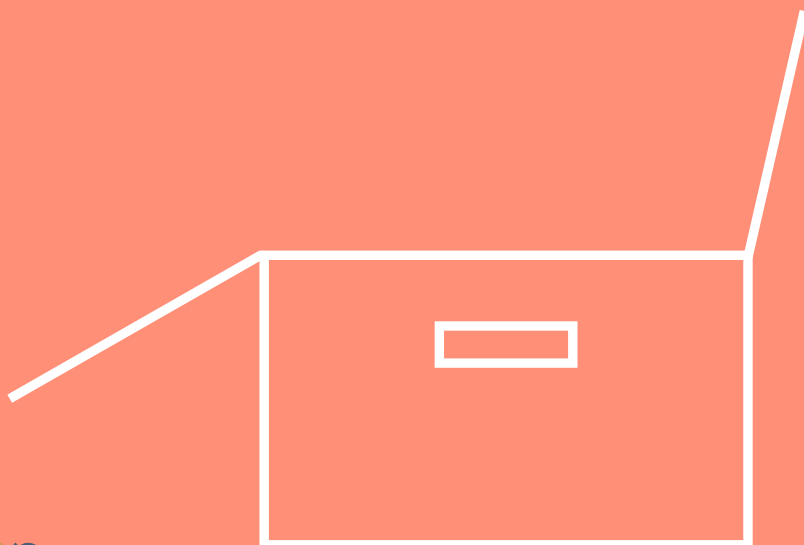


Education, Arts, and Social Engagement: Exploring the Educative Value of Artistic Practice

A Guide for Art Education Activities



Education, Arts, and Social Engagement:

Exploring the Educative Value of Artistic Practice - A Guide for Art Education Activities

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ELPIS
Artistic expression, performance
and social innovation:
the role of the educator for the
accessibility of the arts



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1. ELPIS — A SPIRIT OF HOPE: a framework

ELPIS is a collaborative project involving three countries – Italy, Croatia, and Slovenia – and four partner institutions:

Idrisi Cultura e Sviluppo Palermo (lead partner), Liceo Ginnasio di Stato Francesco Scaduto Bagheria, The Rijeka Youth Theatre, and Pionirski dom – Centre for Youth Culture, Ljubljana.

All participating institutions are dedicated to using the arts to engage communities, create connections, and raise awareness of various social issues across different environments. This international collaboration has allowed us to explore diverse practices, exchange successful program experiences, and share values essential for addressing sensitive topics in various learning situations and working with diverse target groups.

In Slovenia, the project focuses on integrating culture and art with formal education, particularly regarding social topics. Key themes that emerged during the project included:

cooperation, connection, play, experience, awareness, trust, expression, process, perseverance, and community.

Slovenia Laboratory: 3 stages

1. START: We began by planning and setting goals for the workshops, inviting experienced pedagogues, teachers, students, and youth workers to join us.

2. WORKSHOPS: We organized 6 initial workshops to introduce various art forms and their potential use in formal education. This was followed by 9 additional workshops. Art pedagogues from various disciplines engaged participants to explore different art forms and social topics, thereby gaining knowledge and developing skills to foster creativity in their own work.

3. ANALYSIS: We conducted 55 interviews to assess the current “state of the art,” which led to reflections and explorations of how to incorporate art into formal education. Together, we assessed, reflected, and evaluated the process.

RESULT: A tool designed to inspire, encourage, and influence pedagogues and facilitators to combine formal and informal education and include more art in their work.

What We Suggest:

Establish a Common Framework: Exchange expectations with everyone involved in the art education process.

Prepare: Identify your goals and needs, put the plan into action, reflect, and evaluate the outcome. If necessary, adapt and repeat the process.

How:

- **Share Your Plans:** Use a common document for collaborative editing. **Communicate freely and openly.**
- **Experiment and Adapt:** **Don't be afraid to try new things without knowing all the answers.** Visualize, plan, and prepare for activities, but focus on the process rather than the specific outcome.
- **Observe and Reflect:** Offer experiences and observe responses. Adapt and change based on the outcomes. **Remember, there is no failure in using art as part of the learning process—only information about what has worked and what hasn't yet.**
- **Discuss and Share:** **Share doubts and victories.** Understand that what works once may not always work, but through observation and reflection, you can identify principles with a higher chance of success.



