HOW CAN WORKS OF ART BE USED IN TEACHER TRAINING TO ENRICH STUDENTS OWN CREATIVE EXPERIENCE AND SUPPORT THEIR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

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ABSTRACT
In this paper we will describe the ways in which we work with art in our distance-based courses within the teacher training program at Mid Sweden University. In our presentation we describe the philosophical basis for our practice, and cite relevant sources historical and modern. We show how the use of works of art is a vital element in our teaching of art, bringing authenticity to, and enhancing the students’ creative experience. As well, we illustrate the text with examples of the creative work produced using works of art as inspiration. We make connections between the creative processes used by artists and those used by teachers preparing for working creatively with art in educational settings. Our analysis is based on our work with students, as well as student evaluations to describe the effects of our teaching approach on the students’ professional development. As well, we explore the portfolio method of examination as an integral part of learning through reflection, both regarding the subject matter of art, as well as teaching skills. We consider the use of original works of art, and active artists in our geographical context “on the margins”, and show how this can indeed be possible.

KEY WORDS Distance education, art in teacher training, art works, creativity, portfolio method, teachers’ professional development,
“The teaching in this course has been fantastic in every way. Ann and Janet succeed in conveying a sense of security, delight and love through their way of being, each in their own way. Two driving forces that complement each other. Introductions, "input", educational talks and creative tasks are presented with commitment and a passion for art.” Student evaluation 2011.

A snapshot: It is early morning in the art room, which is full of the creative expressions of the students who have been using it for the last 20 weeks. The students have reached the final days of their art course. We watch an hour-long documentary film about the life and work of the Swedish artist, Bengt Lindström. He was born in the northern part of Sweden and we have seen a collection of his enormous abstract oil paintings, which he donated to our county museum, Murberget. In the film we see how Lindström works in different materials, and learn about his particular relationship to form and colour. We hear him reflecting on his creative processes, his choice of motifs from his Sami background and among the pagan gods of Scandinavia. He talks about what drives him to be creative all day and every day, even into old age and infirmity. The film is exciting, surprising, amusing and moving by turns.

Working with films helps us engage students in the thinking of artists about their work. As a pedagogical activity, the students are simply instructed to watch and enjoy the film, and also to consider any possible lesson ideas they can pick out, ideas they could later exploit in their own art teaching.

As teacher, we observe the students to be captivated by the film and are keen to “borrow” Lindström’s colour palette, expression and energy to create their own works. We discuss what we have seen and a two hour-long practical session begins. The students choose freely how to allow his artistic expression to inspire them. We refer to Lindström’s technique, colours and the monumental size of his productions. The
students work independently and without further input from teachers, or each other. They work with great concentration and energy, some find the palette alarmingly bright but work through their resistance and become absorbed by the activity. The 3 hour session ends with an exhibition of all the pictures and sculptures inspired by the artist, and a discussion about what exactly inspired them. The aspects that come up are form, feeling, palette, expression, abstraction, stylisation, explosivity, and delight. The group also discusses the educational value of working in this way, and together we develop a range of teaching ideas in the group based on the collective experience we have just had. A stimulating and productive morning, which filled the art room with vibrant colours draws to a satisfied close.

**The context in which we teach.** Our situation as art teachers within teacher training in the north of Sweden perhaps needs some clarification, as it has a bearing on how we can teach in general, how we can utilise original art works, and how we cannot. Mid Sweden University is a split-site university, the Department of Education being at the smallest campus, in Härnösand. This coastal town of about 25,000 citizens is in northern Sweden, far from the cultural centres of the capital Stockholm and the southern cities of Malmö and Gothenburg. We teach exclusively in the teacher training programmes, Ann having been trained as an art teacher in Sweden, and Janet in the United Kingdom, which has added an extra dimension to our close cooperation over the past decade.

Mid Sweden University is well known for having developed distance education over many years. The majority of the Department of Education’s teacher training courses in which we work are blended, meaning there are several campus weeks interspersed with self-study periods. Our art teaching is carried out with five very intensive weeks on campus spread over the twenty-week semester.

The Department of Education trains teachers for pre-school, and for the compulsory school years up to 16 years of age. We do not train art teachers as such, but work with general teachers who wish to develop special skills in art as part of their general teaching qualification. At the moment they can study art for two semesters out of the 7 required to become a teacher. Both the curriculum content and the organisation of the teacher training programmes are politically governed. New teachers enter a school system which itself is closely regulated by the Department of Education, with stipulated goals for subject knowledge, and social and civic goals, such as democracy and citizenship. The prominent position of common values in education is perhaps surprising to educators from outside Sweden, whilst it is something which naturally informs our daily work as teacher trainers.

