

Encounters with the World through Cultural Schoolbag Workshops for Teacher Students

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Abstract

This article raises some questions about encountering the world and subjectivation in art educational practices. Gert Biesta recently criticised the continuing emphasis on expressive and self-centred approaches and pedagogies in art education (2017, 2018). Biesta calls for a world-centred approach to education in general, as well as art education practices that move the focus from oneself to a greater openness towards the world.

In my own art education practice, I attempt to enable this shift from what I see as an emphasis on merely the self to an emphasis on the world—a more sustainable approach to art education. I practise turning students towards the world that explores the possibility for subjectivation: that is, for subjects to come into existence. I frame this teaching strategy as *educational dissensus* (Skregelid, 2016, 2019a, 2019b, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c).

This article discusses the notion of world-centredness in relation to the initial stages of a pilot study involving teacher students in The Cultural Schoolbag (TCS) workshops. The TCS workshop *Teiporama*, by the artist Sandra Norrbin, had an explorative character and was oriented towards process rather than focused on

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developing skills and an artistic object. At first glance, what happened in the workshops might seem like the expressive approach to art education that Biesta criticizes. However, I still believe the workshop revealed something more. This leads me to asking: *How can an art practice having the self, the I, as a point of departure at the same time be a world-centred educational practice?*

Keywords: Educational dissensus, subjectivation, teacher education, the cultural schoolbag, world-centeredness

Introduction

To exist as a subject thus means to exist in dialogue with the world; it means being in the world without occupying the centre of the world (Biesta, 2017, p. 58).

In my art education research practice, I attempt to enable a shift from an individualistic and self-centred approach to an awareness of oneself in the world and in relation to others and the surroundings. I find *world-centredness* to be a more sustainable approach to art education. I practise showing or turning students towards the world and exploring the possibility for subjectivation: that is, for subjects to come into existence, or what I call *events of subjectivation*. I employ strategies from the arts and deliberately attempt to create tensions that disrupt normal attitudes and behaviours. I frame this teaching strategy as *educational dissensus* and *dissensual education* (Skregelid, 2016, 2019a).

One of my ongoing projects on educational dissensus is part of the national research project *pARTicipED: Empowering student teachers for cross-sectorial collaborations with The Cultural Schoolbag (TCS) in Norwegian Schools*, funded by The Research Council of Norway (2021–2023). The part of the project I lead, which is based in the University of Agder (UiA), Norway, is called the *Lab for initiating dissensus and exploring the edges between art and education*. This involves, amongst other things, working in collaboration with the Swedish installation artist Sandra Norrbin, student teachers and other relevant partners for the project.

In this article, I will discuss a world-centred approach to education in relation to the initial stages of this particular project. The pilot study, financially supported by The Teacher Education Unit at UiA and Kulturtanken: Arts for Young Audiences Norway, had its base in UiA. TCS workshop *Teiporama*, by Norrbin, was site specific and temporal. The workshop had an explorative character and was oriented towards

process rather than focused on developing skills and an artistic object. I specifically chose this workshop for the student teachers as part of their program of study, with the explicit intention to establish a contrast to the vast majority of practice seen in Norwegian schools in general and also in the arts and crafts subject. At first sight, what happened in *Teiporama* might seem like a merely expressive and individualistic approach to art education. However, I still believe the workshop reveals something more. This leads me to asking the question that will be addressed in this article: *How can an art practice having the self, the I, as a point of departure at the same time be a world-centred educational practice?*

I begin the article by briefly introducing the concept of *educational dissensus*. The concept was developed in my PhD and writings that have evolved from that work (Skregelid, 2016, 2019a, 2019b, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c). I will also make a connection between this strategy of teaching and democracy. I then present and contextualise the project involving the *Teiporama* workshop and discuss how it is informed and characterised by dissensus.

