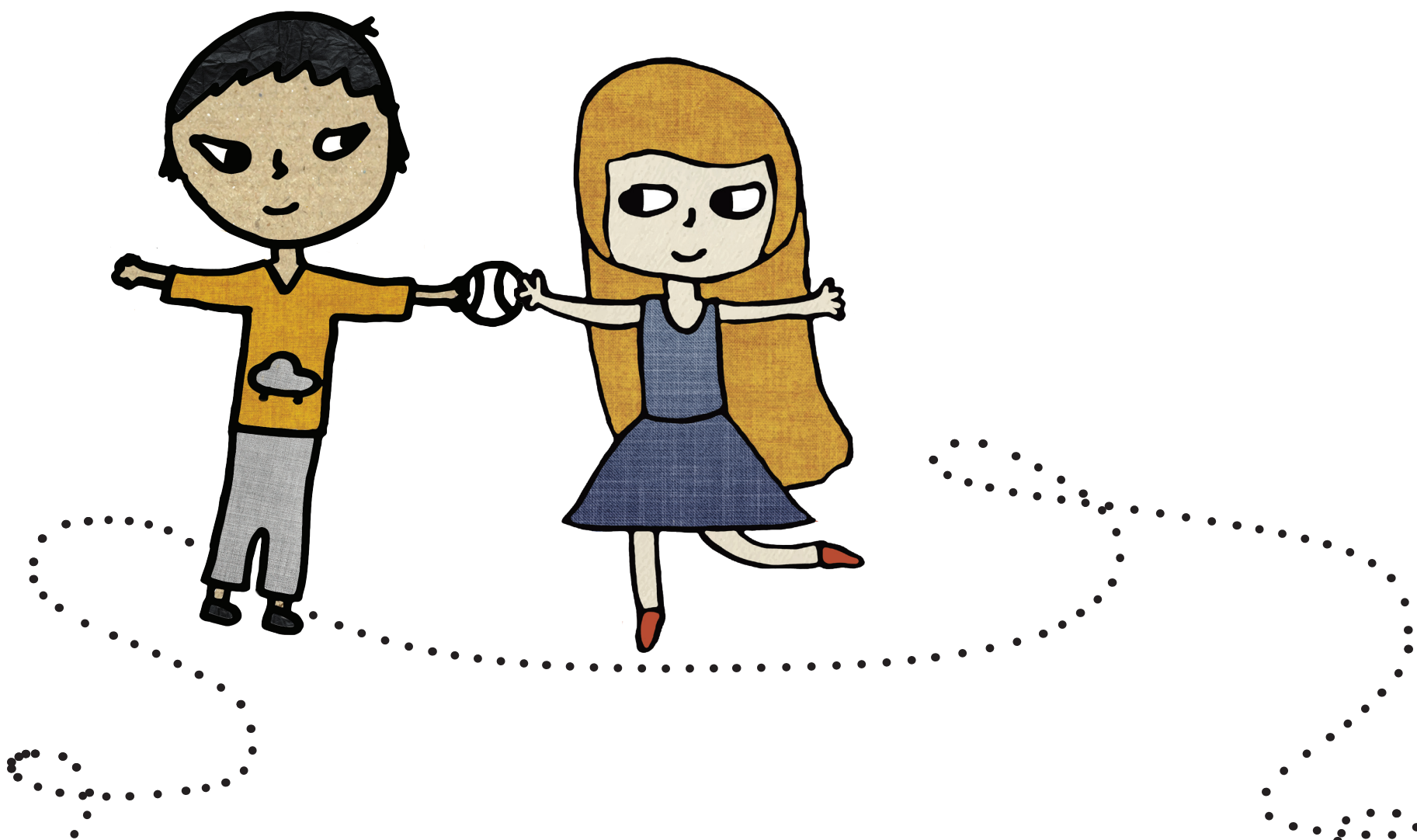




THE ART OF COLLABORATION

ART EQUAL PROCESS GUIDE





We do not learn from experience.
We learn from reflecting on
experience.

John Dewey, Educator and Philosopher



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WELCOME TO ART EQUAL

HOW DO WE ENSURE THE BEST OUTCOME OF OUR COLLABORATION?

