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Editors

**Margaret Macintyre Latta**  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, U.S.A.

**Christine Marmé Thompson**  
Pennsylvania State University, U.S.A.

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## **Art Education as Multiprofessional Collaboration**

Saila Nevanen  
The Centre of Expertise on Social Welfare, Finland

Antti Juvonen  
University of Eastern Finland, Finland

Heikki Ruismäki  
University of Helsinki, Finland

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### **Abstract**

In this article we explore the realisation of an art education project as multiprofessional cooperation. The multiprofessional collaboration pair in this study consisted of an artist working together with a teacher. This resulted in activities, which all actors, artists, teachers and administrators saw to be at an especially high level, both artistically and to the practice of teaching. Actually they all thought that the targets, which were set to the project, were clearly surpassed. At its best this working method connected artistic work with the pedagogic knowledge and experience of the children's group work. The work required common planning, flexibility from the traditional methods and culture together with a long-lasting timeframe, (1–2.5 year per each of the sub projects), which made it possible to try to develop new methods. In setting the aims and evaluating the results, the artist's

highlighted the artistic significance, while the teachers focused on the instrumental values of art. In the end, both teachers and artists were satisfied with the results.

### **Starting Points and Purpose of Research**

In this article we focus on the educational professional (kindergarten teachers, classroom teachers and nursery school nurses) and multiple different area artists' multiprofessional collaboration art educational project that started in 2000 in Helsinki. The aim of the project was to familiarize children with the history of their home district through art, using methods related to their own work and experiences with art. One target was to enrich children's imagination and to encourage them to make and experience art during the everyday routines of kindergarten and school<sup>1</sup>. There were approximately 1500 children and 400 teachers from local kindergarten's and schools, and 20 art specialists from different fields. The children's parents also broadly participated in the project. The visual arts, environmental art, literary art, drama, circus and architecture subprojects were carried out in cooperation between artists and teachers. These sub-projects lasted from one year to two and-a-half years each. The project also functioned as an in-service training for workers as professionals from different areas were involved, and whose participation provided opportunities to learn from each other. The cooperation with artists still continues in kindergartens and schools in Helsinki, but today the projects are smaller and shorter compared to the original.

The teachers' and the artists' cooperation was structured in different ways in different subprojects. In some of the subprojects, the artists were visitors, who enriched the work at kindergarten and school with their short visits. In these sections the programme was mostly planned and carried out by the kindergarten and school teachers, as well as other staff. At some locations the staff already had professionals working in art-based areas (for example drama or literary art), which meant that there was no special need for outside expertise, and the role of the artist was as a "guest star" bringing a specific know-how that is typically limited by time and contents, to the project. Some areas, like circus<sup>2</sup>, architecture, environmental art or dance were not well-known fields of art at school or kindergarten and, as a result, fewer teachers had these skills. In these areas the cooperation became long-lasting relationships for teachers and artists, or groups of artists.

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<sup>1</sup> In Finland preschool is organized partly by school authorities, partly by kindergarten organization, and this is why we mention them separately.

<sup>2</sup> Training connects practicing the use of circus equipment, clownery, acrobatics, juggling, drama, movement, brinkmanship, music and visual arts in circus context.

In this article we explore the construction and results of this collaboration, and in doing so, answer the following questions:

1. What were the prerequisites to carry out the project successfully, and what were the most challenging obstacles?
2. How was the cooperation structured and organized?
3. What were the results of the project and how did the teachers and the artists interpret them?

### **Different Approaches to Art Education**

In this article we see art education as multifaceted educational field, composed of a divergent number of intellectual and expressive practices (see, Eckhoff, 2008; Saarnivaara & Varto, 2005). We believe that the basis of all learning is best built upon a socio-constructivist point of view, where a child builds his or her own learning through self-reflection and practicing. The learning environment and the situational atmosphere are in an important role in these processes where cognitive as well as emotional and practical aspects of achievement are all present. (Gergen, 2001; Tynjälä, 2000; Kauppila, 2007.)