2. WE BELIEVE: a vision

Culture and the arts have always represented vital ways for humans to express themselves, create communities, connect with each other, share stories, experience a range of emotions, and reflect on the world around them. Through this engagement, individuals can imagine new possibilities and realities for their world.

However, play and art are often perceived as non-productive, unserious, and unimportant. This perception is linked to the lack of funding, systemic support, and strategic frameworks that recognize art and culture as essential components of human development and existence.

We can change this through two complementary steps:

1. Bottom-Up Approach: Integrate principles of non-formal art education into formal education frameworks

through the work of educators and pedagogues at all levels of education – from early childhood to academia and beyond.

2. Encourage Systemic Changes: Advocate for policies, funding, and systemic changes that support art education and enable diverse ways and practices of learning art. Systematic learning and support in the form of education would benefit both teachers and students of pedagogical faculties, as well as students of art faculties without pedagogical programs.

Art should be part of human education from an early age to introduce diverse ways of understanding the world and expressing ourselves. It helps diversify perspectives, fosters creative and critical thinking, and expands our ways of knowing. Experiencing something firsthand is essential for true understanding. Art refines and strengthens our awareness, perception, and intuition. It teaches us to question our own actions and those of others and to examine them from different angles. Playing and experimenting are crucial for self-knowledge, understanding others, and comprehending the world.

Art connects us in various ways. For most performative arts, community is a prerequisite. Even in more individual art forms, a communication is established – between the theme and the artist, and between the artist and the audience. This communication, even if indirect, can transcend space and time to resonate with others.

This open communication encourages research and knowledge development. Observing, listening, sensing, and expressing are invaluable approaches in education. Culture and art offer pathways to imagine new possibilities, discover what matters to us, experience co-creation, and gain a sense of agency.

Why should art education be intertwined with formal education?

Despite the challenges of constantly defending art, it's essential to ask ourselves why we believe art is meaningful. This reflection helps us set our own values and ideas about why art is necessary, indispensable, and crucial for individual and community development. Practicing art will also help us set specific educational goals for activities and see the bigger picture, finding meaning even when challenges arise.

What We Suggest:

Share the Common Vision: Not only talk about it but practice it yourself.

How:

- **Practice What You Teach:** Engage in the activities you advocate for. Attend workshops, practice art yourself, and experience it with your community.
- **Experiment and Collaborate:** Guide fellow teachers/educators through the games, exercises, and activities you plan. Allow yourself to be guided by others.
- **Build Connection and Trust:** Understanding each other better helps establish a framework based on shared beliefs and values. Support each other and give space for growth.
- **Practice Constructive Feedback:** Remain sensitive to your own perception biases and limitations. Recognize the value of different approaches to set a common framework and appreciate diverse perspectives.

What are your experiences? Why do you think art education should be intertwined with formal education?



3. HUMANIZING THE SCHOOLS: a problem

The field of education should share similar goals with art – acting as a playground, a field of experience and experimentation, and a space for making mistakes, co-existing, co-creating, and building a community. Ideally, education should focus on forming individuals who possess intellectual capacity, critical thinking skills, and the ability to collect, select, and combine information. Additionally, it should nurture empathy, emotional expression and regulation, and conscious living, with the awareness of both our bodies and the collective body of humanity.

Unfortunately, the current educational system does not sufficiently support this holistic learning approach. Competitiveness and a focus on high grades have overshadowed other important aspects of education. Incorporating art into pedagogy can support a gradual shift in focus within the educational system.

Integrating Non-Formal Arts Education into Formal Education

When incorporating non-formal arts education into formal settings, we should be mindful of the following:

Authority and Flexibility: Maintaining authority in non-formal activities within formal settings can be challenging, as each situation and space comes with its own expectations and code of conduct. However, we have the freedom to play with the rules by clarifying the context of the activity. By setting and co-creating expectations with participants, we can manage the balance between structure and flexibility.