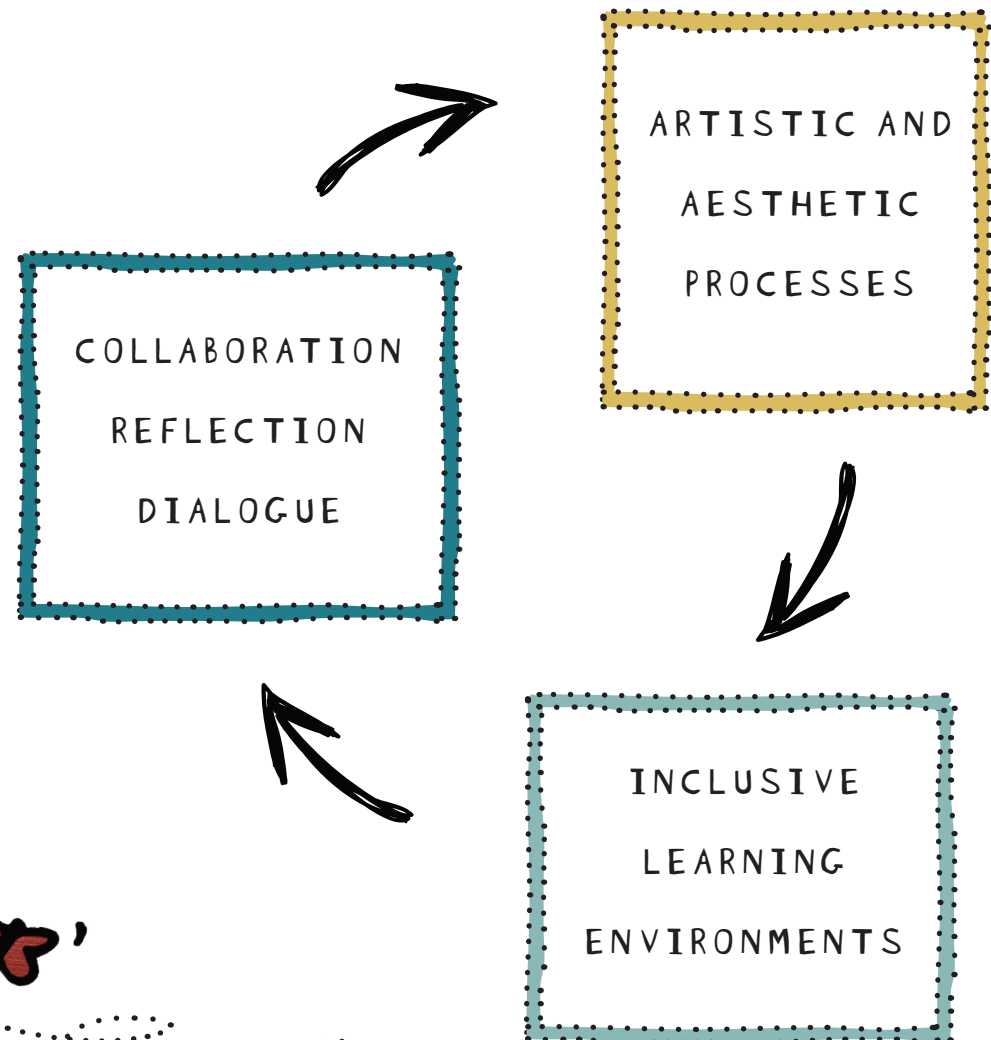
Art EQUAL promotes collaboration and dialogue between art and culture professionals and pedagogical staff in early childhood education and care. The aim of the collaboration is to form the basis of new perceptions and ideas on how to work with artistic and aesthetic processes in the everyday pedagogical practice.

The Art EQUAL process guide is a supporting tool for early childhood services (e.g. kindergartens and primary schools) on how to set up, organise, reflect on, learn from and document collaborative processes with art and culture professionals. It is built upon practical experiences from collaborations with professional artists/culture workers in the everyday pedagogical work with children.

Use the Art EQUAL online platform as a supporting tool throughout your collaboration:

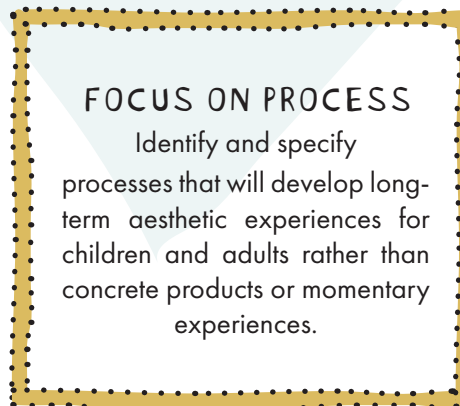
On the Art EQUAL platform, you can upload new collaborations, manage work plans and content, documenting your reflections, photos, videos, recordings and writing narratives – a helpful tool to keep track of your experiences and the collaboration's impact on your pedagogical practice.

www.artequal.eu



CORE VALUES

Before the collaborative activities start, it is a good idea to agree on a common set of values, so everyone involved has a shared mindset. These are the main elements of Art EQUAL.



The core of collaboration is children meeting art and culture in their everyday life

ACTION LEARNING AS A JOINT METHOD

The collaborations in Art EQUAL are based upon the principles of action learning as a joint method. The method ensures equal collaboration and involvement of different professionals' experiences together with the children.

Action learning creates a room for wondering and a joint focus on the challenges of the learning environment. This is different from - for example the traditional artist in residence programmes - where the artist visits a kindergarten with a suitcase full of concrete ideas and creative methods. The artist provides an inspiring workshop with the children and the pedagogues step back and become observers.