Art education is grown children to humanity, caring about him/herself and others and growing up to be an individual and healthy citizen. It is oriented toward the future and, as such, supports children's decision-making abilities (Rauhala, 2005; Karppinen, 2005, pp. 40). The aim is that each growing individual becomes a significant part of the social and cultural community. The arts offer equipment for observing and expressing emotions, which are important for development and success (Eisner, 1998, pp. 78–85). The philosopher Simone Weilin wrote that each field of art has significant educational power. It does not transform traditional ways of thinking, beliefs and prejudices, but rather encourages the exploration of different ways of thinking about teaching and, at the same time, experimental thinking (Varto, 2005, pp. 23–24). With experimental and critical thinking we mean thinking that is based on new, active and practical experiences that help to build new ways of knowing. It expands through new way of solving problems: not only using well-known and pre-established ways, but rather through exploring, and experiencing new situations, materials and possibilities for action. (see, f.e. Burbules & Beck, 1999; Kolb, 1984.)

Art education should be carried out as the integration of teaching moments between different arts. Integrated teaching can be approached as teaching of other subjects through art, whereby art is considered to be central and instrumental as a pedagogical tool. It can be taught through other subjects, or as a separate subject. Art subject matter can be seen as enriching for regular school work or even as something extra for the school. It can be seen as a special type of

knowing, and it can also unite individual experiences in cultural heritage (Puurula, 2001, pp. 175–177; Hoffman, 1999, pp. 25–29).

Liora Bresler (1995, 1998, 2002) classifies integrated teaching in four different approaches: (1) in a repressive style, whereby the art subjects are lighteners and relievers of other subjects. Art making skills, aesthetic knowledge or critical attitude are not developed in this kind of approach. The idea of integration is merely to save time. Teachers who use this kind of integration do not have many art educational skills. (2) In an equal, cognitive style, there are two skillful professionals working together: the teacher's pair is either an artist or a subject teacher well acquainted with art as a subject. (3) In an affective style it is most important to affect the children's emotional development and creativity. This form of integration is favoured by teachers who are active art-enthusiasts, but who do not highlight the importance of academic subjects. (4) The social art educational integration style is concerned with producing programmes for school celebrations. The activities are usually built on traditional models, without additional funding (Bresler, 1995, pp. 36; 1998, 2002). All of these teaching styles were found during the project, but the equal cognitive style and affective style were more prevalent.

The art educator must know the areas that he/she teaches well. It is not necessarily essential to be either a talented artist or a specialist in every possible technique but rather to have an enthusiasm for the arts and drive for teaching. The teacher should encourage pupils to use their senses, to experience and express how the world occurs to them. Through feedback a teacher can make a child concentrate on aesthetic elements like space, colour, strength, the line or the sharpness of the work of art (Pellico, Friedlaender, & Fennie, 2009; Shirmacher, 2006, pp. 233–234).

Historically speaking, the roles and responsibilities of art education and the art teacher have gone through many dramatic shifts. Since 2000, increasing consideration has been focused on the social and therapeutic significance of the arts. Children are able to express and channel their emotions through art (Lehtolainen, 2008, pp. 56–57; Eckhoff, 2008; Adu-Agyem, Enti, & Peligah, 2009; Bachar & Glaubman 2006; Eisner, 1972, pp. 58). The art educator should have a broad knowledge of his or her pupils, the task he/she is teaching and also about art education to be able to make rational decisions in his/her methods of art teaching. Success as an art educator requires continuous empathy for children's particular subject positions (Pääjoki, 1999, pp.145–146). This should be based on an active and well working and solid operational teaching-learning theory of all teachers. In modern education, these are usually based on the socio-constructivist point of view, but sometimes these theories are based on the behaviouristic approach where the arts and skills require practice. That can easily be carried through in a master-apprentice relationship which offers possibilities for model learning. In all

situations the teacher should remember the tender and loving approach to children and their feelings. The sectors of expression and emotions that are active in artistic work; for example, singing, dancing and drawing or painting are very sensitive areas. These emotional experiences can easily be damaged if handled indiscreetly. (see, Bourdieu, 1985, 1986.)

According to Sinikka Rusanen, an art educator must have a personal experiential relationship to art. He/she must know the area of teaching and also recognise his/her own values, which in turn lead to his/her achievement and solutions. He/she should be able to justify the styles and types of art he/she handles with the children. It should be connected to tradition, but at the same time to children's lives and the modern world in which everyone lives (Rusanen, 2007, pp. 207–208).

### **Multiprofessional Collaboration**

The target of multiprofessional cooperation is to be customer-oriented as well as work-oriented so that different professional groups can join together their professional knowledge and skills. With customer-oriented and work-oriented cooperation we mean situation-adjusted, especially “tailored” achievement – not only realization of readymade program entities. It includes equal decision-making and task allocation, experiences and authority, to reach the common target. It may be consciously established or it may retain traditional professional roles or aim for a new synthesis-oriented cooperation (Isoherranen, 2005; Anning, Cottrell, Frost et al., 2006).

