

## Open structure – TTT Budapest 2013

What happens if we close seven dance teachers for seven days in a studio and tell them to do whatever they want? The Workshop Foundation's program entitled *Teaching the Teachers* (TTT) created such a laboratory situation.

### Content

What is TTT?-----	1
Antecedents-----	2
Participants -----	3
Frames-----	5
Professional preparation -----	6
Documentation -----	6
Topics connected to other TTT programs-----	7
Let's do it: What happened? -----	8
Open structure-----	10
Methodological selection -----	11
The dancer is a social being -----	14
Group dynamics -----	15
The social - political aspect of art -----	16
The social - political engagement of art -----	16
How to become better teachers?-----	17
TTT as a basic research about educationnal science -----	18

### What is TTT?

This was the 15th TTT during the 5 years of the Jardin d'Europe international program supported by the European Union.<sup>1</sup> This form of further education for dance teachers was the idea of the project leader, the Viennese dance WEB. The program was called into being by professionals dealing with the education of dance artists. They realized the need for a common time and space to share topics, questions, and their actual experiences. The purpose of the program is to satisfy the need of contemporary dance to establish new pedagogical methods. For this purpose, the co-organizers of each TTT could choose any form. Browsing through the documentation of previously realized TTTs on Jardin d'Europe's website, we can

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<sup>1</sup> Further information is available about the Jardin d'Europe project and the other TTT programs on the project website: [www.jardindeurope.eu](http://www.jardindeurope.eu)

clearly see the vast diversity in the structure and themes of the different programs: at either end of the spectrum there are a few hour-long mini-conferences and one 10-day-long intensive workshop.

### **Antecedents**

Workshop Foundation organized the first TTT program in 2010, which was followed by a second event in 2013. In 2010, the Foundation invited the Budapest Contemporary Dance Academy to be a partner. The Academy appointed three professionals to the program: Tamás Bakó and Viktória Varga as regular teachers at the institution and Éva Karczag, who is a permanent guest teacher at the school. At that time, together with the assistant of the foundation, the three of them formed the program and the circle of guests. The participants related to each other differently according to their professional background. Among the representatives of the three generations, both master-pupil and collegiate relationships were present. The structured concept of that program was connected to an idea formulated during the Bucharest TTT, according to which the location of a program should play a very important role in performing arts. Remaining true to this spirit, during the Budapest TTT of 2010, the group travelled. Every day one of the participants led an open workshop in a different dance institution within the city. In the afternoon sessions, they gave each other feedback about the class and discussed different predetermined topics regarding contemporary dance education. They also wrote, drew, and created several maps.<sup>2</sup> Based on the feedback, the engagement of the participants was clear. Éva Karczag with her gentle and wise, but strong attitude kept the process in hand.

Looking back on the evaluations of 2010, the aspects and topics that became focal points for the 2013 event had already arisen there. Although it was not a conscious choice by the organizers, the phenomenon itself is interesting, because during this year's the TTT, Valentina pointed out that what we want is not the most important, but "what we are longing for." We get professional satisfaction and feel that it was worth spending this week together if our wishes are fulfilled.

I think the success of TTT can be measured by the satisfaction level reflected in the individual participants' feedback.

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<sup>2</sup> Documentation happens in different ways: interviews, written reports, photos, and videos in online, printed, and DVD formats as well. All the material is available on-line here: <http://jardindeurope.eu/index.php?id=42>

What were these “hidden topics” in the 2010 program? Some key notions appear in Viki Varga’s report from that time such as the openness of co-operational structures, exchange and integration of standpoints, and a good proportion of verbal and non-verbal communication. Gil Clarke writes about learning as the process of experiencing where understanding becomes physical. She also accentuates the inseparability of teaching and artistic work. In her reflections, she primarily mentions the importance of open structures and the productive effect of a trustful atmosphere that allows this kind of “risky” working process to function. Éva Karczag emphasizes the importance of support: the multilayered human-professional systems and individual responsibilities that make such a program viable. All these viewpoints, interpreted in a pedagogical context, became central topics of the 2013 program.

