

# Richer lives: creative activities in the education and practice of Danish Pedagogues

A preliminary study: Report to Arts Council England

**Pat Petrie**

Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education,  
University of London

**Helen Chambers**

National Children's Bureau

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# Background

This is a report and recommendations to the Arts Council England in 2009, following a study visit to Denmark, funded by the Arts Council. The report examines the part played by the visual and performing arts in the education and practice of social pedagogues. In the report we use the term pedagogues and social pedagogues interchangeably as is often the case in Denmark.

Social pedagogues in Denmark work with children across many services including those for children in difficult life circumstances. (There is a more detailed explanation of social pedagogues' work, below.) Of central importance to this report, the education of pedagogues acknowledges that, for human beings, life has a cultural dimension and that symbol and metaphor permeate its material and pragmatic aspects.

In Denmark, pedagogues understand well that part of their work is ensuring the physical wellbeing of children and young people, for example children need to sleep and to eat. But such activities, which may appear rather prosaic, are informed by cultural metaphor. This appreciation is fostered in the education of pedagogues. Their training intends to let pedagogues appreciate, for example, the importance of enjoying a meal with children – not just feeding them. Pedagogues come to know that bedtimes are not just “putting children to bed” but can be made cosy and secure, with ritual, story or song. They know how premises can be enhanced with interesting objects and pictures, and that this is one way of showing respect for the children who use the premises. Children having opportunities to enjoy beauty and creativity, and discover wonder, is itself valued. For student pedagogues, participating in the arts helps them to arrive at such understandings. Music, drama, dance and the visual arts open their eyes to wider dimensions of existence, and richer possibilities for the children they will work with.

In England, access to creative and positive activities and a ‘cultural offer’ for all children and young people is a key component of government policy. It is strongly supported, for example, by Care Matters – Time for Change (DFES 2007), Children’s Plan (DCSF 2007), Youth Matters – Next Steps (DfES 2007) and the Respect Action Plan (Home Office 2006). A project funded by the Arts Council England has demonstrated that creative artists can play a role in developing the well-being of looked after children (Chambers 2008). It is apparent, however, that Children’s Services are unsure how to best to work with artists, to the benefit of children in their corporate care. There is also need for appropriate training for artists and for children’s practitioners to ensure practice that benefits children and that maximises the uptake of cultural opportunities.

## Aims of the study

The report describes a study visit to Denmark, undertaken in May 2008. It will examine the role of creative activities in the training and practice of social pedagogues. Throughout the report, we use the term “creative activities” to refer mainly to the visual and performing arts, while acknowledging that it has a wider application.

The aims of the visit were to:

- Provide a better understanding of the role of the arts and creative activities in the education and practice of Danish pedagogues
- Inform the development of the children's workforce in England, particularly regarding creative activities
- Provide a think-piece for the use of those who staff, provide and fund creative activities with children.

## Social pedagogy

In what follows, the term social pedagogy will be used as it is commonly understood in continental Europe and employed in various English government policy documents. For example:

Pedagogues are generalists. Their uniquely broad training with its theoretical, personal and practical content ideally fits them for outcome-focused work with children, including those with significant developmental need (*DfES, 2005, Children's workforce consultation document*)

Pedagogues are also trained and educated in creative activities. The pedagogic approach, representing education in the broadest sense of the word, fits well with the holistic and integrated approach adopted in *Every Child Matters*, with its five outcomes to be applied across many educational and social services. Social pedagogy has been promoted in government green and white papers, most recently with a government pilot scheme to employ pedagogues from continental Europe in children's residential care in this country. The pilot is being undertaken by TCRU.

We describe some important characteristics of social pedagogy below. More detail is provided in a briefing paper *Pedagogy – a holistic, personal approach to work with children and young people, across services* (Petrie et al, 2009; <http://eprints.ioe.ac.uk/58>) and in other publications, (see References and Bibliography).

### The whole person

Pedagogues work with the whole person: pedagogic practice does not compartmentalise different aspects of the person. Pedagogues are aware that children think, feel, have a physical and a spiritual existence, and are creative – and that all of these characteristics are in interaction in the person. This approach is in contrast to the more procedural methods used in working with children, found among some English care workers (Petrie, et al 2006). And while pedagogues seek to work with the whole child they also bring themselves as a whole person, to their practice. It is quite common for them to refer to bringing their 'head, hands and heart' to the work.

### Reflection

While social pedagogy is seen as personal, pedagogues are also professionals. In Denmark, their training and education is at first degree level, covering both practical skills and theoretical and ethical areas. The importance of reflecting on practice in the light of different theories, both individually and in staff groups, is stressed in their training and in the workplace.

### **Democratic and associative values**

It is especially important in the Nordic countries that social pedagogic practice should build on democratic principles and that children's rights are not limited to procedural matters or legislated requirements. Creative activities are a means by which children's voices may be heard. Related to the ethics of democracy and empowerment, an important pedagogic principle is that young people's associative life is a central resource and that the peer group has a positive value. Other research (Cameron and Petrie, 2007) has described the focus on group theory and process in the education of pedagogues.

