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4. TEACHING CO-CREATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH DANCE EXERCISES

INTRODUCTION

Higher education today needs to teach skills relevant to the world of today. In recent years, the ability to co-create has been seen as increasingly important due to the growing complexity of our interconnected and quickly changing world (Leclercq, Hammedi, & Poncin, 2016; Nahi, 2016; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Whereas co-creation skills, thus, may be valuable to teach at any level of education, they seem indispensable at the level of higher education.

In this chapter, I argue that exercises from improvised couples dance (exemplified by tango exercises) (Biehl-Missal & Springborg, 2015; Springborg & Sutherland, 2014, 2015) are useful to give students a concrete, embodied ground from which they can develop general co-creation skills applicable in many different contexts.

THE CHALLENGES OF TEACHING CO-CREATION SKILLS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

General co-creation skills are not easy to teach. To better understand the challenges related to teaching co-creation skills in higher education (and elsewhere), I will first look at teaching co-creation skills from two related perspectives: deutero-learning (Bateson, 1972a) and embodied cognitive metaphors (Lakoff, 2012; Springborg, 2015). After defining some important challenges in teaching co-creation skills, I will suggest that these challenges can be met by using exercises from improvised couples dance. I illustrate this by showing how such exercises can be used to teach four concrete co-creation skills (voicing, listening, respecting, and suspending) described by Isaac Williams (Isaacs, 1999).

From the perspective of deutero-learning, teaching co-creation can be seen as a matter of teaching specific ways of organising experience – or as Bateson formulates it: "habits of punctuating the stream of experience" (Bateson, 1972b, p. 129). According to Bateson, such habits are created when individuals develop more general ways of organising their experience, which support the responses fitting for the learning context. In this sense, the habits developed reflect the structure of the learning contexts to which the individual is exposed. For example, if the learning context is one where a teacher asks questions and the students have to come up with

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the right answers, the students will not only learn those answers but will also learn the habit of categorising claims in terms of right or wrong – instead of, for example, in terms of usefulness or reflexive depth. I will unfold this perspective in the next section.

From the perspective of embodied cognition, our abstract cognition is fundamentally body-based. Therefore, an important element of teaching co-creation skills is providing concrete, sensory experiences, which can work as the body-based ground from which students can develop such co-creation skills. Based on this perspective, I will argue for the importance of considering which sensory-motor experiences students have within the learning context. I will discuss this perspective in the second section below.

Co-creation refers to a broad range of practices practiced in a broad range of contexts. The co-creators may include employees from different departments within an organisation, people from other organisations, customers, suppliers, public organisations, competitors and other social groups who are affected by the activities of the organisation (Leclercq et al., 2016; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Similarly, the purpose of engaging in co-creation can vary from organisations wishing to gain legitimacy in and access to social groups, wishing to create cost-effective products and/or new business models, seeking to create social and environmental value, or seeking to empower marginalised social groups (Nahi, 2016, p. 9).

This raises the question of whether it makes sense to talk about co-creation skills independent of the context in which such skills are practiced. We can, for example, imagine a person who is skilled at co-creating with the customers of his company to create more cost-effective products or services. We can then ask, whether the co-creation skills this person has developed in the context of co-creation with the customers will also make him good at co-creating with politicians and minorities in society with the purpose of empowering such minorities. In this example, we may argue that some skills probably are specific to the context. For instance, the ability to relate customers' wishes to production costs may be useful in the first context but not the second. However, the skill of suspending one's own worldview in order to understand other peoples' worldviews may be equally useful in both contexts. Thus, in this chapter, I will work from the assumption that it makes sense to talk about certain *general* co-creation skills, which can be applied in a broad range of contexts.

Co-creation can be defined as "interaction that integrates different partners' knowledge and capabilities" (Nahi, 2016, p. 2). Thus general co-creation skills are skills that enable such creative interaction and integration of knowledge and capabilities of diverse groups of people. Different authors have proposed different lists of co-creation skills, which these authors claim are useful or even necessary to cultivate for the co-creation efforts to succeed. In this chapter, I will focus on William Isaacs' four skills: voicing, listening, respecting, and suspending, which Isaacs sees as fundamental in learning "the art of thinking together" (Isaacs, 1999), i.e. in co-creating ideas. I will describe these four skills in detail in the third section below. In that section, I will also illustrate how the use of dance exercises can

provide concrete, embodied, sensory experiences, which are a particularly suitable body-based ground for developing these general co-creation skills.

