



Putting It Together:

Artographic awareness through collaborative teaching in a musical theatre educational program

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Abstract

This article demonstrates how collaborative teaching in the field of musical theatre has served as a platform for uncovering the research methodology of artography. This methodology explores the intricate entanglement of the roles of artist, researcher, and teacher. The reorganization of a new curriculum and collaborative teaching among a group of teachers at the bachelor program in musical theatre at Kristiania University College forms the basis of our reflections. We, the two authors, were involved in this process. We connect these experiences to theories of artography and collaborative teaching. We argue that our multidisciplinary artographic awareness relied on certain conditions of growth within the teacher group. These growth conditions include: 1) a culture of sharing pedagogy among

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colleagues, 2) working beyond an individual's level of comfort through co-teaching and 3) reevaluating teaching habits

Keywords: A/r/tography, artography, artographic awareness, a/r/tographic community, collaborative teaching, musical theatre, multidisciplinary, higher education

Introduction

This article aims to address how collaborative teaching, when reorganizing a curriculum in musical theatre, has propelled what we call artographic awareness. Artography is a research methodology for understanding one's own practice as artists (a), researchers (r), and teachers (t) (Irwin & Springgay, 2008). We argue that the reorganization of the curriculum developed artographic awareness through practicing, theorizing, and materializing (Le Blanc et al., 2015). The collaborators we refer to in this article comes from the three fields of singing, dancing, and acting. We alternately use the terms teachers, teacher group, faculty and colleagues when we are referring to the group.



Figure 1. The reorganization of a new curriculum in musical theatre.
Photo: Johanne Karen Hagen.

According to Dahl-Tallgren (2023, p. 42), “artography” can be spelled in two different ways: “A/r/tography” to emphasize the different yet interconnected roles of artist, researcher, and teacher, and “artography” to highlight the seamless integration of these roles. We use the version without slashes, as we believe it more effectively captures the intricate weaving together of these positions.

Musical theatre is by nature a collaboration, and the musical theatre student has to develop high-level skills within each of these fields and must integrate them in developing the triple threat (a performer able to merge singing, dancing, and acting skills in one artistic expression). However, traditional education often teaches these fields separately (Hagen et al., 2017; Kvammen et al., 2020; Melton & Tom, 2012; Melton, 2015). As a multidisciplinary field, musical theatre has only recently been recognized as an academic discipline (Wollman, 2021), and according to von Germeten (2023) the field “is in its infancy” (p.15) in Norway. Limited attention has been paid to research within the field, neither from the perspective of musicology, theatre studies, or performing arts pedagogies. Nevertheless, recent research at Kristiania University College has explored various pedagogical methods in musical theatre. This includes studies that incorporate action research approaches with voice (von Germeten, 2022), studies on teaching methods in musical theatre including song, dance, and the Alexander Technique³ (Kvammen et al., 2020), as well as song, dance, acting, and the Alexander Technique (Kvammen & Hagen, 2024). Collectively, these projects, which involved educators from all areas of musical theatre, have provided both cross-disciplinary and cross- aesthetic insights.

In this paper we want to highlight yet another collaborative project, namely the multidisciplinary work in the teacher group at the bachelor program in musical theatre (BMT) at Kristiania University College. In this article we explore the central

³ Alexander Technique (AT) is a practical method addressing the way we use ourselves (body and thoughts in relation to environment) in different activities, for example in daily activities as walking, bending or picking up something, but also in activities as dancing, playing an instrument etc. AT is often described as a re-education of how thoughts, body and environment cooperates, and it is a widely used method among performing artists (see for example Stat, 2024).

experiences in the group, including pedagogical developments, reflections, conversations, and writings regarding the final curriculum. Multiple experiences are discussed, guided by the following analytic research question:

In what ways has collaborative teaching within an educational program in musical theatre propelled artographic awareness among the teachers?

According to Jusslin (2020) and Jackson & Mazzei (2011), an analytic question emerges from “concrete encounters with the research in practice” (Jusslin, 2020, p. 8). By exploring this question, we aim to animate a discussion on the possibilities and connections between collaborative teaching and the methodology of artography within our field of specialization. We have chosen to use the term “artographic awareness” to elucidate how the teacher group has gradually developed their understanding of the intertwined and interconnected nature of their roles as artists, teachers, and researchers. This awareness has emerged through embodied, collaborative, and practical experiences. Additionally, we aim to highlight how artographic awareness can offer a more holistic perspective in exploring the ways our roles are interconnected (Gouzouasis, 2013, p. 4).

