Aesthetic Education Camp: Benefits for Artists, Teachers, and Presenters

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Abstract: For five years, Montreal's Place des Arts has offered an aesthetic education camp in Montreal, in partnership with New York's Lincoln Center Education, for artists, teachers, and presenters to support their cultural mediation efforts with students. This article reports on a study conducted on this innovative initiative. The results attest to the positive repercussions for the professional practices of the participants. Training in multidisciplinary teams led to the development of a shared vocabulary and the emergence of a community of practice. The findings indicate that cultural initiatives can have a positive impact on both cultural workers and those in education.

***Keywords*:** aesthetic education; artist; teacher; presenter; cultural mediation

Quebec's *Partout, la culture* cultural policy reaffirmed the essential role of culture for lifelong learning, the acquisition of social, intercultural and citizenship skills and improved communication capacities (Gouvernement du Québec, 2018a). The policy asks cultural institutions (cultural centres, museums, libraries, artistic companies, etc.) to expand access to their premises and increase opportunities for students to be exposed to rich and varied cultural experiences. It also asks cultural workers and artists to serve as "cultural mediators"[1] for students. The actions proposed by the Quebec government to enhance the relationship between culture and education include training for artists and cultural workers who want to optimize their efforts in educational settings (Gouvernement du Québec, 2018b) and training enrichment for teachers and educators to help them more effectively integrate culture into their professional practices. As for teachers, the professional skills framework stipulates that they must act as "cultural mediators" and that they must integrate culture into their teaching through interventions with artists and cultural outings (theater, book fair, museum, etc.) (Ministère de l'Éducation, 2001; 2020).

Although the role of cultural mediator is not new to Quebec educators nor to artists and cultural workers, many faces challenges in carrying it out fully. For teachers,

[1] As defined by Montoya (2008, p.34) "cultural mediation" refers to an activity that supports the "development of the relationship of individuals to works of art or to art, and to culture" with the help of an expert - an artist or a teacher - who acts as a facilitator.

creating connections between culture and their curriculum, finding time to collaborate with artists on an activity, understanding concretely how to act as a cultural mediator are some of the difficulties that educators frequently bring up (Beaudry & al., 2017; Dezutter & al., 2019). In addition, some do not see the relevance of acting as cultural mediators and integrating culture into their teaching. Even with the variety of options available to educators (for example, the program *La culture à l'école*, supported by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture, which finances cultural activities in class such as an artist's hands-on workshop), a specific number of them organize no or very few cultural activities (Beaudry & al., 2017; Nadeau, 2015). When trade union pressure from teachers is voted, as was the case in fall 2023 and 2015, it is cultural activities in the school context that are often boycotted. In the end, the integration of culture in school is based on the same teachers, who are often already convinced of the significance of linking culture and school. Furthermore, even in cases where colleges and universities offer training to prepare cultural workers and artists for their position as cultural mediators, a number of artists intervene in schools without receiving this training, giving rise to a variety of mediation styles and practices (Dubé & Lapointe, 2022). Diverse definitions, intervention domains, and practices are all included in cultural mediation, offering numerous methods of mediation, varying from an artist's lecture at school to a series of hands-on workshops in which students are involved (Dezutter & al., 2019; Dubé & Lapointe, 2022; Dufrêne & Gellereau, 2004). According to research on artists' interventions in schools, those interventions that involve students in action and participation have the most positive impact on them (Hart, 1992; Lemonchois, 2010; 2015).

Additionally, in student-oriented activities, educators and artists are encouraged to work together more (Gouvernement du Québec, 2018a; 2018b). This collaboration would indeed promote a better understanding of the roles of each person in the activities as well as quality and relevance of the cultural activities offered (Beaudry & Crête-Reizes, 2022; Easton, 2003; Williams, 2011). Nevertheless, educators and artists do not often work together to design these activities. Artists note that it frequently happens that they are not aware of the expectations set by the instructor, the setting in which the activity is conducted, or the links the teacher makes between the teaching and learning process and the artist's intervention. Teachers acknowledge that they don't always know what to do when an artist is present, and how to connect the artistic subject to what they teach (Dezutter et al., 2019).

