Knowledge Management Framework

Knowledge Management Framework of the ARTES Platform

Mission of the partnership

The founder members of the ARTES partnership have the mission to promote innovative methods, good practices, exemplary projects that use Art in Education and in Social Inclusion. For this purpose we have created an interactive online platform which is the main working tool evolving naturally from a simple information sharing device into a community of practice.

In the past years we have witnessed a growing interest in artistic methods in the educational and social work. Alone in the framework of the LLP scheme of the European Commission at least 36 such projects were implemented between 2007 and 2012. Project work produces formidable results, part of which are available on line, but the profusion does not become a trigger for an accumulative process: resources are scattered on the web and transmission is hampered by descriptions that do not allow the full understanding of what exactly happened in the projects and what learning outcomes were achieved. Project language used in these descriptions often blurs more than it reveals. As a result, the accumulated knowledge remains tacit and risks to get lost with time. There is therefore an urgent need for creating a pool in which not only resources can be found at one place, are organised in a clear and concise manner, but the huge tacit knowledge accumulated by the invisible community of project promoters becomes explicit and transfer is rendered possible by making the community visible and active in information sharing.

Art in Inclusion

There is a reason behind the popularity of artistic methods in educational and social initiatives: it seems to work! In a context where the educational system struggles to redefine its role and minimal aims, in a society which is more and more traversed by dividing lines produced by inequalities and social exclusion there is a need for an integrative language, something that connects instead of

dividing, something that invites to dialogue instead of fighting or closing up. Art is potentially such a language. Elliot W. Eisner[1], a painter himself with a long teaching experience, formalised the theoretical frame that oriented his work in a book that became an important corner stone in art education. Eisner argues that the '"complex and subtle" intellectual demands of the arts have "distinctive contributions to make" in schools, and to the overall process of learning, contributions that are not situated at the periphery of the educational experience, but squarely at its core".[2] "Participation in the arts" – affirms another art educator, Jan MacLean [3], "can promote a stronger sense of agency, and a fuller sense of self", it provides students with "distinctive cognitive tools to make sense and meaning of the world" and helps them to "express their own unique voice". In other words, many professionals using art in educative and social work are convinced that art has the capacity to develop key cognitive and social competences in individuals and by doing so it contributes to create more cohesion and integration on a collective level. Only a few however make the implicit theory orienting their work entirely conscious, and even fewer would be capable to explain how this change happens in the publics they work with. Their knowledge remains tacit and therefore unsuitable for sharing.

Knowledge management – What knowledge? What management?

The particular knowledge the Artes Community wishes to make available for sharing is the tacit knowledge of educational and social professionals using artistic methods in their practice. This knowledge is partly theoretical, partly practical: it includes an implicit theory of change and a complex methodology to work with. The Artes community therefore has the intention to make visible the invisible part of artistic initiatives in the educational context, through the creation of a self

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[1] Eisner, E. W. (2002). *The arts and the creation of mind*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

[2] Rolling, J. H. (2006). Essay review of The arts and the creation of mind by Elliot Eisner. Journal of Curriculum Studies ,38 (1), pp. 113-125.

[3] Jan MacLean (2008). The Art of Inclusion. Canadian Review of Art Education: Research and Issues, v35 p75-98

reflective and cooperating on-line community. Participants of the community are asked to make explicit the implicit assumptions behind their work, to formulate the aims of their projects in terms of competence development and social change and evaluate the results in the face of these expectations. They are also asked to make available the methodology they used by describing in a clear and concise manner the scenario of their interventions and by giving detailed, step by step instructions for some of the methods they used so that these can be replicated. The platform however is more than a simple database. Project descriptions and methodological guidelines constitute only the foundation on which the community can grow. The actual management of the knowledge thus produced is taking place within the community, in the contacts taken between professionals and in the dialogues these contacts provoke.

Communities of practice

Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour[4]. Communities of practice are learning communities, therefore structuring and sharing knowledge and information is one or their primary function. On the Artes Platform we endeavoured to structure information in a way that facilitates its sharing. For this purpose we were obliged to create a closed structural frame based on a classification system, which – like any system of categories – is based on arbitrary social conventions. However, we envisage this structure like an open framework allowing sufficient freedom for the users to fill it with content and exploit it in ways that best correspond them.

What makes a community of practice according to Etien Wenger, one of the theoreticians who coined the term, are basically three elements: a domain, a community, and a practice. A community of practice brings people together because they have shared competences that distinguish them from other people. They form a community in which they regularly interact and it is precisely this

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[4] http://wenger-trayner.com/theory/

interaction that contributes to further develop their competences and make these collective. Finally, the interactions of the members are not purely intellectual: exchanges between them constantly inform their practices. Communities of practice develop a shared practice through informal learning. The on-line Artes platform should be considered as a magnet allowing the concentration of members and facilitating exchanges between them, rather than a simple data base.