When examining the relationship(s) between collaborative teaching and artography, we attempt to offer a fresh perspective on the teaching within the field of musical theatre. It is also our hope that the discussions presented in this paper might propose artographic collaboration in other fields and other communities of artists, researchers, and teachers as well.

This article is divided into four parts. The first part provides a presentation of the background context and the working frames towards the curriculum. The second part gives a presentation of the theoretical underpinnings for the processes presented in the article. In the third part we discuss the analytical question, and we argue that three essential conditions of growth are a prerequisite for this work – 1) a culture of sharing pedagogy among colleagues, 2) working beyond an individual’s level of comfort through co-teaching and 3) reevaluating teaching habits. The fourth part sums up our experiences and suggests some implications for higher education within the performing arts.

Background context

The teacher group

As collaborative educators and researchers, we, the two authors of this paper, have spent the past twenty years teaching singing, voice, and choir lessons at the same higher education institutions. Additionally, we have co-founded and performed together in the professional vocal ensemble, Stilett⁴. Our collaboration encompasses performances, team-teaching, research, reflection, discussion, writing, and for the past ten years, sharing our work with a broader community.

The other teachers, our colleagues referred to in this paper, have their specializations within one of the three fields of musical theatre. They are a community of experienced practitioners, researchers, and teachers from different backgrounds, including ballet and contemporary dancers, pop/rock, opera and classical singers, movie and theatre actors as well as directors, conductors and pianists (with competence in a wide range of genres). When we worked on the curriculum, the group was made up of about fifteen persons. The singing and acting teachers at BMT gained their pedagogical experiences largely through the master-apprentice model during their education (O'Bryan & Harrison, 2014), whereas the dance teachers were educated using both student-centered and teacher-centered approaches (Dragon, 2015).

When we started the work on the curriculum, the teacher group had been relatively constant for a long period, and informal and formal conversations of the multidisciplinary pedagogical possibilities had developed over the years. As performing artists (singers, dancers, and actors), we had multiple experiences from different artistic research projects and collaboration with other performing artists outside our institution. Within our institution, some teachers from the teacher group

⁴ Stilett is a cabaret ensemble consisting of eight professional singers with diverse musical background (Stilett, 2024).

annually collaborated in small or large musical theatre productions as part of the students' end-of-year examinations.

Frameworks for reorganizing the curriculum

One of the purposes in developing a new curriculum was to diminish the “translation problems” we knew our students were struggling with in merging the fields of singing, dancing, and acting. This is a well-known pedagogical challenge within the field of musical theatre (Hagen et al, 2017; Melton, 2015). As an initial step, mapping of collaborative and pedagogical possibilities within the field was initiated by the leadership at BMT. Based on previous research (Hagen et al., 2017; Kvammen et al. 2020) and a growing multidisciplinary focus among the teachers, the leadership decided to replace the former curriculum (which was subject specific) with a reorganized multidisciplinary curriculum. Financial funding from Kristiania University College ensured that the colleagues could work approximately 15 days together over a total of three years.

The first part of the process consisted of plenary discussions in the faculty together with some of the students from the “old” curriculum, dialog meeting with a musical theatre performer/director, and work in different working groups. The groups were named “basic skills”, “performance practices”, “theory and entrepreneurship”, “multidisciplinary projects”, and “movement”. Curriculums from other bachelor programs in musical theatre in Scandinavia were read and discussed and co-writing documents were created, shared, and developed. The official and final reorganized curriculum was finished in November 2019. The reconstructed curriculum was implemented with the first student cohort in autumn 2020.

In the second part of the process, the teachers engaged in hands-on, practical work on the floor. Initially, we exchanged subject-specific methods and exercises. Our activities included Laban's movement analysis (Woltmann, 2022), ear-training work and music theory, voice training and voice qualities, and acting exercises based on the tradition of Stanislavsky (Merlin, 2001). Next, the teachers were divided into small groups of two or three. Each group was tasked with planning, developing, and testing new multidisciplinary teaching methods in workshops with each other and alumni students.