In this context where teachers and artists are expected to act as cultural mediators but where this role remains unclear for some, Montreal's Place des Arts (PDA), in partnership with New York's Lincoln Center Education (LCE), launched an aesthetic education camp, an approach to learning *in* and *with* the arts for artists, teachers and presenters[2] across Quebec, to support their cultural mediation actions with elementary

[2] The presenter, a crucial connection in the performing arts industry, is responsible for booking and buying shows, setting up the space, and giving technical assistance.

and secondary students. The hypothesis postulated by PDA is that training in aesthetic education would support teachers, artists, and presenters in their role as cultural mediators and therefore, enhance their cultural activities offered to students. Because of its format (bringing artists, teachers, and presenters together every summer for a few days to engage in shared training), its origin (a training initiated by the cultural milieu but also intended for teachers), and its foundation in aesthetic education (Greene, 2001), the training provided by PDA, in collaboration with LCE, piqued my interest as an education researcher interested in cultural activities in a school context.

I therefore examined this training, which was offered to 100 participants over a five-year period, from 2018 to 2022. The general objective of the study, which takes a qualitative-interpretive approach, was to describe the experience of the artists, teachers, and presenters who took part. I was interested to find out if their participation in this kind of training resulted in any changes to their practices, and if so, what those changes were. I also wanted to know the potential of this kind of training for the school and cultural environment. This article reports on the results.

The Place des Arts/Lincoln Center Education training camp

PDA is a performing arts centre, both a presenter, producer, and a center for artistic companies. It is the largest cultural organization in Canada. In 2014, PDA initiated a reflection on its cultural mediation that led it to seek one or more approaches on which to base its mediation. The organization wanted to offer cultural mediation that allows students and teachers to live a "sensitive, even sensory experience, which grants an important space to exchange and questioning, and which gives the student a central place which values his expression, his ideas" (Crête-Reizes, 2022, p.5). Their search led them to aesthetic education and Maxine Greene, and then to LCE, who has been applying Greene's work on aesthetic education since the 1970s, in both its cultural mediation activities for students and its cultural mediation training for artists and teachers. At the end of its reflection, it was clear to PDA that aesthetic education was the approach allowing them to achieve their objectives of cultural mediation. Ever since, PDA has provided students with cultural mediation activities that are grounded in aesthetic education as developed by Greene.

In the following lines, aesthetic education is briefly exposed and some results of research on the aesthetic education approach are noted. After, the camp set up is detailed.

Aesthetic education

Maxine Greene, an educational philosopher, has been theorizing about the aesthetic education approach since the 1970s. Greene's conception of aesthetic education, which was developed among other things on the tenets of social justice, democratization of aesthetic experiences, and the enhancement of individual power of action, attempts to teach students through art through a variety of experiences lived as transactions (Greene, 2001) and experiments (Dewey, 1934/2010). Greene views interactions with art as chances to foster "appreciative, reflective, cultural, participatory engagements with the

arts by enabling learners to notice what is there to be noticed, and to lend works of art their lives in such a way that they can achieve them as variously meaningful" (Greene, 2001, p. 6), following in the footsteps of John Dewey and experiential learning. According to Greene, an individual's cognitive, perceptual, emotional, and imaginative development are all impacted by their education with the arts.

Through a range of experiences that they engage in as experiments, this approach aims to familiarize students with art and to educate them through art. The ultimate objective is to strengthen the pupils' capacity for action rather than only their artistic knowledge (Denac, 2014). The heart of the approach centres on inquiry and questioning a work of art, which allow the mediator, whether teacher or artist, to guide the students in their encounter with the work of art (poem, play, painting, etc.). Since "aesthetic experience is not simply an affair of feeling or sensation" (Greene, 2001, p. 9), the activities offered must lead the students to observe the work of art attentively and reflect on what they observe, the effects the artwork has on them, the artist's approach, and their own approach. The activities also allow the students to experience the creative process, test out the artist's techniques, and make decisions. Through iterative observation, thought, and production, students are pushed to feel more, be more impacted, and be more conscious of their environment (Greene, 2001). Students are encouraged to engage with the artwork and create their own thoughts as a result.