## **Participants**

Workshop Foundation compiled the plan of the 2013 program together with two previous participants, Tamás Bakó and Viktória Varga. When forming the group, they had a concept: they wanted to create a context for their own pedagogical practice. They invited colleagues who work in similar situations. Considering what defines their own situation, they pinpointed three main aspects. First of all, life in Eastern Europe (also) defines a specific position for those working in the field of contemporary art. Despite the opening up of borders, after quarter of a century, the separation between West and East is an ongoing and perceptible condition. Secondly, they belong to an intermediate generation, after that in which the so-called “great generation” had already grown up. The students coming after them became educators almost imperceptibly. How can this middle generation find its place in the more and more institutionalizing system of today? Thirdly, they prepare students for a professional career as a dance artist within a school system. An additional viewpoint – according to the experiences of the previous TTT – was that the success of such short and intensive common work can be increased if the participants already know each other somehow, from previous common professional activity. It is not necessary for everyone to know each other, but if everybody has a common past with at least one or two members, it can facilitate much of the group’s communication. It accelerates the first phase of getting to know each other. The circle of participants was compiled in the course of long preparatory work. In the end, it took the following shape:

**Valentina De Piante Niculae** is an originally Italian dancer and dance teacher living in Romania. We were already in touch with her during the previous program. Unfortunately, we could not invite her that time, but this time she was the first to be asked to join. Her early professional work is related to Hungary, as she was a member of the Szegedi Kortárs Balett (Szeged Contemporary Ballet) in the 90's. She graduated in Romania and later continued her studies at the choreography faculty of the I. L. Caragiale National University of Theatre and Film,<sup>3</sup> She currently teaches there at the faculty of choreography, where she is also doing her PHD. She took part in the 2009 TTT program in Bucharest.

**Ivaylo Dimitrov** is a Bulgarian actor, dancer, teacher, and choreographer. He studied acting, pantomime, and then dancing at the National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts<sup>4</sup> in Sofia. After graduation, he worked as a director at the New Bulgarian University.<sup>5</sup> In 2008, he participated in the first Nomad Dance Academy<sup>6</sup> program. Since 2004, he has been teaching movement improvisation at the National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts in the faculty of physical theatre. In 2010, he twice spent two weeks in Budapest with the support of the Jardin d'Europe program.

**Defne Erdur** is a Turkish dancer, choreographer, and teacher. She started to dance while at the same time studying sociology. She is currently teaching and earning her PHD in the faculty of performing arts at the Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University.<sup>7</sup> Her research is on the potential connections between art therapy and performing arts. She participated in the 2011 TTT in Montpellier and the 2012 session in Istanbul. Within the framework of the international IDOCDE project, she already worked with Hungarian pedagogues.

**Katja Mustonen** is Finish dancer, choreographer, and dance teacher living in Frankfurt. After her secondary school dance studies and higher education training in literature, theatre, and drama pedagogy in Finland, she received a dance teacher diploma from the Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts.<sup>8</sup> During her studies, she also taught at the university. She taught several times in Budapest, where she was invited by Kontakt Budapest.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> I. L. Caragiale National University of Theatre and Film: [www.unatc.ro](http://www.unatc.ro)

<sup>4</sup> National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts: [www.natfiz.bg](http://www.natfiz.bg)

<sup>5</sup> New Bulgarian University: [www.nbu.bg](http://www.nbu.bg)

<sup>6</sup> The NDA is a basic program of the Jardin d'Europe: <http://www.nomaddanceacademy.org>

<sup>7</sup> Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University: [www.msgsu.edu.tr](http://www.msgsu.edu.tr)

<sup>8</sup> Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts: [www.hfmdk-frankfurt.info](http://www.hfmdk-frankfurt.info)

<sup>9</sup> [www.kontaktbudapest.hu](http://www.kontaktbudapest.hu)

**Iskra Sukarova** is a Macedonian dancer and dance teacher. After her classical ballet studies, she studied contemporary dance in Lyon, and then at the Laban Center of London. For several years, she was a soloist at the Macedonian Opera and Ballet. Currently, she is a teacher of classical ballet pedagogy training, which has existed for 2 years at the music faculty of the University of Skopje. She is one of the founders of the Nomad Dance Academy program. She participated in the 2011 TTT in Skopje.