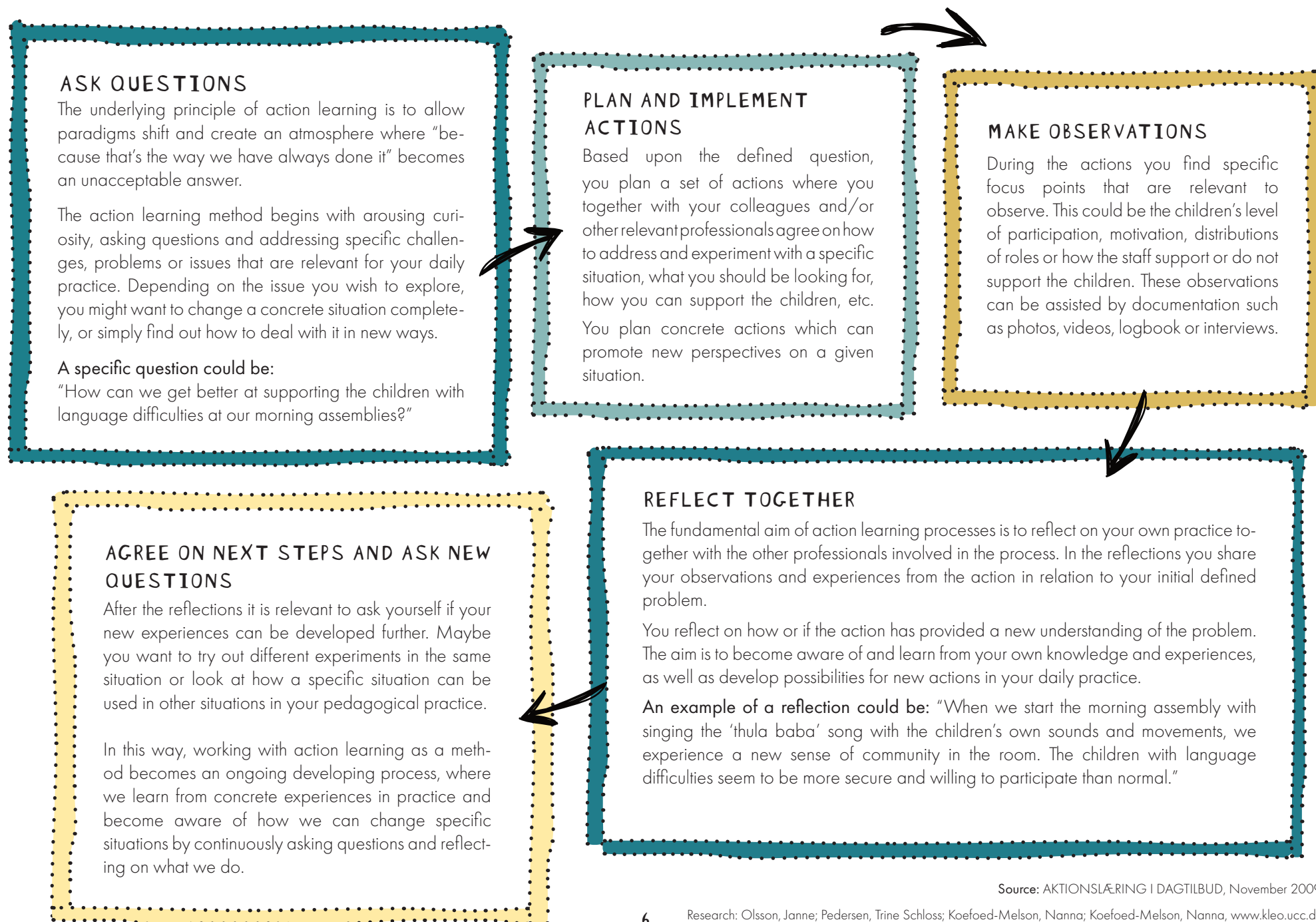
When the workshop is finished the artist puts everything back in the suitcase and leaves the kindergarten, and although the pedagogues have new inspiration and ideas to creative activities, it might not have an influence on their pedagogical practice as such.

The aim of working with action learning is to make sure the suitcase stays in the kindergarten, and the pedagogues had joint reflections with the artist/culture worker about how the activity had an impact on the children and the learning environment.

In the end it becomes a joint examination of how we get better at following the children's motives and actions, and in this way supporting their earliest stages of development.