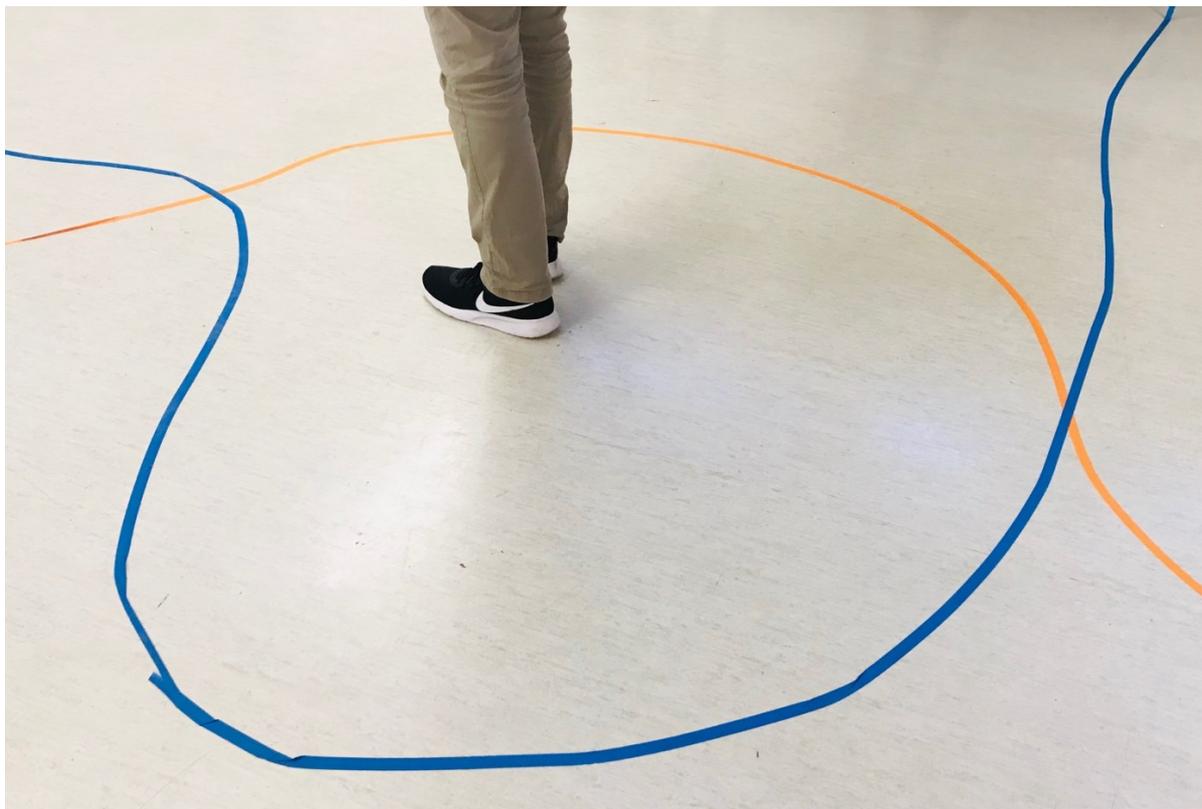


Figure 1. TCS workshop *Teiporama*, with artist Sandra Norrbin at University of Agder, March 2020.
Photo: Lisbet Skregelid

As the project is still in an initial phase, I will examine how the experiences from this pilot study correspond to my own and others' research. I conclude the article by discussing and drawing connections between educational dissensus, subjectivation and world-centredness in art education. I also argue for the relevance of engaging with art in education, as doing so enables students to be in dialogue with both themselves and the world.

Educational dissensus and democracy

The question of world-centredness discussed in this article is based on the TCS workshop *Teiporama* within the frame of teacher education. The artist Sandra Norrbin was commissioned to do the workshop in 2019 for my art and craft students within teacher education and then for general student teachers in 2020 as part of the pilot study. Both groups of students were from UiA. The workshop was processual, playful and free of prescribed learning outcomes. There was no formal assessment. Rather, the students reflected on the relevance of the project for schools and, most importantly, they reflected on the value for them as future teachers. The overall aim was to strengthen students' awareness of the importance of art and artistic practice in school.

In this context, *Teiporama* seems to fit the idea of initiating what I call educational dissensus, as the workshop differs from the educational activities offered as part of the courses on both the general and art-specific teacher education programs. I see educational practice informed or characterised by dissensus as a pedagogical strategy that contrasts with and creates a tension between normal "lines of flight" (Deleuze & Guatarri, 2004) and hence aims to disrupt the expected. The disorder and rupture initiated may lead to resistance, which in my work I often see as a resource that leads to new recognition of one's perceptions and attitudes. In my writings, I argue that educational dissensus enables the subject to emerge. I frame this process as *events of subjectivation* (Skregelid, 2016, 2019a, 2019b).

My development of dissensus in an educational context has been inspired by the French-Algerian philosopher Jacques Rancière (2004, 2009, 2010). Rancière is drawn to the disruptive character of art, and he views art as dissensus and as a rupture in what he terms *the sensible*: what we can experience with our senses. In *The Emancipated Spectator* (2009), he states that art and thus dissensus breaks with habitual forms of imagination and contributes to new ways of seeing, hearing and

sensing. I find Rancière's conception of art to be relevant for education. Education can also function as a rupture. Education can contribute to disturbances and might make us perceive ourselves and the world in new ways.

Educational dissensus is closely related to doing and performing democracy. My research has demonstrated that encounters with art and art practice can be important "democratic freespaces" (Skregelid, 2016, p. 275). Freedom of speech and freedom of artistic expression are fundamental prerequisites for democracy and human rights. There are many examples of artworks that challenge societal norms. There are also many examples of artistic freedom of expression being tested. Although artists may not be able to rise above society's laws and regulations society needs art that questions the existing orders. Society needs artists to express their desires artistically without risking their freedom.

I find both art and art education to be a unique and important inclusive space where consensus is challenged and where diversity, dissensus and agonism can be played out. Rather than striving for equal attitudes and for the right and proper things to say and make, encounters with art, art practice and art education are central places for confronting others' attitudes and for helping us to become more nuanced and more tolerant of others' views—which is essential for a truly democratic society.

Educational practice in which dissensus is used as a central strategy can enhance a democratic education and thus a world-centred approach to education.