**Viktória Varga** and **Tamás Bakó** are both dancers and dance teachers. They both teach at the Budapest Contemporary Dance Academy, after completing their dance studies at the Budapest Dance School, the academy's predecessor.

These seven teachers formed the “international group.” Besides them, seven “local professionals” invited by Tamás and Viktória were involved in the program: **Anna Biczók, Zsófia Tamara Vadas, Júlia Garai, Júlia Hadi, Júlia Lányi, Júlia Vavra**, and finally **Heléna Hrotkó**, who followed TTT events already in 2010 and made a significant contribution to the documentation then and this time, too. This “local group” shares the following characteristics: 1. They study at the Budapest Dance School (either in the secondary school or at the academy), 2. They are active dancers and most of them also teaching, 3. The majority of them belong to a younger generation, and 4. They were students of Tamás and Viktória.

## **Frames**

Compared to previous TTT sessions, the proposed program structure was less fixed:

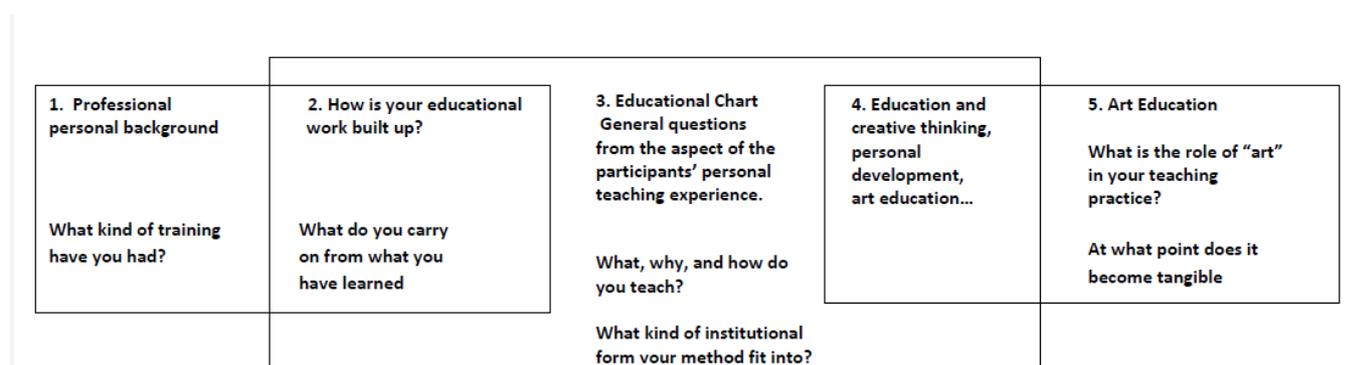
- Space: Jurányi Incubator House, Grabó Studio (a 200-square-meter dance studio). If needed, other studios at the Foundation were available, too.
- Time: 7 days, between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. every day.
- Lunch: at the same location at 1 p.m., a cooked meal with vegetarian options.
- Presentation: to be held on the last day in the afternoon or evening and announced for the local professional audience.
- Participants: an international group with seven participants and a local group with another seven participants. According to the original concept, the role of the local group would be to participate in teaching sessions in the morning, and then, as a control group, to give feedback to the international group about their experiences.

## Professional preparation

The framework of the professional concept was established by the two local participants within the international group – namely, Viktória and Tamás. The basic questions they asked as starting points for further considerations were “When does a dance class become art education?”, “Where is the border between dance training and the personal development?”, and “Is it necessary or possible to trace these borders?” Five interconnected topics were outlined and proposed as starting points:

1. Personal professional background
2. What are your resources as a teacher?
3. What, why, and how do you teach?
4. Education and creative thinking
5. Art education

The following chart presents in detail the topics and their relations:



The invitation with this conception was sent to the future participants. They were asked to write down which topics they were interested in and also to send a personal professional presentation. Thus, before the personal meeting, they already had some information about each other, and they also knew that the group’s common interests lay in the position of art in teaching practice.