Multiprofessional cooperation is typically a dynamic, actively changing and developing process. Succeeding in cooperation requires a common structure for the action, which divides responsibilities like shared planning, cooperative realization and negotiations, and decision-making. Multiprofessional cooperation offers an opportunity to cross professional borders. Common work requires the ability to make compromises and avoid competitive positions. Success requires professionalism, expertise in the field of action, but first of all, a strong professional identity, which makes it possible to give and take mutual know-how. The essential features are: sharing, companionship, mutual dependence and mutual use of power (D'Amour, Ferreda-Videla, et al., 2005; Ketovuori, 2007).

Building cooperation usually involves at least the following stages: agreement on the procedure and contents of the activity, internalisation of the aims of the action, making the action official and organisation and stabilization of the administration of the action. At its best it may develop from a formal and occasional cooperation to a regular communication where consultation and exchange of information become possible. When it works properly, it includes stable and movable structures, which are not dependant on some individuals, but rather are a part of the structure; whereby the workers are strongly committed, and

responsibility areas are planned, carried out and developed together (Pärnä, 2008; Leathard, 2005).

The teacher plays many roles: adviser, model for artistic work, member of the achievement group, and a creative individual or a specialist in the field of art. Children learn differently; some learn easily just listening to the guidelines, some find it easier just to be an on-looker—watching the teacher and trying to imitate afterwards. A teacher should have a unique and creative personality, which means that s/he should have the abilities to react to feedback from the children, as well as to be innovative in his/her creation of solutions for the diverse number of issues that arise. This also requires pedagogic skills, which allow to expand situations so that children have new possibilities for problem solving through creative and innovative solutions. (Shirmacher, 2006, pp. 326–327; Parker, 2009; Thornton, 2005.) The teacher must encourage children's creativity through his/her own example. The creativity includes (according to Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) individual, cultural and social aspects which should all be noticed if we desire to strengthen children's creative engagements. The creative teacher sees pupils as individuals and encourages them to seek out many solutions and ideas, as well as to work in their own, original way. A creative teacher aims at child-centred achievement and appreciates the outcomes of the children giving them the responsibility for decision-making. Children's artistic work does not always go smoothly. Problems may occur in the areas of self-confidence, criticism, imitation, failure to try, or unrealistic expectations (Shirmacher, 2006, pp. 233–234, 327–331). The broad demands of a teachers' job—knowing the points of view of the learner, being a specialist in art subject matter as well as in teaching may become easier to bear when the work is shared by two professionals who have different areas expertise that complement each other. The paired work of an artist and a teacher offers the teacher a chance to observe and see his/her pupils from a different angle. Team teaching enables the teacher and artist to gain information about the pupils' abilities, thinking, interests and styles of learning. Making art may reveal such new talents from the pupils, which otherwise never would have shown up in normal school working. (Oreck, 2005).

### **Research Method and Material**

Evaluation research is built on interaction and discussion between theory and practice and it underlines the exploitable elements (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Patton, 1997). According to Chelimsky (2007) evaluation should answer the questions stated, but also bring to light the practices that are being explored so that they can be changed and made better. Evaluation is an achievement that is always connected to values and this is why the ideology and starting point of the evaluation must be clear and visible. Evaluation is also a part of everyday-life, and researchers Mark, Greene, and Shaw (2007) propose that formal evaluation should reach for interaction with informal, every day evaluation and take advantage of it. Stake and Munson

thought that art education evaluation should be based on experiences and standards. They underline experiential and comprehensive nature of the qualitative evaluation in art education.

In this pluralistic evaluation research we applied the (multi-sided) model developed by Vartiainen (2007). The evaluation targeted the project as a whole and especially the quality of the achievements. The pluralistic evaluation model places the aim of evaluation in a wider context, making it possible to understand the aim of the evaluation exceptionally well. Another important starting point is the central role of the interest groups in the evaluation processes.

In collecting the research material, several methods were used, depending on the suitability of the information as it is applied to different research questions. Thus, the multidimensional material offers a multi-sided picture of the target of evaluation, which helps to avoid simplification of the results. The evaluation criteria was not formed beforehand as standards, rather they were formed during the evaluation process in order to tap into the expertise of the interest groups. The idea in the pluralistic evaluation method is to formulate the results in a useful and practical manner, for example in short propositions (Ojala & Vartiainen, 2008, pp. 1201–1205; Vartiainen, 2007, pp. 153). In this article we have collected the propositions in condensed statements at the end of the results chapters.