**What are our students like?** We teach adult students exclusively, many living in outlying rural areas. Our students are generally aged between 20 and 55 years old, with many students around the age of 30 who are often already parents. Many of our students have to combine studying with being a parent at the same time. Varying levels of prior knowledge of artistic techniques, and differing levels of experience in the creative sphere is the norm in our groups. There is always a wide spread from the very
anxious, inexperienced student to the semi-professional highly competent student. Swedish classes are rarely streamed, so this mix of abilities and experiences will also be the reality our new teachers find themselves in when they begin working in the school system. Below is a student’s illustration of what it feels like to be a teacher, her feet firmly planted in good earth, and her head full to over-flowing with ideas and energy.

What do we prioritise in our classes? We work actively during course meetings to reduce performance anxiety, discourage direct comparison with others and encourage students to set their own goals based on their individual needs. The aim is to prepare the students to be confident, willing to take creative risks and to feel empowered, particularly during their periods of self-study where they may feel a little isolated from their supportive group.

On campus we work as a whole class of 20 to 30 students, in small study groups of 4 to 6, in pairs and individually, both with creative activities and with theoretical studies. The study group becomes the student’s “family home” especially between campus meetings, when the students have virtual meetings using our learning platform, or other social networking tools. We strongly encourage group support and work actively against negative peer pressure, which can often stand in the way of creative development. We frequently have exchange students in our creative arts courses. Their evaluations often praise the relaxed and empowering approach they meet in Sweden, and they regularly compare this favourably with a stricter more divisive system in their countries of origin. They express appreciation for the opportunity to work creatively with art, something often missing in their educational context.
At each step, we allocate a great deal of time to discussion and reflection about what has been achieved. We also encourage students to use relevant technical vocabulary, and to develop an appropriate language for description and analysis when speaking about images. During these conversations, which are often conducted in pairs or in the study-groups, students get an idea of how to approach images, of how an image works. At the same time they also become skilled at providing feedback for each other. We believe it is important for students to be trained in giving constructive criticism, and to realise that every presentation of their creative work is also a positive opportunity for learning, where no one need be afraid of hurtful criticism. Our view is that it is always possible to highlight something interesting, to discuss and praise something in every piece.

As educators we play an important role in encouraging students to develop a rich language and an encouraging approach for their future professional role as teachers of children. In an article in The Guardian (2009) Sir Ken Robinson points out that education should develop our natural abilities and enable us to make our way in the world, instead it often stifles the motivation to learn. He sees the importance of bringing creativity into focus in school, arguing that this should be common practice. Elevating certain subjects at the expense of others is an offense to diversity he says, and all subjects are equally important in a student's education. According to Robinson, all children start their school careers with sparkling imaginations, fertile minds and a willingness to take risks in their thinking, yet most students never get to explore the full range of their abilities. In our art courses we aim to redress this imbalance.

Our philosophical base. Vygotsky (1995) introduced the idea that a child’s development occurs in interaction with their environment to a greater extent than it does as an independent individual process. We believe this to be true of adult learners and therefore pay attention to the context in which we teach. We are also influenced by Roger Säljö’s (2000) extended thoughts on this socio-cultural perspective, involving interaction and cooperation between people, where an individual develops their basic cognitive skills, that is their perception of themselves and of other people through interaction. According to Säljö, learning also occurs in the interaction between individuals, something which informs many of our teaching choices. As one student writes in their evaluation: “I feel rich in knowledge and have developed both as an educator and as a human being”. Student evaluation 2011.

Our teaching methods are also clearly informed by the Reggio Emilia philosophy of teaching and learning described below, where students are seen as competent and important, where difference and diversity are seen as enriching, and where it is acknowledged that many different paths can lead to understanding.

The wall that the kids have to climb over is the one that a deeply ambiguous and contradictory adult culture has built. A culture which, in theory, both ethically and rhetorically idealizes childhood, while in practice underestimating it. It devalues the role of the child, in particular their potential and their ability. It is a culture focused on maintaining and consolidating teaching methods based on constant repetition and a burdensome philanthropic attitude, rather than one
which supports teaching methods that stimulate enquiry and change. Arvas & Wallin. (1986). page 35.