## Documentation

The organizer Workshop Foundation placed great emphasis upon detailed documentation of the research process. The purpose of the documentation was to share the conclusions of the work with those who were not present. They wanted to make the results available to both the

Hungarian and the international public. Documentation was carried out in the following forms:

- Writing a blog during the seven days, with daily updates, through which one could follow the events of the day. Texts, photos, and videos were uploaded on the webpage. The blog was edited by a participant of the local group: <http://www.ttt2013budapest.blogspot.hu>
- Realization of a “Prezi” that would be appropriate as a schematic presentation of the program and could become background material for verbal presentation: <http://prezi.com/uxjyiu2b6ewe/teaching-the-teachers-budapest-2013/>
- Video documentation of the presentation on the last day
- Paper documentation that presents the program in detail.<sup>10</sup>

### **Topics connected to other TTT programs**

The main topic of the Belgrade TTT of April 2013 was basically the same as the one in Budapest: the practice of art during teaching. At the Istanbul TTT of 2012, the same question arose: How do teachers create a balance between their artistic and teaching practice? How can we find the balance between technical and creative education within the pedagogy of contemporary performing art? During the Bucharest TTT of 2009, the question of ideal artistic education emerged: How can we learn/teach without direct guidance? As far as I know, the events dealing with similar topics were not directly connected. These assonant questions rather show that the relationship between art and teaching is a topic that deserves to be analyzed several times from different aspects. The common point of these raised topics is a theoretical structure according to which art education has two well-defined directions: the technical education (of dance) and the development of creativity. More precisely, the basic question is if these two fields can be separated, and if yes, is it worthwhile to do so.

The ensuing responses to the emerging questions were defined by the following approach: What is the ideal training? Who is the ideal teacher? Who is the ideal student?

Taking one step back, we face questions of “What is art?” and “What is the relationship between art and life (society, politics)?” These questions were discussed, both directly and indirectly, during the research process at the Budapest TTT of 2013.

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<sup>10</sup> The writer of the this study was present partly as a witness, partly as a participant during the process of TTT, and in the preparation took the role of an advisor. She was the organizer of the TTT of 2010. As a result of this multilayered viewpoint while writing this text I’m changing the role and point of view of the narrator.

## **Let's do it: What happened?**

In this part, I shall attempt to record what the participants were doing day by day. I shall do my best to be brief, since you can read detailed descriptions about every day on the blog of the program.<sup>11</sup>

### **1st day:**

The international group meets in the bar at the corner. Then, we went together to the studio on the 4th floor, where we discussed the purpose and the theme of the program and the participants introduced themselves to the group. After lunch and a little movement, we gathered the topics that represented our common interests. First, we wrote down and expressed our thoughts, then the common points were committed to paper.

### **2nd day:**

This was the day that the local group joined in the work. In the morning, the two groups were together. The day began with movement, then the international group gave ten-minute micro-classes one after another; however, they made no decision about the topics or the order. The different classes in key words:

- Iskra – Floating body
- Defne – Transition of sensation from body into paper: movement-writing-drawing
- Ivo – What is personal time?
- Tamás – Shaking up the space
- Valentina – Moving from the perspective of a child
- Viktória – You're not independent from the others – performance situation
- Katja – Find you own speed and stay with it.

The classes were partly followed by 2-3 minutes reflection time, which is also a condensed form of what would usually happen. The leader of the class could use this time freely to ask for reflection.

In the afternoon, the two groups discussed the conclusions of the morning session separately.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.ttt2013budapest.blogspot.hu>

**3rd day:**

In the morning, reflections on the day before were held within the context of the main topics of TTT. Structuring the thoughts took a long time. The participants in the international group created several large maps, while the common direction became clear, embodied in the three following questions:

- What is art?
- How can we create a better educational program?
- How can we bring these experiences into practice?

The afternoon was partly a continuation of the morning process. Then, the two groups worked on what they would teach to each other the next day.