### **The role of the visual and performing arts**

Research (e.g. Petrie, 2006) describes how in many European countries, a substantial part of social pedagogy training is in areas such as music, drama and the visual arts. This report sets out to gain a better understanding of the theory and practice that relate to creative activities in social pedagogy in one European country: Denmark. In Denmark, alongside other studies and their practice placements, pedagogy students spend 25% of their three and a half year course in one of four creative options, in which they are examined. The examination considers students' work, whether a piece of visual or performance art, in its own terms, as well as how it might relate to work with children.

## **The study visit**

We interviewed staff in three colleges, situated in different parts of Denmark, about how they prepare social pedagogues for working with children and young people. Interviews were achieved with seven staff, in six departments: two drama, two arts, one music and one general pedagogy department. The interviews, which lasted from 1-3 hours, were lightly structured and centred on how and why creative activities were included in the training and practice of pedagogues. In addition we were able to have some short, but illuminating, conversations with other lecturers, to take part in a drama session and to attend a students' final examination in drama.

### **Box 1. Visit to an arts workshop for disabled adults**

We visited a group of four men and one woman with learning disabilities who lived in an institution where many of them had been since childhood. The group worker described her training as that of a 'special needs' teacher. She worked for 5 hours every day and took meals with the group. She had initiated the work 30 years ago, and had converted an old pipe store as an art room for the group. She believed they would respond and gain satisfaction from creative arts work, individually and as a group. 'Success is when we work together to make something. You can't make a picture without inspiration'. Together they have created an 'Aladdin's cave' of treasures, on show to all those who enter and take part. Two participants actively showed us their work, despite the language barrier and communication difficulties. They had created collages about Elvis Presley; made Easter animals that hung around the room – providing as the teacher said, 'images that mark memories'. Participants were proud of their work. Jacob - a man in his late fifties, not able to speak, and with a range of hearing and communication difficulties had spent 10 years experimenting with a pencil and with paint, before one day he started to produce figurative drawings. He is now exhibiting and selling his very distinctive brightly coloured paintings in a local gallery.

His teacher explained that the rocking and erratic noises he makes change when he is working, self-directed, at his art. “He cannot reply to me so I don’t interpret – it (the art) is pure communication”. He was said to be proud of his work, as was his teacher. She took pleasure in his mastery of technique and his development of a distinctive style of work.

## Creative activity in relation to other aspects of pedagogy

The main body of the report uses a model (Weber, 1993: 69), which shows the relationship between creative and artistic activity *aesthetics*, (see Box 2) and other areas appertaining to the education of pedagogues and their subsequent practice. The use of this particular model provides a theoretical starting point and a means of accommodating various aspects of pedagogues’ training and practice.

The model is interpreted and developed here to meet the needs of our discussion. Where Danish terms are retained, this is to maintain their meaning when an adequate English word cannot be supplied.

Broadly, the model proposes two continua:

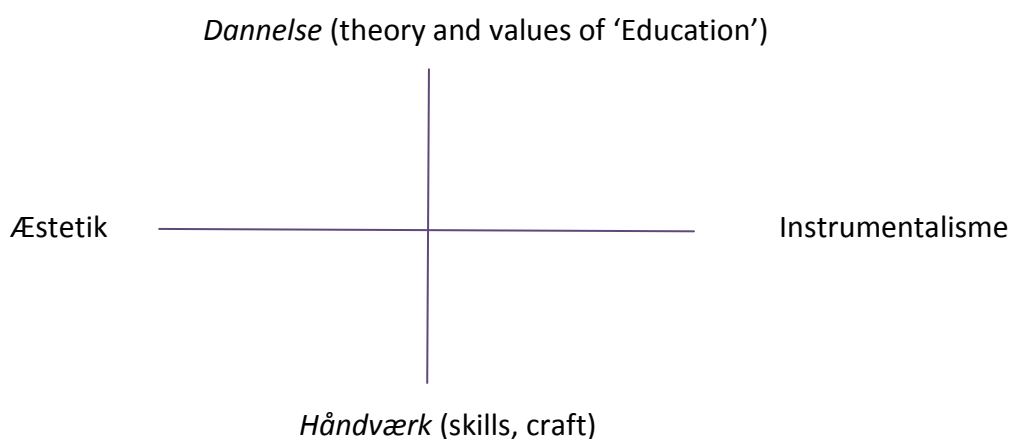
- *Æstetik/instrumentalisme*(aesthetics/instrumentalism)
- *dannelse* (theory and values)/ *håndværk* (craft and skills).

Many of the activities undertaken by pedagogues can be positioned closer to one end or the other of each of the continua.

What follows provides:

1. An outline of the meanings attached to the model’s main concepts, their place in the education of social pedagogues and their practice and the continua on which it is based.
2. A discussion of the four quadrants of the model.