I now turn to look at what the perspectives of deutero-learning and Embodied Cognitive Metaphor theory may tell us about the challenges of teaching general co-creation skills.

CO-CREATION SKILLS AS THE ORGANISATION OF EXPERIENCE

According to Bateson it is important to distinguish between different levels of learning. When a rat, through a number of experiments, learns that it will find food behind the red door and not the blue door, it also learns that whether or not it finds food depends on its own action. In contrast, a rat that is consistently punished regardless of its actions learns that its actions do not matter – a phenomenon often referred to as "learned helplessness" (Seligman, 1975). In other words, an important part of learning consists of individuals adopting more general ways of organising their experience, which support the responses fitting for the learning context.

When looking at the challenge of teaching co-creation in higher education from this perspective, one may ask whether the structure of the learning context (e.g. the way people interact and the structure of the class) generates habits of punctuating experience, which are supportive of the aim of teaching co-creation skills. In the last section, I will suggest how the use of dance exercises can provide a structure to the learning context, which is useful for the purpose of teaching co-creation skills.

To unpack this more fully, I will first describe Bateson's work on deutero-learning in some detail.

Bateson introduced the concept deutero-learning. He sometimes referred to it as "learning 2" or "learning to learn". This concept has been very influential. It is, for example, the foundation for Argyris and Schön's popular concept of double-loop learning.

Bateson developed a framework of "The Logical Categories of Learning and Communication" (Bateson, 1972b, pp. 205–224) by applying Bertrand Russell's theory of logical types to the phenomenon of learning. The basic notion of Russell's theory is that to avoid paradox one needs to distinguish between classes and members of such classes. Applied to learning, this means that there are a number of levels of learning, which must be clearly distinguished between in order to avoid paradoxes. Bateson distinguishes between 5 levels of learning. Deutero-learning is the third of these. To better understand deutero-learning, it is useful to have a quick overview of the different levels of learning.

First, there is a kind of learning where an organism acts in response to a stimulus – without ever changing this response. This kind of learning occurs when an organism has already learned to react in a particular way to a particular stimulus and will keep doing so without fail. One may learn what time it is from looking at a watch and you will always learn the same time from the same position of the hands. Similarly, once you have learned to do maths correctly, you will always respond with the same

answer to the same arithmetic problem. This form of learning is so basic, that one may not even think about it as a form of learning.

Bateson defines the next level of learning, learning 1, as "changes in learning 0". These are cases, where an organism responds differently when exposed to the same stimulus repeatedly. This could, for example, be the classical trial and error learning, where an organism tries to improve the way it responds to a particular stimulus. If the first response to a stimulus does not produce a desired result the organism may try different responses from its repertoire of responses until a satisfactory outcome is achieved. One might think of a dolphin in a show, which tries to get fish when it sees the caretaker (stimulus) by performing all the jumps and flips it knows (different responses). Other examples of learning 1 include situations where the organism's response to a particular stimulus changes because (1) this stimulus becomes associated with another stimulus, which causes physiological response (classical conditioning). For example, dogs begin to salivate at the sound of a bell, because the sound of the bell becomes associated with food; (2) the response changes because the stimulus becomes a sign of possible reward or punishment (operant conditioning). For example, a dog jumps at the sound of a buzzer, because this sound becomes associated with the floor becoming electrified; (3) the stimulus is repeated so often that the organism stops responding to it at all (habituation). For example, a person may react to a loud sound, but if the loud sound is repeated often enough, the person may even stop noticing it at all. Learning 1, thus, contains many of the phenomena we normally think of as learning.

Just as Bateson defines learning 1 as "changes in learning 0", he defines learning 2 (deutero-learning) as "changes in learning 1", or changes in the organism's approach to trial and error. It could, for example, be a change in the organism's repertoire of responses. It could also be a change in the way the organism decides on how to change its response in order to achieve a more satisfactory outcome. For example, an organism could initially simply try all responses in its repertoire one by one. An example of deutero-learning would be if this organism changed its approach to selecting responses to the approach of analysing the result of one response and basing the choice of the next response on this analysis, or to the approach of repeatedly trying the same response with increased intensity. Bateson relates a story of a dolphin, which performed various tricks in shows in order to get fish. One day, the dolphin realised that the trainer was interested not merely in the tricks this dolphin already knew, but in new tricks. It then changed its strategy from trying out different tricks to the strategy of creating new types of tricks. In one show, it produced an outstanding number of new tricks – including a number of moves never before seen in dolphins.