Observation, investigation, documentation and reflection are some of the key characteristics of this educational philosophy, as well as seeing diversity as an important value. We place great emphasis on openness to new expressions and interpretations of tasks within the course. According to the Reggio Emilia approach the teacher should not provide ready answers to questions, but should support the learner’s thinking about how they can learn to understand the question they are thinking about. This open-ended approach works well in the context of art within teacher training, and also models methods which our students can apply in the school context when they begin working as teachers themselves.

**Thoughts on typical course contents, approach and methods.**

"Traditionally, the discussion on art education has been focused on the art. How to communicate art? How to make children understand art? The educational consequences of such a view have been, and continue to be, guided tours conducted by educators who have done their homework and who elucidate the artists intentions – what Illeris calls "the traditional art gallery ritual". This view creates a notion that there is a "correct" interpretation, which one should understand.” Benroth Karlsson (2000), page 38.

In various educational establishments, many classes are conducted in a similar way when the subject is art and works of art. The teacher presents the artist's life and various famous works, while students are expected to listen and be interested. In our experience this approach might lead to a few interested students communicating and showing interest, while most tend to lose focus. To really involve the students actively a variety of methods and pedagogical approaches are needed, and relevant choices need to be made depending on the needs of the group. This thinking lies at the core of our teaching practice.

We aim for both breadth and depth of subject knowledge in our courses. Students work initially with a general presentation and exploration of **materials** and **techniques** to learn the basics and develop the “grammar” of the language of art. We produce images with the help of art and craft-based methods and techniques, and work with different media and communicative practices in areas such as computer and video technology. The use of images as a communicative tool is explored through theories and practical experience. We strive to achieve variety in our teaching where the students’ wishes, creativity, imagination and personal interpretations permeate the work within the courses. In the majority of our teaching we actively include relevant works of art, something which became most apparent when we reviewed our practice when preparing this text. A technique such as **acrylic** painting or **watercolour** is introduced with the help of works of art. **Colour theory** is exemplified using paintings from different eras, and when analysing historical pictures as an introduction, **composition** comes alive.
Sometimes we work intensively with a particular artist, at other times works of art are more incidental in a lesson. Our aim is to present works of art in a variety of ways, and always as a completely natural part of the teaching material in an art lesson. We believe this enriches the students’ own creative experience, and also models an approach they can utilise in their own teaching, giving them a firm methodological foundation on which to build.

When working with **ceramic sculpture** it is natural to show the work of **Hans Hedberg** for example, as an extra stimulus.

![Image of ceramic sculptures](image)

Our teaching encompasses not only subject knowledge in art, but we also continuously integrate the academic content of other school subjects into the creative process. We also encourage students to view art as integrated with other school subjects, to see the many links between art and other areas of knowledge, and to acknowledge the important role creativity can play in many other kinds of learning.

**Fagerlund** and **Moqvist** (2010) believe that in a truly creative activity the result is not predetermined, but the work should be based on curiosity and experimentation. The work can take many different forms and does not necessarily result in a finished product. This is a concept we hold particularly dear. It is something we impress upon our students, especially before their first period of study at home when there is often a little anxiety about “doing something wrong” and having to start over. We explain that every interpretation is a valid one, as long as the student works whole-heartedly with their production. There are no wrong answers, only interesting and unexpected variants, an attitude which fosters responsibility for one’s own decisions at home and creates real security within the course. “The generous climate in the art room has contributed to satisfaction and well-being. The amount of material we worked with is incredible, and it provides a huge breadth in our education.” Student evaluation, 2011

We regularly work thematically using art works as a starting point, and as a supportive scaffolding for learning in other subject areas. In their book on language development, Fagerlund and Moqvist (2010) highlight how aesthetic elements contribute to children's language development and how creative work can also help strengthen self-esteem. Pictures and video are a starting point for conversation, and reflection gives birth to a "linguistic thought process", which facilitates conversation and increases vocabulary and language practice. They believe that creativity also enhances development for children with special needs, and that for children with
different cultural and linguistic backgrounds a creative approach provides important tools in their learning process.

Since one of us is a native speaker of English and a trained language teacher used to working in a holistic inclusive style, the integration of art and other subjects in school is exemplified by teaching a combined lesson where pictures and language interact. This can be seen in the lesson plan below, where the use of pictures as stimulus for spoken language is central. The techniques experienced can be applied to the teaching of other languages including Swedish, and the group experiences “whole body learning” where all their senses are involved. Works of art are an integral part of the language stimulus, but here the prime focus is on teaching techniques using works of art as an invaluable teaching tool.