The research material of pluralistic evaluation consists of subjective points of view by individuals, as well as opinions and experiences, shared conceptions of the interest groups (inter-subjective conceptions), but also objective factual information, like documents, statistics and follow-up reports. The material collected is based on both experiential information as well as standards, strong professional know-how and observations. A dialogic approach between objective discoveries and personal experiences makes it possible to describe the various and complex phenomena within the evaluation of art education (Stake & Munson, 2008; Vartiainen, 2007, pp. 152–168).

The material for this report was collected from interviews (n=18), narratives in the final report (n=9) and meeting memorandums and other follow-up material. The research analysis proceeded as an ongoing dialogue between the research material and background theory so that both completed and formulated each other into the final shape. The final picture was created by connecting different research materials and comparing them. The evaluation criteria were based on the aims of the project, but a self-reflection model (based on professionalism) was also revealed through the evaluation process as well. The material from the subjective evaluation also raised new, unexpected results, which were not predicted in target setting, or in the initial plans of the project. This actually proves the value of these kinds of art educational projects. It brought up new results that surprised the professional educators

and artists. Through the working processes, teachers and artists discovered development in areas of children's behavior that had not been considered or planned for when creating the project. These developments were in areas of social ability, concentration, communication, etc. The teachers developed new understandings of their pupils and situations when they were able to spend more time observing them working.

## **Results**

### ***The prerequisites and challenges to cooperation between artist and teacher***

From the results we summarise the main points, which were found in qualitative analysis. The interviews with the educators showed that from their point of view, the long-lasting, equal and intensive work with the artists clearly differed from earlier experiences of cooperation. It is a new model in which teachers and artists were responsible for planning and executing the project together, as well as guiding and teaching children as a working team. This process occurred in the dance, circus and architecture subprojects. In addition, environmental art and visual art projects also included this long-lasting and intensive work with some artists and teachers, while others visited as special guests.

The basis of the intensive cooperation was (according to educators) that artists were familiarised with the kindergarten and school environment and its culture of working. Many teachers pointed out the importance of the common planning meetings. One of the teachers described the situation: "In the beginning we had to discuss everything very thoroughly. All meetings concerning teaching were most important." Many of the interviewed teachers and artists emphasized that the length of the project (2–3 years) was a requirement for building cooperation. This was described as follows:

It is nice that so many different things have been connected to this project. The long lasting cooperation and project is also good. Often in kindergarten we get some kind of short-term course, but because it does not continue, you become tired and stop unless you really get excited ... Now when we knew that this would continue, and we will get more new ideas and projects it made us excited.

All interviewed artists reported that cooperation with kindergarten and school teachers was easy because of their multiple abilities in so many activities. For example, one artist said: "Kindergarten preschool educators really have multiple talents, as an artist it is easy to cooperate with them. This leads to unbelievably wonderful results."

Most of the teachers mentioned lack of time and the large amount of work as the most difficult elements of the project. The artists said little about the lack of time or the amount of

work although they were busy, especially before performances and exhibitions. Additionally, the artists commented that guiding a group of children and executing a long-term project was less work than usual because there were other adults sharing the responsibilities and work. Most difficult, though, was—from the artists' point of view—strict working hours, the bureaucracy of the public administration, and the confusion of how the project was organized (i.e., the large subprojects that were divided amongst many different offices and kindergartens). Also teachers found the organisation and administration to present difficulties, especially in that the large subprojects were executed in many different places.

<p>Multiprofessional cooperation required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– common regulations and lateral provisions</li> <li>– long lasting shared work</li> <li>– numerous skilled operators</li> </ul> <p>Obstacles to multiprofessional cooperation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– teachers' haste and graduated working hours</li> <li>– strict work structures and bureaucracy</li> <li>– lack of clarity in the organization</li> </ul>
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Figure 1. Prerequisites and challenges of multiprofessional cooperation.

### ***Activity organization, the activity and the different roles of the actors***

The achievement was built on common ideation, although in practice the main responsibility and strategic management were usually on the artists as the teachers worked as collaborators. Many of the interviewed teachers said that the role of a contributor made it possible for them to observe and take notes on the children's group in a different way than it is usually done. Observation offered significant new information about the children. (cf., Oreck, 2005).