Figure 2. Two of the teachers trying out new exercises.
Photo: Anne Cecilie Røsjø Kvammen

For example, we combined rhythm and ear training exercises with tap dancing and explored basic ballet exercises focusing on balance and body alignment, further connecting this to singing. In one session, a singing teacher and an acting teacher led improvisations, emphasizing imagination and voice work. We worked on exploring texts and movement, and we also composed our own melodies using texts from the musical theatre canon to see if we could interpret the text in our unique musical styles. The group had several days experimenting together on the floor, trying out new multidisciplinary methods, to prepare ourselves for the first group of students.

In this article, we attempt to view this work-in-progress as a cohesive whole. The written documents from the process, such as planning documents, agendas, notes, and reports, are used to recall the process. We do not analyse any part in detail but

discuss how the whole process was an avenue for finding our artographic awareness.

Ethical considerations

This article was written by two of the participants from the teacher group. In addition, one acting teacher and one dance teacher have been writing and presenting the artographic work described here (see Bjørneby & Kvammen, 2022; Hagen et. al. 2024; Kvammen & Bjørneby, 2023). We cannot fully account for everyone in the collegium who has been a part of this work, and all interpretations of the process and the associated documents are those of the authors.

Theoretical underpinnings

Artography

Artography has its origins in art and arts-based research, both of which are umbrella terms for multiple ways of performing researching within the arts (Østern, 2017). Research within the arts is transformative in character, and it attempts to understand, interpret, point to meaning making, create activity and contribute to change (p. 11). A rhizomatic structure is often used as an illustration of the unstructured and non-linear network between the roles that one holds as an artist, researcher, and teacher. These structures grow into, under, and over each other and connect in different ways: “A rhizome is an assemblage that moves and flows in dynamic momentum....an interstitial space, open and vulnerable where meanings and understandings are interrogated and ruptured” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xx). Interstitial spaces occur between the different roles and Beare (2009) states that artography is the “examination of the in-between spaces of artmaking/researching/teaching (a/r/t).” (p. 162). This examination is a continuous process and Winters et al. (2009) state: “In a/r/tography, process matters. This is because meaning is alive—always moving, always growing. A/r/tographers view constructions of knowledge as infinite and in-process” (p. 8). An important part of this process of inquiry is writing and the “graphy”-part of artography refers to writing, which means an artist-researcher-teacher using writing as part of their development. This praxis cannot be separated from the other roles, and Springgay et al. (2005) write:

To be engaged in the practice of a/r/tography means to inquire in the world through a process of art making and writing. It is a process of double imaging that includes the creation of art and words that are not separate or illustrative of each other but instead, are interconnected and woven through each other to create additional meanings (p. 899).

The writing strengthens the reflective practice in artography and contributes to deeper understanding of one's own practice or a community of artographers' practice (Irwin, 2008). According to Irwin (2008), an artographic community is "a community of inquirers working as artists and pedagogues" (p.73) and that such communities must address difference and welcome dialogue. It is also worth mentioning that Irwin & Springgay (2008) link artography to action research emphasising that "[...] action research and a/r/tography are concerned with creating the circumstances to produce knowledge and understanding through inquiry laden processes" (xxiv).

Artography with several art forms

According to Irwin & Springgay (2008), "A/r/tography has grown out of a fluid and constantly evolving community" (p. xix), and it has spread to several places around the world (Irwin et. al., 2017). Although artography has its origins mainly in visual art forms (Vist, 2015), the existing body of literature on artography related to other art fields is expansive and growing (Irwin, 2024). Within the field of theatre education, Beare (2009) explores how artography links with theatre pedagogy and his own role as an artist/researcher/teacher in secondary school. Bird & Tozer (2020) uses artography to explore the student-teacher roles and how these can affect learning. Mickel (2021) explores how the performing arts integrate with research, learning, and teaching and suggests that artography facilitates the integration of these pedagogic and creative activities. Carter et al. (2011) uses artography as a focus for inquiry in the education of theatre teacher candidates, while Lea et al. (2011) explore artography and research-based theatre as methodologies that can be integrated by closely examining a theatre-based piece. Dahl-Tallgren (2023) explores how the multiple perspectives of artography might serve as a contribution in an art-making process of a theatre in education programme.

Within the field of dance, artography has gradually influenced parts of the research field in recent years; for example, Flønes (2023) describes her emerging practice as choreographer-researcher-teacher using the methodology of artography as an inspiration, and Østern et. al. (2024) describes how an artographic approach became a part of a professional learning community when restructuring the BA program in Dance Pedagogy at Stockholm University. Moreover, Domogalla (2019) writes about her way of understanding her own artistic practice through academic writing, using artography as her methodology.