Learning 3 is a change in learning 2. Bateson sees this as extremely rare. And learning 4 (a change in learning 3) he believes never occurs in any living organism on the planet.

Bateson developed the concept of deutero-learning to explain a phenomenon that had been observed in learning experiments like rote learning. In these experiments the participants had to memorise series of nonsense words and it was observed that

participants who repeatedly engaged in these experiments began to learn these series faster and faster even when there were no repeated words. The participants simply acquired the general skill of learning series of nonsense words.

Based on this fact, Bateson suggested that whenever an individual learns, not only does he learn some specific content, such as a string of nonsense words, but he also learns to organise his experience in ways that support the kind of actions, which help him deal with this particular kind of learning context.

An interesting consequence of this is that individuals will often approach new learning situations as if they were similar to the ones previously encountered. However, sometimes the ways of organising our experience, which were useful in the learning contexts previously encountered, will not support us in dealing with the new learning contexts.

As a simple illustration of this, you can imagine a dog growing up in a psychological laboratory where they work with conditioned response experiments. Certain stimuli will signal the arrival of food and the dog will learn to distinguish between many different stimuli, learning which of these are irrelevant and which mean that it should get ready to eat. After a few years the dog is transferred to another laboratory where they work with shaping behaviour through patterns of reinforcement. Here the dog has to learn which behaviours it has to perform in order to get food. But the dog has learned to look for signs telling it that food is on its way and if it keeps holding on to this way of organising its experience, it may accidentally perform the actions which are reinforced with food, but every time this happens, it will try to understand what the stimuli was that signalled the arrival of food – not noticing that it had to do with its own actions.

As another example, one could mention the commonly known phenomenon that, as managers rise through an organisation, they must several times profoundly change their ideas about managing. Moving from team leader or frontline managing to higher management positions, they need to be able to stop trying to solve problems and start concerning themselves with selecting which problems should be solved when. As they move to even higher levels of management, they need to stop looking for the right thing to do and learn to navigate in situations where they longer have (even approximately) clear-cut answers. Thus, failing to transform their habits of punctuating experience can mean failing to hold higher managerial positions.

In short, whenever we learn to *do* something, we also learn to organise our experience in particular ways, which support us in dealing with the context in which this learning takes place. We learn what parts of our experience are important and what parts are not important. We learn to select sequences of experience from that vast flood of experience we are exposed to every moment. Over time these ways of organising experience become habits operating seamlessly in the background, and it can be difficult to notice them or to imagine that we could organise our experience differently.

If we, as previously suggested, understand co-creation as interactions, which integrate different partners' knowledge and capabilities, it is fair to say that co-creation is a learning context. The above then suggests that co-creation skills can be

supported by certain ways of organising experience, which one can develop through repeated exposure to this particular kind of learning context, where diverse partners are brought together with the aim of integrating their knowledge and capabilities. It also suggests that when teaching co-creation, we must think carefully about the structure of the learning context in which we teach co-creation.

In today's higher education, we often find learning contexts consisting of lectures, tests, predefined intended learning objectives (ILOs), grades, and certificates. It is worth considering how well the ways of organising experience that students acquire through dealing with such learning contexts will support the student in dealing with the learning context of co-creation. On this basis, one could argue for a thorough restructuring of the learning contexts provided by higher education. However, the goal of this chapter is to show how less drastic measures may also be useful – in this case the inclusion of dance exercises.

EMBODYING CO-CREATION

Several new theories in the area of embodied cognition hold that cognition is fundamentally grounded in sensory-motor experiences. In other words, our understanding of abstract concepts, such as legitimacy or access to social groups or social and environmental value or empowerment and marginalisation, are grounded in concrete, body-based experiences. Thus, if two people ground their understanding of the concept of value in two different body-based experiences, they are in effect talking about two different concepts and, as a consequence, their thinking about value and their approaches to working with value creation may differ radically.

This suggests that that it is important to consider which bodily experiences students are introduced to as part of teaching them co-creation in higher education. In the last section, I will illustrate how dance exercises can be used to give students a number of bodily sensory-motor experiences, which provide a useful ground for learning about more abstract co-creation skills.

To unpack this perspective, I will go over some relevant research within the field of embodied cognition.

Embodied Cognition

From the early 90's researchers have increasingly proposed various claims about the embodied nature of cognition. It is possible to distinguish between six such claims "(1) cognition is situated; (2) cognition is time-pressured; (3) we off-load cognitive work onto the environment; (4) the environment is part of the cognitive system; (5) cognition is for action; (6) off-line cognition is body-based" (Wilson, 2002, p. 625). The most far-reaching and the best documented of these claims is the last one (Wilson, 2002, p. 625). This claim is also particularly relevant when it comes to understanding how and why co-creation skills can be taught through the bodily experiences of improvised couples dance.