Time for Exploration: It can be difficult to find time to explore new, participatory, experiential approaches, which are more about discovery and finding various paths to education. Educators should allow themselves to experiment with these methods but also be willing to return to familiar approaches when necessary.

Grading and Assessment: While grading and assessment frameworks are necessary for learning under pressure and using knowledge, they can also be limiting and rigid, fostering competitiveness instead of creativity. Non-formal art education can help students practice performing under pressure and develop different strengths when faced with challenges.

Inclusion of Arts in Various Fields: Being open-minded and creative includes finding ways to incorporate arts into all fields of knowledge. Some suggestions for application include:

- Testing preconceived notions and stereotypes at the beginning of a lesson.
- Exploring themes and topics creatively or introducing new information in diverse ways.
- Reflecting and reinforcing newly acquired knowledge and assessing understanding.
- Warming up the body and mind.

- Relaxing and focusing during intermissions.
- Connecting the group and providing varied ways to express feelings and share opinions, thereby establishing relationships within the class.

Educators are encouraged to find their own opportunities to include different art methods and techniques that resonate with both them and their students.

The Role of Schools

The role of schools should adapt to societal changes. With the vast amount of information available, the editorial role of educators is increasingly needed to help students make sense of the information they receive. Schools can and should be learning networks that encourage and experiment with various approaches and methods, ideally through experiencing, exploring, making mistakes, and learning to give and receive constructive feedback through different modes of expression.

Values in Practicing Art and Teaching

Values found in practicing art should be reflected in teaching. To achieve this, educators must be willing and ready to learn in the same way. Mistakes should be seen as learning opportunities, as necessary and playful, something that can be fixed. Mistakes can shine a light on different aspects of understanding, leading us to places we wouldn't reach if we were afraid of making said mistakes. While mistakes can lead to frustration, overcoming the frustration builds resilience and confidence for both educators and students.

Teaching and creating art should both validate exploration, curiosity, equality, and diversity. Although changes in the school system might take time, individual teaching approaches can adapt and change quickly.

What We Suggest:

Integrate Art into Formal Education: Find what needs to be added to the formal education framework and carve out time for it, even if it's just for a few minutes. Try and observe the effect.

How:

- **Engage Personally:** Attend workshops and experience the methods firsthand. Use what resonates most with you. It could just be one game, one song, one exercise, or one short assignment, and then pass it on to your students. Your excitement will generate excitement in others. To ignite passion in others, you must first light the passion in yourself.
- **Facilitate Reflection:** Ask participants how it felt to perform or engage with an art form. Understand that while art education activities are often fun, they may not always make the desired impact. Persist and you will find activities that bring joy and engage the group, helping them overcome resentment and frustration.
- **Appreciate Diversity:** Follow the group's curiosity, appreciate differences within the group, and respond by combining different methods and approaches.



4. HOW TO IGNITE: a perspective

After identifying our values and goals in teaching and gaining some experience, it is important to choose and select a method. Experiencing artistic processes ourselves is crucial, as it includes our teaching or facilitating practice through observing pedagogical approaches and methodologies. Attending workshops and activities repeatedly allows us to experience being unburdened and open to the process, and to observe how other educators create safe environments essential for art education. By understanding their approaches and methods, we can structure our activities and create an inspiring and effective teaching approach that aligns with our personalities and teaching settings.

Before developing a methodology, it is important to acknowledge the uncertainty, defences, and fears that accompany any new experience. When creating a method based on our knowledge, we can only predict the process to a certain extent, informed by

our own experiences or previous groups. Limiting ourselves to one desirable outcome can make us feel out of control. This uncertainty can also affect participants experiencing the process for the first time. However, this is the only way to develop a method: by courageously creating and exploring without knowing the outcome or the emotional journey it will take us and our participants on.

Sometimes, quality control of the process becomes about control itself. We suggest starting with experimentation, exploring methods, materials, and techniques without pushing for perfect results. Creating as an action should be enough to start method development. Trust yourself to know that even if the process doesn't work as planned, it provides learning opportunities. Observe what you can take from the experience. Don't worry if not all participants respond the same way. Repeat activities to see if different approaches cause resistance. The goal is to start.