Within the field of higher music education and musical theatre, the literature is still scarce. Gouzouasis (2006) is one scholar who links artography to music research, and Kristoffersen et. al. (2022) used artographic practice in primary school to create a music video. Despite the growing focus on artography in dance and theatre, to our knowledge, no attention has been given to its application in the field of musical theatre.

Embodied perspectives

Research within the arts is often conducted “from within”, and the body is involved in the thinking and reflection. Moreover, intersubjective relations to others are essential: “Research becomes a process of exchange that is not separated from the body but emerges through an intertwining of mind and body, self and other, and through our interactions with the world” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxii). As artographers, we, the authors, are informed by theory from a multifaceted embodied perspective. Fuchs (2020), Gallagher (2005), and Varela et al. (1993) all acknowledge how one experiences the world in a constant interplay between thoughts, emotions, the body, and the environment in a circularity as pointed out by Fuchs: “Circularity [is] a means of explaining the relation between the phenomenology of lived experience and the dynamics of organism–environment interactions.” (Fuchs, 2020, p. 2). The field of embodied teaching and learning (Clughen, 2023; Hegna & Ørbæk, 2021; Macrine & Fugate, 2022; Østern et. al, 2021) is expanding and has enriched and contributed further to our epistemological point of view.

Collaborative teaching in higher music education

Traditionally, the master-apprentice model has been the cornerstone of higher music education in the western world (Gaunt et al., 2013, p.1). However, this tradition is evolving, with a growing emphasis on collaborative knowledge practices in recent years (Gaunt et al., 2013, Westerlund & Gaunt, 2021; Harrison & Grant, 2015; Latukefu & Verenikina, 2013). In 2002, Liora Bresler addressed the “myth of individualism” and noted that “cross-disciplinary collaboration requires a shift of perception regarding the relationship of the individual to the society, from the individual constrained by the community, to a framework where the individual becomes enhanced by interactions with others” (p.18). This is also noted by Hongve (2022): Today, teachers are expected to collaborate, and students expect dialogue and equality with the teacher (p. 109). In their book *Expanding Professionalism in Music and Higher Music Education*, Westerlund & Gaunt (2021) invite the reader to see the importance for

[...] both music education and higher music education to be proactive in creating experimental spaces in which to research and develop next practices in music, thereby supporting the professions and next generations of professionals in fulfilling their societal responsibility and promise as game changers (p. xiii).

Gaunt & Westerlund (2013) and Orzolek (2018) argues that musicians are especially skilled in collaborating with others in their music practice, because the practice is “largely collaborative in nature” but that these collaborative elements are “under-utilized by educational practitioners” (Gaunt & Westerlund, 2013, p. 2). This is transferable to the field of musical theatre education and is highly relevant for our collaborating teacher group as well; in musical theatre productions, collaboration takes place on multiple levels. Therefore, collaboration was a prerequisite when work was started on the curriculum. The growth conditions consisted of three decisive factors: 1) a culture of sharing pedagogy among colleagues, 2) working beyond an individual’s level of comfort through co-teaching and 3) reevaluating teaching habits.

Growth conditions

1) *A culture of sharing pedagogy among colleagues*

Overall, reorganizing the curriculum was time-consuming and expensive. Nonetheless, the leadership argued that the work had to be rooted in the entire teacher group. This was a conscious investment and led us towards the first condition of growth, which was defined as a culture of sharing pedagogy among colleagues. Conditions were created for all the teachers at BMT in the form of workshops, meetings, co-creating documents, and discussion groups. Throughout the entire process, we discussed, wrote, reflected and taught in the same room and openly shared subject-specific knowledge and methods with each other. These meeting points led to the development of new methods and new exercises. An important source of nourishment for the culture of sharing was a general feeling of belonging and connectedness, which resonates with Irwin (2017), who states that “[...] artographic communities may be defined by the very act of coming together, the condition of relationality, of belonging” (p.72). Overall, new pedagogical approaches and possibilities emerged, and in retrospect, we see that an artographic awareness began to emerge among the colleagues. This aligns with Østern (2017), who describes methodology as a process. However, methodology may appear as a product once the project has been described and completed (p. 8).

Our process included many small steps and parts, and in the beginning of the process no one knew what the outcome would be. It became “a practice set in motion”, as described by Irwin (2013, p. 198). It was when we became aware of the methodology of artography that we realized we had been engaged in artographic research while working on the curriculum.

