PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLE

THE POTENTIAL OF MULTIPROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION IN INTEGRATING DANCE IN EARLY ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

BY: *Kaisa Korpinen[1,2] and Eeva Anttila[3]*

CITE THIS ARTICLE (APA7): Korpinen, K., & Anttila, E. (2023). The potential of multiprofessional collaboration in integrating dance in early additional language education in primary school. *Dance Articulated, Special Issue: Dance in Cross-Sectoral Educational Collaborations, 9*(1), 50-79. **DOI:** 10.5324/DA.V9I1.5053

EDITOR FOR THIS ARTICLE: Dr. Tone Pernille Østern, NTNU Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Dr. Kristine Høeg Karlsen, Østfold University College and Gunhild Brænne Bjørnstad, Østfold University College. **CORRESPONDENCE TO:** kaisa.m.korpinen@utu.fi

PROOF-READER: John Shepherd. **DESIGN:** Trine + Kim Designstudio, Oslo, Norway.

[1] Department of Teacher Education, University of Turku, [2] University of the Arts Helsinki's Research Institute·

[3] Theatre Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki

ABSTRACT

This article explores how a multiprofessional team collaborates in integrating dance in early language education. It is based on the team members' experiences and reflections as they combined dance with the teaching of Swedish as an additional language in grade 1 in a Finnish primary school. The project was framed by the notion of embodied learning understood as the holistic engagement of learners within their socio-material surroundings. Following socio-material approaches to education, the study examines the team of a dance teacher, a researcher, and the school's class teachers as an assemblage and multiprofessional collaboration as events that cross subject boundaries. The data assemblage encompasses audio-recorded, embodied, and material documentation of weekly meetings, in which the team co-designed the activities. The analysis maps the collaborative process of integrating language and dance through the post-qualitative approach of embodied writing. It highlights the designed practices, the challenges and the possibilities of the collaboration, and the conditions for successful collaboration. Co-designing dance and language integrated pedagogy occurred in events of disciplinary crossings and in entanglement with the process of becoming an assembled team. These insights illuminate multiprofessional collaboration as an entry point to embodied and cross-disciplinary pedagogies in early language education in primary school.

Keywords: *Multiprofessional collaboration, dance education, early language education, embodied learning, primary school, post-qualitative approach*.

AUTHOR BIOS

Kaisa Korpinen (Master of Arts) is a doctoral researcher in education at the Department of Teacher Education, University of Turku, Finland. She is a certified subject teacher in English and French as foreign languages. Her research interests include dance integration, embodied learning, and language education. Her doctoral research project focuses on integrating dance in early additional language education through multiprofessional collaboration. Currently, she is also involved in the research project *Embodied Language Learning through the Arts* (ELLA) and is a visiting researcher at the University of the Arts Helsinki's Research Institute.

Eeva Anttila (Doctor of Arts in Dance) is professor in dance pedagogy at Theatre Academy of University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland. Her research interests include dialogical and critical dance pedagogy, embodied learning, embodied knowledge, and practice-based/artistic research methods. Currently, she leads the *ELLA* research project, and previously has led the Arts@School team in the *ARTSEQUAL* research project (2015–2021) and the development and research project *The entire school dances!* (2009–2013). She has published several articles and book chapters nationally and internationally, and is actively involved in national and international dance and arts education organizations and journals.

Arts-based practices are often argued to enliven language teaching, but they can also generate integrative learning settings that enable approaching language learning "not as a purely abstract, cognitive, cerebral process but one that is embedded in action, emotion and aesthetic sensibility" (Fleming, 2023, p. 269–270). This holistic take on language learning resonates with the notion of embodied learning that—as articulated in arts educational research—considers learning not merely occurring in the brain, but in entire human beings and within their socio-material environments (Anttila, 2015; Anttila & Svendler Nielsen, 2019).

However, not all teachers are familiar with arts integration as a pedagogical approach and need support in using it (Buck & Snook, 2020). This seems particularly relevant for art forms that are not yet established in school settings (Nevanen et al., 2012). In Finland, the context of this study, dance is not a curricular subject. Nevertheless, dance can be integrated in school subjects as the national core curriculum emphasizes the use of cross-disciplinary approaches, for instance through cross-sectoral collaboration (Finnish National Board of Education, 2014).

Long-lasting, non-hierarchical, and in-depth collaboration between teachers, artists, and researchers can support the implementation of arts integration and the participants' professional development (Jusslin & Østern, 2020; Nevanen et al., 2012; Sharma et al., 2020). Yet school structures do not necessarily bend easily to cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral collaboration, nor the embodied and creative explorations that artistic processes involve (see also Nikkanen et al., 2019). While cross-disciplinarity and co-teaching are increasingly explored in Finnish teacher education, collaboration with the arts remains scarce. There is a need for more research on how professionals work together to make arts integration work in different language educational contexts (Anderson & Chung, 2011).

This study contributes with new insights on multiprofessional collaboration as an entry point to dance integration in early additional language education. Contextualized within the project *Dansa språk! (Dance Languages!) (2019-2022)*, the study explores how a team consisting of a dance teacher, a researcher-language teacher, and class teachers collaborated in integrating language and dance in a Finnish primary school during one academic year. It is based on the team members' experiences and reflections as they combined dance with the teaching of Swedish as an additional language in grade 1.

Swedish is the second official language of Finland. While spoken by only 5.2 % of the population (Statistics Finland, 2022), the school was in a majority Swedish-speaking municipality offering the second national language—instead of English or another foreign language—as the first additional language. The school piloted an early start to additional language learning before the curricular reform in 2020 that moved the learning of the first additional language to grade 1 (Finnish National Agency for Education FNAE, 2019). The bilingual landscape and the curricular reform combined created an urgent need to design new pedagogical practices that support children's Swedish language learning in school.

The study leans on socio-material approaches to education (Fenwick, 2015) to explore the collaborative process of integrating dance in early additional language education. The focus is on *events* that crossed boundaries between language and dance from being seemingly separate subjects to becoming inseparably *entangled* (Chappell et

al., 2019; Smythe et al., 2017). Moreover, the study shifts the focus from individual team members to the team as an *assemblage*. The concept of assemblage invites rethinking subjectivity not as limited to bound individuals but as extended to human-nonhuman ensembles (Braidotti, 2018, 2019). Composing new assemblages across disciplinary and institutional borders may open possibilities for thinking and doing pedagogies differently.

The *data assemblage* (Ellingson & Sotirin, 2020) encompasses audio-recorded, embodied, and material documentation of the weekly design meetings, in which the team members, including the first author Kaisa, co-designed the activities. The analysis expands the focus beyond individuals and languages to the embodied, affective, and material dimensions of multiprofessional collaboration through the post-qualitative research approach of embodied writing (Guttorm et al., 2016). The questions posed to the data are the following:

1. How did multiprofessional collaboration evolve over the course of the first year of the project?
2. How did language and dance become entangled as the multiprofessional team became an assemblage?

To clarify, this study does not focus on learning in, but on co-designing language and dance integrated pedagogy. The cross-disciplinary collaboration occurs between multiple and partly overlapping we's: the team and the authors. Kaisa is a member of both. Next, we co-authors, Kaisa and Eeva, map previous research, and lay out the theoretical foundations and the methodological underpinnings of the study. After outlining the analytical process, Kaisa traces back the collaborative process of integrating language and dance through embodied writing. Together, we continue developing this approach, which Eeva has explored in her previous co-authored work (Guttorm et al., 2016; Löytönen et al., 2014). Throughout the analytical process, we engaged in dialogue to share experiences and views on cross-disciplinary and embodied pedagogies, critically, while collegially reflecting on the challenges and possibilities of multiprofessional collaboration. Finally, we discuss the designed practices, the challenges and possibilities of the collaboration, and the conditions for successful collaboration.