**4th day:**

On this day, each group brought a movement exercise to share. The locals began with a spontaneous ball game which called for creative participation after they presented the rules of the game (without adding any verbal comment). The international group proposed a structure built up from 5 phases:

- 10 minutes of dance on our own
- 30 minutes: everybody is a student (you can ask anyone to teach you)
- 30 minutes: everybody is a teacher (you can propose teaching)
- 5 minutes of individual reflection
- at the end, a discussion about the whole process

In the afternoon, the two groups remained together and continued with movement. They worked in pairs under the guidance of Katja and Defne.

**5th day:**

In the morning, the two groups tried to decide together what to do during the last days of the program. After lunch and a common free dance, the work continued in three groups that took shape according to the different directions of interest. In the evening, the group invited the local professional public to an open Peace Jam, dedicated to the political situation in Turkey.

### **6th day**

The morning started with authentic movement, then the participants shared their experience with the homework, which was the following: whenever you realize you are doing something, change it. Do this for 15 minutes. Before lunch we watched a lecture by Sir Ken Robinson about the connection between creativity and the education system.<sup>12</sup>

In the afternoon the international and local group divided. In these two circles, they tried to find answers to the following three questions:

- What kind of expectations did I have concerning TTT?
- What did I get?
- What did I give?

### **7th day**

The morning began in mixed groups according to different interests. In the afternoon, they prepared that evening's presentation. In the evening there was an open presentation for the professional public.

### **Open structure**

Reading the above schematic description, it may be obvious that the structure proposed previously by Workshop Foundation was not realized at all. Already at the first day's meeting, the participants faced the basic questions concerning the structure of the program.

One of them was reflection upon teacher and student roles. This destroyed plans from two perspectives: first, concerning the relationship between the local and international group; and second, concerning the daily alternating teacher-student roles within the international group (Who is teaching which day?). Moreover, there were concerns in relation hierarchic structures: Who is the leader? Who is deciding about the content of the program?

As everyone was open to discuss these basic questions, the "hosts" (Tamás and Viktória) did not insist upon a leadership role at all, and the previously proposed program changed completely. It was also a common decision not to fix in advance the program of the week, but to evaluate it constantly and to react to spontaneous needs as they occurred. In this manner, the group decided upon upcoming duties just one or two steps ahead. As Define

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<sup>12</sup> TED talk is available on-line: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iG9CE55wbtY>

expressed it in her report, “We knew what and why we were doing, and this time we allowed ourselves not to know how we were going to do it.”

Changes and experiences due to the resulting open program:

- The group dynamics and the evolution of roles received especially strong focus.
- How is responsibility divided? The leadership role was also changing. By approximately the end of the fifth day, a team of three people was formed, and they put great energy into creating a balance between satisfying everyone’s needs and realizing our common commitments. The selection of someone by the group for this role, I believe, depended on the amount of energy the participant devoted to this balancing.
- A common experience, also mentioned in several reports, was that working in such an open system requires plenty of time and attention toward each other. The ability to listen and good timing of expression were appreciated values.
- This structure allows the participants to experience different roles within a group freely.
- “Research into the unknown” is an experience that was formulated in almost everybody’s report.
- Nothing is evident. What is obvious for someone, can be a completely new experience for someone else. (Katja highlighted this in her report.)

## **Methodological selection**

During the work in the open structure, members of the group were free to come up with methodological ideas, and the participants decided together whether to try it or not. It often happened that an idea was adapted to the actual needs of the group. In the following, I will present some exercises with a common theme, to try to go beyond the traditional hierarchy (teacher vs. student, teaching vs. studying).

### **- 10 minute micro-teaching**

All the members of the group give a 10-minute class in which they try to condense the main interest of their teaching. The 10 minutes are followed by two or three minutes’ reflection time, and its format is also chosen by the teacher. The topics are not shared in advance, and the order of the classes is not fixed. In this format, the role of the teacher and the student

constantly changes. This method is used by the members of the international group to “present” themselves to each other and to the local group on the morning of the second day.

Tamás and Viktória evaluate this method in their report, saying that the accelerated time and density prioritized the content of the class, and the usually fixed roles and habits influenced the learning process to a lesser extent. According to the source, “The roles of teacher and student rotated in short intervals, dissolving the traditional schema of roles.”