To understand how off-line cognition can be body-based, one can think of learning to count and do simple arithmetic using one's fingers. In the beginning one may hold out the number of fingers corresponding to different numbers. However, with practice such movements may become smaller and smaller until they are reduced to a mere priming of the motoric systems responsible for moving fingers. Thus, the physical aspect becomes completely invisible to an outside observer. The claim that off-line cognition is body-based simply means that many of the cognitive processes we would normally think of as abstract are, in fact, based on the body, in a similar fashion as counting on the fingers without actually moving them. The neurological systems originally developed to serve the function of moving fingers get appropriated for the use of counting and arithmetic. This brings a new view of cognition where the neurological systems developed for perception and movement (the sensory-motor systems) in general can be decoupled from the input and output organs and used for abstract thinking. Empirical evidence for this claim has been mounting in several fields of study over at least the last 25 years. For reviews see Wilson (2002), Rohrer (2007), Niedenthal et al. (2005), and Barsalou (2008).

Cognitive Metaphor Theory

One field in which the body-based nature of abstract concepts has been explored is Cognitive Metaphor Theory. In 1980, Lakoff and Johnson used evidence from the field of linguistics to propose that our understanding is metaphorical in nature (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). They showed how commonly-used metaphorical expressions form clusters, which can be seen to indicate that we understand one domain of experience (a target domain) in terms of another domain (a source domain). For example, there are a number of commonly-used expressions, which draw on terminology from warfare to describe argumentation. Such expressions include: to shoot down someone else's arguments, to defend one's claims, to win or lose arguments, to deliver a critique that is right on target, etc. Thus, one target domain (here argumentation) is understood in terms of a source domain (here warfare) creating the conceptual metaphor: argumentation is war.

The use of cognitive metaphors is one of the ways in which we organise experience. One effect of this is that the use of different conceptual source domains for the same conceptual target domain will highlight different aspects of this target domain, whilst hiding other aspects. Thus, using different conceptual source domains will organise our experience of the conceptual target domain in different ways. For example, argumentation could also be seen as a collaborative search for truth as in the Socratic cooperative argumentative dialogue. However, when one sees argumentation as warfare, the collaborative aspect of argumentation is hidden.

That conceptual metaphors highlight certain aspects of the target domain and hide other aspects opens the possibility of using several different conceptual metaphors for one particular target domain to get a fuller view of this target domain. Each cognitive metaphor works as a different vantage point from which we can look at a

particular phenomenon. For example, in his famous book *Images of Organizations* (Morgan, 2006), Gareth Morgan shows how organisations (the target domain of interest) have been understood through a number of conceptual metaphors, such as, organisations are machines, organisations are organisms, organisations are brains, organisations are cultures, etc. Each conceptual metaphor highlights certain important aspects of the phenomenon under investigations, namely organisations. Looking at organisations as if they were machines highlights goals, objectives, plans, and control in organisations. Looking at organisations as if they were organisms highlights the relationship between an organisation and its environment, the survival needs of organisations, and how organisations can be classified as different species. The brain metaphor highlights how organisations can learn, innovate, and be governed by principles of self-organising as opposed to principles of control. The culture metaphor highlights the symbolic significance of actions and artefacts, creation of shared meaning, and social construction of meaning.

If our understanding of any phenomenon is metaphorical in nature, and different conceptual metaphors through which we understand a phenomenon will highlight/hide different aspects of this phenomenon, then it becomes interesting to select good cognitive metaphors through which we can understand co-creation. Improvised couples dance would be one of many possible source domains we could use for this purpose. And the relevance of using this source domain would be determined by whether or not it reveals important aspects of co-creation in a way which enhances co-creation skills.

Cognitive Metaphor Theory has evolved since the eighties and has increasingly explored the body-based roots of cognitive metaphors. And this provides a stronger argument for the use of dance as a source domain through which we may understand the target domain of co-creation.

Body-Based Cognitive Metaphors

If one domain is understood in terms of another and this other domain is understood in terms of a third, then where would the chain of cognitive metaphors end? Lakoff and Johnson (1980) propose that our metaphorically organised understanding is grounded in structures arising from physical experiences of being a body in a three-dimensional space, such as, centre–periphery, up–down, front–back, etc. To support this claim they refer to the existence of common conceptual metaphors, such as, happy is up, sad is down, importance is central, importance is big, etc.