Usually art education at school and kindergarten is carried out in short sessions, but in this project there was more time and the achievement was built on long lasting work periods. The achievements were not planned as single action sessions. The subject matter differed widely and it was developed through the action into bigger entities, which culminated in some kind of an artistic form. Practicing and producing art objects became more intense and focused as the events, performances and exhibitions approached. These events were larger and more imposing than those usually completed in schools and kindergartens. For example, due to the needs of the circus performance, a giant tent was hired in the yard of the school and kindergarten, and the audience consisted of parents and people living nearby. The dance performances were organised in the "great hall" of a local cultural centre, which was equipped with good stagecraft. Large events' happenings were laborious for the staff, but they offered

experiences of success for the children, and giving their own performances, following the performances of others and receiving good feedback from the audience encouraged the children to persevere.

The artists commented that work in this project was lighter than normal, because usually they are responsible for everything. The participation of a regular teacher helped in controlling the children's group and the artists did not need to take care of discipline. The role of the teachers was important in handling the disturbances, especially with the groups where there were children who need special care. For example, a dance project was carried out with children who had special difficulties in the conceptualisation of their own body. Their participation required strict advance planning so that the children's difficulties were not noticed in the action. The dance teacher was responsible for the planned dance activities and movements, but the special education teacher helped whenever needed. The teacher described the distribution of work as follows:

She (the dance teacher) had the general management, but when one of our children started to behave in an unsuitable way, we interfered in the situation, and reassured the children and supported them in their achievements.

The teachers were responsible for the administration and organisation of the project and integrating it into the other activities of the kindergartens and schools. Teachers also took care of the practicalities like facilities, schedules and materials as well as communication between the parents and other actors and interest groups. Often the planning work was done in cooperation between the teachers and the artists who had an important role in starting the activities with the children. After the first stage the personnel of the kindergartens and schools continued the activities without help from the artists.

In interviews the artists often mentioned that they experienced causing chaos and being like tornados in the daily life of kindergartens and schools: "Combining different operation cultures always requires mutual flexibility. Sometimes I have felt as a tornado mixing up the whole life of the kindergarten for a moment." Many teachers also noted that art education includes elements of chaos and embarrassment: "The project has upset our normal rhythms pretty much. The adults have had to change their working shifts quite a lot and the routines have suffered somewhat." This chaos had to be tolerated, as art making moved towards new and comprehensive creative processes. On the other hand, because the breaking of routines was also disturbing, many agreements and much flexibility were needed to arrange the achievement. This was described as: "Of course it means a lot of work to arrange small group achievement, knowing who is working with whom and where. This kind of work has been needed from the personnel, but everything has been solved." The everyday routines were

tested, but questioning and estimating the normal practices was also seen as a positive matter. Many artists criticised the schools and kindergartens for being too sterile environments. This, in the artist's point of view, guides children to be too cautious and, as such, children do not have the courage to throw themselves into an action which might provide trash or some kind of littering. The work was also disrupted by the fact that the materials and unfinished works could not be left out; they always had to be put away after work.

The creative projects also required the adults to be enthusiastic and throw themselves back into the work. When the adult was excited about the action, the enthusiasm easily reached the children. The personal, deep relationship of the artists to the field of their own art made art work different from usual work at schools and kindergartens. In some subprojects artists and teachers worked together with the children, and also performed together with the children on stage. This way of working encouraged children, and in the case of the circus professionals, their skillfulness elicited admiration from the children and caused them to practice so to reach the same level of skills. The teachers reported that the project offered them variability in work and an opportunity to "let go" every now and then. They noticed that working with children may get boring and routine, and this is why new developmental impulses and stimuli from outside are sometimes needed. One teacher saw, for example, that the most important benefit for her from the project had been: "Most of all the variation and a chance to work together with an architect, have brought new inspiration to my work. These two years have just flown away with this kind of activity and success."

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| <p>Multiprofessional cooperation both required and made possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– clear distribution of work</li> <li>– consolidation of different work cultures</li> <li>– flexibility and ability to cope with chaos</li> <li>– finding new points of view in work</li> <li>– questioning the assumptions of the work cultures</li> <li>– increasing the variation of work and working well-being</li> </ul> |
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Figure 2. Requirements and opportunities for organizing multiprofessional achievement.