Professor Anne Bamford, of the University of Arts in London has reviewed 170 countries, working with arts and culture in schools. In the research report she wrote on behalf of Unesco “The Wow Factor” (2006) she describes how aesthetic elements affect students’ learning. She points to a number of positive effects that arts and creative education have, and which she believes will strengthen students’ critical thinking. Bamford stresses the importance of students being able to use their knowledge and show it in different ways, for example in the form of exhibition work, performance of various kinds, digital presentations and so on. Bamford also stresses the importance of students’ and teachers’ reflection for their learning processes.

Key concepts such as democracy, equality, gender and values are reflected, processed and worked with creatively in a variety of ways in the courses.
These core values are also stipulated in the school curriculum determined by the national Board of Education, and are part of every Swedish teacher’s responsibility. In fact, achieving the social and civic goals is prioritised over the achievement of the goals for subject knowledge, something that gives a unique flavour to education in the Swedish context. We show appropriate ways in which the subject of art can address this aspect of teaching. In our art teaching we work with film, media, advertising and consider how they work in our society.

An important characteristic of our approach is facilitating interactive learning. Borrowing ideas from each other is in some contexts seen as cheating, whereas we see it as a vital way to enhance learning and to encourage students to try new means of expression. Exploration, critical thinking and curiosity are actively promoted. Just as we borrow from an artist such as Bengt Lindström, and let him inspire us, we can borrow ideas from each other. Each person has their own distinct artistic “dialect”, just as no two artists share the same expression, and it is challenging to develop new ways of working through observing and “stealing” a fellow student’s “language”.

We aim to challenge students to visualize their ideas through various means, and to reflect continually on their attitudes and their learning. An important part of the process of reflection is the pedagogical portfolio, which students submit as their examination. Here they document the course contents in detail, with a clear focus on the teaching and learning aspects of the course. Compiling a portfolio makes visible the students’ own development, they also have the opportunity to see other people's development, they observe different learning styles and learn to respect different paths towards knowledge. We will return to this central topic of documentation.

Our view is that during their teacher training students need to experience many varied methods of working and examination, so they themselves will be able to become inventive and resourceful educators, well able to create exciting and varied lessons. The link to research, both in theory and practice is very important. Consequently the students are introduced to current research literature as an integral part of their studies. We also point out the similarities between artistic processes and research processes, both of which are about solving problems, trying out ideas/hypotheses, gathering information and gaining expertise, studying the facts, questioning and evaluating, and both of which result in a final product. Studying the production of an artist can lead to relevant insights into these linked processes.

We make use of artistic processes and strike a balance between theory and practice in all we do, inviting students to see the common thread in their course. We work through process and encourage the students to see their course as a journey made up of many steps, each one important but not necessarily all equally beautiful in themselves. We foster an acceptance of failure as an essential element in learning, and eventually succeeding. Comparisons can be drawn between the development of an artist’s expression during their lifetime. Dewey (2004) coined the term "learning by doing", which is an active approach in which theory, practice, reflection and action are
all linked together. We sometimes joke about an extension to the theory, “Learning by doing wrong”. If you are prepared to try something out, and make mistakes doing it, you often discover something worthwhile as well.

“Our teachers have been incredible role models both in methodology and pedagogy, not just in terms of art but also in their roles as teachers. They practice what they preach; we learn how to teach through experiencing the same sort of teaching ourselves. That way, you really understand.” Student evaluation, 2011

According to the student evaluations we receive at the end of each course, our teaching method and the atmosphere it creates in class, is considered to be very positive. Many refer to the richness of their creative experience, which is due in part to the integrated use of works of art and the introduction this gives to an enormous and ever-growing resource for teaching. We ourselves spend time and energy thinking about how to create the most enabling, encouraging, relaxed and inclusive atmosphere in our lessons. We see this as a prerequisite for true creativity. At the same time we are considered by our students to be demanding teachers who show clear leadership and provide exciting and surprising learning experiences in our classes. This creative tension between freedom and responsibility, relaxation and effort, has links to the creative processes an artist goes through in the search for a nourishing balance. Our hope is that our students will work in a similar way with their pupils, will actively incorporate art works in an organic way, and will find their work to be as fulfilling and energising as we do.

**Some snapshots of creative activities using works of art.** A popular task in our course is to choose a 2 dimensional work of art and to make an interpretation of it in 3 dimensions.