In 1997, Joseph Grady proposed a distinction between primary and complex cognitive metaphors. This distinction was quickly picked up by Lakoff and Johnson in their book *Philosophy in the Flesh* (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Primary cognitive metaphors are cognitive metaphors that are found in different languages throughout the world, across cultures. They are grounded in sensory-motor, body-based experience and, according to Grady, they are formed early in life through universal correlations in human experience.

For example, friendly/hostile attitudes are understood in terms of warmth/cold. Time is understood (with a few exceptions) in terms of either moving forward through a landscape or standing still and having the landscape pass by you from front to back so that the future is in front of us and the past is behind us. Other primary metaphors include: knowing is seeing, understanding is grasping, causes are physical forces, categories are containers, happy is up, and difficulties are burdens.

The existence of primary conceptual metaphors supports the strong claim in embodied cognition, that even our most abstract concepts are grounded in body-based, sensory-motor experiences. Cognitive Metaphor Theory also provides insight into how Bateson's habits of organising experience may be formed, namely by using the sensory experience of the learning context as source domain for understanding the phenomenon of learning.

Sensory Templates

From 2010–2014, I conducted research on different approaches to facilitating managers' learning around organisational problems, which they experienced as both very important and unsolvable (Springborg, 2015). My goal was to explore the effects of identifying and changing the body-based experiences used to understand a particular task. I chose to work with tasks that at the beginning of the research seemed unsolvable to the individual participants, because if the participants at the end of the research could see any kind of solution, this would be a strong argument that something had shifted in the way they saw the problematic situation.

The most important finding from this research was that a work situation can appear as an unsolvable problem when the manager understands it through *one* conceptual metaphor, but as a simple matter that is easily dealt with when the manager understands the situation through *another* conceptual metaphor – in particular, when the source domain of the new cognitive metaphor is grounded in a different body-based experience.

For example, one manager in the research – we can call her Sue – was part of a management team. The team would meet and make decisions together. However, Sue experienced that the other managers would agree on certain decisions when they met, but would do something completely different back in their own departments. Sue found this very frustrating. She had tried for many years to change this state of affairs without success. The situation appeared unsolvable to her. At the start of the research, Sue described the problem as one of making all the managers commit to follow up on the common decisions they had made. She spoke about this as making the managers head in the same direction and pursue the same goals. Listening to her language, it was clear that she structured her experience of the situation in terms of trying to achieve coordinated movement. I gave Sue a camera and asked her to take pictures to illustrate the problem. She took pictures of trains heading in opposite directions, further confirming that her understanding was grounded in primary metaphors such as: goals are physical destinations, purpose is movement through

space, woven into the overall conceptual metaphor of this situation is a matter of making people move in a coordinated way towards the same physical destination.

However, during a workshop I facilitated as part of the research, Sue changed the sensory experience she used to structure her understanding of the problematic work situation. Instead of seeing people who did not move in a coordinated way towards the same physical destination, she saw people who had no physical connection. The experience of touching vs. not touching became the sensory experience in which she grounded her understanding of the situation. Once this happened, she changed from seeing the problem as a problem of making people commit to the decisions they made in the team, to seeing it as a problem of how to make the team members form relationships to each other. Seeing this was a great relief to her, because she knew how to do this. She had many methods of making her own employees form relationships, but had just never thought about applying these methods to the management team. The metaphor she had used to structure her understanding of the problem before the research workshop had simply hidden this possibility from her. When I interviewed her one month after the workshop, she had already had some success in achieving better collaboration by focusing on creating relationships, rather than on creating commitment.

This example shows that using one of these sensory experiences (objects moving in coordinated fashion toward the same point in space) as a basic template for the abstract understanding of the situation made the situation appear as an unsolvable problem of creating increased commitment, whereas using another sensory experience (objects touching or not touching) made the situation appear as a – for Sue – much simpler matter of creating relationships between the members of the management team.

The example also shows that sensory experiences can function as fundamental structures or templates upon which abstract understanding of a situation can be organised. In the example, Sue changed from the fundamental organising principle of entities moving through space towards either the same physical destination or different physical destinations, to the fundamental organising principle of objects either touching or not touching. These experiences are the kind of body-based, sensory-motor experiences in which Lakoff and Johnson proposed that all our understanding is fundamentally grounded. Changing the sensory experiences we use as a fundamental structural template upon which we model our abstract understanding of a situation can, thus, be seen as a means of changing the way we punctuate the continuous stream of experience.