A world-centred approach to education

The art education researchers Dennis Atkinson's (2011, 2018) and Gert Biesta's (2006, 2014) theories on the subject and interruptive teaching have inspired my conceptualisation of educational dissensus. Both scholars argue for education that risks and offers resistance in order for the subject to exist or to come into presence. Their writings have motivated my way of seeing dissensus as a premise for events of subjectivation and have prompted my call for dissensus as something that can be initiated (Skregelid, 2020a). My hypothesis in this article is that certain art workshops and educational activities can make the participants view themselves as part of the world.

In my continuing investigations on educational dissensus, Biesta's (2017, 2018) understanding of a subject-oriented approach to education, along with his criticism of expressivism and self-centred approaches and pedagogies in art education, has caught my attention. In his book *Letting Art Teach*, Biesta questions what he thinks is

an overused rhetoric of creativity in art education. He further questions the expressive and child-centred tradition in art making or “expressivist justifications of the role of the arts in education” (2017, p. 37). Specifically, Biesta is referring to opportunities for students to express their own unique voices. Biesta is sceptical about the self-oriented activities that have been and are still a part of the art education discourse, which I term the “Charismatic regime of art education” (Skregelid, 2016, 2019) and that can be associated with educators such as Victor Löwenfeld and Herbert Read, who both promote freedom of expression. Biesta (2017) asks a lot of “What if?” questions and asks “What if the voice that expresses itself is racist? What if the creativity that emerges is destructive? What if the identity that poses itself is egocentric (...)?” (p. 56). How do Biesta’s questions correspond to the artistic autonomy and democratic education I have argued for in the paragraph above? Is it a difficult mismatch to argue for both personal artistic expression, freedom of speech and a world-centred education?

Biesta himself admits that his way of promoting a subject-oriented approach to education while simultaneously criticising a person-centred approach is difficult. In a recent article (2020), Biesta explains the following as part of the problem: “(...) not least because the very idea of a worldview already stems from the framework I seek to challenge” (p. 3). Instead of this person-centred—and what he refers to as an “egological”—approach to education, Biesta (2017) calls for art-educational practices that move the focus from oneself to greater openness towards the world. He argues for approaching students like this: “Look, there is something there that I believe might be good, important, worthwhile for you to pay attention to” (p. 85). Instead of an educational practice that aims to please the student, that listens to the students’ desires and that strives to give the student what he or she asks for, Biesta calls for education that disrupts and that deals with existential matters. He calls for a world-centred approach to education in general and in art-education practices and terms this approach *real educational work*: “The real educational work, as I will argue, is precisely not about facilitating expression but about bringing children and young people into dialogue with the world” (Biesta, 2017, p. 37).

So, what happens when we disturb students and initiate dissensus by bringing in a conceptual artist and her tape workshop in the context of teacher education and expose students to a processual and material-based art practice? What happens when we discuss the experiences from the workshop using theories of world-centeredness? How can an art practice having the self, the I, as a point of departure

simultaneously be a world-centred educational practice? Can Biesta's criticism of expressive art practices be questioned? Can this workshop demonstrate a more dynamic view on how the self relates to the world?

Keeping these questions and the main concern about world-centredness with me, in the following paragraphs I will contextualise the workshops, describe some of the observations and refer to some of the students' reflections made after the workshop. The first workshop from 2019 has already been described and discussed in a recent article (Skregelid, 2020b). However, in this article, I refer to the three workshops in which I saw a different kind of resistance and discuss the notion of world-centredness, particularly in response to this resistance.

The Cultural Schoolbag and *Teiporama* in Teacher Education

Contexts

Teiporama is a workshop component of TCS. TCS was established in 2001 and is an ambitious national program with an annual budget of about NOK 285 million. The scope of TCS spans literature, music, visual arts, performing arts, film and cultural heritage. TCS aims to ensure that all Norwegian pupils aged from 6 to 19 can access professional art and culture in schools. On average of four times a year, 3300 schools (comprising around 820 000 school pupils) visit venues for arts and culture or are visited by professional musicians, writers, theatre companies, dancers, artists and other cultural producers. According to education researcher Anne Bamford (2012), TCS "is one of the largest programs in the world that aims to bring professional arts and culture to children" (p. 33). The explicit political aim is to provide a shared frame of reference and joint experiences, irrespective of the pupil's nationality, address, wealth or social background (Kulturtanken, 2020).

Kulturtanken: Arts for Young Audiences Norway, is the Norwegian Ministry of Culture's agency responsible for TCS and works in close collaboration with county councils and municipalities, schools and cultural institutions. TCS has thus become an established national cross-institutional organisation; however, there are some challenges that need to be known and addressed. For example, research undertaken across the school sector and art sector demonstrates a polarisation of interests, perspectives and ideology (Liden, 2002; Aslaksen et al., 2003; Borgen & Brandt, 2006; Digranes, 2009; Aure et al., 2011; Christophersen et al., 2015). The research reports stress the need for integrating the program better within schools. The idea of relating the TCS productions closer to schools causes tensions, as the two sectors

(teachers and artists) seem to understand goals and objectives within the program differently. The reports state that teachers lack ownership of TCS and that artists want their artistic interventions to be isolated from everyday school activities.