EXAMPLE OF AN ACTION LEARNING PROCESS IN PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE



Source: AKTIONSLÆRING I DAGTILBUD, November 2009

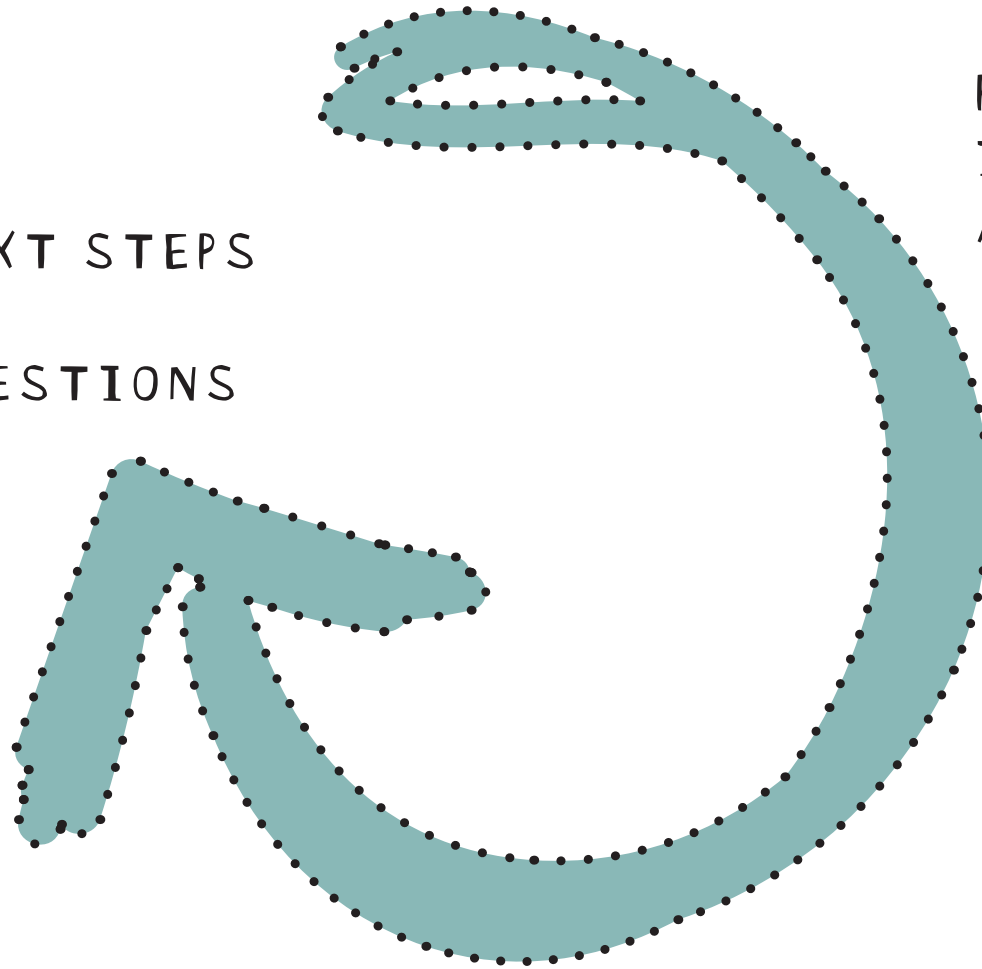
ASK QUESTIONS

PLAN AND
IMPLEMENT
ACTIONS

MAKE
OBSERVATIONS

REFLECT TOGETHER

AGREE ON NEXT STEPS
AND
ASK NEW QUESTIONS





GETTING STARTED

You are now ready to start planning the structure and content of the collaborative activities. On the following pages you will find a set of guidelines that can help you to ensure everyone involved keeps an eye on the ball and stay focused on the aims of the project.

STEP 1 ASK QUESTIONS

Art EQUAL is about looking at how collaborations with art and culture professionals can challenge and develop the mindset and practice of pedagogical staff in childcare services. We want to examine how artistic and cultural activities can influence the learning environment and have a positive impact on the children's participation in the process, ways of expression and sense of community. All organisations work in different ways, so it is important that you define the specific problem or challenge that is relevant for your pedagogical practice.

- Look at your own everyday practice and define concrete challenges or situations you wish to develop:
- What would you like to explore in your pedagogical practice?
- Do you have any specific challenges you wish to work or experiment with?
- Is there anything in your daily practice you would like to change or develop further?



Within context of your own practice, define the problem or challenge you wish to explore.

QUESTIONS



STEP 2 PLANNING

First step is to make sure both staff and artist/culture worker are involved from the beginning. A good idea is to have a kick-off reflection where you agree on the core values of the collaboration, aims and objectives and working methods.

In the planning phase and throughout the process it is important to inform the whole organisation of the coming activities, so all staff members feel engaged and supportive throughout the project.

(Be aware that your plans can change throughout the collaborative processes depending on the specific challenges or issues you want to explore)



Break down the tasks and clarify roles

Who is responsible for?

- Implementation
- Documentation
- Logistics
- Staff resources

Who should be involved and when?

- Staff members
- Child groups
- Artist
- Parents

Agree on content:

- Materials
- Methods
- Pedagogical approaches
- Physical environment

Agree on ethical values

- Mutual respect
- Forms of dialogue
- Personal borders
- Motivation
- Confidentiality

Agree on time frame:

- How many workshops?
- How long will they last for?
- Include time for short reflections after each action

Set dates for mid-term and final reflections

STEP 3 IMPLEMENT ACTIONS AND MAKE OBSERVATIONS

When the collaboration has started, it is important that the different professions are brought into play: the art/culture professional and the early years professional. From the artist/culture worker's perspective, it is essential that the activity invites the pedagogical staff to participate in and contribute to the artistic/cultural processes. The other way around, the staff must understand that they have an important role to play when the action is on. They need to be active participants in the action and contribute with their pedagogical approaches and special knowledge of the selected group of children. By doing so, both professionals can observe and learn from each other's approaches and perspectives on the children's participation, interaction, motives and actions.

The observations of what happens in the room and how the different professions are interacting and influencing the learning environment play a fundamental role for your joint reflections.



RELEVANT FOCUS POINTS

Focus on the aesthetic participation of everyone in the room:
artist /culture worker, staff, children

Observe, support and guide the children's well-being, level of participation and interaction with each other

Explore your own motivation to participate in the action with an experimental and playful approach

Observe if the action supports the inclusive learning environment and how it influences children in vulnerable positions

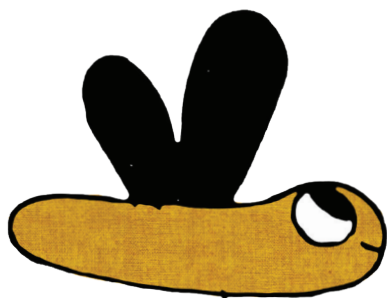
STEP 4 TIME FOR REFLECTIONS

Reflecting on your observations and experiences is fundamental for what you learn from the actions and what you can bring further into your pedagogical practice.

It is recommendable to have joint short reflections after each action, as well as longer reflections such as mid-term and final reflections where you have more time to evaluate on the collaborative processes and make decision on next steps.

Together you will have the opportunity to reflect on your observations and exchange views on how you experience the children in a given situation.

Ask yourself questions that relate to the problem, challenge or issue you wished to explore, and if it has aroused new problems or issues that is relevant to address.



Questions for reflection



- How did it go today?
- Did it go as expected or did something unexpected happen?
- Are we doing what we think we are doing?
- Is what we want to happen happening?
- What do we want to focus on next, and is there anything we can do differently?
- What can we bring further into our pedagogical practice?

Art EQUAL Platform

On the Art EQUAL online platform, you can use the reflection tool "Let's Collaborate" to document and collect your joint reflections. Here you will be able to keep track of your observations, experiences and reflections in relation to your initial defined problems, challenges or issues.



GO TO THE TOOL HERE

<http://artequal.eu/en/lets-collaborate>

REFLECTION MODELS

On the following pages, you will find a set of models that can be used as inspiration for your reflections and as a help to stay focused on your aims with the collaboration.