### ***Principals' project evaluations***

Both the interviews and the final report showed that the starting point for the artist's were the artistic processes, which included planning, working and practising in connection to the performances and exhibitions. According to the artist's the entire artistic process offers the children positive experiences and provides them with a chance to form new skills. The artist's emphasised the opportunities for the children to get to know the world of art and to absorb the power, energy and excitement generated from the arts. They saw the importance of producing

high-quality art as a result of work and practice. They saw the project succeeding when the whole artistic span was fulfilled. One artist summed up the results: “Long lasting cooperation produced some fine, artistically complete entities made by the children.”

The artists pointed out the value of getting to know art and making it, but did not place much value on the instrumental effects of art. They emphasised the target-orientation and sense of direction in the work, which they also wanted to transfer to children. The exercise had to be planned and have a target. After the action it was also necessary to consider what should be done differently and where more practice was needed. The performances, events and exhibitions served as long-term targets to which all subprojects aimed. They offered the children a way to succeed in front of a real audience, which in turn amplified their self assurance, motivating them to continue to practice. One of the artists described the process as follows:

Activity, overcoming oneself, overcoming fears and feelings of success were everyday feelings in the circus lessons which also provided good training in attitudes. There were no results without crazed training and hard work. It was great to see how well the children prepared themselves for the main events of the circus tent in springtime, and how many nice memories we all got from the project. The circus project strongly ennobled the target orientation for both the children and the teachers.

Normally, whenever artists work with children, it usually happens in the evenings when the children are losing their alertness. In this project the work took place in the daytime when the children were most active and receptive. One of the artists noted: “Many times I have speculated on the meaningfulness of a hobby, when a child is brought to the dance lesson tired, crying and against his/her own will . . .” He thought that it was much better to offer the children an opportunity to make art in a familiar and safe environment when their activity level is at its best.

In the interviews, many teachers stated that in the beginning the aims and targets of the project were separate from the curriculum targets of the kindergartens and schools. It was something extra that demanded more work. The teachers said that they tried to do everything as before, but in addition to that they also had to do the tasks of art education project. The teachers were also worried about the time to handle other duties such as the preschool tasks. As the achievement went further, they learned to combine the activities into other aims. As the project reached full speed, the teachers learned to better combine educational and substance aims into it. This helped in managing time and overcoming feelings of insufficiency. The

projects included practicing skills which belong significantly in achievements of kindergartens and schools. This was described by one teacher:

Circus is such a broad area that it naturally includes some of kindergarten's usual and normal achievements: moving, drama, music and visual arts. Circus also taught social skills and an awareness of the needs of others while increasing self confidence and courage.

The educators concluded that the most important results were the children's positive experiences in learning and their increased encouragement to try different tasks. The teachers also saw that general aims could be fulfilled through art education. Learning different skills that were needed in making art was seen as being good, but not the most important result of project. The project efficiently provided children an opportunity to practise their social skills and increase their general abilities in learning. The ability to concentrate listen, plan and evaluate the results of the work were common requirements to all subprojects methods.

Many teachers and some artists mentioned that emotional skills were also practised. The fearful children were encouraged to try and practise. The success strengthened their self-respect and offered new experiences. The length of the project allowed time for the reserved, quiet or otherwise slow children to become involved. They could first follow and watch the other's work and then slowly get on with it. The project also offered many opportunities to practise emotional skills as the imagination exercises allowed children to face their fears and handle them through playing step-by-step in a safe atmosphere and situation.

The projects offered significant achievements to reckless and overactive children. For them working with real instruments was motivating, and it also offered energetic, speedy and border breaking achievement in many ways. The artists had more courage in these activities than the teachers. Even small children used sharp knives and saws. Competent guidance and not rushing, which can often cause accidents, allowed the work to occur smoothly, especially in the visual arts and architecture sub project's building exercises. The physical requirements in the dance and circus projects involved the active children as they were able to discharge their energy and need for activity in a positive way and receive positive feedback. Often these children are seen as a disturbance in the life of the kindergarten and school, which often times leads to negative feedback from teachers. One teacher described it this way: "The children learned about themselves, enjoyed moving and discharged their energy in a positive way". In interviews, the teachers often mentioned that for the children it was good to see a different adult working with them because this different approach aroused their interest and curiosity. This "difference" was not spoken aloud, but it was referred many times in the evaluations: "Of course, the artists are "artists", and there were surprises, too . . ." Some of the respondents

saw it as positive that the children received attention from an adult other than their own teacher. The strong presence of the artists in the work areas influenced the children. The teachers had to take care of many daily tasks, such as answering the phone, which also affected the children's concentration.