All teachers in Norwegian schools are in contact with TCS activities several times a year, yet the TCS initiative has not been included as part of the education of teachers. This has led to a tense atmosphere between the sectors that seems to be ongoing. Against this background, this project facilitates practices within the context of teacher education, schools and TCS. The project aims to develop theory, methods and methodologies that can move beyond the established gap between the arts, culture and education within schools. By bringing these often conflicting capacities together (aesthetics and education, artists and teachers, art and pedagogy), the project facilitates new knowledge on the role of art in education and what important contributions *aesthetic approaches to teaching* in general, and *educational dissensus* in particular, can make in the educational system. Through gaining first-hand experience by encountering artists and becoming actively engaged in art practice, I believe that it is more likely that students will appreciate the value of art and encourage their future pupils to engage in art projects organised by both TCS and others.

The first *Teiporama* workshop component of the research project was realised in January 2019 for my student teachers in arts and crafts at UiA. This workshop involved nine students. I asked the artist to do exactly the same workshop with the students as part of this module as for the pupils in the schools. Before the workshop, the students were given some context and introduced to installation art and had worked both with traditional and more processual and unconventional drawing methods. This particular group took part in the same workshop in a primary school as part of TCS; therefore, the participants gained some additional understanding of the approach and materiality of the workshop, and how this could be realised with schoolchildren.

In March 2020, *Teiporama* was to be undertaken by eight groups of general student teachers from different courses. This is the cohort of students that the main project *pARTicipED* will include, as we try to reach all upcoming teachers, not only those who have chosen art as part of their teacher education. The general student teachers took part in the *Teiporama* workshop in between teaching in their main subjects, which ranged from science to physical education and religion. The workshop was made a mandatory activity as part of student teachers' education in aesthetic learning

processes. However, due to the corona crisis (COVID-19) and the subsequent closure of the university, only two of the eight workshops were completed, and this was in one day. The two groups were bigger than the arts and crafts group: one group of 15 students and the other group of 20. These students were not prepared for the workshop apart from receiving in advance some written information about the workshop and its context. The students were also presented with a small number of articles to read that demonstrated the different positions in the TCS debate (Holdhus, 2019; Holsve et al., 2019). These groups did not take part in the workshop with schoolchildren.

In the workshop for both categories of students, different coloured tape was used to make images and installations in one of the seminar rooms—thereby converting a conventional seminar room into an artistic space. The process was open-ended, with the students given minimal instructions and very little information about the project. In fact, there were very few limitations, as we encouraged the group to embrace the open-ended nature of the approach.

An aspect this project reveals methodologically is the potential of arts-based research, as well as what knowledge can be achieved through the hands and body in an educational context. The *a/r/tographic* approach seems relevant because of the processual and rhizomatic character and the combination of the fields of art, research and teaching (Springgay et al., 2008). In the limited frame of this article, I will comment on the chosen research methods and not elaborate on the arts-based research method *not used*. An *a/r/tographic* research approach is, however, something that will be considered in the main study.

The empirical material from the first part of the pilot study is based on my observations and fieldnotes, along with the arts and crafts students' own written reflections. In these written reflection notes, completed after the workshop, the students were to respond to questions about their experiences of the workshop and about how relevant they found the workshop in school and within teacher education. The students' responses were downloaded into a locked online folder. I then coded the reflections to keep students' identities anonymous. The empirical material from the last workshop with the general student teachers is based on my own observations and fieldnotes alone, as these students did not reflect on the workshop in writing. In the following three paragraphs, I will discuss the notions "person-centred" versus "world-centred" in relation to what I saw in the pilot study, as well as the responses to the *Teiporama* workshop.

A person-centred charismatic *Teiporama* workshop?

In the Norwegian context, child-centred education (Skregelid, 2016, 2019a) entered the arts and crafts curriculum in schools in the beginning of the 20th century. Instead of copying from models, still life and what the teachers had made, fantasy and free and spontaneous expression were promoted, especially in drawing. Unlike classical drawing sessions, children were expected to record their memories on paper and to express their feelings. The teacher was not to interfere with these activities. The belief in the child and his or her inherent capacities stems from Jean Jacques Rousseau's radical book on education, *Emile*, from 1762 (2010). Rousseau's ideas were picked up by art educators such as Victor Lowenfeld and Lambert Brittain (1976), who argued for a personal and undisturbed relation to the activities in arts and crafts workshops. So, how does the *Teiporama* workshop relate to these thoughts? Does the absence of instructions and the spontaneous and processual character of the workshop speak to a person-centred and individualistic approach to art practice?

One of the observations from the first workshop was that all the arts and crafts students started off with no hesitation at different places in the room, mostly corners and walls. To begin with, there was hardly any sound apart from the hands working on the tape. From my field notes, I could read that "most of them were focusing on the tape and seemed to be in their own worlds". When writing their reflection notes, the students were asked to explicitly recall the atmosphere in the workshop. Some recalled the dominating silence and the general good feeling and "magic mood" in the room. They also wrote about the high levels of personal concentration, about being in their own worlds (their own bubbles, as noted below):

I felt that there was a good atmosphere in the room. I felt that everyone was very focused on their own work. There was some talk and laughter in between, but also a lot of silence. I found myself going into a kind of bubble where I was concentrating on the work (Female student 3).