Mapping previous research

This section maps previous research on combining dance with additional language learning, embodied learning as a framework for bridging the two, and the early teaching of additional languages as the context of the study. By mapping the terrain, we seek to position the study, not to provide a comprehensive review. While we recognize previous work on multiprofessional collaboration with the arts (Jusslin & Østern, 2020; Nevanen et al., 2012; Sharma et al., 2020) and additional languages (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2012) respectively, reviewing this work is beyond the scope of this study. Our focus remains specifically on dance integration in early additional language education. We describe the methodological framing of the collaboration later.

Combining dance with additional language learning

The idea of using arts-based activities in second and foreign language teaching is not new, and prior research has focused on, for instance, drama (Cannon, 2017; Rothwell, 2011) and singing (Ludke, 2018). Dance in additional language learning has rarely been investigated empirically, despite early proponents dating back to the 1990s (Bell, 1997; Pinter, 1999) and cases continuing to be made (Gardner, 2016). Nevertheless, recent studies suggest that creative movement can support children in recalling vocabulary and producing alliteration in a foreign language (Sila & Leonard, 2020), improve their speaking skills in a second language (Greenfader et al., 2015), and create an immersive environment for second language learning (Zhang et al., 2021). Moreover, approaching a second language through dance can increase positive emotional responses to learning among adult students (Hanks & Eckstein, 2019).

In Finland, previous research and arts-pedagogical projects have combined dance with additional language learning at different educational levels. In the *TALK* project by the Zodiak Center for New Dance, artists collaborated with language teachers to embed movement-based approaches in additional language instruction in comprehensive schools. This work was connected to the research initiative *ArtsEqual* focusing on artistic and collaborative processes in second language learning in preparatory education. Activities that involved creative action and movement generated communicative situations that encouraged both embodied interaction and language use among newly arrived pupils (Anttila, 2019; Nikkanen et al., 2019). Altogether, combining dance with additional language learning may anchor language learning in embodied action, non-verbal communication, peer collaboration, and kinaesthetic experiences. This work provided a stepping-stone for bridging language and dance as an embodied approach to early language education.

Embodied learning

Contemporary views on cognition understand meaning-making, thinking, and language as intertwined with "our bodily being in the world" (Johnson, 2017, p. 33). They challenge the prevailing assumptions in education that disconnect the mind from the body and privilege the brain over the rest of the body in learning (Macedonia, 2019). Perspectives grouped as '4E cognition' consider cognition considerably *embodied* in being shaped by bodily structures and processes, *embedded* in the physical and social environment, enacted in ongoing brain-body-environment interactions, and *extended* or distributed to the surroundings (Ellis, 2019; Johnson; Gallagher, 2018; Johnson, 2017 Rowlands, 2010). Building on these perspectives, embodied learning entails actively engaging learners' entire bodies in relation to their socio-material environments.

Dance as a physical and artistic activity involving social interaction, creative processes, performative elements, and reflection can engage human beings comprehensively (Anttila, 2018). A well-planned, meaningful dance-integration can foster embodied learning (Anttila, 2015; Anttila & Svendler Nielsen, 2019). Incorporating embodied activity in learning can yield holistic meaning-making processes, in which the sensations and experiences from embodied and multisensory engagement become connected to concepts and language (Anttila, 2013; Anttila & Svendler Nielsen, 2019; Katz, 2013; Svendler Nielsen, 2015). Embodied activity encompasses not only visible bodily

movements, but also invisible bodily sensations, experiences, and physiological changes. Although physical movement is not a prerequisite for embodied learning, it may support especially children in embodied learning processes.

Based on a literature review conducted in the research project *Embodied Language Learning through the Arts* (ELLA)[1], research interest in embodied learning approaches in language education is increasing (Jusslin et al., 2022). It shows that movement-based activities can improve children's language learning especially in terms of vocabulary, whereas arts-based activities can support language learning emotionally and motivationally. Hence, embodied learning approaches offer a holistic take on language learning, which may both enhance and nurture a positive approach to learning language, particularly among young and beginner language learners.

Early teaching of additional languages

An early start to additional language learning often assumes that younger children learn languages more easily. However, the limited hours typically assigned for additional language learning in school underscores the importance of quality early additional language pedagogy (Enever, 2015). Teaching additional languages to young children, who are only learning to read and write, requires a pedagogical shift from analytical approaches that emphasize written language to holistic, multisensory, and experiential approaches that focus on oral language development (Keaveney & Lundberg, 2019; Pinter, 2017). Age-appropriate teaching strategies involve setting realistic goals for linguistic outcomes while supporting positive attitudes to learning languages (Enever, 2015). Importantly, they involve creating plenty of opportunities to listen to and use language in peer interaction (Keaveney & Lundberg, 2019). Moreover, the Finnish core curriculum emphasizes the incorporation of playfulness, music, drama, games, movement, and multiple senses (FNAE, 2019).

Teachers teaching additional languages to children need a combination of oral language fluency and age-appropriate teaching skills (Enever, 2015). However, class teachers are generally not trained in language pedagogy nor in the language, whilst language teacher training often has limited focus on young children (Enever, 2015; Hahl et al., 2020). Consequently, the potential of class and language teacher collaboration for enacting quality early additional language pedagogy has been recognized (Hahl et al., 2020). The *Dansa språk!* project extended this collaboration to dance teachers.

Laying out the theoretical foundations

Next, we present the concepts used in exploring the collaborative process of integrating language and dance.

Multiprofessional collaboration

What multiprofessional collaboration generates is contingent upon the people involved alongside the socio-material surroundings in which the pedagogical and research practices are set (Jusslin & Østern, 2020). Following socio-material approaches to education (Fenwick, 2015), we consider the multiprofessional team as an assemblage. The notion of assemblage refers to the grouping of mutually implicated elements, human and nonhuman (Fenwick, 2015; Smythe et al., 2017). Accordingly, teaching

is never solely a matter of human beings, but involves ad hoc gatherings of people, discourses, things, and places. As processes or phenomena (Smythe et al., 2017), assemblages are more-than-the-sum-of-the-parts. If we consider subjectivity as coming into being in these flowing yet grounded human-nonhuman ensembles that transverse binaries (Braidotti, 2019), then agency as the capacity to enact can also be understood to emerge in these relations (Taylor, 2021).

In exploring the collaborative process of integrating language and dance, we focus on events. From a socio-material perspective, events are unique occurrences choreographed in human-nonhuman collectives (Bozalek & Taylor, 2022). They are a result of the particularities of a situation, the past entanglements of the people involved, and the potential that their present encounter generates. Events become felt and sensed in the moment and can be scrutinized in retrospect as moments that mattered. It is impossible to know which moments will matter or which practices will work before the event is already underway, as it is in the moment of the event—in the event-ing—that new practices may emerge. Nevertheless, experimentation that "undiscipline[s] the bodies, minds and practices" (Bozalek & Taylor, 2022, p. 67) can facilitate the emergence of such events in education.

Challenging boundaries in education

In exploring events that cross boundaries between language and dance, we lean on the notion of *intra-action* coined by Karen Barad (2007). This notion has been influential in socio-material approaches to education (Fenwick, 2015). While *inter*action is taken to position bodies and things as separate entities existing prior to their encounter, *intra*-action considers entities inseparable and "com[ing] into being through their entanglement" (Barad, 2007 in Smythe et al., 2017, p. 25). Intra-action is connected to *diffraction*, which in physics refers to, for example, the blending and 'bending' that occur when light, water, or sound waves merge or meet barriers (Barad, 2007, p. 28; Bozalek & Murris, 2022). Barad draws on Donna Haraway's (1992) proposition of diffraction as an alternative to the metaphor of reflection, which focuses on mirroring and sameness rather than difference (Barad, 2003, 2007; Bozalek & Murris, 2022). Focusing on the entangled relations between bodies, things, and places, which are themselves in the process of changing and becoming, can challenge boundaries between mind/body, subject/object, human/nonhuman, and language/non-language in education (Smythe et al., 2017). As much as boundaries emerge and stabilize, they can also be destabilized.