**Figure 1. The relationship between ‘the aesthetic’ and other areas of the pedagogue’s work: a model**



1.

## Two continua in the social pedagogy model

*Æstetik (hence forth aesthetics) – Instrumentalisme (instrumental) continuum*

The horizontal continuum in the social pedagogy model allows reflection on the relative weight of the aesthetic, compared with the instrumental content of an activity. Is the practitioner more concerned with engaging young people in an artistic process or using the arts to achieve other ends – such as improved communication or group cohesion?

## The aesthetics/instrumentalism continuum

### Aesthetics

Aesthetics is the domain of the creative arts in children's work. The value placed on the aesthetic was apparent in several interviews. Varied examples were provided by the interviewees. For example, a music lecturer spoke about how young people in a youth club responded to his expert playing of the guitar, and the 'wow!' factor that it produced. Another lecturer said that the aesthetic is important for children, 'you can see it in their eyes'. A different lecturer spoke about children's spiritual response to beauty, the recognition of something outside the self, of 'other'. Another talked about 'going with the flow', that is when children are wholly engaged in a creative activity. Yet another spoke of the sense of commitment that is one characteristic of creative endeavour and the aesthetic. In a similar vein (but in this case drawing an example from the field of sport), another talked of 'giving oneself' to the game, and the sense that the game is greater than the participant. He felt that a similar commitment was to be found in children engaged in creative activities.

### Box 2. Aesthetics

In the Danish pedagogy curriculum 'aesthetics' refers to pedagogic education and training in the visual arts, music, drama and similar activities and it is in this context that the term is used in this report. We do not here discuss *aesthetics*, which has its own extensive literature and developed discourses, but we have found the work of Eisner helpful in building an understanding of the concept. Eisner claims that the recognition of 'what is aesthetic is persuaded by an emotional tone made possible by the process of being engaged in a work of art' (Eisner 2002 p81). Artistry is a relationship between ideas, imaginative ability and technical skills that, in its expression, is emotionally moving. Engaging in the creative arts allows the imagination, and the forms and structures of artistic practice, to give expression to that which is felt. This is not a rational or cognitive process, though the skills and artistry involved may be learned and practised. Eisner draws on the work of Ulric Neisser (Eisner 2002 p36) in asserting that creating work regarded as 'aesthetic' requires a mind that animates the imaginative capacities, and promotes an ability to engage with emotional experience.

Two of the colleges visited for this report, and others visited in the course of earlier research (e.g., Petrie et al, 2006; Cameron and Petrie, 2007, provided evidence of the value placed on the aesthetic in the many original works by



professional artists, displayed throughout the premises. In one college, we were told that there were regular shows by individual artists, and that the college always bought one of the pieces. In the same college, pedagogues took part in various local arts festivals in addition to formal curriculum requirements.

We were also told that student pedagogues were expected to be in contact with the municipality's Children's Culture Coordinator, so as to find out what was on offer for children. Students would be sent on a 'study visit to their own city' to learn about its galleries, and theatres, as a resource for practice. During their practice placements they were expected to introduce children to some of these local opportunities, prepare visits and, often, to base other activities on what the children had experienced.

An example was that students had taken children to a local exhibition, in the botanical gardens. There, an artist had used his professional expertise to present new techniques and possible subjects for art work, all based on plants, for the children to explore in their own visual art. In this case, the artist was said to have led the children into a richer experience of art. The pedagogues' role was to lead the children into a better appreciation both of their own capabilities and of the richness of the cultural world.

The enrichment of life through the visual and performing arts was a theme that arose in other interviews. A lecturer explained that student pedagogues might be asked to consider what could provide a richer life for the young people with whom they worked, and to do so by drawing on their own creative abilities. Some examples were provided that related to children's everyday lives. These included the pedagogue inventing bedtime rituals for children in residential care, with stories and special ways of tucking the children in and saying goodnight. A more ambitious example was of a student helping young people to produce CDs to give as Christmas presents. Because of their training, whether in drama, music, dance or visual arts, pedagogues had the confidence to seize opportunities for providing children with these and similar experiences.

It was emphasised that the training provided in the colleges was not intended to produce professional artists and performers. 'We do not teach musicianship' said a music lecturer, the aim was to strengthen the student's existing competence. We were also told that pedagogues were not necessarily highly artistically talented, otherwise they might have taken up an artistic career. Some were gifted, others much less so, and their visual art on display in the college revealed this range. One drama practitioner was clear that social pedagogues were not performers per se, although, as we noted above, students in one college were expected to take part in the town's annual arts festival working, for example, with professional theatre groups.

Nevertheless, although the pedagogue training did not aim to produce professional performers, we were able to see an accomplished piece of 'devised theatre', in the tradition of Mike Leigh, the English film and theatre director. Three students presented this as part of their final examination. We were told that these students were 'average' students, but that the college was known for its good drama department. The piece was accomplished. The students used lighting, music, costume and themselves, as actors and 'devisers' to produce a moving, and amusing, piece of theatre.