Another student reports: "The atmosphere in the room was very good and almost magical. Everyone just worked quietly with their own work and in their own worlds". Others noted the friendly atmosphere, calm mood and silence. Many connected to the processual approach in the workshop, as there was no hesitation, and the students started working with the tape without any set plan.



Figure 2 and 3. TCS workshop *Teiporama*, with artist Sandra Norrbin at University of Agder, January 2019. Photos: Lisbet Skregelid

The students worked with the tape, encountered challenges in the material and made their own worlds—both mentally and physically—that they moved into. Some students seemed to close the doors to the rest of the world. From these observations, the workshop *Teiporama* might be seen as a self-oriented practice, a practice part of the expressive art-making tradition that Biesta criticises. We can certainly question whether we are here witnessing a mere expressive and person-centred art practice that in many ways enabled the students to be with themselves and hence *not* be concerned with anything outside themselves (i.e., the world).

But I believe there is more going on here than just being in one's own individual worlds. The personal moves, the personal experiences, are important for the students to connect with the world. The students were aware of their actions, of their fellow students and their surroundings and, of course, aware of the physical involvement in the non-human matter (e.g., their hands encountering the materiality of the tape and their bodies being present in the seminar room).

I will now point to some of the main characteristics of the workshop that can be seen as resistance—an important premise for events of subjectivation and also for a world-centred approach to education. As the two groups responded differently to the workshop, the responses will be discussed separately.

A productive resistance from the arts and crafts students?

One premise for encountering the world is to encounter resistance. Art and encountering art may represent such resistance and has this dissensual potential to disturb (Skregelid, 2016, 2019a, 2019b, 2020). Thus, *initiating* dissensus by introducing students to both art and educational practice that contrast with norms and disrupt the expected has the capacity to turn education to a place for subjectivation—for being *in* the world, without occupying the centre of the world. This relates to how Biesta (2017) envisions how world-centredness is revealed: “The encounter with the world — material or social — manifests itself in the experience of resistance” (p. 64). When our intentions, actions and initiatives encounter resistance and are interrupted, we can push our ambitions, or we can withdraw if it feels too frustrating. Instead of withdrawing or protesting heavily, we can also stay in “the middle ground” and have ongoing dialogues with the challenges (p. 65). Biesta connects this to a world-centred approach and calls it a “never ending exploration of what it might mean to exist in and with the world” (p. 66). Introducing resistance is to put something “in the way” (p. 87).

What were the possible challenges and educational dissensus here? To discover the dissensus in the project is to point to where the educational disruption is and how it is implemented. It is also to pay attention to the resistance and challenges. In *Teiporama*, students’ expectations seemed to be disrupted. In their responses, students write about how this workshop differed from general teacher education activities, but it was also different from most of the activities they had already had in their art course. Nevertheless, the arts and crafts students said they felt a kind of freedom and openness in the project that they seldom experienced in education. They also appreciated the playful nature of the workshop, as playing is more or less ignored in the school curriculum. In their reflections, students even stated that they saw the relevance of this non-sense in their own education.

Even though the arts and crafts students found the workshop disturbing because of both its processual, temporal character and the lack of boundaries, there was no withdrawal. The students seemed quite content. Even though they felt out of control,

they stayed in the workshop and “stayed with the trouble” as Donna Haraway put it (2016). In the reflections, quite a few students write about feeling resistance. Interestingly, this was connected to the tape—the material. It was about the *doing* of art. The tape was more flexible than students expected it to be, and for some, the material was the agent that was in control, as described by this male student: “The tape actually controlled me. The only thing I thought about was using the colours in a specific order”. This challenge was also described as something new:

After all, we were challenged to work in a way we hadn't done before, so creativity was challenged. Using the room as paper and drawing with something other than a pencil challenged us to think differently and to see other solutions and opportunities than the ones we are used to (Female student 1).

This insight demonstrates how the workshop activated knowledge that was not common for the students and thus represented a rupture in their conceptions about art educational practice. As students were given the opportunity to reflect on and respond to their experiences of the resistance, this also realises the potential for subjectivation.

A more troublesome resistance from the general teacher students?

For the general student teachers, the resistance was manifested differently. From my observations, the atmosphere in the room was tense even before the workshop started. It was clear that the onset of the corona crisis was already causing worry amongst the students. This workshop required the students to work together in a small room (the same as the other students), but we told them to spread out as much as possible. This was the day before the university closed. In an act to possibly ease this tense situation, one of the students in the first group asked if it was okay to have music played to the workshop. The artist hesitated but agreed to have music on while they were working. I was discussing this with the artist after, and we agreed that we would not allow music in the other groups, as we felt it was disturbing.

Compared to the student teachers from the arts and crafts course, some of these students seemed more reluctant to do the activity and hesitated. One could sense by their body language that some of them were asking themselves about the point of it all.