By expanding Barad's notion of entanglement, it is possible to explore events that cross boundaries between language and dance as moments of disciplinary entanglements that are nevertheless contingent upon the embodied, socio-materially entangled people involved (Chappell et al., 2019). Transforming pedagogical practice with a transdisciplinary approach can generate "'intra-actions' among entangled entities that are usually taken to be distinct" (Smythe et al., 2017, p. 38; see also Lenz Taguchi, 2010). While such boundary-crossings are difficult to enact alone, they can become possible through multiprofessional collaboration. This work begins by "assembling a community of diverse, heterogeneous elements", a 'we' (Braidotti, 2018, p. 185).

Navigating research as multiprofessional collaboration

In this project, educational design research acted as a methodological starting point. It provided a flexible frame for intervening in pedagogical realities by designing, implementing, and evaluating pedagogical practices in collaboration with teachers and within a real school setting (Bakker, 2018; McKenney & Reeves, 2019). Crucially, it enabled bridging theory and practice by anchoring the educational design theoretically to generate practical tools and theoretical insights for pedagogical practice.

However, the focus on embodied learning created a domino effect. Understanding knowledge and knowing as fundamentally embodied, material, and relational processes produced a shift toward post-qualitative inquiry. While continuing to adapt the iterative and reflective cycle of educational design research, post-qualitative inquiry enabled approaching research practice as *embodied* in recognizing the body as a strength in knowledge generation and *performative* in generating the investigated pedagogical realities (Østern et al., 2021). Moreover, it became possible to consider Kaisa, the other team members, and the researched phenomena entangled and becoming with one another.

Assembling a multiprofessional team

Kaisa initiated the project *Dansa språk!* as part of her doctoral research at the Department of Teacher Education, University of Turku, to explore how dance could be integrated in early additional language instruction. As a certified language teacher, Kaisa sought out partners in dance and primary education. First, she contacted the principal at the Hurja Piruetti Western Uusimaa Dance Institute[2] in Raseborg, Finland, where she was a former dance student. The dance institute offered basic education in dance as part of formal arts education outside schools and was actively involved in dance educational projects in schools. Basic education in the arts is a state-subsidized system supporting arts education as an extracurricular activity. The *Dansa språk!* project aligned with the dance institute's ongoing work to increase children's access to dance in the region[3]. The dance teacher who joined the project was a certified, Finnish- and Swedish-speaking dance pedagogue with experience of school projects and teaching dance to children.

The principal of the Finnish-speaking primary school Kiilan koulu, Raseborg, welcomed the project as a chance to spark pupils' interest and foster positive attitudes toward learning Swedish. The two first-grade class teachers, who also taught Swedish to first graders, expressed that they appreciated gaining support with the early teaching of Swedish as a new subject. Together, we formed a team that cut across disciplines (dance, language, and primary pedagogy), institutions (primary school, dance institute, and teacher education), and sectors (the public sector, including the school and teacher education, and the third sector including the dance institute)[4]. We set out to co-design new pedagogical practices that combined dance, creative movement, and language, and develop professionally through co-teaching.

Setting up the project

As project leader, Kaisa established the project goals in research proposals and funding applications, but the school and the team members were closely involved in shaping the project to embed it in the everyday school reality as organically as possible.

For instance, the school initiated the collaboration with the class teachers. Following the principal's wishes, the entire first grade was included in the project, and the starting point was therefore inclusive[5]. The pupils' linguistic backgrounds were diverse since some had a strong background in both Finnish and Swedish, some were only learning Swedish, and some had a background in other languages.

In the project's kick-off meeting in May 2019, the team members scheduled twenty weekly 45-minute lessons for each of the two pupil groups (18–19 pupils per group at the end of the first project year)[6]. Access to the school gym was a given. The team members also scheduled weekly one-hour design meetings and kick-off meetings at the beginning of the autumn and spring term, and an evaluative meeting at the end of the year. The team members remained the same throughout the year apart from a substitute teacher joining the team in mid-autumn. All team members were compensated for project work, including design meetings.

Before the teaching started in the autumn of 2019, Kaisa mapped previous research to frame the project. Central principles were, among others, to connect language and dance in meaningful ways, focus on spoken language, and embed language use in embodied activity and communication. The teachers aimed to speak mainly Swedish by using embodied strategies, including movements, gestures, and facial expressions. Moreover, the emphasis was on the pupils' creative movements rather than ready-made dance steps or choreographies. The overall goal was to approach language and dance integratively, rather than considering one a mere vehicle for the other, through a focus on embodiment. Apart from these framings, the plans were left open until the start of the lessons in the autumn of 2019. Establishing collaborative practices and pedagogical starting points became central endeavours when the teaching began.

Mapping and tracing through embodied writing

The analysis draws mainly on data from the meetings, in which the team members co-designed the activities. The focus is on the meetings in the first year of the project (2019–2020, including two kick-off meetings, 18 planning meetings, 18 brief reflections after class, and one evaluative session). Making the data was an embodied and material process occurring through intra-actions between Kaisa, the other team members, the school spaces, the recording devices, and other materials (Ellingson & Sotirin, 2020). The data assemblage includes audio-recorded, embodied, and other material documentation of the process, including notes, lesson plans, and video recordings of the lessons. In addition to the teachers' audio-recorded responses, the embodied data encompasses Kaisa's lived experiences of the meetings and the lessons. Eeva, too, has an embodied experience of the practice having once participated in the lessons and the following co-reflection.

The analysis expands attention beyond individuals and languages to the embodied, affective, and material dimensions of the collaborative process (MacLure, 2018) through the post-qualitative approach of embodied writing (Guttorm et al., 2016; Löytönen et al., 2014). Embodied writing recognizes multiple forms of knowing and involves "plugging the body into research and writing" (Guttorm et al., 2016, p. 423). By encouraging experimentation with language in embodied terms, embodied writing addresses the call in post-qualitative research "to engage more fully with the materiality

of language itself" (MacLure, 2013, p. 663). Moreover, it may also involve moving away from the 'researcher I' as an individual knowing subject to a suprasubjective position of a 'we' (Guttorm et al., 2016).

In this study, "falling in the entanglement of encounters" (Guttorm et al., 2016, p. 425) involves (re)encountering the team members, the pupils, the materials, and the school spaces. First, Kaisa transcribed co-designing situations dealing with language, dance, and embodiment, while carefully taking notes on the contents of the rest of the discussion. Secondly, Kaisa read the transcripts and notes to focus on events, in which language and dance connected or resisted entanglement. She *mapped out* the emergence of such events by focusing on their turning points, and their enabling structural, material, temporal, and spatial conditions (Lenz Taguchi, 2010). She listened repeatedly for what happened in these events, including experimentations, coincidences, or the unexpected. She attuned to what was said in the dialogues, how it was talked about and what else could be heard, including sounds and silences. Plugging in the body, she paid attention to the recollections of the encounters in the physical school environment. She then played with words and their positioning on the page, for instance by highlighting do*ing*s instead of doers and foregrounding materiality by omitting verbs. She also re-enacted the events and drew maps of the team's movements.

Tracing back the collaborative process using the material-discursive documentation of events (Lenz-Taguchi, 2010) generated experimental writings and drawings that became "a map on where we've been" (Guttorm et al., 2016, p. 418) with the team. The result is not an exact representation of reality, but "constructed cut[s]" of events occurring in pedagogical settings (Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 67). These cuts are agential (Barad, 2003). Agential cuts as temporary distinctions between entanglements are the result of boundary-making processes that enable scrutinizing parts of the flow of intra-actions (Barad, 2003; Bozalek & Fullagar, 2022). The cuts are enacted by the research assemblage that includes the embodied researcher (Bozalek & Fullager, 2022). 'Reading' the cuts can produce insights into "the intra-actions between numbers of matters that *mattered* in what happened" in events, which, in turn, can be used to further pedagogical practice (Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 86, original emphasis).