In the example above, both conceptual metaphors were grounded in fairly common sensory experiences. However, there is nothing to prevent one from using sensory experiences that are less common, as sensory templates upon which one may build one's understanding of a situation. Such sensory experiences could, for example, be experiences developed through various forms of physical practice, for example, improvised couples dance. In the next section, I will describe what kind of sensory experiences one can get through practicing improvised couples dance and suggest that these sensory experiences are particularly suitable as sensory templates for developing four general co-creation skills.

USING IMPROVISED COUPLES DANCE TO LEARN CO-CREATION SKILLS

Above, I have used the perspectives of deutero-learning and Embodied Cognition to define some important challenges one should consider when teaching general co-creation skills in higher education.

The perspective of deutero-learning reveals the importance of considering whether the structure of the learning context generates habits of punctuating experience, which are supportive of the aim of teaching co-creation skills.

The perspective of Embodied Cognition highlights the importance of considering whether students are introduced to bodily experiences, which form a useful body-based ground for developing general co-creation skills.

In this section, I suggest that engaging in dance exercises can provide a structure to the learning context and a number of bodily sensory-motor experiences, which provide a useful ground for developing general co-creation skills. I illustrate this by looking at the general co-creation skills described by William Isaacs in his book *Dialogue – the art of thinking together* (Isaacs, 1999).

Dialogue

William Isaacs works with facilitating what he calls generative dialogue. Generative dialogue is an example of co-creation, in that the participants co-create new ideas, insights and common understandings through conversation, which in turn form the basis of common action. Isaacs and his colleagues at MIT have worked with facilitating generative dialogue all over the world between groups of people with radically different perspectives and even mutual hostility. They have, for example, led dialogue with management, employees, and union representatives in the UK coalmining industry and with different social groups in post-apartheid South Africa. Thus, Isaacs' work is very much about interaction that integrates different partners' knowledge and capabilities, i.e. co-creation.

In generative dialogue the new ideas, insights and common understandings do not come from any individual participant, but rather emerge from the group. In this way, generative dialogue is different from most everyday conversations. What makes generative dialogue possible is the development of a number of skills in the participants. In generative dialogue everyone listens to others in a respectful way and holds their own views lightly, with a willingness to let them change at any given moment. And from this position, they give voice to what they perceive.

Isaacs distinguishes between four general co-creation skills: listening, suspending, voicing, and respecting. Below, I will briefly describe these four general co-creation skills and look at how each one can be grounded in bodily experiences of participating in improvised couples dance. In particular, I will use tango as an example. In the examples, I will refer to the leader as male and follower as female for the sake of clarity in the description. But obviously woman can lead and men can follow in

life, as well as in dance, and when using dance exercises in teaching situations, it is important that the leader and follower roles are not related to any specific gender.

Voicing

Every human being has a unique blend of past experience and personality, giving them a unique vantage point from which they look at the world. Voicing is the ability to give voice to what you can see from your particular vantage point. It is letting other people know what seems true and important to you at any given moment. There can be many reasons for not doing this, from self-doubt and fear of being attacked or humiliated, to worry about hurting others or being seen as too pushy or forceful. Both people who hold back their own voice and people who seem very assertive when speaking their mind may be influenced by such patterns. Voicing is about speaking what is true for you in a direct, clear and simple way – and that is not always simple to do.

In tango we can experience this in a physical form both in the role of the leader and of the follower. Imagine the following basic exercise often used in tango introduction classes. The couple is standing still in a dance embrace. The leader shifts weight from one foot to the other and the follower notices and follows these weight shifts. At some point the leader stops with all his weight on one foot and the follower does the same. When the leader senses that the follower has all her weight on one foot, he has three options. He can take a step forward, backward or to the side of the free leg. When he does this he keeps the embrace firm (but not tense) and pushes the floor with the standing leg to produce a clear direction. When the follower feels the direction, she takes a step that matches the step proposed by the leader.

When taking the step, the leader has to be clear and make the decision about the direction purely out of his own inner feeling. There is no negotiation. The clearer he is, the easier it will be to follow him. Thus, taking the step is a physical equivalent of making a clear personal statement. Similarly, when the follower feels the direction, she will take a step to match what she feels. Thus, the step of the follower is also a clear personal statement about what she perceived. Once the follower takes her step, the leader may need to adjust so that his own step matches the follower's. This is easier to do if the follower is clear when taking her step.