Figure 4. TCS workshop Teiporama, with artist Sandra Norrbin at University of Agder, March 2020.
Photo: Lisbet Skregelid

Some of the students also asked if it was acceptable to leave the room after only 10 minutes. At that stage, these students had made their images and installations and considered their work finished. Most of the students however, became immersed in the workshop and worked with the tape in a similar manner to the arts and crafts students. Still, there was more prior discussion amongst the former group, who had agreed on how to proceed with the tape. For example, two girls started to tape the outline of half of each other's bodies and made one image of the two, thereby expressing a unique approach to the activity.

In the discussion after the workshop, the artist and I asked the students how they felt throughout the workshop. Some stated how different the workshop was to anything they had experienced in their study program and also how uncomfortable it was to act like children and play with the tape. Furthermore, some students did not consider the workshop a very educational activity.

As mentioned, the workshop was organised a bit differently from the one with the arts and crafts students. For instance, neither the artist nor I had met the general student teachers beforehand. Also, as the students came from different courses, they were also not so known to each other. We did not have the preparations we had with the arts and crafts students, and we did not have so much time for the reflections in the group after the workshop. Different from the first group, the written reflections from the general student teachers were not mandatory. I was also the course leader for arts and craft students, whereas I had no responsibility for the general student teachers.

Due to the “speed date” nature of the workshops for the general student teachers, with two workshops run consecutively and with 30 minutes break between, it was actually close to what TCS workshops for pupils would look like. Even though preparing the schoolchildren is preferred and including the TCS workshops more into school activities is required, this has not been the normal order. Rather, TCS has been detached from school activities (Bamford, 2012). However, both *The Cultural Schoolbag as Dissensus in Teacher Education* project and the project I will now refer to (Karlsen & Bjørnstad, 2019a) aimed to encourage the teachers to see the relevance of preparation and for TCS and other art and cultural initiatives to be included more in the schools. Both projects also hoped to increase an awareness in the student teachers of the value of art in general.

The resistance seen in the last workshop from the general student teachers is similar to what the researchers Kristine Høeg Karlsen and Gunhild Brænne Bjørnstad saw in the TCS project *Kropp i ROM på tvers* for teacher students. That project was a collaboration between Kropp i Rom (KROM) (Body and Spaces in a Cross-institutional Collaboration) and teacher education programs at Østfold University College in Norway (Karlsen & Bjørnstad, 2019a). The students participating in that dance workshop also used tape as an important element. The researchers reported on some of the comments by the students. Students talked about a feeling of freedom and about how they could explore their own creative power (Bjørnstad et al., 2019b). However, three of four of the students in the project had low expectations for the workshop and showed little engagement. The researchers also referred to critical students, who found the dance workshop strange, boring, meaningless and a waste of time (Karlsen & Bjørnstad, 2019a). The researchers also reported on students who did not get the relevance of aesthetic approaches to teaching. The students also thought the children in school would have a negative attitude to the workshop. At this

stage, resistance was high. However, when the students noticed how the children responded to the workshop, this negative attitude became positive. The students seemed to acknowledge the importance of art and aesthetic approaches to learning. There seems to be this need for time and also for the students to see the workshop in its original context to realize its relevance.

I want to draw attention to the resistance that seems to be a bit overwhelming in the first part of the dance project at Østfold University College and to some extent in the *Teiporama* workshop for the general student teachers in UiA. For example, when some of the students gave up after only 10 minutes, this is what Biesta (2018) would call a “withdrawal”. Some of these students might find the challenges too high and, according to Biesta, the following might happen: “We abandon our initiatives and ambitions because we feel that it is too difficult, not worth the effort, too frustrating and so on, to pursue them” (p. 16).

In the first part of the current project, the arts and crafts student teachers were both prepared and had more time to reflect on the workshop, as the workshop was integrated in my teaching. The arts and crafts students also participated in the workshop in the school with children. As mentioned, the general student teachers had previously received some information about the workshop and some articles to read as prework. The actual time we were given with the general students from the teacher education department was the two hours for the duration of the workshop, which included a little reflection about students’ experiences in the group. The plan was that the students were to respond to similar questions as the arts and crafts students after the workshop, but because only one of four of the general student teachers had taken part in the workshop, the teacher education department did not make the written reflections mandatory for them. So, I am left with some questions regarding the general teacher students: Was the resistance too overwhelming? Will students have more or less confidence with art after participating in this workshop? Will students recognise the potential of activities like this in school after taking part in *Teiporama*?

These questions remain without clear answers but will be investigated in depth when the main project this pilot study was aiming for, *pARTiciPED*, is realised. For now, I include these questions in a final discussion on possible connections between dissensus, subjectivation and world-centredness, being aware that this examination is only an initial attempt that must be further explored.

Discussion on the connections between dissensus, subjectivation and world-centredness

I have already quoted the student from the arts and crafts group who talked about being “in their own worlds”. So how can being in *my* world be a world-centred approach to education? How are the self and the world positioned in such an art practice where students work with their hands and tape? How may subjectivation happen here? Can we assume that the students were concerned about more than their own actions and desires in the *Teiporama* workshop? Can we claim that world-centredness was taking place for the general teacher students, bearing in mind some students’ hesitation, reluctant participation and even withdrawal?