From their accounts, pedagogues explained that they are 'lay people' who, through their training, are in touch with their own creativity. Their training helps them to respond to, and

help awaken, the creativity of the young people with whom they work. The young people come to appreciate creative activity by participating in it: as a lecturer told us, this is the best, perhaps the only way. Young people who have had such experiences may also provide a more informed and active audience for the arts.

### Instrumentalism

When considering children's involvement in creative activities, instrumentalism is seen as at the opposite end of the continuum to the aesthetic. The concept of instrumentalism refers to the means employed to achieve specific pedagogic goals. Creative activities which come closer to the instrumental pole of the continuum place are those where, for the pedagogue, aesthetic aims are of secondary importance, with goals such as conflict resolution or achieving greater group coherence to the fore. In this context the aesthetic is seen as a means to an end. The aesthetic is not the only means of achieving such goals, however. For example, a pedagogue could, in pursuit of their goals, write a letter to a child's parents to tell them about a child's achievements, have a conversation with a group of young people about planning a party, or arrange an outing to help strengthen relationships within the group. However, for the purposes of this report, we consider only those forms of instrumentalism that involve the use of the aesthetic to bring about pedagogic goals.

The model allows us to position the pedagogue's motivation in terms of the relative weight given to aesthetic activities in themselves against their use to further aims outside the realm of the aesthetic.

Sometimes pedagogues refer to the employment of creative activities and the arts as examples of 'the common third' – activities and experiences that the young person and the pedagogue share in common. First and foremost, pedagogues bring *themselves* to such activities, both at a personal and professional level. Music, drama, theatre, the visual arts (and other activities) provide the medium for the relationship between pedagogues and children and between children and each other. They are a means of enjoyment and of making friends, not just of talking about doing so and therefore have elements of both the aesthetic and the instrumental. We were told that the spirit in which such activities are approached should be that of joint exploration. Neither the pedagogue nor the children know what the outcome will be, but all contribute to it.

The work of Paulo Freire, the influential Brazilian educationalist, was cited as providing an example of the importance of working towards outcomes that were as yet unknown to both the educators and the student. Working in adult education, Freire believed that relationships between teachers and students should be non-hierarchical and that the results of their joint work should not be controlled by the teacher, but open to many possibilities.

In social pedagogy, the aim is for the children/young people to find their own answers and not to take over, unquestioningly, the values and opinions of the pedagogue. A major challenge is to support young people in this. Pedagogues must have confidence, also, in the group, both adults and children finding solutions together. The pedagogic view is that it does not help to tell somebody how to behave, they must learn this from their own experiences and interactions with others. To some extent, such experiences may be gained via participation in creative activities. For example, in group role play young people have opportunities to reflect on both the processes and feelings involved in specific scenarios and

on the experience of cooperating with other people in group activity and the tensions that arise and can be worked with.

With the pedagogic concept of the common third, creative activities belong to both the pedagogue and the child, they are neither 'you' nor 'I' but 'other': the common 'third'. The common third provides a mutual focus, and yet to be discovered processes and outcomes. It is also the medium in which the relationships between young people and young people and their pedagogues are formed. This is true for all children. For children with neglectful or emotionally impoverished backgrounds the common third may allow them to shape or 'realise' previously unexpressed experience. The required forms and inherent boundaries of aesthetic activities provide an element of personal distance while allowing the expression of individual or of group identity.

A further element is that engagement in the common third builds trust between pedagogues and children. This trust stems from children's experience of success, whether individually or as a member of the group, and fosters their self-confidence and feelings of being of value. The basis of the relationship between child and pedagogue is that pedagogues value children as persons in their own right, and do not judge them solely on the basis of their performance, achievement or, indeed, behaviour. Being valued is viewed as important for all children and especially essential for work with those whose life circumstances have affected their confidence and self esteem. Ideas such as these have developed from the work of, for example, Erik Erikson, the American psychologist and John Bowlby, the English paediatrician.

One lecturer in particular warned against an extreme recourse to instrumentalism in approaching the arts. For example, he believed that claims that music enhances cognitive skills, concentration, autonomy, endurance of criticism (*'the list is endless'*) was misleading and not based on good evidence. He also commented that pedagogues should not use art forms as therapy. They are not trained to do so, and they should not bring psychological interpretations to children's work, they are not therapists or social workers, trained to work with psychological problems. Pedagogues, instead, are trained to concentrate more on children living in their own social worlds, experiencing the related difficulties and delights. He gave an example of a pedagogue setting up a role-play as a means of exploring and resolving conflict, within a group of young people, a process sometimes described as 'emotional learning'. This type of practice positions drama at the service of pedagogy.