In enacting and scrutinizing agential cuts of events, we employ the verbs *crossing*, *balancing*, *bending*, *stretching*, and *blurring* both literally and metaphorically. Some of these embodied concepts originally stem from the team members' discussions of the challenges and possibilities of integrating language and dance. We start by presenting the team members using different fonts and placements on the page. The dialogues stretch from moments of cacophony to moments when the conversation flows and the different voices blend into one—the voice of the team. To illustrate the process of the individual team members becoming an assembled team, the quotes of the different team members are first spread across the page:

the dance teacher (D)

the researcher (R)

the class teachers (C)

Gradually, they come closer together, and at the end they merge into one body in the middle of the page. Moreover, we employ italics for *manners of speaking*; another font in bold for **doings**; and yet another font for `bodies, materials, space, and time` to highlight the different elements that choreographed the events. We use screenshots of the video recordings of the lessons as constructed cuts of co-design events and what they produced. Along the way, we fill in more details into the maps of the team's journey and the process of tracing it back. While we start from the beginning of project, the following cuts do not adhere to chronological order. Kaisa has translated relevant quotes from Finnish and shaped them into the cuts of events. In the contextualizations of events, she used the embodied concepts to propel thinking. From now on, the 'we' refers to the multiprofessional team. While Kaisa was responsible for making the cuts, the team's reflections contributed to it.

Crossing, balancing, bending, stretching, and blurring boundaries

What follows is an embodied exploration into how the multiprofessional team collaborated in integrating language and dance in the *Dansa språk!* project.

Crossing

After a kick-off meeting in May 2019, the next time the dance teacher and the researcher meet with the class teachers is in August, two weeks before the lessons start. While the aim of the meeting is to plan the term and especially the first lessons, we begin by discussing roles and expectations.

Figure 1

Discussing roles and expectations.

Afternoon. Empty corridors. The teachers' lounge. Coffee maker. Work nook. The curriculum on the table. Team members by the table.

[Looking at the curriculum]

Researcher: Should we start from what you see that your role is? Or do you want to begin directly with planning?

Class teachers: It's probably good to talk about the roles. We can probably contribute with what is going on in the class. We also bring pupil knowledge. We can observe pupils in a different way, when you [the dance teacher] focus on the thing of this lesson. And we can attend to individuals.

Dance teacher: Yes, support those pupils, who might need something particular.

C: Yes, exactly.

R: **[Turning towards the dance teacher].** How about you?

D: Well, I'm prepared to come up with activities, choose the music, and then, the concrete: lead the group. I'm used to doing the planning on my own, but that would be the richness here, that it could be done together.

R: Sounds good! It's great that we get to plan together and use everybody's knowledge so that it [the practice] could be truly integrative. I'll bring in research and language pedagogical perspectives. I'll move around with the video camera, but also as a teacher. It's lovely to be back at school.

Coming together from different disciplines and institutions, we had different entry points into the project. While everybody participated in designing and carrying out the lessons, the dance teacher took on the main responsibility for proposing ideas for and leading the activities. The researcher provided theoretical and language pedagogical perspectives to the educational design, whereas the class teachers contributed with knowledge about the pupils, age-appropriate strategies, and the school context. Since they did not need to focus on leading the activities, they could observe the pupils differently and bring these observations to the co-design work. Nevertheless, the class teachers and the researcher did not simply observe on the sidelines but participated actively in carrying out the lessons. The class teachers, who were in charge of the groups, managed the groups and supported the pupils, whilst the researcher juggled roles in also being responsible for documenting the lessons.

We met in the school an hour before the lessons to co-plan. Next, the placement of the doings refers to locations, not individuals.

Figure 2

Criss-crossing the school.

Early morning. Quiet schoolyard. Locked door.

Knocking. Greeting.
Talking about this and that.
Arranging desks to sit at face-to-face.

Looking through the notes for today's lessons.
Turning a new page for the next sessions.
Typing up a plan.

Moving to another building.

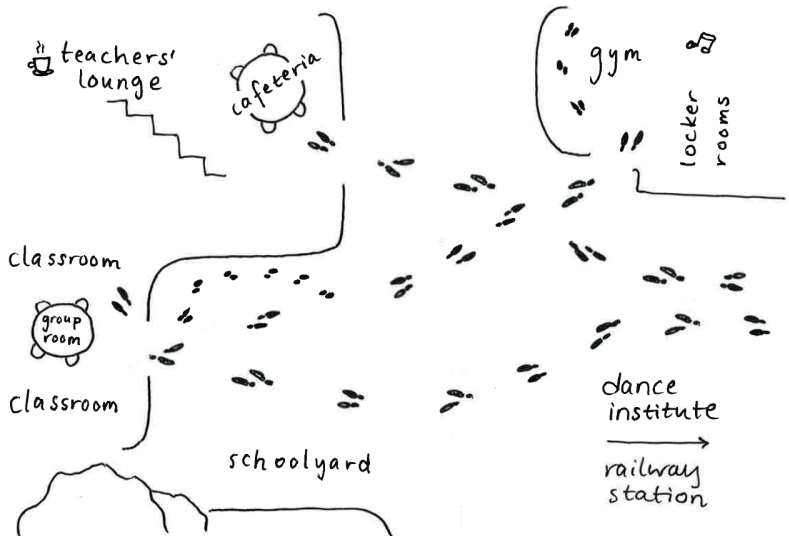
Rolling down the gym divider.
Spreading out the
materials on the floor.
Sorting out the wires of the sound system.

Putting up the video cameras.
Glancing at the plan one last time.
Exchanging last-minute ideas.

Accompanying the pupils to the gym.

Figure 3

Mapping out movements across the school.



Note. Map by Kaisa.

As we moved *across* the school, our collaborative practices started shaping. In our weekly meetings, we focused on refining the plan for the lessons the same day before designing the upcoming lessons, including the topic, activities, aims, and structure, and addressing practical matters. All members suggested ideas for activities, although the dance teacher often took the lead by presenting activity ideas or summarizing our plans, with the other members actively proposing refinements. The dance teacher and the researcher often leaned on the class teachers, who evaluated the design in relation to the pupils, their age, and their prior learning experiences. The class teachers also solved practical issues, including the transitions of the groups. Meanwhile, the researcher documented the plans on the school's online project platform. Based on the class teachers' suggestion, we met up directly after the lessons to reflect on our experiences and observations.

Figure 4

Team members in the gym.

Figure 5

Co-reflecting on the first lessons.

Lunchbreak. Empty gym. All team members but one close by the door. Creaking door. Rattling keys.

C: **[Stepping in.]**

R: We already talked a little bit, but what are your main thoughts?

C: **[Inhaling].** Well, in my view they had a sense of doing. Already from when we started running in a circle, you saw that it was the movement that was so nice. **[Pausing].** There was an enthusiastic atmosphere, I think. Speaking together encouraged. Starting alone would've probably been too challenging.

[Co-reflecting.]

C: Who of you said that the important [thing was] that we win them on our side? That has really happened.

D: The tag was a HIT!

[Laughing together.]

D: It was a good solution for the beginning.

C: Yes.

D: We can probably sell them something else later on, too.

C: True.

D: Like 'this is a fun thing, let's try something new.'

At first, we were uncertain about how to connect language and dance in activities. We started exchanging and building on each other's ideas for activities and content. We designed communicative movement-based exercises with a low threshold, including a presentation round and a greeting tag, to *cross* potential barriers to dancing and learning Swedish among the pupils. We hoped that a positive start could enable moving toward activities that involved more creativity and imagination.