### **- Class established according to a group concept**

For the fourth day, the participants gave themselves the task of sharing knowledge with the other group. (The two groups made this decision together.) The notion of “sharing” instead of “teaching” was used for the first time in the context of this exercise. In the concept of teaching, the hierarchic relationship of teacher and student or educator-learner is perpetuated. Here, they wanted to try out models not based on this traditional opposition.

Co-teaching was also realized in a special format on the morning of the fourth day.

Both concepts proposed a playground in which the roles of the participants changed constantly during the process. A detailed description of the two formats is available on the blog.

### **- Teaching and learning by request**

To provide a methodological example of studying in open learning structure, I shall highlight one event from the aforementioned group formats. The people or players in the space can select for themselves one of the proposed roles: they can ask someone for teaching, or they propose something to teach. Apart from these choices, one can be an observer, a free mover, or can join a teaching process already in progress. The optional roles can be structured in time (first one can just ask for teaching, then just for learning), although the different engagements can also happen at the same time. According to Viktória and Tamás’s recollections, the method helps to clarify what we want to learn. It also makes us aware of the capacity of individual learning and its motivation power. The possibility of dynamic alternation within the roles also helps dissolve the role schema that often interfere with the learning process.

### **- Parallel classes**

This is another version of the previous method. The morning of the seventh day started with the idea of staying in the same place all together and starting the day with common movement. According to individual needs, there can be different processes going on in the common space. During the discussion, there were requests for classes. Here two groups were formed, and, of course, it was possible to join individually for the day. We just agreed on the time frame, and then we all took our places in the space.

#### **- Common, free dance**

The free dance, which opened the fifth afternoon, received special emphasis not only in and of itself, but also due to its importance in the whole process. It helped provide an emotional release of the “group dynamic crises,” which resulted from the unclear, shifting roles and absorbed plenty of emotional energy. During that morning’s discussion, the opposition among different interests came into focus. Agreement as to what future steps to take in the program could only be established at the cost of big compromises. Due to this, verbal exchanges on the subject continued lunchtime as well. During the free dance, every participant could relate to the others as equal partners. Different expectations and levels of responsibility – first broached in discussion, then experienced during the program – were in opposition. In this common free dance situation, the role conflicts lost their importance. Improvisation created a democratic atmosphere for the participants, and they could reassert their presence and role in the group. At the same time, playing in this democratic space gave us an emotional relief in this situation that was already loaded with emotional tension. This emotional release helped the participants formulate and actively represent their interests during following discussions.

#### **- Open-structured (methodological) presentation**

The aim of the open presentation on the last day was to share the results and experiences of the week with a wider professional public. As the main focus of the week was the open structure, the program was realized according to the abovementioned principles. Several items were proposed simultaneously in the space, which gave guests the opportunity to engage in the experiences of the participants in different ways. Options were constantly present – for example, to read the created maps or posters hung on the walls, or to listen to discussions and voice recordings. There were events that one could actively join. Participants even approached one or two guests and shared an important experience, or they proposed some teachings. Of course, it was always possible just to remain a witness of this structured collage.

The basic principal that they communicated through this experience was that everyone gave and received something according to individual interest and activity in the co-created process. The structure of this final event represented what Tamás and Viktória concluded in their evaluation concerning contemporary dance: “As the creator’s method is experimentation, pedagogical approach should also remain always experimental.” Similarly, “creative and analytic ways of thinking, experimentation, and a non-hierarchical approach can be part of the learning process as different means of perceiving knowledge.”

### **The dancer is a social being**

After the 10-minute mini-teachings, I joined the discussion of the local group, where they shared their experiences about the classes. In the feedback, I recognized a common point: in each case, they expressed the importance of being in a community with other people during the learning and experiencing process. Even in a private observation like “perceive your personal time” (Ivo), Júlia Garai shared that the presence of partners, and witnessing how they discovered their personal time, helped her identify her own personal time.