Another example was presented vividly when a drama lecturer invited us to take part in some exercises with a group of four students. In one, we became, with four other people, the 'clay' for a 'human sculpture'. In another, as 'sculptors' we each positioned and 'moulded' two students, copying photographs portraying in one case a tender, and in the other a more hostile, relationship. The aim was for 'the sculptor' to express these emotions. The exercise concluded with interpretation of the 'sculptures' – what emotions were expressed and how were these communicated? The sculpting was both a teaching tool and a personal and group expression.

It was explained (and demonstrated) that the discussion following such exercises could be used to show, for example, that different people could have different perspectives on the same events. The exercises could also be used to help young people to get to know one another better, to consider the part played by body language in communication, and to

discuss different people's feelings about touching and being touched. Goals such as these are informed by the values and theories that appertain to *dannelse*, that is education and upbringing (discussed below). They may include helping young people to communicate more effectively, improving group relationships, and addressing problems.

While the exercises, as presented to us, were informed by such goals, drama as an art form also played a part. The participants in such exercises are having an experience of drama, alongside any other outcomes. The lecturer said that the exercises could be used as the initial stage of preparing a performance involving young people, because they helped people to get to know one another.

## The Dannelsen – håndværk continuum

### Dannelsen – or education in its broadest sense

*Dannelsen* is a Danish word that refers to children's up-bringing, supporting their development and their education in the broadest, rather than the narrowly academic, sense of that word. *Dannelsen* is sited in the world of relationships and practical and creative activities. Ethical, cultural and philosophical dimensions are central to the concept. *Dannelsen* is about educating children for life as a whole, as opposed to any specific learning outcomes that may be linked to any activities. It asks the "very big questions": what kind of citizens or human beings do we want and what kind of people do we need to shape the future? It prompts discussion as to what is a good up-bringing for young people, and supports reflection on professional practice and whether this is in accordance with the practitioner's aims for *dannelsen*. Linked to *dannelsen* is the underlying knowledge needed to work with children and young people, the theories available from child development, psychology and sociology. Interviewees referred to a range of psychologists, sociologists, philosophers and educationalists, from Rousseau, through Freire, to modern Scandinavian thinkers whose work could be employed in pursuing the aims of *dannelsen*. The contexts for *dannelsen* are varied, including the home, the school and leisure activities. For social pedagogues, *dannelsen* is at the heart of their work and of their relationships with children and young people.

Earlier, we described some key pedagogical values relating to *dannelsen*. One value is to see *the child as a whole person*, a person in their own right, rather than to concentrate on one aspect of their being - for example, as a dentist might focus largely on a child's teeth or a dance teacher on correct technique. Children are seen as, at the same time, physical, cognitive, social, and emotional beings, whose own social agency and participation is to be respected. Of special relevance to this report, *creativity* is seen as an important aspect of the whole person. This was stressed by many of the lecturers interviewed, as may be seen in the discussion of the aesthetic dimension of pedagogic training and practice, above. Enabling young people to access aesthetic experience and activity is a value that informs the pedagogue's training, as is apparent from the time allocated to the arts in the pedagogy curriculum. As we noted earlier, Danish pedagogy students spend 25% of their three and a half year course in one of four creative options. Their final examination includes a consideration of the student's work, whether a piece of visual or performance art, in its own terms. Additionally, the students are expected to explain to the examiner how they could draw on the work in practice, or had in fact already done so while on practice placement.

A further aim of *dannelse* is that it should be informed by *democratic principles*: pedagogues should respect children's social agency and their perspective on the world. This ideal is seen not only in individualistic terms; great value is placed on children's associative life and the importance of the group. The lecturers whom we interviewed made reference, again, to Paulo Freire's work, relating this to the empowerment of young people and the desirability of their questioning their social world. For example, we were told that drama could be used to bring about a 'critical consciousness' that could examine injustice and question the structures of society, on the part of the performers and their audience. A characteristic of drama and other art forms is that they can go beyond individual expression and performance or, as one lecturer characterised it, 'Look at me, I'm happy doing this'. It was seen as valuable that creative activities involving groups of young people could give rise to insights about the social and political world.

The centrality of *group work* for pedagogy training and practice, and the value of children's association with their peers in group activities, is well recognized in Denmark (Cameron and Petrie, 2007). Several practical examples were provided by those interviewed. Students are themselves required to undertake some creative projects in groups. An example is the examination theatre piece, described earlier, but other art forms are also accomplished in groups. As well as achieving their creative goal, the students are required to be observant of the group processes and of their own contribution and feelings as a member of the group. What supported the group in achieving their aim and what stood in the way? The students are encouraged to reflect on, and discuss, the processes involved. They do so, in terms of the theories of group dynamics addressed in other parts of their course. They go on to examine the lessons arising from their experience and reflections for their work with young people, and how best to promote a group life that is based in democratic values.