Data base function of the platform

The main aim of the platform as a data base is to share and promote good practices from the field of Art&Education and Art&Social Inclusion realised in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme. Descriptions of these projects are stored in the repository of the platform from where they can be retrieved for information, for learning and for reproduction.

Social functions of the platform

"Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly."[5] Accordingly, we have to envisage the platform as an environment facilitating mutual learning, in which all learners do at the same time also hold knowledge and competences that they are ready to share with others. To facilitate this sharing and in order to create a "living curriculum" involving everyone in the learning process, the platform also hosts forums allowing discussions about the methods, ideas and other relevant topics.

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[5] http://wenger-trayner.com/theory/

Structure of the platform

Thematic boxes - heart of the online community

The structure of the platform developed during the initial phase of the project, by discussions between the partners and reflection on the use and the functions. The framework was different at the beginning It was divided into Ideas, Techniques, Works and Scenarios. It was then replaced with the current structure, but the former order still can be used in developing educational materials, as a supporting tool in categorizing different resources. The current shape is the result of the clarifying process of the initial trials, tailored to the needs of the users. The platform consists of two main parts that are separated, both thematically and visually. The main section of the opening page is built up from colourful squares. The smaller squares in the first two rows represent thematic boxes. Here the topics are divided according to the art discipline used in the projects. Accordingly, projects can be categorised in ten disciplines: Theatre, Drama, Literature, Music, Photography, Multimedia, Visual Arts, Dance, Craft and Film.

The content of this part is very rich: this is the main field where the online community has the opportunity to share ideas, project plans and results concerning Art, Education and Social Inclusion regardless the project's frame (weather it has been financed from LLP, YIA, other European or non-European funds). One article can be associated to more than one thematic box.

There is a possibility to link a given project to other categories, too, with regard to the pedagogical-social field concerned: Adult Education, School Education or Vocational Education. These fields are represented by larger boxes in a raw under the smaller squares. The last big square in this raw is that of the "Learning Paths", a category allowing the translation of the results of the projects into concrete training tools (for more details see bellow)

Lifelong Learning Program projects – Repository of Resources

The three categories "Adult Education, School Education or Vocational Education" refer to the former Lifelong Learning program categories: Comenius, Grundtvig and Leonardo da Vinci Programs and makes it possible to categorise the projects along these lines Users would find a short description of the projects realised under these schemes. This part is the main LLP database, containing descriptions of successful projects realised by organisations all over Europe in the framework of Lifelong Learning Program.

Project presentations follow a common structure. Presentations begin with some basic data about the project: its title, the logo, the specific program in which it had been realised (weather within the LLP scheme or other) its exact duration, the identity of the project coordinator, the countries participating, and the target group, followed by the address of the webpage where more information can be found.

After this section we find a short introduction of the project structured in the following way: The description contains the main pedagogical and social goal, the listing of the project's results in terms of concrete outcomes (for example an educational material) and its pedagogical and social achievements (for example development of certain competences within the target group or its better social inclusion) as well as a short section explaining what exactly happened within the project, what methodology was used and how it was realised.

One presentation should be linked to only one category under the LLP framework according to its original funding scheme even if it involved a mixed target group.

Learning Paths

The category "Learning Paths" is meant to contain a detailed description of exercises and practices with the explicit aim of transferring methods in a simple, user-friendly way. The learning path can be developed based on a project presentation already provided, but also without this former step.

The Learning Path has to contain information about the presented project, a general introductory text and optionally an introduction video that is not longer than 1 minute.

After this the material should be divided in modules. The form of the presentation of the steps is flexible, but has some minimal requirements. These are the followings: the aim of the module (educational and/or social), learning outcomes,

target group, duration (how many occasions and how many hours/occasion too), materials needed and other resources. After this optionally some downloadable material has to follow, which can be diverse, as lesson plans, handbook parts (preferably printable, pdf version), short videos or any other form that serves as a step by step guide helping third parties to recreate the artistic process. In order to help the user to upload her material the partnership provides a basic template for the organisation of the information.

Tags

For further categorisation of the projects tags are also available. Tags help the users to find the relevant projects they are interested in. The pool of the tags contains the most frequently used tags showing the frequency by the size of the letters, giving an instant overview of the full content. By clicking to one tag all the related project presentations and learning paths appear.

Search option

There is a search option too after entering from the home page of the platform, entering any keyword or phrase the user gets a list of pages that include them.

Actualities

The actualities as the latest posts, recently active members and active groups appear at the bottom of the page.

Main current information section

Above the *Our mission* part there is a surface that can be used to promote important events of the community. In the meantime images of the presented projects are displayed.