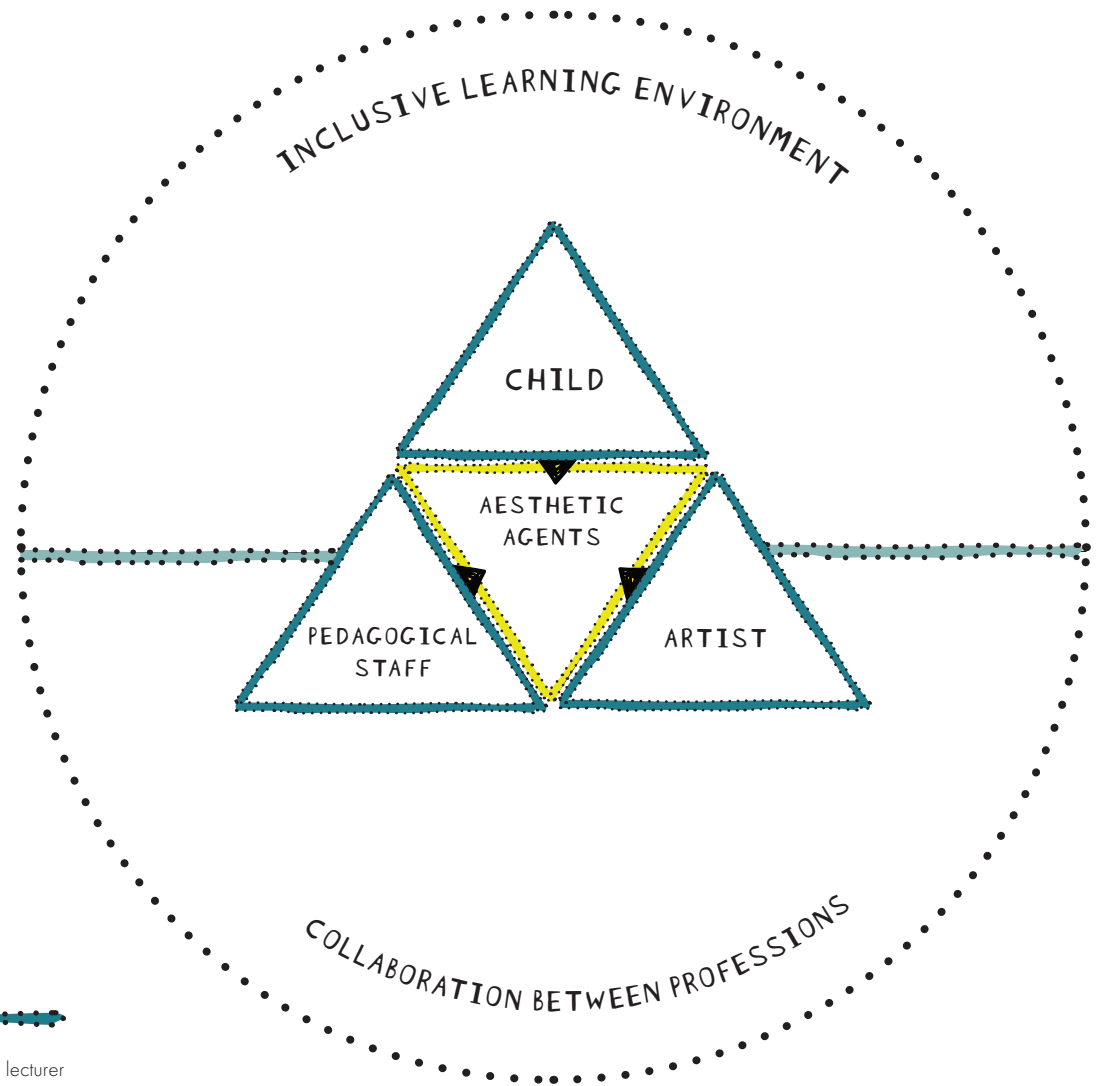


REFLECTION CIRCLE

The model demonstrates the different positions in the artistic/cultural processes: child, pedagogical staff and artist/culture worker. Everyone in the room is regarded as a part of the action and thus in this model as aesthetic agents.*

The focal point of Art EQUAL is to examine how the inclusive learning environment can be influenced and supported by the collaboration. These are the model's two main perspectives.

