Anr AlféaRT project, October 2015, pre-proposal (French version available)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>AlféaRT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full title</td>
<td>Arts, langages, formation, éducation, apprentissages: recherche et transfert (Arts, language, training, education, learning: research and transfer)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project presentation (summary)**

The AlféaRT project has two related objectives. The first consists of identifying and understanding the inseparable theoretical and practical issues encountered by teachers who seek to give arts education and education through the arts their rightful place by developing their intrinsic contribution in achieving key competencies (EU, 2006) and combining this with their extrinsic impact on non-art outcomes. The project will use methods of field observations, video elicitations and interviews. The second objective, linked to the first, is to design a multi-user multimedia resource that can be used for research and teacher education purposes, based on the needs formulated in real settings by the stakeholders. In turn, both the process of designing this resource and the feedback resulting from its use will generate new research questions.

**1. Scientific and practical objectives**

**The international context: an active area of research** *(references on line)*

Finding the optimal way to integrate arts education and education through the arts [hereafter AE] in educational programmes is a universal concern, as evidenced by the recommendations of international institutions such as UNESCO (UNESCO, 2006, 2010; Bamford, 2009), the OECD and the European Commission (The European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World: EC, 2007; Eurydice, 2009):

‘The Seoul Agenda calls upon UNESCO Member States, civil society, professional organizations and communities to recognize its governing goals, to employ the proposed strategies, and to implement the action items in a concerted effort to realize the full potential of high quality arts education to positively renew educational systems, to achieve crucial social and cultural objectives, and ultimately to benefit children, youth and life-long learners of all ages.’ *(UNESCO, 2010)*

In its latest report on the impact of AE on ‘the skills that fuel innovation in the economy and society: creativity, imagination, communication and teamwork to name a few’ (Ishinger, 2014), the OECD reviewed scientific studies (Winner, 2014) that demonstrate that AE contributes to the development of skills, habits of mind and knowledge that are critical in today’s society: how to live together with shared values and tolerance (behavioural, social and academic skills; Deasy, 2002; Kerlan, 2015) and sensitivity, creativity and critical thinking (Winner, 2015; Burke & McGuigan, 2008). Moreover, their unique contributions to skills considered ‘fundamental’ (including basic skills: literacy, numeracy) argue for giving them their rightful place: AE calls upon technical skills, including the broad conception of literacy (in the wider sense of the multiliteracy extended to all types of language as described in 21st century skills: Barton, 2014; Duncum, 2004). EA is also inseparable from a cultural education.

Beyond these arguments, the report concludes that AE should be maintained as both a field of practice and a domain of specific and irreducible knowledge without the need for extrinsic justifications (McCarthy, 2004):

‘Arts have been in existence since the earliest humans, are part of all cultures and are a major domain of human experience, just like science, technology, mathematics, and humanities. The arts are important in their own right for education.’ *(Winner, 20)*

Finally, the report reinforces the necessity of carrying out research into teaching methods that will allow AE to meet such demanding standards.
The context and issues in France: an institutional and professional appeal

In France, arts and cultural education is inscribed in the school reform law ‘Refondation de l’école’ (art. 10) as one of the pillars of the Common Core Standards in Skills, Knowledge and Culture (MEN, 2013). The new French national curricula (CSP, 2015) encourage the development of varied artistic practices, visits to artistic sites and encounters with artists in order to contribute to the acquisition of knowledge, skills (for example, digital and verbal skills), and habits of mind (curiosity, openness towards others, inventiveness, etc.), which fall within AE in and of itself, but also within other school subjects. Educators are encouraged to develop interdisciplinary approaches with this aim (e.g. cross-curricular practical lessons, a comparative history of arts, etc.).

Educational institutions are urged to develop these projects in cooperation with cultural institutions (joint call from both ministries, MEN/MC, 2015). As a result, it is strongly encouraged for stakeholders in art and culture (e.g. institutions, non-profit organisations, etc.) to take part in this shared educational mission. The issues arising from these requirements call for scientific reflection, in particular with the objective of describing and understanding the resulting teachers’ education and training concerns, as all stakeholders share the responsibility of designing research-based cross-training programmes.

The barrier to raise: developing research and transfer

The OECD report finishes with a set of ‘suggested areas of research’ for future studies. One of those proposed is:

‘[To] study the relative effectiveness of different kinds of pedagogies, assessments and curricula in fostering various kinds of learning outcomes in the arts and, possibly, simultaneous development of skills and habits of mind that can be used in other domains.’ (Winner, 2014: 259)

Although studies of this kind exist, few are available that specifically address the following questions: on what basis do teachers make pedagogical and instructional choices that they consider crucial when they choose to integrate AE in the global educational project without sacrificing its own specific essence and contributions? How do they define the priority issues in AE? How do they apply assessment criteria? And finally, what resources do they find useful in tackling the issue? In short, what do they do in practice to develop the intrinsic and extrinsic educational potential of the arts?