In her written recollection, Anna Biczók states that experiences shared within the group amplify the intensity of the personal ones. In the course of her reflections, the points of view are enumerated, and a question arises: Is possible to formulate a personal experience at all? In other words, the presence of others and their experiences are part of the personal experience.

Júlia Lányi shared that, in the exercise where one person moved freely with the other three people supporting (Iscra), the presence of partners was very important. She realized that the reactions of the others influenced many of her decisions.

Concerning Viktória’s class, Tamara reports that even if there is no direct connection or touching between people moving together, they still feel one another. She asked how this kind of perception (without eye contact) be taught?

Júlia Vavra shared a similar experience concerning Tamás’s class, where they moved freely. Free movement is also relative, as it is determined by one’s relationship to the others: “People where herding me through space.”

After sharing, they defined the common experiences through four concepts: touch, time, perception, and presence.

Later, the theme of the conversation shifted to their experiences as students in the past and to the topic of the ideal school. In the meanwhile, the other group (the international one) arrived at the same topics, but by a different path. In both groups, there arose the question: How aware are we during the process of learning and teaching about the importance of the partner's presence and their influence on the quality, development, and efficiency of the learning process itself?

### **Group dynamics**

The topic above shows us that, as pedagogues, we should recognize the effect of group dynamics, since they can highly influence the quality of the learning process. During the conversations and reflections, several people admitted that when coming to a workshop about dance pedagogy, they never expected that they would learn the most about group dynamics.

The open program structure gave the participants space and time to experience transformations in group dynamics intensely. Processing of these experiences took place after a few days in the verbal reflections, which allowed members to consciously analyze and successfully deal with conflict situations that eventually arose.

On the fifth day of the program, which was the fourth for the two groups working together, the process of group dynamics culminated in a crisis. On the surface, the conflict was about the next step of the process: should we continue with movement or verbal exchange? Behind the focused and less focused representation of viewpoints, it was about the suspected/real roles and role interpretations within the group. For example, do the two groups have the same right to decide in which direction the program is guided? To what extent is a person entitled to express individual needs?

This situation warns us of the fact that after creating an open structure and realizing a democratic platform, the previously established (suspected or real) role hierarchies do not disappear automatically; they are only suspended or limited to certain situations and activities. If someone creates such a situation as a teacher, the limits must be defined. One must be conscious constantly of the rules of the game and make the group aware of them. Another question: In what situations can this method function at all? What kind of knowledge and abilities should the members of the group provide to make such an open learning situation work? This question leads us back again the topic of the ideal school.

### **The social - political aspect of art**

On the third day, the international group summarized many of their emerging thoughts in three questions. During the fifth day, while I was watching the free movement session of the participants, and I myself experienced the liberating effect of this dance, my eyes suddenly discovered those three questions written out in capital letters. I recalled several conversations, and I found the following answers:

- What is art?

Art always challenges the existing systems, always tries to find new pathways and solutions. Therefore, it basically follows a democratic practice.

- How can we create a better education system?

By transmitting democratic values and developing skills. These are certain values and skills that the dancer as a social being needs in the day-to-day practice of his/her profession. These include sensitivity to others, flexibility, capacity to solve problems, creativity, paying attention to others and oneself, stamina, as well as the ability to compromise, to hold on and to let go, to wait, and to say yes.

- How can we bring those experiences into practice, into the body?

Practicing those skills in a laboratory situation. Let's bring methods into the dance studio that provide time and space to experience a democratic practice. That's what happened in the dance studio.

### **The social - political engagement of art**

The group could experience the connection between art and life clearly through an actual, tragic event. Defne, the Turkish member of the group arrived from a revolutionary situation. During the days of TTT, her friends and family members were standing in the streets in defense of democratic values. She herself tried to do something with her own artistic tools.<sup>13</sup> She expressed her protest through a performance in which she was standing still. Standing is a basic exercise of contact improvisation that is called "the small dance" by Steve Paxton. In the apparently standing body, there are a multitude of movements going on to maintain balance. The silence of the surface is created by the interplay of many harmonious sounds. For the evening of the fifth day, we invited the dance community of Budapest for a common dance – a dance for peace, for peace in Turkey. During the evening, Defne spoke about the actual events, and then she asked the people to express their solidarity by standing still for a