We often focus too much on the interpretation, coding, messages, and reception of art, and forget that enthusiasm for art is the first step in using it as a teaching method. Everyone can enjoy art in their own way. The emphasis on interpretation overshadows the experience, feeling, and sensing aspects. Teaching techniques, skills, methods, schools, approaches, styles, and history is important, but personal experience is the first step into the unknown, into a sea of possibilities, and into freedom within forms. Share your joy for art and provoke individual interpretation with questions:

- **What do you see?**
- **What do you feel?**
- **Why do you think you feel that?**
- **Where did your mind take you during the experience?**
- **What do you do when you think you do not understand?**
- **Can you connect it with something you know?**
- **If you do not like it, what is it that you do not like?**
- **What would it need for you to like it more?**
- **Do we have to like everything we experience?**
- **What sparks at least a little interest for you?**

- **How can you use your imagination to find your own interpretation of the work that was done within the group?**

Both processes – doing and observing – mean experiencing. Allow the development of new interpretations. Encourage and discuss them. Build trust in students, encourage them to feel and interpret their feelings, and guide them to see different layers starting from their experience.

What We Suggest:

Overcome the Fear of Experimentation: Don't lose encouragement if things don't go as planned. Keep your goals in mind but remain open to learning through both success and failure. Learn by consuming art, doing it, and reading about it. Art itself is the greatest teacher.

How:

- **Prepare Thoroughly:** Gather materials, set goals, create a lesson plan, develop a discussion framework, and conduct research.
- **Embrace Surprises:** Be ready to be taken off track. Initially, it might feel like stepping into the unknown, but exploration becomes familiar with time.
- **Document Observations:** Write down your observations, even if briefly. Note what worked and what didn't and reflect on the why. Consider your expectations and how they align with the outcomes.
- **Allow for Reflection:** Include time for reflection after activities. Some participants need more time and space to show how they feel.

By following these steps, you can ignite a passion for art in your students and create a dynamic, engaging learning environment.



5. ART IS EVERYWHERE: a methodology in preparation

Choosing the art form to incorporate into your teaching methodology is a personal and flexible decision. Begin with what you are passionate about and most familiar with, and take time to expand your knowledge by attending workshops or events and connecting with artists. Focus initially on one art form but remain open to integrating others as you progress. You don't need to be an expert in all art forms to connect them with your topics or draw inspiration from them. Share your knowledge, be ready for challenges, and continuously learn together with your students and on your own.

Art Exploration Through ELPIS Workshops in Slovenia

In the ELPIS workshops in Slovenia, we explored various art forms:

- **Breathing and voice**
- **Movement and dance**
- **Improvisational theatre**

- **Visual art (painting, collage, sketching)**
- **Music (rhythm, singing, Orff instruments)**
- **Visual art and movement combination**

We started combining the art forms by putting art pedagogues in pairs and had workshops for pedagogues, students and youth workers where they were experiencing the topics of boundaries, borders and peripheries through the two artforms of their choice. In the end of the workshops, we presented the outcomes of different groups, each time achieving unique results despite having the same lesson, topic, and pedagogues. This demonstrated that the execution and results are never the same.

Art forms can be interconnected in numerous ways as art offers a vast field of exploration, addressing various topics and developing imagination, expanding our association fields and sharing and gaining personal experiences. Collaboratively we possess more knowledge than as single individuals.

Explored Topics

Our topics included **peripheries, borders, boundaries, and limits**. The pedagogues interpreted these topics in a variety of ways by asking questions about what they want to focus on:

- Physical limitations and boundaries of the body or space we are creating in
- The line on a paper as a limit or a border
- Peripheries as areas that are usually overlooked
- How are we approaching these topics that have a possibility to be explored from multiple perspectives: political, personal, societal, imaginative, linguistic, activist, historical, etc.?

Structuring the Activity

Before introducing the activity, consider these questions to help structure it:

- What is the goal of the proposed activity?
- What artistic approach and methodology will be used?
- What skills are needed from the facilitator?
- What is the time frame and group size?
- What materials and space preparation are required?
- How will the time be structured in combination with the content?
- How will the activity be introduced and concluded?
- What are the criteria for measuring the success of the activity?