In this way, taking steps is a physical form of making clear statements in both roles. And the clearer the statements are, the easier it is to dance. If these physical statements are not clear, the other partner has nothing clear to relate to and respond to.

In the same way, in co-creation it is good to make clear statements. Even if the statements are later rejected or proven to be false or silly, they still fulfil the function of giving others something clear to respond to – for example by building on it, modifying it, or opposing it.

Thus, the physical experience of taking clear steps together is a good bodily experience from which one may develop one's skill of voicing.

Isaacs writes that, to practice voicing, we can ask: what needs to be said? When we take clear steps in tango, we practice making statements about what we, at the present moment, believe would be a good next step. If we try to decide what step to propose by referring to someone outside ourselves, for example, guessing what our partner would like or what people looking at you would think is impressive, we often become unclear in our statement.

Listening

Listening is often much harder than voicing. Krishnamurti, a teacher who's teaching has had profound influenced on the dialogue method, makes the difficulty of listening clear when he writes:

> If we try to listen we find it extraordinarily difficult, because we are always projecting our opinions and ideas, our prejudices, our background, our inclinations, our impulses; when they dominate, we hardly listen at all to what is being said. In that state there is no value at all. One listens and therefore learns, only in a state of attention, a state of silence, in which this whole background is in abeyance, is quiet; then, it seems to me, it is possible to communicate. (Isaacs, 1999, p. 84)

It may seem natural that part of listening is making sense of what we hear by relating it to our own experience and recognising it as something we already know. But in doing so, we are very active and we easily misconstrue what we hear. If someone arrives late to a meeting and says: "Sorry I'm late", we could hear this sentence as an apology or a disarming act or even as a complaint about excessive punctuality. When we categorise the sentence as a specific kind of act, we project everything we know about such acts onto the sentence and then we are no longer listening. Another example could be when someone proposes an idea, which is similar to another idea we have tried earlier which did not work well. We feel we recognise the idea and then go straight to explaining why this idea won't work – without listening to why this particular person came up with the idea at this given moment. It is possible that the one who proposed the idea was in the process of formulating something beyond the idea we previously tried out. John Dewey talks about how we use sensing for recognition and that once we've recognised something, we stop sensing more details – we stop listening (Dewey, 1934).

In the basic tango exercise described above, there is the moment before the step, when both parties are standing on one leg. When one has a stable balance on one leg, the loose leg is free to go anywhere. As long as all the body weight is placed on one leg, the follower does not need to have any fixed ideas about where to go next. In the same way, the leader will often have the full body weight on one leg and if the follower takes a step that is different from what he had in mind (and tried to lead) he has the possibility to simply change the plan. However, the moment weight is shifted to the free leg, this openness is lost.

Paying attention to what the openness in the free leg feels like in the moment before any step is taken provides a bodily experience from which one may develop

one's skill of listening. When we listen, we are like the free leg without any weight on it. The moment we hear what we hear as something particular, i.e. we interpret what we hear, we place weight on the free leg and this limits our ability to listen.

In co-creation, we need to give time for people to speak without trying to draw any conclusions. We are like a free leg hovering in suspension, willingly waiting to understand what the other is trying to convey. In co-creation we may even listen to the silence or the gap where nobody knows in this way.

Isaacs writes that to practice listening, we can ask: how does this feel? Standing on one leg, we practice feeling the direction. The moment we try to predict the direction with the mind, we usually go wrong.

Respecting

Respecting refers to the skill of seeing the integrity and coherence of another's position (in particular when you do not agree) and the skill of knowing that you can never fully understand this position (Isaacs, 1999, p. 419). For example, in conversations, it is easy to get the feeling that someone else is saying what they say because they do not understand what you understand and if only the other knew what you know they would come to the same conclusions as you. As another example, think of how leaders often feel that what seems like irrational behaviour from their employees is due to their employees lacking the organisational overview of the leader. They do what they do, because they don't see the big picture. However, employees generally have the advantage of knowing the details of everyday work much more intimately than the leader. Thus, the leader and the employee have two different vantage points and they can, therefore, see different things. Both parties draw conclusions, which have integrity based on their particular vantage point, both parties reach for something truly valuable, even if this is not immediately visible to the other part, and neither party can fully understand the position of the other because they do not have the fullness of the other party's experience. Thus, each party needs to listen to the other.