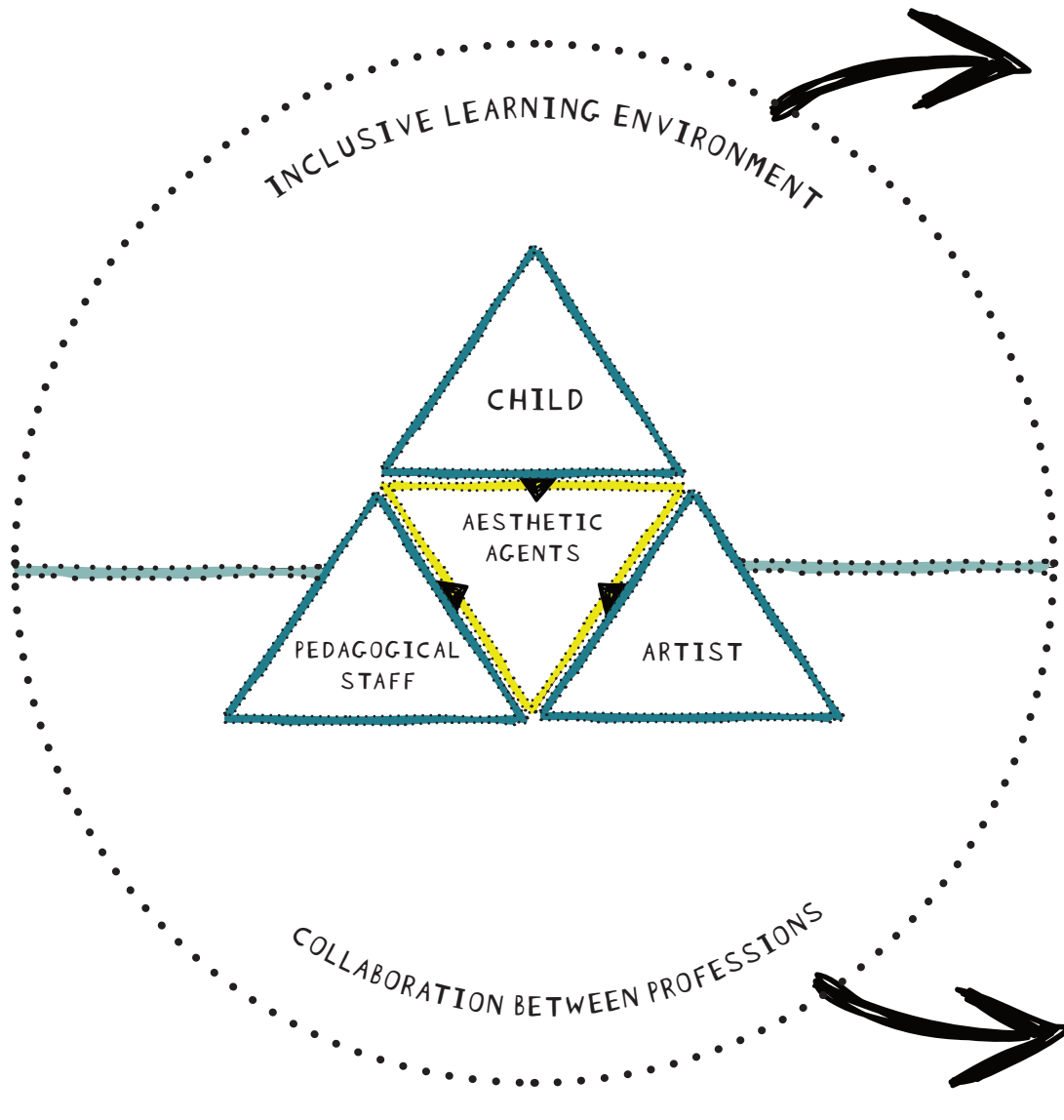
See examples of other relevant perspectives and themes for reflections on the following page.



* "Aesthetic participants" is a concept formulated by Henriette Blomgren, ph.d. and lecturer at VIA University College and University of Southern Denmark, DK. Her ph.d. examines artist's, pedagogue's (pre-school teachers), and children's co-creative activities concerning aesthetic processes in Danish kindergartens.

REFLECTION THEMES

Here is a set of themes as inspiration for your joint reflections.



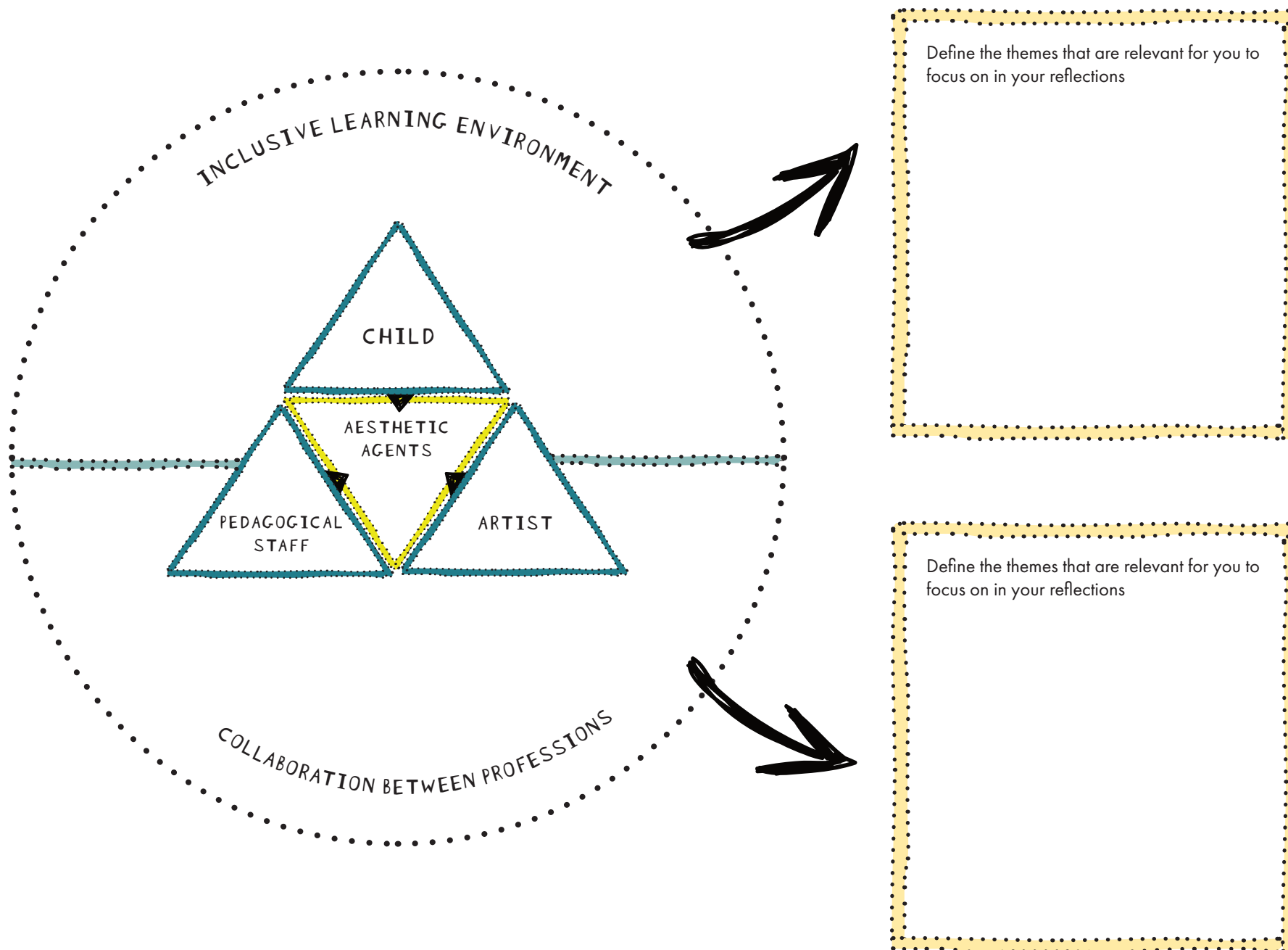
INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- The children's motivation, participation and co-ownership
- The role of play
- Democratic processes
- Interaction and distribution of roles between the children
- Interaction between children and adults
- New competences