Reflection and Adaptation

Reflecting on the activity is essential to understand why it succeeded or failed. Even factors like timing (for example, whether we are doing the activity before or after lunch) can significantly affect the outcome. However, do not overly concern yourself with perfect conditions. Instead, focus on setting a basic framework and improving conditions as you progress.

Success Criteria

Success criteria for an activity can vary, for example:

- Participation and engagement
- Learning new vocabulary
- Expanding the circle of expectations and associations
- Mastering a technique or method
- Achieving content comprehension

Even if everything was executed correctly but yielded different results, it teaches us to stay observant and adapt our plans if needed (or appreciate what is and not what should be).

What We Suggest:

Prepare, plan, and choose, but also let the process unfold naturally. Observe, reflect, and trust yourself and the process. Be honest with the group, show control, and admit when things deviate from the plan. Discuss what could have been done better and learn from the present activity.

How:

- **Engage Personally:** Attend workshops, invite artists, and observe how they work with groups. Discuss and study their preparation methods.
- **Reflect:** Keep a notebook or file for activity preparation and take time to reflect on each activity.
- **Experiment:** Try different approaches, attitudes, and styles. Trust and develop your own voice and expression.
- **Collaborate:** Invite colleagues to observe your activities, attend their sessions, and exchange feedback on experiences.

By embracing these methods, you can create a dynamic, engaging learning environment that integrates art into formal education effectively.



6. RELATE: a safe-r space

When we talk with people about their favourite creative experiences with art, they often mention special energy, vibe, connection, and a feeling they had in their bodies – feeling relaxed and alive at the same time, being able to achieve more than they knew they could. Through art, people meet parts of themselves they did not know they had or haven't seen for a long time. When we analysed and translated this into concrete ideas about what makes the conditions right to achieve this, one thing became very clear: establishing a safe space is the most important starting point. How do we do it?

1. Clear Frame of the Activity

- Set a Goal: It is important to know why we are doing an activity. Setting a goal doesn't mean we know the result already, but it does mean we understand our motivation. A clear goal provides a sense of purpose and direction.

- Define the Framework: Clearly outline the boundaries and expectations of the activity. This framework brings safety to the group and can be adapted as needed. Listen to the group and adjust activities based on their needs, whether they need relaxation or stimulation.

2. Building Trust

- Trust in Facilitators: Trust starts with the facilitators. We must trust in our own intentions and the space we create. This confidence will help participants trust the process, especially when trying new and unfamiliar things.

- Trust Among Participants: Encourage trust within the group. Ensure that no one undermines or mocks others. A safe space relies on mutual respect and support, allowing everyone to contribute without fear of judgment.

3. Consistency, Reaction, and Honesty

- Consistent Behaviour: Be consistent in your actions and reactions. Address disrespectful behaviour immediately to maintain a respectful environment. Encourage participants to try new things, even if they do not fully understand them at first.

- Honest Communication: Create an environment where honest observations and feelings can be shared openly. This reduces tension and fosters a sense of togetherness in the group.

4. Respect

- Respect Differences: Use words and discussions to clarify why certain behaviours are respectful or disrespectful. Set clear boundaries and encourage participants to articulate their own boundaries to foster mutual respect.

5. Authority

- Relational Authority: Authority should be based on knowledge, skills, respect, consistency, and trust, rather than hierar-

chical status. It is important to guide with awareness and modesty, maintaining a balance between leading and learning.

6. Facilitation: Safety and Responsibility

- **Shared Responsibility:** Facilitation involves encouraging exploration and discovery while ensuring the environment remains safe. Participants should know that they share responsibility for maintaining this safe space.
- **Practical Considerations:** Address basic needs and logistics (e.g., breaks, bathroom access) to help participants feel secure in an otherwise unknown situation.

7. Variety

- **Embrace Diversity:** Recognize that not all participants will react the same way or enjoy the same activities. Incorporate a variety of expressions and activities to cater to different preferences and comfort levels and at the same time challenge everybody to adapt to other people's preferences as well.