## Håndværk

*Håndværk* refers to craft and skills: the practical. It is at the opposite end of the continuum from the more conceptual territory of *dannelse* – the theories and ethics that inform pedagogy and the overall aims of upbringing. *Håndværk* is about *how* things are done, as opposed to *why* they are done and provides practical means to achieve a variety of aims. It relates more to the contribution of 'the hands', rather than those of the head and of the heart which are in the realm of *dannelse*. *Håndværk* raises questions about the skills needed to achieve a specific end. Although its literal meaning refers to the work of the hands, it can have a wider application, such as the breathing techniques used to sing or to play a wind instrument.

For the pedagogue, the question may arise as to the contexts in which *håndværk* is more important, and those in which it is less so. A subject raised several times during our visit was about when it was necessary to learn and practice skills. An interviewee remarked that for children there comes a time when 'playing' is not enough and they want to engage with the 'real'. At this point it is necessary for them to learn and perfect appropriate skills, so that they may better achieve their intentions. The same is true for the pedagogy students. The examination drama piece we watched (above) demonstrated that the students had mastered much in the way of theatrical technique. And, while as we have noted, a music lecturer reported that his department did not set out to provide a musical education, nevertheless he wanted those students who had musical ability to practice their

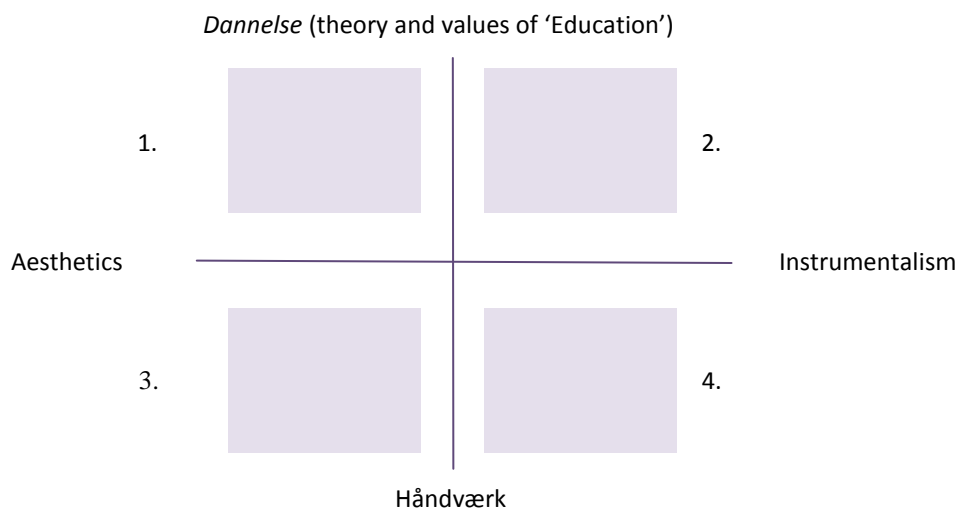
instruments regularly. A negative note was sounded by a dance lecturer who remarked, disapprovingly, that some of her students thought they had no need to practice!

## 2. The model's quadrants

Since its two continua are orthogonal to each other, the model has four quadrants and so allows us to look at activities with children and young people (and others) in terms of *dannelse*, aesthetics, instrumentalism and *håndværk*, and the relative contribution of each, with reference to the intentions of different stakeholders. In the discussion below, we will look at activities which can be placed squarely within one quadrant and others where there is overlap. The perspective employed here, as in the rest of the report, is that of the people who are working with the children. The children themselves may have their own agendas! The quadrants refer to abstractions or pure cases, which may be rather rare in practice. Finally, we will consider how activities may overlap two or more quadrants, and the relative contribution of the quadrants involved.

First we take each quadrant in turn, as in Figure 2 below, with suggestions of the activities appropriate to it.

**Figure 2. the models Quadrants**



Quadrant 1 represents activities that are informed purely by (i) the theories and values appertaining to upbringing or education, and (ii) by the aesthetic. An appropriate example is a children's visit to a gallery or theatre, arranged by a pedagogue for no other reason but that it is valuable for children to experience art and drama. Some nursery-class art activities could also be placed in Quadrant 1, for example where the teacher believes that technique is of minor importance at this stage in children's development, but that their expression and experience, is paramount.

Activities placed in Quadrant 3, involve creative expression and the skills necessary to accomplish this, without any other considerations. A commercial theatre’s employment of children in a production of *Oliver*, would fall here. The show’s director would engage the children in creative activity and require the necessary performance techniques. Considerations about the children’s upbringing and education would be subsidiary for the director, although for the licensing authority, the children’s chaperones and tutors they would be important. This is not to say that participating is of no value for the children, just that such value would be incidental for the commercial company, their provider, and would not inform their motivation in employing the children. An adult art class could also find a place in Quadrant 3: the teacher would be motivated strongly by aesthetic values and by students’ acquiring the necessary skills to realise their intentions.