COLLABORATION BETWEEN PROFESSIONALS

- The collaboration's impact on pedagogical work with inclusion
- Exchange of competences:
What can we learn from each other?
- Different experiences of the learning environment and the children's level of participation
- Courage to participate and take initiatives
(from the pedagogical staff's perspective)
- Distribution of roles between the adults
- The adults as role models for the children

MAKE YOUR OWN CIRCLE

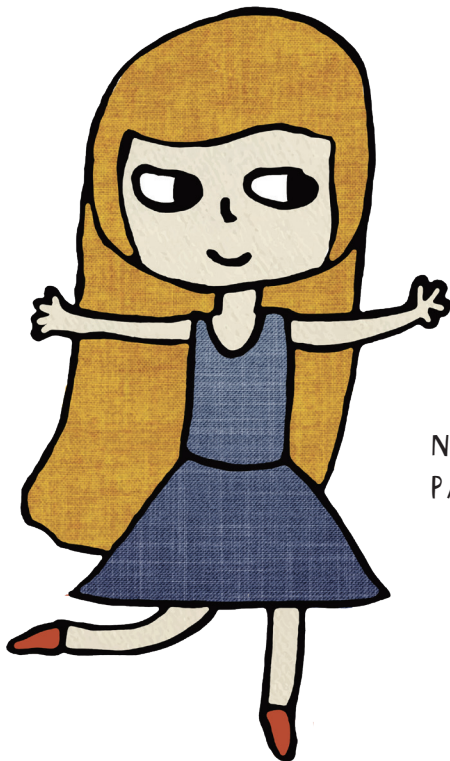


LADDER OF PARTICIPATION

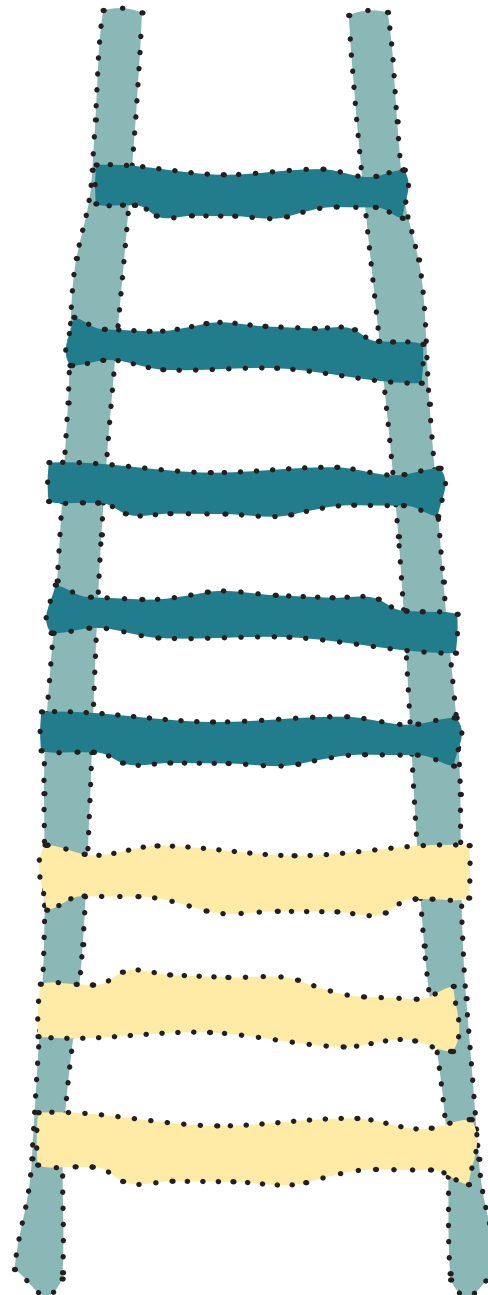
Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation is a useful tool to reflect on how you will involve the children in the activities. It is relevant to ask yourself throughout the activities where on the ladder you are working.

- Are we on the steps we thought we would be, or have we changed steps during the activity?
- Do we wish to move further down our up next time?