The artists eagerly added subjects where children showed interest. The work was done based on the children: children's age, skill level and special needs were taken under consideration. Their own teacher could estimate which subjects and tasks would be interesting for them. An important starting point was that the achievement had to touch relevant points in the children's lives, experiences and world. For example, a group started to develop themes of dance from a "pirate point of view" because the theme was topical in children's play at that time. The children helped with the planning and their ideas were taken and developed. The art projects also required adults' skills and courage to handle negative, violent, gloomy or frightening themes and emotions in a way which kept the subject under control and did not promote more fear or anxiety in children (cf., Adu-Agyem, Enti & Peligah, 2009). For example, a group of boys in a kindergarten was deeply interested in Hugo Simberg's paintings handling themes of death. The boys definitely wanted to dramatise their own play about the "Death came in the house" painting.

In summary, we can see that there were many factors that contributed to the final success of the projects and achievements.

#### Essentials

artists: planning, working and practicing, as well as the performances and exhibitions  
teachers: concerned about integrating the projects to kindergarten's and school's  
normal work, long-lasting, universal themes which culminated in performances  
and exhibitions, child-centered points of view

*Figure 3. Essential principles of multiprofessional achievement.*

### ***Sharing the know-how***

Sharing professional know-how succeeded well in all subprojects. One of the aims was for the teachers and artists to learn from each other. A teacher described the situation:

We (teachers) gave our professional know-how to the artists and advised them about how to act with children of a certain age, and what kind of abilities and skills they have. They gave us hints about how to carry on this circus theme, what kind of ideas there are and how to work with them. Thus the ideas conflated and during three years of work I developed my own methods.

Usually artists know almost nothing about children in advance, and their knowledge about children's development is usually rather narrow. The teachers' knowledge about each child and group helped the planning and working. The artists noticed that each group is different although the age structure of the group might have been the same. Some of the artists involved in this project did not have previous experience of working with children as small as these and that made some testing necessary to find the right level of achievement: what could the children do and how long they were able to work nonstop? The artists learned a lot about how to integrate certain achievements to a certain age group so that activities were suitable for the developmental level. On the other hand, an unfamiliar adult (artist) without any preconceptions about a child could also guide new accomplishments and arrange surprises. One of the teachers commented: "I would never have believed that this child would be so excited about the task".

There was no competition or authority quarrels between the professional groups. Because the participation was voluntary, the participants who were interested in multiprofessional cooperation and art education, were self-selected, which resulted in stable levels of commitment. The pre-questionnaire also revealed that there were workers who were not interested in this kind of work and who had different attitudes. One of the kindergarten professionals wondered what the artists would have to contribute. She thought that the outside partners were unnecessary to the whole project. This kind of thinking is quite normal, as the teaching personal often see themselves as experts in anything which has something to do with the children. In this way they do not see art as something important, they only concentrate on children. The whole project would have become impossible to carry out if there were associates who would have been thinking this way. That makes the decision of voluntary participation wise. Mutual respect was needed between the cooperators all the time. We believe this could not harm the reliability or validity of this research- rather quite the opposite.

The artists involved were strongly committed to the project and many had earlier experience in art teaching. In the interview the artists were asked what their colleagues thought about this

kind of work with small children. According to them some had followed the project with interest, but some of them did not appreciate educational work and especially not teaching such small children. Also, working together with amateurs or enthusiasts was not appreciated by everyone.

Learning in a multiprofessional cooperation context:

- teachers learned more about the substance of art education
- artists learned about how to teach pre-school and kindergarten children
- both teachers and artists were able to reflect on their own work

*Figure 4.* Learning in multiprofessional cooperation contexts.

### **Conclusions**

The long-lasting art education project offered an opportunity for cooperation between artists and educational professionals, where planning, realisation, decision-making and development of the work was done together. The cooperation was described as equal, where professionals learned from each other. Liora Bresler (1995) described four different approaches to integrated teaching. Of these, this project fit “the equal cognitive style” (the second approach), in which two skillful professionals work together. According to Bresler, this kind of integration is rare in the school world. In the end, art education integrated well in the normal everyday life of the kindergarten and school, but a lot of planning and work was needed. In the beginning art education was one equal but separate subject area besides the other teaching areas. As the project proceeded, it rose to the centre of the achievement in many cases, and other teaching contents were integrated in it (cf., Bresler, 1995). The teachers saw art education as an excellent child-centred way to go through the main contents of preschool and kindergarten. The artists made it possible to carry out a whole artistic process including high quality outcomes integrated within the normal achievement of kindergartens and schools.