The pilot study demonstrates how an educational practice and artistic practice can be both person-centred and world-centred at the same time. What seems to be self-centred and possibly even ego-centric is also *eco*-centric. In *Teiporama*, the students could be in the world without occupying the centre of the world. The freedom in the project, such as being able to use the tape in whatever way the students want is challenged by the others in the room, the room itself and the tape itself. When the students are taping and moving around, they have to pay attention to fellow students and the surroundings. The resistance is represented by the surroundings and the tape, but also the workshop can be seen as a dissensus, a disturbance, in itself. *Teiporama* is temporal and processual, rather than being object-oriented and focusing on assessment. This creates a contrast and represents dissensus in the students’ notions of normal order within school and in their teacher program. This is a starting point that might support an interruption of the students’ understanding of art and education, an interruption of students’ personal beliefs and values. This dissensus might also enable subjectivation and new ways for the students to encounter themselves, others and the world, thereby “moving from self to other” (Johnston, 2018). Like myself, the Irish artist, educator, researcher and activist John Johnston (2018) argues for disruption and disturbance as important features in art education praxis: “I use these terms to describe the intention of a specific action that occurs within my practice” (p. 7). Also similar to my agenda with education, Johnston states that “[t]he intention to disturb the existing norms is central” (p. 7). Johnston argues for the relevance of Rancière’s concept of dissensus, and when used in an art education context, dissensus realises “the pedagogical force of transformation (....) and embodies the potential to shift, alter, disrupt and disturb existing behaviors, perceptions and attitudes” (p. 8). This transformation is essentially political, as it might enable new actions as a result of one’s desires being altered.

I have raised questions about the responses from the two categories of student teacher to the interruption: the dissensus. Is the dissensus accepted, or is the resistance too overwhelming, so that students withdraw? Biesta (2017) writes about how the interruption first appears as an interference, “as something they didn’t actually ask for” (p. 88) and continues:

What we hope, as educators, is that ‘down the line’, the student will turn back to us and will say, express, enact that which ‘arrived’ as interference, as an intervention they did not ask for, turned out to be helpful, beneficial, perhaps even essential for their attempts at trying to be home in the world (...) (p. 88).

As stated above, the written reflections from the arts and crafts students show that they seem to accept resistance is part of what education can be about. The general student teachers encountered the inherent resistance in the material and in the workshop but seemed more uncomfortable, and we are left with questions about the effect of this act of disturbance. We can do as Biesta tells us: to hope that as time goes by, the general student teachers will think of this workshop as beneficial in some way. They might think back on it as a liberated site of freedom without predetermined outcomes. They might see this workshop as valuable in a contemporary educational climate that is very much characterised by knowledge that favours what can be assessed and quantified and that primarily emphasises goals and results, not processes (Biesta 2014, 2017). But we also risk that the students do not see any relevance at all.

Biesta (2017) touches upon the problems associated with just introducing interruptions and expecting the students to “jump” (p. 89), to enter the state of subjectivation. I can relate to this, as the general student teachers were left on their own after the workshop due to the corona situation. It was sad not to be able to meet these students again and disappointing that we only had two hours in the workshop together. I was a little uncomfortable that this workshop might be experienced as a mere stunt. One should not underestimate what reflection can do to students’ consciousness and possible transformation, so having the students to reflect on the workshop is something that will be realised in the main project. We will also be given one more hour with the students.

Nevertheless, for me as an educator and researcher, the state of uncertainty and not knowing how the students will think of this workshop in the long term is productive. I

like the idea that pupils and students need time to figure out the relevance or even success of the educational activities they take part in—good education does not necessarily happen immediately. It may take time. In fact, it might take a *long* time. Events of subjectivation require time and educational work.

Biesta (2017) thus says that slowness and “suspension” is needed in order to realise a world-centred approach to education and to make subjectivation possible (p. 89). He says there is a need for creating a gap between the interruption and the possible jump. To make this gap, both time and someone who raises questions, someone who makes you stay in the trouble and wonders about what the trouble is doing to you, is needed. This is the role of the educator.

In my PhD, I criticise the speed-date character of TCS workshops (Skregelid, 2016). Instead, I created more longer lasting art education events, made in collaboration with schoolteachers and museum educators to ensure that visits to art exhibitions were part of the teaching in school, or at least prepared or taken care of when returning to school. One could say that the version of the *Teiporama* workshop that the arts and crafts students were exposed to with the preparations and the continuing work after the visit was a more holistic art education event. The disturbance was supported and turned out to be meaningful due to the depth of analysis and follow-up. The workshops for the general student teachers were disturbances that were more or less left for the students to handle themselves. The pilot study demonstrates the need for spaces for reflection and discussions. Students should be able to ask questions and to discuss issues such as *What is happening here? How is this alike or different from other activities? What is this activity asking from me? What is educational about this activity?* As the British professor of visual culture, Irit Rogoff (2008), states, “[T]hose who formulate the questions produce the playing field” (p. 8).