In tango both leader and follower dance to the same music. However, they may have very different ways of listening to and interpreting this music. Similarly, the movement repertoire of tango is very broad. The different types of movements used in tango have names, such as *barridas, ganchos, colgadas, sacadas, giros*, etc. Not every dancer is equally skilled or comfortable in regard to all possible types of movements. Furthermore, different bodies move differently. Some may be very light and quick. Some like to bring connection by offering resistance in the movements. Some are tall and some are short. Some are expressive and playful and some prefer to move in simple patterns with a lot of intensity.

When dancing with a new partner, one must respect the partner's musicality, movement preferences, dancing style, and body type. Once a dancer told me that she did not mind dancing with partners with very stiff bodies. Instead of seeing this as an obstacle to the dance, she saw it as something she could rely on and as something that opened possibilities not present with other partners.

Isaacs writes that we can practice respecting by asking the question: "How does this fit?" Thus, dancing with different partners and searching for that physical fit provides a sensory experience from which one may develop one's skill of respecting.

Suspending

Suspending is the skill of setting aside the urge to argue particular points of view, regardless of how right they appear, or the urge to pursue particular actions, regardless of how necessary they seem. It is about suspending opinions, preferences, convictions, and certainty. In short, it is the ability to suspend what we think we know and hang out in our ignorance – the empty void where our certainty used to be. This can at first feel scary and/or vulnerable. We may feel defenceless and worry that others may take charge and that our voice will not be heard and what is important to us will not be taken into account. However, suspending is not in contradiction with voicing. When you suspend your knowledge, you do not take away validity of the truth you speak. You do not invite others to overrule you. It simply puts your voice into the right perspective: it is *your* voice. It is what you see to be true from your particular vantage point. Suspending brings openness and through this openness can come immense creative energy.

Because tango is an improvised dance, both leader and follower must constantly be willing to give up any prediction of where the dance is heading and convictions about where the dance should be heading. When doing this, one leaves room for a dance to emerge, which is decided neither by the one nor the other. It is the dance, which emerges in the meeting between two dancers and the music and the broader context like the movements of the other dancers on the floor, the atmosphere in the room, etc. When the improvisation goes well, no single individual is the author – everyone is simply participating and the dance arises from this mutual participation.

The question Isaacs proposes for training suspending is: how does this work? This question encourages us to look at a fuller picture. Simultaneously bringing our bit to the table and relinquishing control of the process of creation. Trusting that the outcome will supersede anything any individual could have imagined by him/herself. Having the experience of dance unfolding on its own, once again, provides a sensory experience from which one may develop one's skill of suspending.

DISCUSSION

Above, I have argued that when teaching co-creation skills in higher education, we need to take into account that part of what students learn in higher education is dealing with the structures of the context in which learning takes place. Thus, we need to consider whether the skills students develop to deal with the learning environment are the kind of skill we wish to teach.

Furthermore, I have argued that when teaching co-creation skills in higher education, we should also take into account which bodily experiences the students

are exposed to the teaching context and whether these bodily experiences provide a useful bodily grounding for the various abstract concepts taught.

I have then illustrated how letting the students engage in simple dance exercises can provide a learning context suitable for teaching certain general co-creation skills, namely, voicing, listening, respecting, and suspending.

Of course, this is not the only way to teach these skills and the skills mentioned are obviously not the only important skills needed to become good at co-creating. This chapter can be read both as inspiration for educators and as a more general illustration of a growing conflict between the learning contexts often found in higher education and the kind of subjects institutions of higher education at present need to teach to produce students who are prepared for a society where co-creation skills are needed to thrive.

Questions naturally arise concerning teaching students about co-creation in a learning environment where the majority of bodily experience consists of sitting, speaking and writing and where students ultimately need to convince the teachers to give them grades good enough for them to get a certificate. To deal with such an environment, students may not develop the skill of voicing. Considerations of whether what they say will help them get good grades can easily overrule considerations of what seems true from the students' current vantage point. Similarly, students may not necessarily develop a habit of respecting, when immersed in a setting where the teacher's perspective is ultimately the right one. Suspending would mean to set aside any agenda – including the agenda of doing what needs to be done to pass the course. And listening from the openness created by suspending would also not be encouraged in a learning environment, which emphasises testing.

Of course it is no simple matter to envision new forms of higher education and to question institutionalised practices, which have been useful for decades. However, we need to take a serious look at how such practices may be in conflict with what we wish to teach in higher education. In this chapter, I have proposed that by suspending our beliefs about what higher education should look like and integrating knowledge and capabilities from other domains, such as dance, we may co-create better forms of higher education.

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