Although our concerns about the pupils' (and even the guardians') attitudes especially toward dance affected the design of the activities, our initial efforts generated mainly positive responses. For instance, we noted the enthusiasm that movement generated among pupils seemed to feed into language learning, and vice versa. We also noted that pupils with language backgrounds other than Finnish and Swedish participated actively.

Balancing

Despite the positive first impressions, we also faced difficulties in integrating language and dance. For instance, experiences of spending too much time on language while sitting on the floor led us to change the routine activity at the beginning of the lesson.

Figure 6

Co-designing activities.

8 am. The group work room. Round table in the middle. Notebooks, tablets, laptop, recorder, tea mugs.

D: **[Flipping notebook pages.]** So, do we try to do a quicker greeting round?

C: Mmm. **[Sipping tea.]**

Greet with a body part. **[Turning the nose.]** With the nose. Reply with the nose. **[Chuckling.]**

Mmm.

[Turning the elbow.] With the elbow. Reply with the elbow. If it runs smoothly, we can always hope…

Mmm.

For some considering always takes time.

Yes, [for some] it [the time] goes to courage and considering.

Yes, but it should go a little faster.

Mhmm…

Yes. Then we have the tag. Animals. Do you want to…? Am I too TA-DA-DA-DAA?

R: No, but…

[Laughing.]

From a dance perspective, here's greeting with body parts, replying. Could we add the word in Swedish, too?

Mmm!

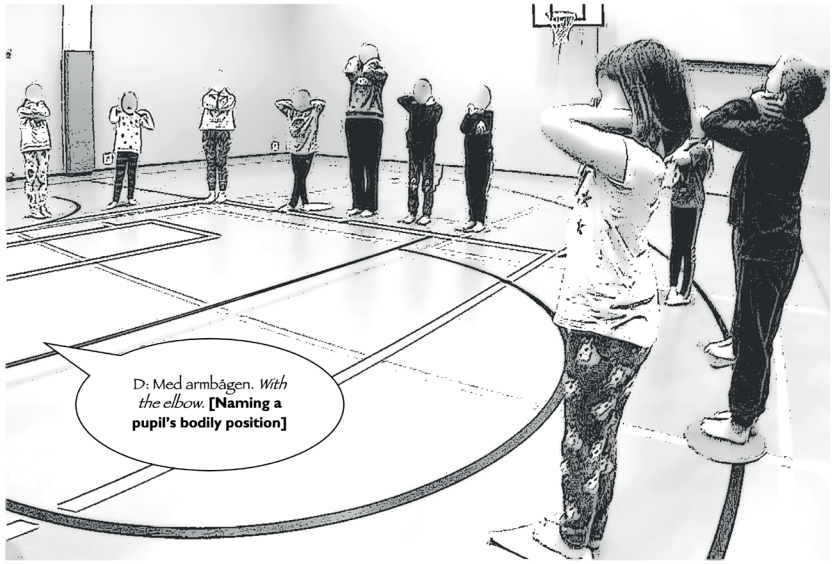
When we do nose, we also say nose. **[Fingers typing loudly.]** From a language perspective, revising body parts. New body parts might emerge from the pupils, so verbalizing those in Swedish…

The dance teacher drew on a dance educational lesson structure to start moving directly through a simple warm-up activity: greeting with body parts. The class teachers considered the activity and structure from the pupils' perspective and the researcher with 'language glasses'. In verbalizing the structure, contents, and aims of the activity from the perspective of our respective domains, we shared and learned from each other's professional expertise.

Despite our aim to combine language and dance meaningfully, sometimes the activities focused too much on one element. The more complex the tasks became, the more creativity, imagination, and collaboration they involved, the more challenging it became to connect all elements. However, the instances of *balancing* on the line between language and dance mattered for finding *balance* within single activities and during the whole lesson.

Figure 7

Greeting with elbows.



Bending

When meeting up after the lessons, we went through our immediate experiences of what had worked and what had not, to refine the plan for next time. In the following, we discuss our observations of an activity involving bodily shaping numbers in Swedish.

Figure 8

Co-reflecting on the numbers activity.

Half past ten. The gym. Team members in a circle.

D: I have a feeling that we can dig a little deeper into numbers. From both groups, it came that it would be fun to do it together.

C: Yes, everybody probably experienced it concretely that doing three on your own is a little tricky when you can't bend yourself like that…

[Laughing.]

But the children always came up with something! Is it one-to-one with the shape of the number? Not necessarily, but children's creativity is somehow so much bigger. They're like 'Oh fours!' *(Whispering:)* 'Like this?' 'This is a good four!' *(Normal pitch:)* They have a lead [idea].

[They have] no restrictions like us.

No, nothing like 'this curve needs to be like this' or 'I can't bend this body this way…'

[Laughing.]

Children don't have those thoughts yet.

R: Somehow, it's more about the experience: 'This is what four feels like, it's angular'.

Yes, the fours especially. There were like this… **[Shaping a four.]** And then again…

[Bending in another way.]

They were concentrated, explored, experimented…

Based on our observations of the pupils' embodied engagement and desires in shaping numbers, we included peer collaboration in the activity. The dance teacher remarked that embodied exploration and creative solutions appeared to come easily to the pupils. Unlike adults, the children were not yet fixed with their bodily limitations or exact representations of symbols. They also creatively *bent* the rules of the activities, which at best created more opportunities for using language. Hence, not only did '*bending* bodies' *bend* language use, but it also *bent* our thinking about language learning as embodied, creative, experiential, relational, and unexpected processes.

The dance teacher had a crucial role in supporting the pupils and the other team members in working with embodied and creative processes. Co-teaching enabled observing each other in action. In our co-reflections, we returned to instructional choices. For instance, after a lesson on body parts, we discussed how the dance teacher navigated the unanticipated possibilities that emerged during a statue exercise. Instead of co-creating positions based on the body parts suggested by the teacher, the pupils decided for themselves. When sharing their choices, the pupils revised body parts while connecting vocabulary with experiences of embodied and collaborative actions.

Through this focus on embodiment, the disciplinary boundaries among the team members started *bending*:

Figure 9

Connecting language and embodied actions.

Early morning. A first-grade classroom. Conversation slowing down.

[Disrupting the silence.] I've been thinking… that at some point, when we come to verbs… *(Emphatically:)* we can think about HOW we MOVE.

(Eagerly:) Yes, I'm looking forward to those.

Yes. **[Chuckling.]**

Running, jumping, turning. They would also be nice considering movement…

(Silently:) True.

Tentatively: Maybe we could think about them after these themes?

(Excitedly:) Quite interesting because I haven't thought about it, but indeed, ways of moving can work…!

[Chuckling.]

(Enthusiastically:) This is one of these epiphanies—

Yes!

—that this is what we do, language connects to that and the need to use language rises from there.

(Straightforwardly:) Would it be too brave to include it here?

(Weighing:) Well, I was just thinking… that should we now go for ways of moving…?

(Becoming keener:) When we have ways of moving, we could have in what ways and on what levels. Slow and fast, up and down, near and far.

Mm.

These would come naturally—

When we have those—

—they could be used with everything else.

The design meetings created space for in-depth pedagogical discussions that produced new insights. Our realizations of the connections between language and embodied activity took us beyond the contents of the local curriculum and the teaching material, which initially provided us with ideas for themes, including numbers and colours. As with body parts, the idea of exploring action verbs and spatial and temporal adverbs by moving created an 'aha' moment. These "pedagogical epiphanies" (Zhang et al., 2021) *bent* our plans as our emerging ideas 'snowballed' into previously unseen possibilities as we collectively built on a seed of an idea. One activity that this yielded was creating and performing dances in small groups, and guessing the movements in the performances:

Figure 10

Performing and guessing movements.

Stretching

Using mainly Swedish in teacher talk was more easily said than done. We returned to the teachers' language use several times.

Figure 11

Co-reflecting on instructions.

```
Recess. The gym. Legs stretched out. Cold floor.
```

[Sighing.] There was now much more Swedish, but then sometimes I feel that does it 'go to the magpies', the talk, if the activity is not understood?