We put forward that these practical questions are inseparable from the theoretical questions central to the sciences of art (e.g. What is art? What is culture and cultural transmission? What is to teach art?). These questions call for further research into the area where the sciences of art(s) intersect with the social sciences, learning sciences and educational sciences, as well as the academic study of work and professional training, to investigate what potential impacts a better integration of AE in teacher education and training might have.

Reviews of academic literature reveal the lack of fine-scale research into teaching practices:

‘Better understanding the relative effectiveness of different kinds of pedagogies in different art forms on the acquisition of artistic skills themselves is another key area for research on arts education’ (Winner, 2014: 261)

and that the appropriation of these practices by teachers seems to be most problematic:

‘Many educational systems rely on generalist teachers to teach arts subjects, especially to younger children. Teaching the arts to a high standard is challenging, so it is not surprising to find that primary teachers in particular lack confidence in teaching the arts (Taggart 2004). There would appear to be a need to consider both the initial preparation of teachers to teach arts subjects and the arrangements for continuing professional development, to enable arts teachers to update their knowledge and develop their skills.’ (Eurydice, 2009: 10)

The design and trialling of resources grounded in research is in itself a major goal, to help empower stakeholders from different professional backgrounds (education, art, culture),
the vast majority of whom are not specialists in AE. This is why the AlféaRT project seeks to join fundamental and practical research.

Theoretical and practical objectives

The AlféaRT project aims to closely intertwine two goals using a translational approach (HCERES, 2014).

The first aim is theoretical and strongly set in a multidisciplinary framework. It consists of collecting (clinical approach), understanding and problematizing (fundamental research approach) the questions posed by stakeholders (both teachers and their project partners) when they design, implement and assess AE teaching contexts and projects.

Initial research issues include: How does crossing perspectives from several academic disciplines allow a better understanding of the stakeholders’ concerns (regarding sciences of art and ‘sciences of art(s) education’, social science, ergonomy, etc.)? How do stakeholders redefine the aims of AE, in particular the issues of education and learning? How is art actually taught at school and what art? How do teachers tackle the twin requirement of developing AE on its own terms, with its own allotted time and aims, with the growing demand for cross-curricular projects?

‘the trend for more cross-curricular work, involving arts and other (non-arts) subject areas working together on creative and/or cultural themes’ (Eurydice, 2009: 12)

The second aim is practical. AlféaRT considers the key issue in the field to be ‘transfer’, defined as the appropriation by the stakeholders not of the raw research results, but of the participants’ methods, shared and validated using “design developed through use” based on collaborative research. The epistemological particularity of translational research consists of the intertwined development of a theoretical structure and an evolving and participative practical tool that is multi-user and multi-use, allowing links to be made between research input, analyses of data collected in educational contexts, and user feedback, organised so that it is accessible for teacher training. The resulting resource will be based on the experiences of the stakeholders in educational contexts and draw on their points of view (developing their ability to act [empowerment] rather than simply imposing a rule of conduct on them).

Initial research questions include: At the design stage, how do the stakeholders define resources that they consider useful? In particular, which theoretical and practical resources do they find useful and how do they use them? At the prototype testing stage, how is the resource used/appropriated (ergonomic approach)? How would stakeholders like to see it evolve?

The intention of AlféaRT is not to separate these two objectives but to develop them jointly. The theoretical aspect of the project enables the investigation to be rooted in the multidisciplinary body of AE research, yet the project seeks to promote a continuous exchange between questions that fall within fundamental research and questions that fall within clinical and applied research. The goal is not simply one of transferring academic outcomes, because the transfer process itself will throw up questions that prompt renewed theoretical work; for example, by provoking updated feedback on fundamental questions about AE, beginning with its definition and anthropological functions, as well as the question of the real nature of ‘AE’. So the process of applying the resource will in turn redefine the ongoing fundamental research process.

2. Project organisation and implementation

Methodology

The teams in the AlféaRT network will be responsible for different areas of observation and experimentation depending on their professional context (e.g. teacher training, specialist or generalist educators at primary or secondary level; monitoring extra-curricular organisations or projects; monitoring collaboration between public schools and
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cultural institutions such as museums, theatre groups, dance companies, etc.). The first year of the project will focus on collecting, selecting and analysing the stakeholders’ key priority issues, both practical and theoretical, in contexts that they consider representative of their professional concerns, arising from the implementation of institutional requirements (ergonomic approach). The data collected might consist of videos, field observations or interviews based on a range of methodologies (e.g. explanations, video elicitations, feedback on instruction tools or students’ work, etc.). This investigation is the subject of the first PhD project.

The second year of the project will focus on analysing the collected material according to the priorities identified by the stakeholders, as well as the collection and development of the solutions that they have produced (enriched by our research) and the resources they have provided (ergonomic approach). This will allow a prototype of the resource to be created, based on cross-pollination between typical examples of ‘professional questions’ and typical situations that illustrate them (e.g. using video materials with transcriptions, students’ work, etc.). This will require the production of a prototype of the future digital tool (using mainly videos, images and audio), transcriptions, analyses (post-doctoral work), as well as technical support to develop the tool itself (digital engineering services at Lyon’s École Normale Supérieure). Given the time constraints, this will only be a working model or prototype.