This **“Interpretation”** is done at home, and in combination with a PowerPoint presentation of the chosen artist. Students are encouraged to select the information they find most interesting, unusual or exciting about the artist, their life and work. They
create a **presentation** using a combination of pictures and text, which they upload to First Class for the whole group to see. Once back on campus, we exhibit all the interpretations alongside a reproduction of the work that inspired the sculpture. Each student gives a short oral presentation to a small group, and answers questions about their work. This is a relatively gentle way to enter the world of **art history**, as the students are asked to “place” their artist on the art historical timeline, research the “ism” the artist worked within and identify its main features.

We incorporate different ways of working in the interface/confrontation with works of art in our teaching, and we foster an attitude of "respectful disrespect" rather than exaggerated respect, which can inhibit creativity. The work of art is used as a starter motor for something new and original. We train the students to interact and borrow freely, to use and “misuse” the works of art, in short to get to grips with the piece and interact with it, not simply regard it from afar. We require the group to take works of art seriously, but also to exploit them in a playful way to extend their own repertoire, and later to encourage their pupils to do the same.

One such classic activity is the **Paraphrase**, which students read about and produce at home, a feature that leads to greater variety of treatment. Students select an art image that they find intriguing or challenging, and then change it in some way to alter the message. Some use paint and paper, some use digital techniques. The work is documented in the portfolio and reflected upon, which adds a dimension of analysis to the activity. We link this activity to **media, advertising** and the analysis of professionally produced advertising images, bringing in cultural codes, connotation and denotation as well as connections to the commercial world.

A popular classroom activity uses the material **Plastelina**, an inexpensive, brightly coloured, blendable plastic modelling clay.

The students bring a reproduction with them to the lesson, and are given an A5 piece of white card on which they “paint” a simplified, stylised version of their chosen 2D art work in this rather unexpected material. The plastic clay can be applied to the card using different and techniques for a range of effects. During the session the chosen work of art is observed in depth, and many details are discovered due to closer than average
This is an enjoyable way to increase awareness of art history, composition, line, form and so on, and it results in dramatic, pleasing and often jewel-like miniatures adding another useful creative string to the student’s bow.

**Presentations of work in class, and in the pedagogical portfolio.**

Regular presentations of work done in the course are seen as an opportunity for learning, and as a useful way to gather inspiration from the whole group’s productions and ideas. Reflecting together on the experience we have just had, and on the products of our efforts, encourages learning at a profound level. We vary the way in which work is reviewed, sometimes working in small groups round a table, sometimes in a whole group with a formal exhibition. One way or another, there is always dialogue and interaction and the essential provision of supportive feedback that encourages everyone in their learning.

According to **Professor Lars Lindström** (2007) of Stockholm University, a major proponent of the method, the portfolio can be used to grade the student’s artistic production, their thoughts on teaching and learning, and their depth of reflection. The approach requires a concerted effort on the part of the teachers, but in return it provides a clear picture of how students tackle authentic tasks requiring reflection, self-expression and investigation. Last but not least, the method facilitates awareness of the creative process for the student, and anchors their learning in a visible concrete way.

Our students document their work both in words and images, they are encouraged to include pictures of the process, and of the group’s results to increase the range in their portfolio. They make links to their upcoming profession, write pedagogical reflections, consider further exploitation of the lesson idea, and find links to other school subjects as well as reflecting on their own experience as an integrated part of their portfolio. Relevant links to policy documents and course books are also included in the documentation, while other literature is processed in more depth in a longer text. Decisions about the design of the portfolio lie with the students. Some use advanced digital word and image processing, while others choose to make their portfolio manually by cutting and pasting. There is great variation in expression and style, but the portfolios tend to be of good to excellent quality. The students are highly motivated to work hard on appearance and content, not least since they gain inspiration from each others’ portfolios. They see their own portfolios as a reference work for later use, and it can be shown to future employers. In the course evaluations all students express great appreciation of the portfolio as a method of assessment, although initially there may be some concern as it is an unusual assignment. This attitude changes during the course of the work as the lasting value of their portfolio becomes apparent.