Mm. But then again when you said in Swedish, there was a more concentrated, listening thing. They started spontaneously interpreting and verifying 'was it like this?'

Yes, yes. It went nicely the part that we had thought about beforehand, 'think about what I do and say', 'what would this be?'

Yes.

It gave the children a puzzle. They could take it either through embodiment or the language.

Mm.

Following our concerns that the pupils did not understand the tasks or the teachers, we started co-planning the instructions to better activate the pupils and support meaning-making. Besides guessing games, we designed routine exercises and modelled meaning with bodies, materials, space, and voice to *stretch* the use of Swedish. These embodied and playful strategies enabled increasingly going into Swedish through bodies, rather than through another verbal language. Despite the temptation of falling back on Finnish, our observations of the pupils successfully doing the tasks, listening more carefully, and speaking Swedish more spontaneously, encouraged us to keep trying.

Blurring

The more experience we gained from the practice, the more we approached it beyond the perspective of our own domain. As the disciplinary boundaries within the team *blurred*, so did the boundaries between language and dance:

Figure 12

Refining the design.

Recess. A locker room. Excited voices from the gym.

About the end rhyme. When they [the pupils] asked:
'Well, what does it mean?', 'Can we translate?' I was thinking that it doesn't—
[clapping]
—it doesn't tell anything.

No. We clap and speak, but there's no situation.
The meaning doesn't become clear from anything. Not even from movement.
But we can change movements to it—

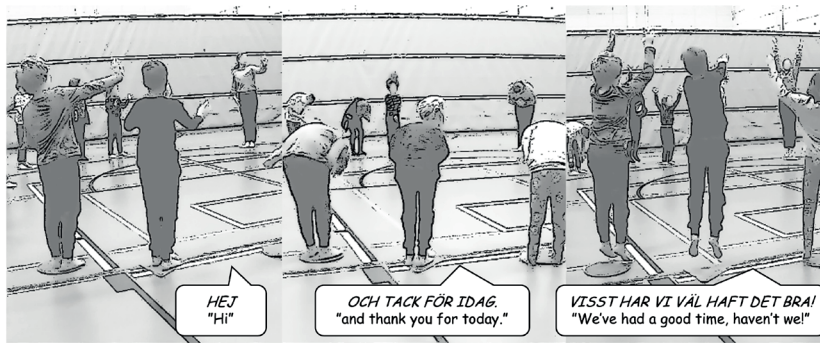
[rhyming-clapping-rhyming-moving]
—so that there is something that depicts more what it says.

It's the same as in dance! A ritual kind of. It's repeated and it's easy and it stays in the head. That's important for children. They want words, even if they don't understand.
Maybe the comprehension comes at some point.
It can be a little boring—
[clapping]
—if I just say something and I don't understand.
But if it's a DANCE, like you said—
[rhyming-moving]
—then it's immediately different.

When co-reflecting on the pupils' requests to translate a jointly repeated goodbye rhyme into Finnish, we changed the clapping to movements. The dance teacher choreographed movements that followed the rhythm of the rhyme and supported meaning-making in a broad sense rather than word-for-word. For the class teacher, this turned the rhyme into a dance—one that could engage the pupils, even if they did not comprehend everything. In refining the activity, the researcher also started rhyming *and* moving. When the boundaries between language and dance became *blurred* in co-designing the activities, they also became *blurred* in class, in dancing, and languaging with the pupils.

Figure 13

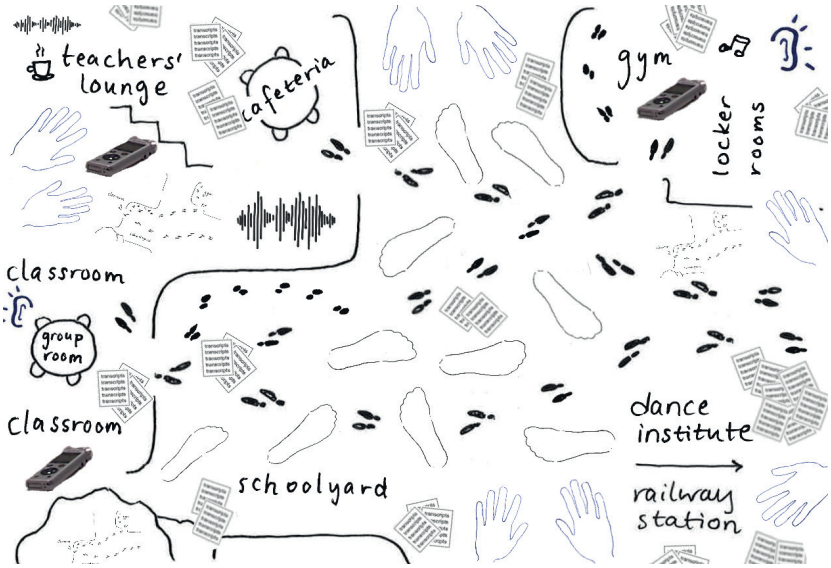
Dancing the rhyme.



During the year, the dance teacher and the researcher went to the school once a week to share half a day with the first graders and their teachers. The lessons and the meetings alongside informal conversations over lunch in the cafeteria became important meeting points. It was in these embodied encounters and events that the team members became an assembled team, and language and dance became entangled.

Figure 14

Tracing back the collaborative process of integrating language and dance.



Note. Map by Kaisa.

Discussion

This study explores how a multiprofessional team collaborated in integrating language and dance in grade 1 in a Finnish primary school during one academic year. A socio-material approach extends the focus beyond individuals and languages to materials, spaces, and a multiprofessional team. It not only implies that agency emerges in relation to non-human things, but also that human beings and subjectivity are conceived of as becoming with others. Through embodied writing (Guttorm et al., 2016; Löytönen et al., 2014), the analysis maps out the collaborative process by enacting and scrutinizing agential cuts of events that *cross* boundaries between language and dance. These boundary crossings highlight the practices that were designed, the challenges and the possibilities of the collaboration, and the conditions for successful collaboration.

In the *Dansa språk!* project, integrating language and dance began by professionals in different domains coming together and establishing collaborative practices. The team members collaborated closely in co-designing, co-leading, and co-reflecting on the lessons. Verbalizing aims, contents, and structures from respective domains enabled

sharing and learning from each other's professional expertise. Witnessing each other act during the lessons allowed learning with one another in action, whereas co-reflecting on events and instructional choices enabled continuous refining of the design.

During the process, the team members evolved from individuals exchanging ideas based on their respective domains to an assembled team that criss*crossed* domains collectively and creatively. The focus on embodiment and the increasing experience of practice mattered for *bending* and *blurring* disciplinary boundaries between the team members. They merged into an assemblage that was bound to the temporalities of the project and the materiality of the school spaces, yet encompassed the team members' past experiences and present entanglements with pupils, pedagogical materials, curricula, and literature. The common goal of designing and implementing pedagogical practices alongside the regularly scheduled meetings and lessons held the assemblage together. By becoming mutually implicated, they developed professionally (Jusslin & Østern, 2020) and became more than the sum of its parts—as did the pedagogical practices that were designed.

It was in the events that cross boundaries between language and dance that the seemingly unrelated subjects became entangled (Chappell et al., 2019; Smythe et al., 2017). However, *crossing*, *bending*, *stretching*, and *blurring* boundaries was not only a smooth process as it also involved tensions and frictions (*balancing*). While previous research argues that embodied learning approaches can be easily implemented in language education (Jusslin et al., 2022), this study also points at the challenges. Combining multiple elements in meaningful ways generated moments of *balancing* between language and dance. However, these moments mattered for finding *balance* by rethinking the activities and the structure integratively.