The requirements of an art teacher set by Pääjoki (1999), Rusanen (2008) and Shirrmacher (2006) include a broad knowledge of the art, a personal relationship to art and significant knowledge about children and their levels of development. These are difficult challenges for a single human being. In this project it was reached through multiprofessional cooperation, which combined knowledge about the learner, teaching and the subject being taught. Working in pairs or in groups also increased and broadened the skills of an individual worker.

The workers involved in the project were ready to share their professional skills and to receive new work methods and points of view (cf., D’Amour et al., 2005). From artists educational professionals learned about the substance of art teaching and received new ideas and stimuli

for their own work. The project enriched and refreshed the daily work and also strengthened their well-being at work. The teachers were surprised to see how much the art educational achievement developed the learning and emotional skills as well as social abilities of children. Artists learned from teachers how art teaching should be adjusted to the children's developmental level and made suitable for each children's group. The teachers' ability to discipline and effectively manage the classroom made it possible to involve special education groups in the teaching.

Multiprofessional work and the administration of the project also had challenges. The work required clear structures. Organisation and questions of responsibilities were brought up in the interviews when respondents were asked what they would change in the future. In the project, which lasted for about two and a half years, practical work methods were finally agreed upon in each single working place, which produced results satisfactory to everyone. One of the subprojects developed purposefully, administration strategies that crossed the borders of working positions and, finally, created a working model that was suitable for their project. Still, it was not possible to create a more general administration model that was suitable for everyone—a model in which the responsibility and decision-making would clearly have been applicable to all working environments. This would be the next area to be developed.

Successful cooperation required common planning and organisation. The planning focused on practical tasks; the essentials and philosophic or educational basis of values were not gone through in the discussions. The evaluation showed that although the aims of the project were defined and written down, the different professional groups started building the projects and goals from different points of view and values. The educators underlined the instrumental values and the functionality of art education in teaching the contents of curriculum, while the artists focused on the meaning and significance of art itself. The educators saw the work process as important, but the artists saw both outcomes and the work process as important. This project showed that a project that has many starting points as well as different focuses can succeed and produce a wholeness that is satisfying to everyone involved. Additionally, multiprofessional cooperation offered all of the actors a chance to find new points of view in their own work and to see this work more broadly.

### In the end

Summarizing, we may say as answers to our research questions shortly:

1. To succeed, multiple professional cooperation requires: a long lasting period of shared work, which includes common planning and agreement of rules of the action. Shared working requires clear distribution of work, flexibility and questioning the trivialities of working cultures. The obstacles for working are stiff routines of action, bureaucracy and too much hurry as well as unclarity of organizing.
2. Cooperation that is built and organized on the equal cooperation of professionals from different areas, whereby the skills of the teachers and artists are combined. The actions are based on voluntariness, and both groups were strongly committed in the project. The general working requires more clear structures and better working administration conventions.
3. Both teachers and artists are satisfied with the project, but they underline different aspects in the results. The teachers focus on instrumental possibilities of art education in fulfilling the targets of education and syllabus, while artists emphasize the significance of art itself. These different interpretations of the good results live side by side and do not disturb good cooperation together.

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### About the Authors

Saila Nevanen works as Senior Planning Officer in The Centre of Expertise on Social Welfare in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area (The Development Unit of Early Childhood Education). Her special interest concentrates on early childhood education. Saila Nevanen is a postgraduate student at the University of Helsinki, Faculty of Behavioral Sciences in the Department of Teacher Education, and Art Research Centre.

Antti Juvonen works as professor in Education (especially pedagogy of Arts and skill subjects) in University of Eastern Finland, Faculty of Education, Department of Applied Education and teacher education. His research interests focus on music education and arts education. Juvonen has published 9 monographs and many articles in international journals.

Heikki Ruismäki works as professor in Arts Education in University of Helsinki, Faculty of Behavioural Sciences, Department of Teacher Education, and Arts Research Centre. His research interests are widely in arts and skill education. Ruismäki has supervised many doctoral dissertations in arts education and music education. He has published many articles in international research journals.

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