8. Feedback

- **Constructive Feedback:** Start with positive feedback, acknowledging bravery, exploration, commitment and effort. Provide critical commentary in a supportive manner, focusing on continued growth and exploration.
- **Feedback Examples:** What worked and what didn't? Where did the participants show the most and where the least engagement? How can the participants immerse themselves in the activity even more? How can they explore different ways of approaching the activities?

The expression safeR space is used because different people need different conditions to be fulfilled in order to feel entirely safe. We can however try to create a space that supports all the people sufficiently to work creatively and to share, to open up to some extent, and express themselves.

What We Suggest:

Observe yourself and create a common code of conduct.

How:

- **Discussion:** Start by discussing with your group how everyone wants to feel in the shared space. What do you need from each other to feel safe and supported?
- **Create a Poster:** Use post-it notes to create a poster with guidelines that serve as a compass for the group. This can be a visual reminder of your collective goals and agreements.
- **Be Aware of Others:** Reflect on actions or behaviours that have made you feel safe. Consider what others might need to feel the same. This empathy can help in fostering a supportive environment.
- **Understand Diverse Needs:** Recognize that it is impossible to create a space where everyone always feels equally safe. People have different needs: some require more instructions, others prefer fewer; some need more attention, others need more space; some thrive on more stimuli, others need less. Reflect, adapt and be flexible to these varying needs.

By fostering open communication and being mindful of diverse needs, you can create a more inclusive and supportive environment.



7. PUT IT IN MOTION: a product or a result?

It is extremely important to be aware and decide what is the direction of our art education activities. As we already described, sometimes defined and chosen goals differ and do not match the goals achieved in the activity. This is not a problem as long we remain observant and aware of what is happening and what is the main direction we want to take with the activity.

Working with art to achieve an artistic product (a painting, a performance, an artefact, etc.) predisposes the process as well. It can and should start similarly in all the fields of artistic expression, in a relaxed and creative environment with learning the techniques, methodologies, working with different materials, developing different skills, and exploring self-expression.

Distinguishing Between Process-Oriented and Product-Oriented Approaches:

In art education, there are two main approaches: process-oriented and product-oriented. Each has its own focus and benefits.

- **Process-Oriented Approach:** This approach emphasizes the journey of creation rather than the final product. It values exploration, experimentation, and personal growth. Students learn techniques, develop skills, and express themselves without the pressure of producing a polished final piece. The main goal is to encourage creativity, foster a love for art, and build confidence in one's abilities. This approach is flexible and adaptable, allowing for changes and adjustments based on the needs and responses of the group.
- **Product-Oriented Approach:** This approach focuses on creating a finished, presentable piece of art. It involves more structure, discipline, and often a set timeline. Students work towards a specific goal, refining their work to meet certain standards. This approach teaches perseverance, attention to detail, and how to handle constructive criticism. It is particularly useful when preparing for exhibitions, performances, or any scenario where the artwork will be presented to an audience.

Balancing Discipline with Creativity

It is crucial to find a balance between these two approaches to provide a comprehensive art education experience.

While the process-oriented approach nurtures creativity and personal expression, the product-oriented approach instills discipline and the ability to work towards a tangible goal.

- **Integrate Both Approaches:** Start with a process-oriented approach to allow students to explore and experiment. As the

project progresses, gradually introduce elements of the product-oriented approach to guide them towards creating a finished piece.

- **Encourage Flexibility and Freedom:** Even when focusing on the final product, maintain a degree of flexibility. Allow students to make changes and explore new ideas that may arise during the creation process.
- **Support and Guidance:** Provide consistent support and guidance. Help students manage the stress and pressure that can come with working towards a finished product. Encourage them to view challenges and setbacks as opportunities for learning and growth.
- **Celebrate Achievements:** Acknowledge both the creative process and the final product. Celebrate the effort, exploration, and learning that occurred along the way, as well as the completed artwork.

By balancing discipline with creativity, we can create an environment that values both the artistic journey and the outcome, fostering well-rounded development in our students.