While the design meetings focused on the here and now—planning the next lessons—they also carved time and space for in-depth pedagogical discussions. These events generated "pedagogical epiphanies" (Zhang et al., 2021) on the connections between language and embodied activity that *bent* not only lesson plans, but also the team's thinking of teaching and learning language. Paradoxically, these insights materialized in seemingly simple activities on, for instance, body parts and action verbs, which nevertheless involved holistic meaning-making processes.

Embracing an emergent approach enabled considering these insights and observations of the pupils' engagement in the design (Anderson & Chung, 2011; Sharma et al., 2020). Communicative movement-based exercises with a low threshold led to creative and collaborative activities. This progression resonates with previous projects (Nikkanen et al., 2019) and can relate to the newness of embodied and arts-integrated approaches in schools. To *stretch* language use, the team members and the pupils needed to become familiar with embodied and creative processes. In line with previous studies on arts integration (Jusslin & Østern, 2020; Nevanen et al., 2012), this speaks for the necessity of long-term collaboration when integrating dance in language classrooms.

In addition to the intra-actions during the design meetings, disciplinary boundaries became *blurred* in events that happened in the gym, for instance in activities that entangled dance and language in engaging ways. These disciplinary entanglements occurred as part of the actual intra-actions between team members, pupils, movements,

languages, and spaces.

The cuts into the collaborative process offer examples of the integrative practices that emerged and laid a foundation for the rest of the project. One team member alone could not have designed the practices (Jusslin & Østern, 2020), nor could they be attributed to an individual as they were the result of the work of the team. The process of integrating language and dance occurred not merely in parallel, but in entanglement with the process of the team members becoming an assembled team.

Conclusion

This study highlights the potential of multiprofessional collaboration in integrating language and dance by broadening understanding of the multiprofessional team as an assemblage of embodied, socio-materially entangled professionals, and dance and language integrated pedagogy as co-designed in events of disciplinary crossings or entanglements (Chappell et al., 2019). Not only *who* the team members are, and *how* and *why* they collaborate, but also *what they become together* affects what kind of knowledge the collaboration generates (Jusslin & Østern, 2020).

Following the ethos of post-qualitative inquiry, developing the embodied writing approach enabled foregrounding the embodied, affective, and material dimensions of multiprofessional collaboration. The embodied exploration of the becomings and practices of the multiprofessional assemblage allowed embracing the "complexities of life" (Guttorm et al., 2016, p. 419) at play when co-designing new knowledge in real-life school settings. The result is a research story that does not seek to close emergent practices into fixed and static models as 'best practices' but to open new ways of thinking and doing pedagogies (Smythe et al., 2017).

While forming new assemblages is needed to disrupt the status quo (Braidotti, 2018), future studies should scrutinize how multiprofessional collaboration can be sustained beyond the temporalities of projects. Change requires sufficient resources for collaborative educational design work and the implementation of new pedagogical practices. Appropriate compensation, also for design meetings, is crucial for engaging teachers in multiprofessional collaboration. There is also a need for increasing multiprofessional encounters in teacher education to prepare teacher students for cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral dialogue in education.

Acknowledgements

We thank the *Dansa språk!* team for the open dialogues on embodied and dance-integrated approaches to early Swedish language education. We also give thanks to all participating pupils, teachers, assistants, and principals at the primary school Kiilan koulu and the dance institute Hurja Piruetti Western-Uusimaa Dance Institute for making the project and this research happen.

Funding

During the academic year 2019–2020, the project *Dansa språk!* was supported by The Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland and The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. The study was conducted within the research project *Embodied Language Learning through the Arts* (ELLA) with funding from Kone Foundation.

REFERENCES

Anderson, J., & Chung, Y.-C. (2011). Finding a voice: Arts-based creativity in the community languages classroom. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 14*(5), 551–569. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2010.537742

Anttila, E. (2013). *Koko koulu tanssii! Kehollisen oppimisen mahdollisuuksia kouluyhteisössä.* [The entire school dances! The possibilities of embodied learning in a school community]. Theatre Academy Helsinki. https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-6670-26-3

Anttila, E. (2015). Dance as embodied dialogue: Insights from a school project in Finland. In C. Svendler Nielsen & S. Burridge (Eds.), *Dance education around the world: Perspectives on dance, young people and change* (pp. 79–87). Routledge.

Anttila, E. (2018). The potential of dance as embodied learning. *Proceedings of a body of knowledge conference.* University of California Irvine. https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3s7118mr

Anttila, E. (2019). Migrating pedagogies: Encountering immigrant pupils through movement and dance. *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy, 10*(1), 75–96.

Anttila, E., & Svendler Nielsen, C. (2019). Dance and the quality of life at schools: A Nordic affiliation. In K. Bond & S. Gardner (Eds.), *Dance and the quality of life* (pp. 327–345). Springer.

Bakker, A. (2018). What is design research in education? In A. Bakker (Ed.), *Design research in education: A practical guide for early career researchers* (pp. 3–22). Routledge.

Barad, K. (2003). Posthumanist performativity: Toward an understanding of how matter comes to matter. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society, 28*(3), 801–831. https://doi.org/10.1086/345321

Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Duke University Press.

Bell, D. M. (1997). Steps to dance in the adult EFL classroom. *Journal of the Imagination in Language Learning, 4*, 34–39.

Bozalek, V., & Fullagar, S. (2022). Agential cut. In K. Murris (Ed.), *A glossary for doing postqualitative, new materialist and critical posthumanist research across disciplines* (pp. 30–31). Routledge.

Bozalek, V., & Murris, K. (2022). Diffraction. In K. Murris (Ed.), *A glossary for doing postqualitative, new materialist and critical posthumanist research across disciplines* (pp. 54–57). Routledge.

Bozalek, V., & Taylor, C. A. (2022). Event. In K. Murris (Ed.), *A glossary for doing postqualitative, new materialist and critical posthumanist research across disciplines* (pp. 66–67). Routledge.

Braidotti, R. (2018). Affirmative ethics, posthuman subjectivity, and intimate scholarship: A conversation with Rosi Braidotti. In K. Strom, T. Mills & A. Ovens (Eds.), *Decentering the researcher in intimate scholarship: Critical posthuman methodological perspectives in education* (pp. 179–188). Emerald Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-368720180000031014

Braidotti, R. (2019). A theoretical framework for the critical posthumanities. *Theory, Culture & Society, 36*(6), 31–61. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276418771486

Buck, R., & Snook, B. (2020). Reality bites: Implementing arts integration. *Research in Dance Education, 21*(1), 98–115. https://doi.org/10.1080/14647893.2020.1727873

Cannon, A. (2017). When statues come alive: Teaching and learning academic vocabulary through drama in schools. *TESOL Quarterly, 51*(2), 383–407. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.344

Chappell, K., Hetherington, L., Keene, H. R., Wren, H., Alexopoulos, A., Ben-Horin, O., Nikolopoulos, K., Robberstad, J., Sotiriou, S., & Bogner, F. X. (2019). Dialogue and materiality/embodiment in sciencelarts creative pedagogy: Their role and manifestation. *Thinking Skills and Creativity, 31*, 296–322. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2018.12.008

Ellingson, L. L., & Sotirin, P. (2020). Data engagement: A critical materialist framework for making data in qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 26*(7), 817–826. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800419846639

Ellis, N. C. (2019). Essentials of a theory of language cognition. *The Modern Language Journal, 103*(S1), 39–60. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12532

Enever, J. (2015). The advantages and disadvantages of English as a foreign language with young learners. In J. Bland (Ed.), T*eaching English to young learners: Critical issues in language teaching with 3–12 year olds* (pp. 13–30). Bloomsbury Academic. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474257145

Fenwick, T. (2015). Sociomateriality and learning: A critical approach. In D. Scott & E. Hargreaves (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Learning* (pp. 83–93). SAGE.

Finnish National Agency for Education (FNAE). (2019). *Amendments and additions to the national core curriculum for basic education 2014 regarding the instruction of the A1 language in grades 1–2*. FNAE.