The shared space for collaboration

From the multiple meeting points, the pedagogues uncovered bridges and overlaps within the fields of singing, dancing, and acting. We asked, “What do a dancer, a singer, and an actor have in common?” and “Where are the meeting points?” In the beginning of the process, we were all afraid of losing some important elements in the realm of our subject-specific fields and did not believe that the multidisciplinary work was going to be fruitful. And it took a lot of extra time! Could these changes ensure

that the students would be skilled enough in their crafts of singing, dancing, and acting? We immersed ourselves deeply in our respective fields of specialization, defending them rigorously. This was a crucial part of the process. Over time, we began to recognize the value of multidisciplinary juxtapositions, viewing the overlapping areas as a shared space for collaboration.



Figure 3. The shared space for collaboration in musical theatre

Perhaps the “sacrifices” we made could free up time for other activities? Maybe we could develop ideas and methods that, in the long run, would be more essential and sustainable for the triple threat? Some joint themes unfolded, and we now teach them in the first five weeks of the students' first year (Figure 4).

Week 1	Ensemble work, all-inclusive awareness, listening, rhythm
Week 2	Curiosity and imagination
Week 3	Creativity and improvisation
Week 4	Embodied learning (body, mind, emotions, and surroundings)
Week 5	The performers meeting with the stage and the audience

Figure 4. The joint themes we (three or four teachers) teach collaboratively the first five weeks at BMT

We have named these weeks the “Introduction Weeks”, and the thematic order was carefully discussed within the collegium. The first week opens with ensemble work, focusing on all-inclusive awareness (source), listening, and rhythm awareness. The purpose is to broaden the students' understanding of ensemble work as a foundation for performing artists. In the last week, the students' attention is on the theme “The performers meeting with the stage and the audience.” During these weeks, a team of three to four teachers are collaboratively teaching the group of new students.

In the process of reorganizing the curriculum, both the sharing of stories from our teaching and our discussions concerning understandings of concepts and pedagogical strategies strengthened the feeling of belonging in the teacher community and enriched our practice. Irvin (2017) states: “Practice is created through the negotiation and sharing of aesthetic and educational stories and understandings” (p.74). Our practice led to an expansion of knowledge, and several of the teachers reports that this knowledge has affected their own artistic work. Now, this is part of our new artographic awareness: understanding how the different fields overlap and merge, and how we can take advantage of this in our own artistic expressions. By allowing this new multidisciplinary understanding and insight to influence our one-on-one singing lessons, acting, or dance classes, we emphasize that the collaborative aspect has deepened and influenced our roles as teachers. The culture of sharing has become a hallmark at our bachelor program, and the work has continued into new projects. We believe it also affects the students, and when the students see teachers working together in the same room and exchanging different professional approaches it stimulates creativity and allows for diverse approaches in teaching. We argue that this culture of sharing pedagogy between colleagues opens the students' view to learning: The world is not black and white, and there might be several avenues for approaching a particular “problem”. As noted by Orzolek (2018), by doing this

[...] we allow our students to see and hear teachers interact with one another over real issues and concerns pertinent to the disciplines. I think this is a critical skill for students to learn and something crucial to the success of learning in any interdisciplinary classroom (p. 128).

Taken together, these projects over the last few years constitute rich pedagogical experiences and have strengthened the teacher group. As we see it, our faculty is now more characterized by an attitude of curiosity where the conversations and experiments continue to develop with artographic awareness. Disagreements and discussions were important steps of the process, and they still are. Nevertheless, we argue that these experiences enable us to deal with disagreements in a more constructive way. Equally important was the playful and sharing atmosphere we all created, inviting us “out of our comfort zones”.

2) *Working beyond an individual’s level of comfort through co-teaching*

We wanted to explore the connections between the different fields in musical theatre and to investigate new pathways and new means to facilitate the students’ learning trajectories. We had to renounce many elements of basic training that we believed were important building blocks in our “own” fields, and in the process we had to “trouble and address difference”, which is an inevitable part of an an a/r/tographic community (Irwin, 2008, p.72). During the process, the singular nature of just teaching singing, or just teaching acting, or just teaching dance-was challenged.