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<sup>13</sup> The interview made with Defne is available here: [www.szuveren.hu/tarsadalom/a-nem-mozdul-as-tetje](http://www.szuveren.hu/tarsadalom/a-nem-mozdul-as-tetje)

few minutes before entering the studio. The nearly thirty dancers standing in the corridor of the fourth floor of the Jurányi Incubator House became a silent monument dedicated to the victims of the police's brutality. The importance and topicality of this event was confirmed by the revolting fact that the Hungarian government sent a supporting message to the Turkish government. Defne's engagement and her need to react is a good example about how artists can reflect on a political situation with their given artistic tools.

During the TTT program, another question came up. Why are we here? One of the answers led us back to the European Union, although the Union as a source of money is just the practical explanation of why. If we look back at the spirit of the European Union, we realize that it was the idea of a Europe-wide social-political peace that created this alliance between the nations.

The event on the fifth evening, the stand-in followed by the common dance improvisation, also facilitated this peace. According to Ann Cooper Albright, who writes about 11 September 2011, improvisation leads us to the capacity of imagining our relationships differently. During an improvisation, we open ourselves to the unknown both physically and mentally. Its practice can be useful on a personal and political level, too.<sup>14</sup>

### **How to become better teachers?**

The topics of an ideal world and an ideal school were present simultaneously during the conversations. That means that a school ideally is an institution that is open and not subordinate to the world; it transmits behavioral models which transform the world. During the search for characteristics of the ideal school, the international group discovered that it is actually teaching how to create a bridge between the ideal and real world. From a professional standpoint, it means that, in today's art education, we should transmit to future artists the ability to create jobs for themselves. More and more, it seems today's dancers create work opportunities for themselves. Creative energies will be useful on the labor market, too. Instead of finding something already existing, creating new things is the key to find our path in this field. During training, we must first of all prepare the students for this situation in order to educate successful artists. What, how, and why do we teach? From these three questions, we should first clarify the "why" and then evoke our answer to it again and again. The "what," the curriculum, can be defined by the dancer's professional background. If we have answered both questions, we can easily find the "how," the methods to use.

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<sup>14</sup> Albright, Ann Cooper. "Dwelling in possibility", *Taken by Surprise. A Dance Improvisation Reader*, Ann Cooper Albright and David Gere (eds), Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2003, p 257.

Concerning the connection between art and teaching, it was important to acknowledge that, when we speak about art education, we should not forget that teaching itself is an act of performance. Moreover, the teaching role is not limited to the 90 minutes spent in the studio. A teacher never imparts only the curriculum to students. The huge field of pedagogical practice with which we transmit energy, and the models of relating to information and human beings, is called the hidden curriculum.

### **TTT as a basic research about educational science**

In my opinion, the success of this intensive common research process goes beyond the personal experiences and the professional conclusions. In the field of research and development, this kind of workshop provides the elements of *basic research*. According to the *Frascati manual* - accepted by the countries of OECD - which deals with activities in R&D, the main criteria of basic research are the following:<sup>15</sup>

- Activities: analyzing structures
- Goal: creating and justifying theories
  - The researcher has the freedom to choose his/her topics
- During the research phase, the researcher does not have any application possibilities
- The results are usually not sold, but published

The 2010 and 2013 TTTs in Budapest conform to the above criteria. The participants also related to their commitment as common research, and the organizer of the program placed great emphasis on the documentation. From this point of view, we can allow ourselves to go beyond the practical outcome when questioning the utility of the program.

The participants' reports showed a positive evaluation both from a personal and professional point of view. The open structure played a significant role by allowing the different individual interests to shape the common work. As the strengthened values and methods travel from generation to generation, the effect of this workshop will be multiplied in the long term.

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2013, Budapest-Püspökladány

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<sup>15</sup> The manual is available in the Hungarian language on the website of the National Innovation Office: <http://www.nih.gov.hu/strategiaalkotas/legfrissebb-kiadvanyaink/frascati-kezikonyv-080523> Information concerning basic research is under chapter 4.2.2.