Finnish National Board of Education. (2014). *Finnish national core curriculum for basic education 2014.* Finnish National Board of Education.

Fleming, M. (2023). Arts, language and intercultural education. *Language Teaching Research, 27*(2), 261–275. https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211044244

Gallagher, S. (2018). Educating the right stuff: Lessons in enactivist learning. *Educational Theory, 68*(6), 625–641. https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.12337

Gardner, A. N. (2016). The case for integrating dance in the language classroom. In A. J. Moeller (Ed.), *Fostering connections, empowering communities, celebrating the world: Selected papers from the 2016 Central States conference on the teaching of foreign languages* (pp. 79–96). Robert M. Terry.

Greenfader, C. M., Brouillette, L., & Farkas, G. (2015). Effect of a performing arts program on the oral language skills of young English learners. *Reading Research Quarterly, 50*(2), 185–203. https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.90

Guttorm, H. E., Löytönen, T., Anttila, E., & Valkeemäki, A. (2016). Mo(ve)ments, encounters, repetitions: Writing with (embodied and textual) encounters. *Qualitative Inquiry, 22*(5), 417–427. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800415620216

Hahl, K., Savijärvi, M., & Wallinheimo, K. (2020). Varhennetun kieltenopetuksen käytäntöjä: opettajien kokemuksia onnistumisista ja haasteista [Practices in the early teaching of foreign languages: Teachers' experiences of possibilities and challenges]. In R. Hilden & K. Hahl (Eds.), *Kielididaktiikan katse tulevaisuuteen: Haasteita, mahdollisuuksia ja uusia avauksia kielten opetukseen* [Language didactics' gaze on the future: Challenges, opportunities, and new openings for language teaching] (pp. 77–103). Suomen ainedidaktinen tutkimusseura. http://hdl.handle.net/10138/312321

Hanks, E., & Eckstein, G. (2019). Increasing English learners' positive emotional response to learning through dance. *TESL Reporter, 52*(1), 72–93.

Haraway, D. (1992). The promises of monsters: A regenerative politics for inappropriate/d others. In L. Grossberg, C. Nelson & P. Treichler (Eds.), *Cultural studies* (pp. 295–337). Routledge.

Honigsfeld, A., & Dove, M. G. (Eds.). (2012). *Coteaching and other collaborative practices in the EFL/ESL classroom: Rationale, research, reflections, and recommendations.* Information Age Publishing.

Johnson, M. (2017). *Embodied mind, meaning, and reason: How our bodies give rise to understanding.* University of Chicago Press.

Jusslin, S., Korpinen, K., Lilja, N., Martin, R., Lehtinen-Schnabel, J., & Anttila, E. (2022). Embodied learning and teaching approaches in language education: A mixed studies review. *Educational Research Review, 37*, 100480, 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2022.100480

Jusslin, S., & Østern, T. P. (2020). Entanglements of teachers, artists, and researchers in pedagogical environments: A new materialist and arts-based approach to an educational design research team. *International Journal of Education & the Arts, 21*(26), 1–28. https://doi.org/10.26209/IJEA21N26

Katz, M.-L. (Ed.). (2013). *Moving ideas: Multimodality and embodied learning in communities and schools*. Peter Lang.

Keaveney, S., & Lundberg, G. (2019). *Early language learning and teaching: Pre-A1–A2* (2nd ed.). Studentlitteratur.

Lenz Taguchi, H. (2010). *Going beyond the theory/practice divide in early childhood education: Introducing an intra-active pedagogy*. Routledge.

Ludke, K. M. (2018). Singing and arts activities in support of foreign language learning: An exploratory study. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, 12*(4), 371–386. https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2016.1253700

Löytönen, T., Anttila, E., Guttom, H., & Valkeemäki, A. (2014). Playing with patterns: Fumbling towards collaborative and embodied writing. *International Review of Qualitative Research, 7*(2), 236–257. https://doi.org/10.1525/irqr.2014.7.2.236

Macedonia, M. (2019). Embodied learning: Why at school the mind needs the body. *Frontiers in Psychology, 10*, 2098, 1–8. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02098

MacLure, M. (2013). Researching without representation? Language and materiality in post-qualitative methodology. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 26*(6), 658–667. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2013.788755

MacLure, M. (2018). Encounters and materiality in intimate scholarship: A conversation with Maggie MacLure. In K. Strom, T. Mills & A. Ovens (Eds.), *Decentering the researcher in intimate scholarship: Critical posthuman methodological perspectives in education* (pp. 197–204). Emerald Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-368720180000031016

McKenney, S., & Reeves, T. (2019). *Conducting educational design research* (2nd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315105642

Nevanen, S., Juvonen, A., & Ruismäki, H. (2012). Art education as multiprofessional collaboration. *International Journal of Education & the Arts, 13*(1), 1–22. http://www.ijea.org/v13n1/

Nikkanen, H. M., Kirsi, K., & Anttila, E. (2019). Artistic process as a frame for collaborative, embodied pedagogies. In C. Svendler Nielsen & S. Burridge (Eds.), *Dancing across borders: Perspectives on dance, young people and change* (pp. 134–144). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003008569-23

Østern, T. P., Jusslin, S., Nødtvedt Knudsen, K., Maapalo, P., & Bjørkøy, I. (2021). A performative paradigm for post-qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Research, 23*(2), 272–289. https://doi.org/10.1177/14687941211027444

Pinter, A. (2017). *Teaching young language learners* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Pinter, I. (1999). Second language development through the use of dance. *Brock Education, 9*(1), 13–20.

Rothwell, J. (2011). Bodies and language: Process drama and intercultural language learning in a beginner language classroom. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance, 16*(4), 575–594. https://doi.org/10.1080/13569783.2011.617106

Rowlands, M. J. (2010). *The new science of the mind: From extended mind to embodied phenomenology.* MIT Press.

Sharma, G., Nikolai, J., Duncan, S., & Carter, J. (2020). Observing the delivery of a curriculum-integrated dance programme across four New Zealand primary schools. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies, 55*, 29–47. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40841-019-00151-2

Sila, A., & Lenard, V. (2020). The use of creative movement method in teaching foreign languages to very young language learners. *European Journal of Social Science Education and Research, 7*(1), 15–27. https://doi.org/10.26417/ejser.v7i1.p15-27

Smythe, S., Hill, C., MacDonald, M., Dagenais, D., Sinclair, N., & Toohey, K. (2017). *Disrupting boundaries in education and research*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108234931

Statistics Finland (2022). *Population structure 2021*. Statistics Finland. https://www.stat.fi/til/vaerak/2021/vaerak_2021_2022-03-31_tau_001_en.html

Svendler Nielsen, C. (2015). Exploring learning in dance as artistic-educational practice. In C. Svendler Nielsen & S. Burridge (Eds.), *Dance education around the world: Perspectives on dance, young people and change* (pp. 117–126). Routledge.

Taylor, C. A. (2021). Knowledge matters: Five propositions concerning the reconceptualisation of knowledge in feminist new materialist, posthumanist and postqualitative approaches. In K. Murris (Ed.), *Navigating the postqualitative, new materialist and critical posthumanist terrain across disciplines. An introductory guide* (pp. 22–42). Routledge.

Zhang, N., Southcott, J., & Gindidis, M. (2021). Integrating dance and language education: A pedagogical epiphany. *The Qualitative Report, 26*(10), 3112–3126. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2021.4835

NOTES

1 https://sites.uniarts.fi/en/web/ellaresearchproject/home

2 The school and dance institute have given permission to use their real names for research purposes.

3 The dance institute's part was funded partly by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture.

4 All team members gave informed consent to research participation.

5 All pupils participated in the project lessons, but data was collected from and screenshots published of the pupils whose guardians gave informed consent.

6 The COVID-19 pandemic interrupted the teaching in the spring of 2020.