Being without

Phelan and Rogoff (2001) talk about interdisciplinarity as a place of “being without”. This “without” is clarified in Springgay (2005): “Without is not a form of negation, a lack, or a denial of what has been previously done. “Without” is a space of active participation where one discovers that previous methodologies are not sufficient while simultaneously resisting the formation of specific criteria to replace them” (p. 898). When reorganizing the curriculum and finding new ways into multidisciplinary teaching methods, the teachers felt “without”. To us, “being without” meant leaving the safety of our own subject-specific ways to communicate. In the process, we had to abandon some subject-specific and traditional ways in teaching and to let go of what felt safe and comfortable. Consequently, we gradually had to move out of our comfort zones. The shared space encouraged us to develop new approaches and exercises. For example, we developed exercises that invited students to explore the interplay between thoughts, body and surroundings, both in combination with voice, movement and acting work. This approach strengthens the students’ presence and momentary-sensitivity (Sødal, 2020), enhancing both their skill-development and

artistic explorations. Clarke et al. in Irwin (2017) deal with uncertainty as follows: “When we permit ourselves to entertain uncertainty, we are allowing ourselves to live dangerously with pedagogy - to invite chaos (uncertainty) suggests that we will trust the process of complexity to resolve or manage the resultant problems” (p.73).

Our abandonment of some teaching habits opened several new possibilities. For example, when engaging with students’ artistic projects in a teaching setting, our focus has gradually shifted from a somewhat one-sided technical focus to a more holistic approach. As singing teachers, we are now less concerned with isolated issues such as breathing techniques, sound and resonance. Instead, questions regarding stage presence, communication, and movement have become integral elements to address. We believe that stepping into the “unknown” and out of our comfort zones has stimulated and developed what we now recognize as artographic awareness within our teaching group.

Collaborative conversations

In the context of the floor work, the teachers also had the opportunity to talk about, demonstrate, and teach some important components in their own fields, thus engaging in “collaborative conversations” (Renshaw, 2013, p.238). Renshaw further writes about creativity and innovation in relation to collaborative communities:

This is not achieved in isolation, in a silo of convention and predictability, but by people choosing to work together, celebrating how their different talents, perspectives and insights can create something that transforms their practice and ways of seeing the world (p. 238).

The process was at the same time funny and unpleasant. In a way, we felt that we were vulnerable when teaching in front of our colleagues. Leaving one’s comfort zones implies that one must show one’s vulnerability (Ørbæk & Engelsrud, 2019) and abandon some ingrained habits, which was not easy after many years of teaching and being the “master”. The experiments on the floor in groups, and the resulting co-teaching, gave us the opportunity to ask professional questions, try out new exercises, and to interact. Sæther (2013) writes that “the most fundamental learning takes place when comfort zones have to be abandoned as a consequence of intercultural collaboration” (p.37). Collectively, we have experienced curiosity and a

willingness to learn side by side as colleagues. We continue to challenge ourselves in this direction by regularly inviting external pedagogues to hold workshops in the teacher group. In this work we are engaged in different activities on the floor, including sharing, talking, discussing, and creating new thoughts and ideas together. Our renewed artographic awareness is very much a part of these new ideas. Stepping out of some teaching habits and stepping into the students' roles has given us new perspectives. By embodying insecurity and moving out of our comfort zones, we have placed ourselves in the very situations we constantly encourage our students to embrace. This approach aligns with Westerlund & Gaunt (2021) who suggest that educators should "be proactive in creating experimental spaces in which to research and develop next practices in music, thereby supporting the professions and next generations of professionals in fulfilling their societal responsibility and promise as game changers" (p. xiii)

3) *Reevaluating teaching habits*

When educating the triple threat there are three skills that must be developed and cultivated, but as pointed out in the introduction, traditional silo thinking often permeates such educational programs. One reason might be that teachers in the performing arts are influenced by the master-apprentice model (Dragon, 2015; Gaunt et al., 2013; Hongve, 2022; O`Bryan & Harrison, 2014). Another reason is addressed by Antilla (2013): She points out how educational programs and schools often remain largely untouched by progressive developments in the arts, and "schools can be seen as containers of pedagogical history" (p.16). Within schools and educational programs, she claims, there is a danger that old paradigms continue to exist and are conserved.

As singing teachers, we can relate to what O`Bryan and Harrison (2014) write: "Typical pedagogical strategies employed by singing teachers include the use of visual imagery through verbal instruction, imitation of vocal models and gestural instructions" (p.3). Gaunt & Westerlund (2013) points out that one-on-one lessons often start with "a brief warm-up or chat, the student playing a study or some repertoire and then detailed comments and technical or musical work on the material" (p.199). In dance, Dragon (2015) points out another "habit", saying that the pedagogue's teaching philosophy, values, and background are not always

highlighted and explained to the students and how this might contribute to a maintenance of a form and way of teaching that can unconsciously become an “I teach as I was taught paradigm” (Dragon, 2015, p.26).