Menu of the Social functions

Three functions are available at the right up corner of the page:

Community: At this part the users can see the registered members, the existing groups or the recent activities depending their interest.

Contact: gives information on members of the Artes project, the contact details of the partner organisations and the contact person involved in the project.

Sign in: Gives opportunity to sign in as a registered member (see bellow)

How to use the platform? Uploading

The registered users are able to upload posts to the platform. As for the thematic boxes the content of the post can be diverse: comment, question, doubt, project idea, promotion of a certain event, etc. At the bigger boxes only LLP project presentations can be uploaded, at the Learning Path only Learning Path can appear. One project presentation and a Learning Path can appear in the thematic boxes as well. In case of inappropriate content the author will be contacted by the moderators or the content will be removed, not relevant information should not be uploaded to the platform (see Community Charter).

To be able to upload materials or comment, one has to be registered to the platform. The registration is free but not automatic because of safety issues; only after receiving a confirmation by email from an authorised person can someone become a registered user.

Tagging

During the process of uploading materials one can add tags to the article or comment that appears afterwards on the right side of the page. One article can gain three tags maximum describing specific characteristics of the project.

Searching for information

The platform can be visited without registration; the uploaded materials are accessible and downloadable.

Communication and networking

The users have the opportunity to share comments, ideas, start discussions at the thematic boxes. Every user has a profile that can be personalised by short presentation of the person and one can get in touch with other users, establishing "friendship" relations via the platform (about the development process of the Community of Practice see Social learning management framework).

Groups and Forums

The users can join thematic groups and they also have the right to create new ones. The role of the groups is networking, hosting discussions and sharing knowledge. Different structures and roles can be implemented in the groups, but

the partner who is leading has full responsibility of sustaining and moderating the group. The group leader can invite members from the community to join the group. The Forums serve to host the discussions that the groups create around different topics. One group can own various forums.

User Support

The partners of the Artes project strived to develop a structure of the platform that is clear, well organised and helps the visitors understand the mission of the Community of Practice. One short introduction stands above the thematic boxes entitled *Our mission*, explaining the aims of the platform and the mission of the partnership.

FAQ appears at the bottom of the page answering basic questions in a step by step way to help the first steps of a new user.

Knowledge management in the process

Within this structure of knowledge management framework, the members of Artes project, the core group of the Artes Community of Practice aims to make manifest, transfer and this way multiplicate existing knowledge about Art in Education and in Social Inclusion.

The core group consists of the dedicated members from the partner organisations of Artes project. Their responsibility is to moderate the communication on the platform, stimulate debates with regular inputs, storing information on the past and present projects related to the domain areas. The other group is the group of the Users, its members can contribute to the debates, share their knowledge and expertise, announce their own event and participate at the events of the Artes Community. (see more details in the Artes Community Charter).

The aim of the Artes Community of Practice is to assure the sustainability of the good practices, innovative methodologies and establish a community that aims to create and recreate artistic and involving processes that include an implicit theory of change and a complex methodology to work with on the field of Art, Education and Social Inclusion.

The participation of the members of Artes Community of Practice can be diverse: forms of participation include getting information, building a network, commenting in a thematic group, or transferring methodologies by creating a Learning Path.

Hints and Tips

Avoid to use project language - in the Project Presentations and Learning Path

Structure: read the existing material and choose the form that fits best to your project and ideas! As we said, there is the structure we elaborated and propose, but knowing that especially processes working with arts are spontaneous, creative and include a lot of improvisation, we are flexible!

Try to be clear and simple – step into the shoes if the user, teacher, trainer: what would you be interested in the presentation? What information would facilitate to reproduce your practice?

Feel free to share your images, videos and other audiovisual materials! – it gives a huge added value if one can see the result or the methodology "in action"!

Share your ideas and questions! In the forums of the specific groups or in the comments of the presentations, it is always useful to hear opinions and reflections!

Contact the partners of Artes Community! If you need more information or you have some doubts, don't hesitate to contact the project partners!

Attachment:

1. Example for the Leaning Path structure
2. Project Description Form

Attachment1

DESCRIPTION OF MODULE 1 OF THE LEARNING PATH "XXX"

Objectives of the module:

Activity n°1
Time needed:
Optimal number of participants:
Materials needed (include space and arrangements needed):
Facilitator preparation needed:
Instructions: Step 1   Step 2   Step 3
Debriefing:

Hints for facilitators:
(aspects, possible challenges to be aware of, risks to take care of..)
Learning outcomes of the activity:
You can add here an illustrative picture if appropriate / helpful

Copy the activity table according to the number of activities in the module

Project Presentation form

Project name and logo or picture

Project framework (Funding program) and duration

Project coordinator (name, country) and a link to the website of the project

Partner countries

Target group

Objectives

Project description (10-15 lines)