DEGREES OF
PARTICIPATION



NON-
PARTICIPATION



Child-initiated, shared
decisions with adults

Child-initiated and directed

Adult-initiated, shared
decisions with children

Consulted and informed

Assigned but informed

Tokenism

Decoration

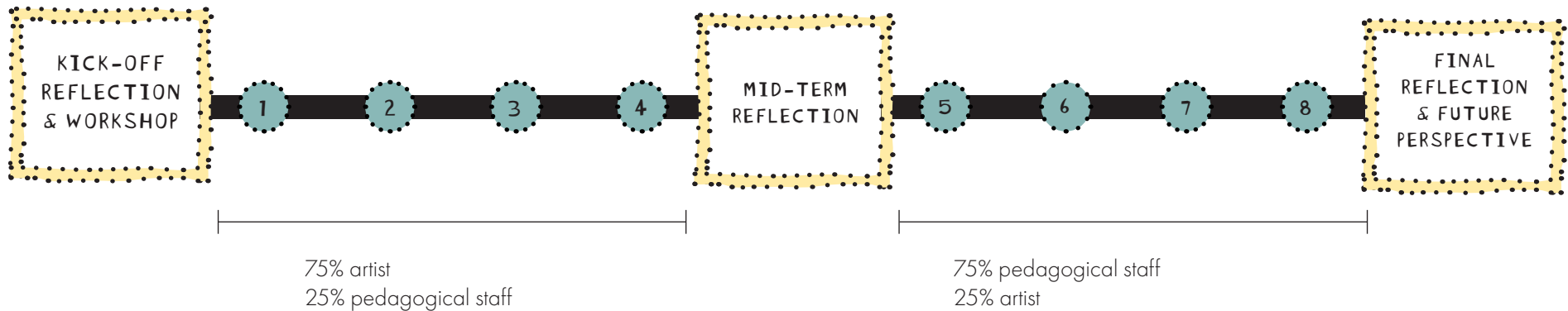
Manipulation

CHANGING ROLES

This model can be used as a mnemonic rule that supports the collaboration's influence on the pedagogical practice after the collaboration has ended. To ensure that the pedagogical staff get new competences to work with artistic/cultural processes in their practice, the artist is encouraged to step back and let the staff be "in charge" of the concrete activity. The artist then becomes more of a supporting guide, while the pedagogical staff can experiment with different techniques and methods, that promote the children's participation in the activity.



An example of an eight week programme. The time of confrontation with the children is distributed between the artist/culture worker and the pedagogical staff.



WRITING NARRATIVES

FRAMEWORK TO WORKING WITH NARRATIVES

Working with narratives as documentation for pedagogical evaluation can be an effective way to reflect on your own practice. Here is a suggested framework for narratives with a focus on how artistic and cultural activities influence the learning environment.

FRAME

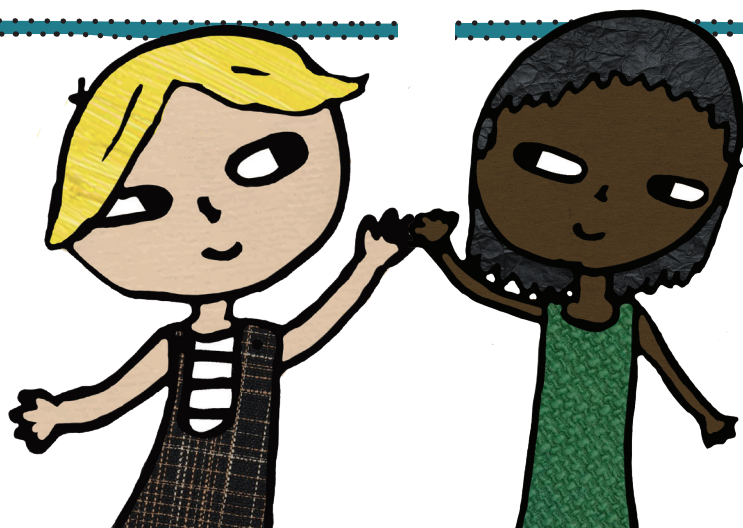
- The narrative is 0,5-2 pages
- The narrative is initiated with reflections on why this particular story is chosen.
- The narrative should be written as soon as possible after the action.

CONNECTED TO ART EQUAL

- The narrative has a focus on inclusive learning environments through collaborations between professionals and action learning as a common reflection tool.
- The narrative is experienced as an important example of working with the inclusion of children at risk of exclusion
- The narrative can be an example of something successful, interesting or challenging.

DEVELOPMENT OF EVERY DAY PRACTICE

- The narrative is based on an everyday practice working with children
- The narrative takes its starting point in the children and their experience of the activity
- The narrative features an element of development related to a child, a group of children, a practice, a way of working or a pedagogical view. That means that the narrative can jump in time and place and describe the storyteller's subjective experience of a situation. This could for example be how a concrete situation in the everyday has been affected by the collaboration of a professional artist's way of approaching the children.



Art EQUAL is a 2-year Strategic Partnership project – funded by the EU's Erasmus+ Programme

Project period: 2017-2019

PROJECT PARTNERS:

Kulturprinsen, DK (beneficiary)

Elderberry AB, SE

Kulturskolan Örnköldsvik, SE

TRIS KRASAS, LV

Myndlistaskolinn, IS

Bergen Kulturskole, NO

PROJECT OUTPUTS:

Online platform with inspirational material and supporting tools

Handbook and process guide

Training course curricula

Implementation strategy

Link to the Art EQUAL platform: www.artequal.eu