“**The portfolio is the best possible examination. Not a "test" for the sake of it but a tool to be used in my future teaching work. It is in the writing and compiling of the portfolio that you see your own process. This means that you are studying for your own benefit and not for the teacher’s, which is a definite plus.**

“**Portfolio work is the most instructive and stimulating work and examination I have ever experienced. Fascinating material is created which we can later use to**
aid our memory and the portfolio can be used when applying for jobs. I will continue to work in a similar way for my own benefit in other courses. Even if I have to write exams as well, in any case I will have arrived at my own knowledge on my own.” Student evaluations 2011

The portfolio of one student is commented on by another student in the same group. This provides students with good training in providing professional feedback “as a teacher”. Developing in their future professional role, seeing themselves not as students but as teachers is an important part of teacher education, the portfolio work makes this development very clear indeed. The student also gains useful perspectives from their classmate about their own portfolio before it is submitted for examination. We believe that this form of examination deepens understanding of the course content, and gives an opportunity for essential pedagogical reflection. In our experience, this examination method ensures an appropriate assessment of student performance, and evaluations of the portfolio examination method show consistently very happy students. The physical results in the form of well-filled, elegantly designed and inspiring reference works have a lasting value in themselves, not least as visible evidence of knowledge acquired.

Where can we find original works of art in the rural areas and small towns of the north of Sweden? Works of art used as inspiration, as a starting point and as a reference appear and reappear in our courses. As we live and work in the far north of Sweden we often approach works of art through the Internet, via books, reproductions and films but also “live” in art galleries and museums, exhibitions in the library and other venues. Web-based material is a vital element in bringing works of art into the students’ consciousness. They can have instant access to collections such as Tate Modern in the UK, the Metropolitan in New York and a wealth of others throughout the world. When works of art are presented via the Internet the constraints of geography, time and schedules are lessened and accessibility increased. This evens out the educational playing field and means students are less disadvantaged by location than would otherwise be the case. There is access to works of art locally, and there are many dedicated people who endeavour to open hearts and minds to artistic expression. Our library has evening art clubs for children, where a local artist uses works of art as inspiration, and exhibits the childrens’ creations for the general public to see. Murberget, the County Museum is based in Härnösand, and has an extensive collection of mainly Swedish artists and several trained pedagogues who offer free educational programmes for children, and for our teacher trainee students.

Our municipal art gallery has three exhibition spaces with a varying programme of artists showing throughout the year. The curator presents the works for our student groups as part of their course. The gallery runs a “Childrens’ Culture Week” every year, where the gallery is filled to the brim with creative works done by the towns’ school and pre-school pupils. It is a glorious celebration of the joy of expression, and helps our students to see just what children are capable of producing, given a nourishing environment and a competent teacher.
We invite active artists to join us in the courses and to work creatively with our students. These visits are often very fruitful and are greatly appreciated by the students. Lisa W. Carlsson, the artistic consultant in the county of Västernorrland and is also a practising contemporary artist. She has run lessons using contemporary concepts such as installations with our teacher training students, resulting in a short film of the activity. Janne Björkman and Kerstin Lindström have taken part in an “Artists in Schools” project, which they told our students about. We then worked creatively with a very relevant role-play to decide how to spend the budget for cultural activities in a school context. The artists introduced the role-play with a piece of performance art, and the entire group was ultimately active in the performance which lasted an hour.

It is important that our students become educators who promote close cooperation with various venues and cultural institutions in their home areas, which in turn allows their pupils to do exciting outreach projects. We aim to empower the students in this role, and often include a task to survey their hometown for learning opportunities in locations outside the preschool/school. They investigate the opportunity to interact with and enjoy the cultural institutions or events in their own home municipality. Students visit various locations where original works of art can be found in the vicinity, the breadth of works of art available to school groups is impressive. Generally there are specialists trained to work with school groups, who are employed in the galleries and museums. This service is generally paid for by taxes and is free at source, something which makes working with art works a real possibility.

How did it turn out in the end? The students have the last word: We feel we have shown that the use of works of art is a vital element in the teaching of art in our context. It brings authenticity to, and enhances the students’ creative experience. We have shown connections between the creative processes used by artists and those used by teachers preparing for working creatively with children. In our own practice we
find the use of works of art provides an organic framework for the teaching of art, providing a never-ending source of inspiration to develop and improve our courses. Our hope is that these valuable aspects of the use of works of art will continue to inspire teachers in all forms of education, and contribute to a rich and rewarding life for the pupils, and for their teachers.

“I have deepened my knowledge of art and I now feel well equipped to be a calm and satisfied teacher. I have gained new strength and a clear goal for my teacher training with this course. It has provided me with nourishment and energy. I am going in for my studies in a completely different way now. This art course is different, the teachers are different, everything is done with soul, heart, body and intellect, all working in harmony.” Student evaluations 2011

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