Activities appropriate for Quadrants 2 and 4, have little connection with the subject of this report. Quadrant 4 represents skills/instrumentalism: children are introduced to a craft skill with little or no scope for creativity. A hypothetical example would be where an occupational therapist’s intention was to use basket work to improve digital dexterity, without envisaging that creativity or imagination would play a part. Quadrant 2, is the location for pedagogic activities which do not involve children directly in the aesthetic. Such activities might include a house meeting, so that children could participate in resolving a conflict; or arranging a joint holiday for young people, so as to strengthen their associative life. These aims draw on the pedagogue’s understanding of *dannelse* – what is a good upbringing and how can this be achieved? The activities are instrumental, in that they serve goals appropriate to a good upbringing.

## Activities which overlap quadrants

**Figure 3. Activities that overlap quadrants**

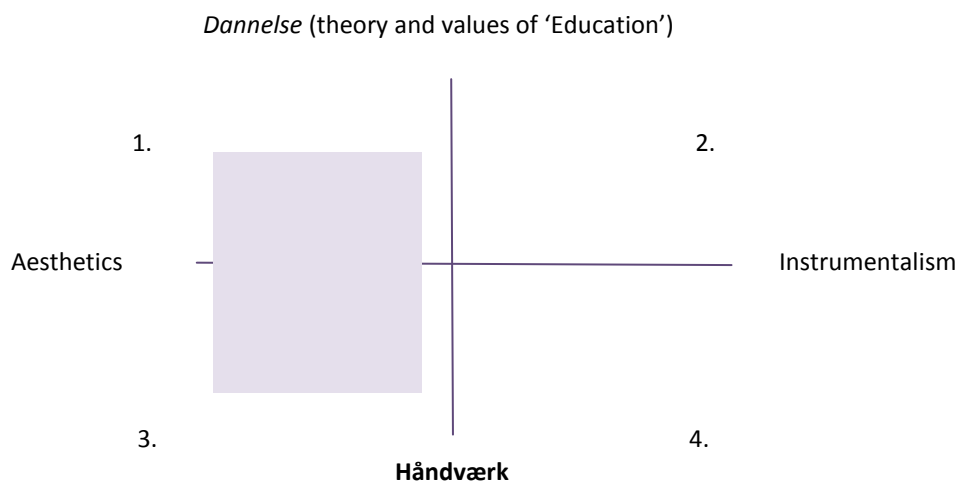


Figure 3 provides an example of an activity which is important in terms of the child’s education-in-the-broadest-sense (*dannelse*), in its aesthetic content, and in the skills and techniques required. An example is the involvement of children in a play and their creative engagement in the production (the aesthetic dimension), drawing on their own experiences. The children are involved because it is believed that the play presents an important educational experience. The producers show a pedagogic concern about the young people

and their well-being, they are not pawns on a chessboard, manipulated for aesthetic or commercial profit. At the same time, the producers expect them to observe the disciplines of theatre and to use appropriate techniques (*håndværk*). Because of its broad educational as well as aesthetic content, this play differs from the example of the commercial theatre, given above.

Many other examples of overlap could be provided, here, but we restrict ourselves to two. The aim is to demonstrate the different intentions of the providers and their staff.

**Figure 4**

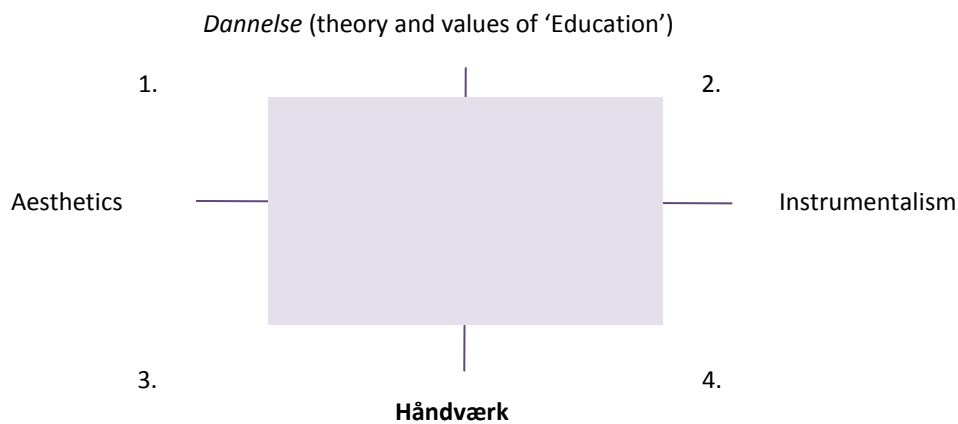
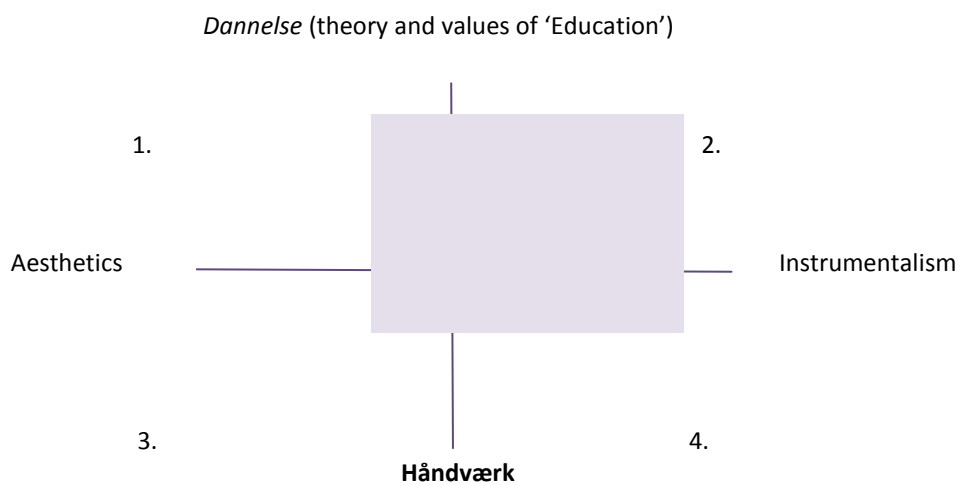