The collaborative work that we engaged in largely challenged such habits. According to Irwin (2008), “a/r/tographers address the explicit knowledge as well as the implicit or tacit knowledge shared among community members” (p. 72). During the process, our implicit or tacit knowledge became apparent. We all had to relate to and reconsider our preconceptions of each other’s fields; our intuitions, our assumptions and not least, our embodied understanding of our own field, but also of our colleagues’ fields. This thorough process made us all more artographically aware, enabling us to see connections between each other’s fields, develop new exercises, and explore further possibilities for co-teaching. The artographic awareness also enhanced our creativity in envisioning artistic expressions for future student performances and inspired us as performing artists. Irwin (2008) notes that “though tacit knowledge may seldom be articulated, a space of emptiness and hospitality provides a venue for self-reflection” (p. 73). This self-reflection was making us reevaluating usual teaching habits and a recurring statement among the teachers was: “I have learned a lot from my colleagues’ fields of expertise”. The teachers often referred to each other’s field when they were teaching. Overall, the knowledge the teacher group has acquired from their colleagues in singing, dancing, and acting has opened up new possibilities in the studios. Not least, it has made us more aware of our habitual way of teaching and has encouraged us to reflect on our choices as teachers.

Habitual distinction of the different roles

As a performing arts institution, we are a part of the “academization” within the performing arts educational discourse (Angelo et al., 2019), and as teacher-artists we are expected to research, reflect upon, and develop our professional and artistic praxis. We have felt, and witnessed among our colleagues, that the demand for research arouses resistance and displeasure, as Rasmussen (2012) points out: The requirements (of doing research) may also be perceived as complex and irrelevant to the extent that one is expected to orient oneself in a jungle of research theory and methodological traditions from many scientific disciplines and several knowledge

paradigms (p. 25). We argue that the teachers' prejudices and habitual ways of viewing the role of the researcher also brought forth unconscious silo thinking, and the artist, teacher, and the researcher did not necessarily have much contact.

As artists, many of the teachers were used to working with new material and searching for new expressions and were accustomed to chaos. As teachers, we were more often tied to teaching habits, traditions, and methods. A growing artographic awareness has dissolved the artificial and habitual distinctions between our roles as artists, teachers, and researchers. By bringing an exploratory mindset and the curiosity of a researcher into the studio, the teacher within us has become more accustomed to embracing chaos.

Concluding remarks

In this text, we have posited that collaborative pedagogical strategies have propelled and enhanced the emergence of what we have termed artographic awareness within a cohort of educators in a bachelor program in musical theatre. So far, there is little published literature on the multidisciplinary pedagogical possibilities within the field of musical theatre education. In this paper we have argued that co-teaching or working together is a different, yet beneficial way of working, and that the reconstruction of the curriculum at Kristiania University College was a venue in discovering new possibilities. The multifaceted work became an entrance to understanding our threefold identity as artists, researchers, and teachers. Irwin (2013) describes artographic processes as "a journey over time and a journey in time" and as a process of "coming to becoming" (p.199-200). Overall, the work on the curriculum has been a process where knowing (theoria), doing (praxis), and making (poiesis) (Given, 2008, p. 26) have been merged and been used. Without any of the teachers really being aware of it, artographic approaches were utilized in the process. The teacher groups' triple identity as artists, researchers, and teachers contributed to a creative and playful process in developing new pedagogical tools and multidisciplinary methods between the different disciplines. As a prerequisite, we had to create a culture of sharing pedagogy among colleagues, to work beyond an individual's level of comfort through co-teaching and to reevaluating teaching habits. When doing this, we created the circumstances (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxiv) for

development within the teacher group and the power of collaboration became a motivating factor.

The process of “putting it together”⁵, which involved both the inherent fields of musical theatre and the recognition of the interrelatedness between our roles, has been, and continues to be, important and inspiring for our artographic awareness. We believe that artographic awareness can provide a playful, creative, and holistic approach to artistic practice, research, and teaching. However, for us, collaboration and collaborative teaching among the teacher group were the key components.

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⁵ «Putting It Together» is a song from the musical “Sunday in the park with George”, written by Stephen Sondheim, one of the most famous musical composers.

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