The art pedagogy of empowerment for pre-vocational secondary education
Utrecht School of the Arts, the Netherlands

Collaboration
Utrecht School of the Arts (teachers’ training course Bachelor of Education in Music, Visual Arts and Theatre) with Yo! (youth-) Opera festival, Makeblijde (Centre for Architecture) and Utrecht Centre of the Arts (short courses for amateurs), and three schools for pre-vocational secondary education 12 – 16 year olds) Delta College, Meerstroom College and Liefland College.

Objective
To develop an art pedagogy of empowerment (all art disciplines) for secondary education. This had been done through practice led research on three pilots, one in each pre-vocational school. Each pilot was executed by a triangle creative partnership consisting of one school, one cultural organisation and the Utrecht School of the Arts (HKU).

Products
- Six events in which pupils of pre vocational training were visible as co-owner of artistic performances or products.
- A site that explains to artists and teachers what to take into account when you make art with pupils of pre-vocational training: www.vmbo-kunstenaar.nl
- Good practices of Creative Partnership between secondary schools and art organizations
- The approach of Creative Partnerships has become an experimental policy of the city of Utrecht for creating networks and continuous chain of cultural participation for children and youngsters.
- Art pedagogy of empowerment has become a new focus in the curriculum of the teachers training departments.

Benefit for partners
- For teachers and artists who work in secondary education: Through the project insights and tools are developed which can support art-teachers and artists in the classroom to use the art pedagogy of empowerment
- The cultural partner organisations (Yo! Opera, architectures, Utrecht course centre) will improve their practice by the feedback that arises from the systematic monitoring of the practice and from the exchange of the pilots in the three schools.
- For HKU: intensive new knowledge creation, intensification of collaborations with various partners, interesting activities for students and staff from the different faculties.

Impact on education
The curriculum
BA level: The teachers of the School of Visual Arts Education has created an ongoing creative partnership with one of the involved pre vocational schools and a museum: common internships, development and testing of new educational material of the museum on the pupils of the pre-vocational school.
A new module on art pedagogy of empowerment for part-time theatre has been developed. The first enrolment of a minority student (peer-educator in the project) in the teachers’ department of Music education.
The co-ordinator of the project has become senior Teacher at Music Education to implement knowledge from the project in the trajectory.
In our MA a follow-up research is done on what kind of design assignments are needed for enlarging the creative capital of pre-vocational pupils.

**Teaching methodologies**
Creative partnerships functioned as a place where students, teachers and researchers were able to experience authentic learning. Co-ownership, the central axiom in the art pedagogy of empowerment, is nowadays applied in new programmes for students of the Theatre Department.

**Assessment**
Part of the activities of this partnership are a regular element of the curriculum of Bachelor students in Education of Visual Arts, Music and Theatre. Within the secondary schools general competences were used. Specification concerning learning preferences and cultural background might lead to specified competencies for pre-vocational secondary education in the future.

**Impact on community**
- Pre-vocational secondary education in the big cities in the Netherlands is the gathering place of youngsters with an immigrant background. Due to language and social problems they lack access to the developing creative and knowledge industry.
- The art pedagogy of empowerment seeks to empower these youngsters to give them the experience of co-ownership of an artistic product and process. This experience will broaden their creative horizon and might wake up their actor-ship concerning their own capacities and their ambitions concerning creative and knowledge industry.
- This fits in a general policy in Dutch pre-vocational training to develop a approach of learning by doing and learning in authentic contexts. Arts and creativity is -also due to this project-being acknowledged as a powerful way to develop flexibility and creative capacity of these young learners. The project was rated as the second best innovation of Dutch education in 2008.

**Economical benefit**
- More employability for educational artists in pre-vocational training
- The approach of Creative Partnerships has become an experimental policy of the city of Utrecht for creating networks and continuous chain of cultural participation for children and youngsters. Art organisations can gain €10,000 when creating in Creative partnership
- Utrecht school of the Arta is asked to monitor these partnerships 2010-2012 on commercial basis.

**Knowledge transfer**
- The new knowledge that was created is the art pedagogy of empowerment for pre-vocational training was communicated internally and externally through a website: www.vmbokunstenaars.nl.
- Development of research and monitoring skills in intercultural education, this has led to the monitoring assignment of the City of Utrecht
- Development of tools and knowledge on an art pedagogy that connects cultural diverse background and creative development. Specified knowledge on approaches that fit (foreign) youngsters in pre-vocational secondary education. Both are used in teachers training programs.
**Strength**
There is a tailor-made pedagogical approach developed for art is pre-vocational training. This approach parallels the new thinking on the position of pre-vocational training and cultural participation of young immigrants.

**Weakness**
The approach asks for small groups and highly skilled and motivated teachers.