Figure 4 takes in all the quadrants. Here, the activity just described under Figure 3, now has an extra, instrumental dimension. In this example, the young people are involved in the production of a play with the added intention of keeping them out of trouble during the long school holidays and improving their communication and social skills.

For a different provider (a local authority, for example), the instrumental and educational dimensions of the activity could be more important than the aesthetic and *håndværk* dimensions (Figure 5).

**Figure 5**



Here, the providers want to keep the young people out of trouble and to improve their life skills. They do so by providing the opportunity for young people 'known to the police' to form a band and perhaps make a CD. The provider has chosen the *aesthetic* as the arena for



their intervention – but they might equally have provided an adventure holiday. Also, they realise that a certain level of *håndværk* is involved. But they are not as committed to these two dimensions of the activity as they are to the *instrumental* and to *dannelse*.

With all of the above, if the perspectives of the creative practitioners who deliver the programme and of the young people involved were to be taken into consideration, quite different pictures could emerge.

## A brief conclusion

This report has been written as a think piece. It provides an understanding of the key part played by the visual and performing arts in the training and practice of Danish social pedagogues. The study visit showed that in Denmark the creativity of young people and of those working with them is valued. The report, in its final section, also distinguishes between the varied intentions of people who fund, provide and staff creative opportunities for young people, more socially excluded groups and others. Such understandings are a necessary basis for the commissioning of creative opportunities, for providing and managing them and for realizing them face-to-face with young people.

The recommendations which follow arise from the report's findings.

## Recommendations

1. Involving children and young people in what we have referred to as 'creative activities' requires that staff understand the value of these for children and young people. Further, that staff have some insights into creative processes because they themselves have been exposed to these and understand both the rewards and the frustrations that may be involved. Therefore we recommend to the Department for Children, Schools and Families and to the Children's Workforce Development Council that creative activities are given a higher profile in the children's workforce, including for staff working with looked after children and with foster carers.
2. That the Arts Council England supports the dissemination and discussion of the report's findings by means of a seminar for arts practitioners and those concerned with children's services. This seminar would consider practice and training in Denmark, and elsewhere in continental Europe, demonstrating how the arts contribute to the work of social pedagogy.
3. The Arts Council is requested to support the development of an Anglo Danish project, building on the above seminar, on this preliminary report and on NCB's People with Passion Report to the Arts Council England. The aim would be to develop 'creative pedagogy' and 'pedagogic creativity' in the UK. The project would provide the basis for the development of the children's workforce in the area of creativity and the arts *and* of the work of pedagogic artists, those artists who see themselves as working with children and young people to support their emotional and social development through the arts. Colleagues in appropriate departments in the Institute of Education (drama, the visual arts and music) could be approached to

participate in, and advise on, this work, as would creative practitioners in the performing and visual arts, known to the researchers through earlier work. Among other activities, the project would invite Danish student pedagogues to take up practice placements with creative practitioners in England (it is usual for Danish students to undertake placements abroad and to be visited in placement by their tutors). The objective would be to share learning and expertise as the foundation for a cultural leadership training and development programme.

4. That funders are identified by the researchers, in discussion with Arts Council, England, for research examining the role of creativity and culture for children in difficult circumstances, as a means of awakening imagination and aspiration. Three studies are envisaged: (i) Research into the role of English foster carers and how they best support children's participation in the arts, and what stands in the way of this: this is an area which the researchers have identified as needing attention. (ii) A short study visit undertaken to examine the role of the Danish children's cultural coordinator, as someone with overall responsibility for involving children in creative activities, at local authority level. (iii) An action research project to develop the training of creative practitioners for work alongside children in difficult circumstances. The aim of the training would be to enhance children's creative and critical skills, and to improve their wellbeing.

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