Nevertheless, the experiences from the pilot study tell me that one should continue to introduce teacher students and pupils to art and educational activities that they might not see the immediate relevance of. Pupils and students should experience resistance and should not only have their personal desires fulfilled. To only offer what students want and find comfortable is not a sustainable approach to education. What might seem beneficial for them is not necessarily beneficial for the planet. Still, I think it is possible to be in one’s own personal bubble, to be occupied with art practice (which initially seems like a very person-centred activity) and at the same time have this world-centred approach to education. To introduce *Teiporama* in teacher education is a way of initiating dissensus. This workshop thus makes dialogues and

encounters with the world possible. The workshop also enables events of subjectivation. The same goes for many TCS workshops and activities, as they contrast everyday life and practices in school and create disturbances in the normal order. Therefore, rather than putting too much effort into merging TCS into schools and into the curriculum, we should investigate how to best facilitate art to be appreciated and respected in educational contexts. In my opinion, schools and teachers can be involved in TCS but not intervene in the production of the art. TCS should interact with schools, but it is also important to claim the dissensual quality of the art.

Sensible dissensus?

In writing this piece, I recalled a memory from my own childhood that took place almost 40 years ago. Our usual teacher at school became ill, and to cover three weeks of his recovery, my class received a substitute teacher. This new teacher was a young woman from theatre studies. I can remember her very long hair and her velvet checked jumpsuit as she entered our classroom, saying, "I want you to move all the desks and the chairs to the wall. We are going to play!" She made us move around on the floor like snakes and made us act like we had not had any water or food for days. It was all so strange. For three weeks, we did this. I recall feeling uncomfortable, and I could see that my fellow pupils were feeling the same. We were doubting this teaching, yet most of us played along.

When our usual teacher returned, he was disappointed with the theatre student who, he believed, had not taught us anything useful. We had been playing for three weeks. After all these years, these weeks with the theatre student, now a reputed theatre director, are some of the very few moments from school that I remember very clearly. I did not see the relevance of this workshop back then, but I do now. What I once considered non-sense now makes sense for me, maybe because I have been so much engaged in questions regarding resistance in education. The substitute teacher made us question our own moves in the classroom, the rearrangement of the room and education in general. It was an interruption, a dissensual event, that made new understandings and realities possible. And it stayed with me as an embodied memory. One could say that the dissensus has become sensible.

So, what does this personal story add to the discussion on the *Teiporama* workshops for the student teachers? What does it add to the general discussion about TCS? How can this talk about dissensus, subjectivation and world-centredness be of

relevance in a current educational climate? How can it be relevant for future teachers?

The pilot study reveals what seems to be an expressive and person-centred activity and, at the same time, sustainable encounters with the world are offered. I think workshops and activities that have a processual quality, with no definite end result, are important both in school and teacher education, to contrast the learning goal-driven curriculum with pre-set competences to be achieved by the students. This balance between freedom and framing, a mix of the playful “doing what you want” and the encounter of resistance, is valuable for the teacher profession. It is my hope that the teacher students will bring the experience of *Teiporama* into their future teaching, like I bring the memory of the three weeks of playing from my school years. I hope the teachers will think of the experienced state of uncertainty as something that should be embraced, and something they will also risk initiating so their future pupils get the opportunity to experience this themselves within a complex world.

Risk is vital here, both for artists, teachers, students, pupils and stakeholders related to TCS and other similar initiatives. By not putting ourselves at risk, there will be little opportunity to question established habits and norms. I also find *doubt* to be important. When I doubt my art education practice and research practice, the practice lives. To introduce a “pedagogy of doubt” and to “posit doubt as a pedagogical force” (Johnston, 2018, p. 13) my own beliefs are challenged. In my writings, I recommend theoretical perspectives and educational practice that approach art education as a place for taking risks, a place for doubt, a place for encountering resistance and a unique place for being in dialogue with the world—a place for the subject to emerge (Skregelid, 2019b, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c). My research, including this project on TCS in teacher education, demonstrates how art and art education practice puts a beautiful risk of education and a dissensual pedagogy into play. In a contemporary educational climate dominated by standardisation, competition, measuring and testing, and where the arts in education are being decimated, I believe art offers great possibilities for encountering resistance and for challenging the existing norms. Encountering art and doing art practice have the possibility to reconfigure our ways of seeing, thinking and acting. Here, art in general and TCS in particular is important in school because of its dissensual quality and because it enables this unique opportunity for world-centredness.

About the author

Associate professor Lisbet Skregelid holds a PhD in art education and works as a researcher and lecturer at the University of Agder (UiA), Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Visual Arts and Drama. Skregelid leads the research group Arts and Young People at UiA. In both teaching and research, Skregelid is exploring how artists and art educators can create productive arenas for *dissensus*. She suggests theoretical perspectives and educational practice that approach art education as a place for taking risks and a place for encountering resistance. Thereby she is calling for what she terms a *pedagogy of dissensus*; an educational approach using the characteristics of art as a point of departure.

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