What We Suggest:

- **Use Different Goals as a Motivational Tool:** Depending on the needs of the group we can focus on different goals throughout the longer process of creative work - to express, to creatively explore the topic, to embody, to learn techniques, to work towards a product, etc.
- **Discuss Insecurities and Fear of Failure:** Emphasize both the process and the end result to address insecurities and fear of failure. Ensure that the space remains safe, even when focusing on the final outcome.

• **Focus on Learning and Development:** Remind yourself and your students that learning, exposing ourselves to art, and developing skills are essential steps for growth and building trust in the materials we create.

How:

• **Acknowledge Stress and Vulnerability:** Be mindful of the stress that comes from the vulnerability of exposing oneself. Recognize that all artistic expressions combine intimate, personal, societal, and relational elements.

• **Encourage Bravery and Sharing:** Encourage bravery in sharing voices and understand that we do not have full control over how the audience will perceive our work. It's a shared experience between the creator, the product, and the audience.

• **Focus on the Importance of the Process:** Highlight the importance of researching the topic, techniques, materials, concepts, and approaches. The process of discovering, shaping, and expressing what matters is crucial.

• **Cultivate a Sense of Purpose:** Emphasize that the significance of the final product lies in conveying what matters to the creator. Whether it's a message, beauty, approach, exploration, question, or provocation, the act of putting it on display should reflect the creator's values.

• **Encourage Reflective Thinking:** Educate people to think about what matters most to them and reflect on these aspects through their artistic expressions.

• **Treat the End Result as a Learning Opportunity:** Never forget that the end result is also part of the process and a learning opportunity. Keep learning and refining your taste in art by immersing yourself in it and seeking honest, constructive feedback on what worked and what didn't.

- **Engage with Art Professionals:** When preparing a product, art professionals can be of great value and support. Connect with them and learn from their experiences and feedback.

By balancing the focus between the process and the end result, and by creating a supportive environment, we can help students embrace vulnerability, develop their skills, and express what is most important to them.



8. SLIPPERY SLOPE, BORDERS AND BOUNDARIES: a limitation

We cannot do everything. Limited resources, such as time, space, group size, materials, and funds often frustrate us. However, these limitations can also serve as starting points for finding better conditions and stronger support systems.

Sometimes, clear limitations can spur creativity. For example, dividing the workspace in half with a line on the floor introduces a boundary to play with—crossing it, walking around it, or trying to erase it can generate a variety of associations, stories, and meanings.

Embracing Limitations

Limitations can be both helpful and frustrating. When creating and exploring with art, we might be dissatisfied with the outcome, finding it ugly or unrefined. Artistic practice can also open emotional spaces, potentially triggering

trauma. While some participants might react positively, becoming more open and sharing, others might need additional support. As educators, it's crucial to recognize when professional help is needed and to direct participants to appropriate resources. Art is not therapy, though it can have therapeutic effects.

Handling Vulnerability and Reflection

Encourage vulnerability and self-expression, but always close sessions with reflection to help participants process their experiences. Unexpected topics may arise during activities, requiring support from fellow educators. Be honest and humble, observing and learning from each interaction. Address sensitive discussions with care and sensibility, and be prepared to admit when you don't have all the answers.

What We Suggest:

Be aware of limitations and use them as a framework.

How:

- **Build a Support Network:** Find people who can help you overcome various limitations.
- **Communicate with Participants:** Ask for their needs and suggestions for solutions.
- **Admit Uncertainty:** Acknowledge that you don't know everything and step into the unknown with courage.
- **Establish Boundaries:** Be clear and decisive about protecting participants' and your own boundaries.
- **Accept Limitations:** Understand that the process's result is always within the scope of the given limitations.

- **Embrace Change and Surprise:** Let yourself be changed and surprised by the process.

- **Practice Courage:** Model bravery for your participants.

By recognizing and working within our limitations, we can create a supportive and creative environment that fosters growth and learning for both educators and participants.



9. FLY: a motivation to continue

IT TAKES TIME. It takes support. It means going back to your values and the vision you had for the process more than once, or even revising and adapting it. It means finding other people who believe in similar ideas. But it also means finding people who believe in different ones. Above all, you should observe yourself and take care of yourself. If it feels like too much, find ways to make it easier for you. It is always worth a try, even when it feels like a failure; you might have learned something in the process.