The third year of the project will focus on user testing of the tool, either by individuals or in group training sessions, etc. We stress that the aim of the resource is not to impose models of entirely transferable ‘best practices’ to copy, but rather to provide materials as the basis for reflection in self-study or group training. The approach is one of ‘design developed through use’ (Béguin & Darses, 1998). This part of the project (the study of the design and testing process) is the subject of a second doctoral project.

The partners involved and their previous projects (references on line)

AlféaRT is a consortium supported by the PEPS 2015 ‘Education’ programme (Projets Exploratoires Premier Soutien, Programme Avenir Lyon St-Étienne), which supports research teams working in the field of education.

- The project leader of AlféaRT is Jean-Charles Chabanne, Full Professor at the École Normale Supérieure in Lyon/French Institute of Education (Acté laboratory). His research focuses on interdisciplinary approaches in AE and the specific and transversal issues (particularly the role of language) related to these, taking into account questions around transfer and training (ENS's LéA, an experimental collaborative research teams network). He pilots a LéA project in Montpellier with the Local Education Authority, the École Supérieure du Professorat et de l’Education and the Fabre Museum, under contract with the University of Montpellier and the LIRDEF laboratory (2 Associate Professors from LIRDEF, University of Montpellier: Yves Soulé et Isabelle Poussier).

- At the University of Lyon 2, the laboratory Education Cultures Politiques (EA 4571) in the area of research Policies of art and culture in education and teacher education, is studying ‘the aesthetic paradigm in education’ and has recognised expertise in the field of analysing the transformative effects of artist-in-residence programmes at schools. (1 Emeritus Professor, Alain Kerlan; 1 Full Professor, Gilles Boudinet; 2 Associate Professors, Françoise Carraud and Rémi Deslyper).

- At University of Lyon 1 and the École Normale Supérieure in Lyon, research is being carried out on education and the arts as a practical activity, subject to observable changes in the real interactions between stakeholders. (1 Associate Professor Jean Paul Filiod, UMR Centre Max Weber. 2 PhD, Jean Duvillard and Corinne Iborra, laboratoire ECP)

- At Aix Marseille University, the ERGAPE/ADEF team develops collaborations with the Ballet Preljocaj dance company and analyses teaching practices in disciplines using research based on an ergonomic and didactic approach. (3 Associate Professors: Laurence Espinassy, Pascal Terrien and Alexandra Arnaud-Bestieu).
3. Project impacts and results

The originality of the AlféaRT project is to link the objective of creating knowledge (theoretical impact) and the objective of the transformative effect of this knowledge on professional practice in the field of education (socioeconomic impact). The value-creation is not conceived as a final ‘result’, but rather the project from its very inception involves transfer by means of the collaborative and evolving design of the prototype in preparation for the later development of the resource. This approach is backed by the prior experience of the IFE/ENS Lyon in this area (e.g. the NeoPass@ction resource and the Visa database). This prototype will be further developed in the future. One on its defining characteristics is to be multiuser: initially developed by researchers as a structuring and analysis tool, the data can be accessed through designed filters for use in training scenarios or as training resources, which can themselves eventually be designed by students in a ‘learning by doing’ process.

We believe that integrating these aims is essential in an educational research paradigm concerned with ‘understanding why pedagogical innovations have so much difficulty moving out of the experimental phase’ (Challenge 9, line of research 4). AlféaRT’s answer is to design a knowledge transfer that does not consist of the raw dissemination of ‘best practices’, but rather ‘empowers’ stakeholders, by remaining as close as possible to their own concerns, and the way they perceive and describe their own educational contexts. AlféaRT aims to conduct research in the area of AE that is both contextual (possibly generalizable) and collaborative (researchers, practitioners and decision-makers are stakeholders, whose expertise is not conflated but linked together as usefully as possible).

The originality of AlféaRT is to support the specific contribution of AE aimed at the general improvement of school outcomes in France, building on the national and international research that demonstrates that AE contributes to ‘enhancing all forms of intelligence and skills’, on the condition that it retains its own learning space. If this condition is met, AE addresses fundamental educational issues specific to the arts as well as having an impact on non-art outcomes, for instance, learning that is considered instrumental (cultural development and multiliteracy) and fundamental (sensitivity, creativity, curiosity).

In this way it contributes to knowledge production while avoiding two pitfalls. First, isolating AE and restricting it to an allotted space and time distinct from ‘ordinary’ space and time, uncoupling the pedagogic from the educational, juxtaposing practices, separating specialists and practitioners. And second, on the other extreme, exploiting AE under the pretext of taking advantage of its contributions, thus reducing its scope to the purely utilitarian and diminishing its disruptive effects.

By bringing together teacher education institutions and academic research teams with research experience in this area, AlféaRT aims to provide a unique contribution to research on AE. We want to maximize the role AE can play in education in our contemporary society, in which the cognitive, social and ethical benefits of arts and culture are increasingly in demand.