Emphasize Self-Care for Facilitators

As facilitators, we need to take care of ourselves first. This is why we encourage attending workshops, classes, and activities yourself. It is where we fill our cup so we can share it with others. Believe and do not let challenges or even failures demotivate you. Circle back to your values and vision repeatedly.

As educators, we have the greatest limitation of all – time: what do we want to do with it? Create and be a part of activities that inspire you and play, take different opportunities, and be open to new experiences yourself.

Practical Tips for Maintaining Motivation and Dealing with Challenges:

- **Set Realistic Goals:** Break down your long-term vision into smaller, achievable goals. This helps maintain a sense of progress and accomplishment.
- **Reflect Regularly:** Take time to reflect on your experiences, both positive and negative. Identify what worked well and what didn't and use these insights to adjust your approach.
- **Seek Support:** Build a network of colleagues and friends who can provide support, feedback, and encouragement. Don't hesitate to ask for help when you need it.
- **Balance Work and Rest:** Ensure you have a healthy balance between work and rest. Schedule regular breaks and downtime to recharge.
- **Stay Inspired:** Engage with art and creative activities that inspire you. Attend exhibitions, read about new techniques, and stay curious about different forms of art.
- **Celebrate Small Wins:** Acknowledge and celebrate small achievements along the way. This can boost your morale and keep you motivated.
- **Practice Self-Compassion:** Be kind to yourself. Understand that setbacks are a natural part of the learning and creative process. Allow yourself to make mistakes and learn from them.
- **Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle:** Take care of your physical

health by eating well, exercising regularly, and getting enough sleep. A healthy body supports a healthy mind.

• **Stay Connected:** Maintain connections with other educators and artists. Sharing experiences and ideas can provide new perspectives and rejuvenate your enthusiasm.

And the group you are leading into the world of art?

Some participants will be deeply moved. Others will feel a newfound freedom. Some will recognize and seize the possibilities that art offers. Some will be seen in a different light, given a chance to express themselves in ways they never have before. Some will gain tools to find new paths, while others will release their inner pressure. Each person will take something unique from the experience – even if it’s not exactly what they or you might have envisioned. There’s always a way to adapt and try something different to achieve the desired outcomes.

Art is always worth the energy, time, and money. It can expand our perspectives and experiences, making us feel seen, heard, and understood. It can prompt us to imagine the unexpected, challenge stereotypes, bring ease and joy, and evoke emotions that lead to deeper reflection. By engaging with art, we continuously return to it, as we are drawn to it by its transformative power.

What We Suggest:

Go on. Find your reasons to continue. Find support and ways to persevere.

How:

- **Just Do It:** Engage in the process wholeheartedly.
- **Reflect:** Regularly evaluate your experiences and learn from them.
- **Embrace Vulnerability:** Acknowledge your moments of breaking down as opportunities to build better structures and strengthen yourself.
- **Share Your Journey:** Communicate your struggles and successes with others. Sharing weaknesses is a strength that can inspire new ideas and foster community.
- **Voice Your Ideas:** Express your opinions, passions, and creative insights. Encourage others to do the same.
- **Persevere:** Keep going, even when it's tough. You are making progress.
- **Return to Basics:** Revisit the fundamental questions: Why? How? With what? With whom?
- **Enjoy the Process:** Balance seriousness with fun. Understand complexity, but don't be afraid to take things lightly at times.
- **Use Time Wisely:** Recognize time as a precious resource and make the most of it.
- **Overcome Fears:** Step boldly into the unknown.

BREATHE and ENJOY

10. CONNECT: get more information

You can contact the involving organisations if you need more information:

Pionirski dom – Center za kulturo mladih:

www.pionirski-dom.si, bjanka.krsmanc@pionirski-dom.si

The Rijeka Youth theatre:

<https://linktr.ee/trytheatre>, trytheatre.official@gmail.com

Idrisi Cultura e Sviluppo ETS:

<https://idrisiculturaesviluppo.org/>, info@idrisiculturaesviluppo.org

Liceo Ginnasio di Stato F. Scaduto:

<https://www.liceoscadutobagheria.edu.it/>, papc01000v@istruzione.it