Some studies have explored the way using aesthetic education affects teachers and artists. When teachers and artists are formed together for aesthetic education or work together within an aesthetic approach, it appears to give them a better understanding of each participant's respective role (Easton, 2003) in a cultural mediation activity and allows them to create a shared vocabulary (Beaudry & al., 2024). Their discussions on the activities to be implemented, on the reasons that justify their choice of activities lead them to collaborate. Moreover, since it places the student at the centre of the encounter with the artwork and makes the student active, the process may also help teachers and artists offer what they see as higher quality mediation that is more relevant to the students (Beaudry & al., 2024; Easton, 2003). For some teachers and artists, aesthetic education also provokes reflection on the place and role given to the students in their mediations, leading them more deeply consider the words and experiences of the students (Beaudry & al., 2024).

Beaudry & al. (2024), Fuchs Holzer (2009) and Gulla (2018) have also shown that aesthetic education provides broader fuel for teachers' practices, and not only in relation to the arts. These different researchers noted that teachers trained to aesthetic education have reinvested what they learned about aesthetic education in disciplines unrelated to the visual arts, including working with students on literary works or on natural or social phenomena. Some teachers have declared that aesthetic education has given a "second wind" to their teaching, reinvigorated them and lent new meaning to their work (Fuchs Holzer, 2009). Beaudry & al. (2024) also revealed that artists who took training in aesthetic education and developed activities based on it went on to use the approach in other contexts, not only when they were giving activities to students. Artists also attested

that aesthetic education allowed them to put what they do "into words" more instinctively and lend meaning to their interventions in the school settings. Finally, the results of the study by Figueroa Murphy (2014), conducted with language teachers, showed that they acquired the confidence and capacity to include works of art in their language teaching after participating in aesthetic education activities and learning more about the approach.

The training camp

In 2015, PDA set up a training in aesthetic education for its artists and another for teachers who register their students in its activities to familiarize teachers and artists with its projects and promote their deployment. Then, backed by Quebec's 2018–2023 cultural plan (Gouvernement du Québec, 2018b) and the needs of both cultural and educational milieus, PDA decided to offer an aesthetic education training camp every summer from 2018 to 2022, in Montreal, for all artists, teachers and presenters in Quebec. The camp was initiated and coordinated by PDA, in partnership with LCE, who acted in support of PDA. PDA was motivated to conduct this extensive training in collaboration with LCE because, since the 1970s, LCE has provided teachers and artists with training in aesthetic education. Their expertise seemed important, even if, in the end, it was the PDA team that designed and facilitated the training. PDA stands out, in this sense, by its desire to integrate presenters into its training. Part of the reason for this is that presenters are also invited to become involved in cultural mediation (Gouvernement du Québec, 2018b).

The participants, from across Quebec[3], were invited to register as a mixed team comprised of at least one presenter, one artist and one teacher, with a maximum of six people per team. A total of 100 people in 23 teams from ten administrative regions took part: 35 artists, 31 teachers (generalist primary school teachers, secondary French teachers, secondary Arts teachers) and 34 presenters. PDA's decision to create multidisciplinary teams was rooted in two rationales. On the one hand, some studies have demonstrated that collaborative projects that demand that teachers and artists work together upstream to prepare the activities provided to the students result in a better understanding of everyone's roles as well as a shared understanding of the objectives of the activities and the artwork (Cabaniss, 2003; Easton, 2003). On the other hand, this team composition provides a window into how aesthetic education can be applied in various settings and ensures that the experiences and learnings at the camp will resonate locally, in each region, across the whole of Quebec (Crête-Reizes, 2022).

The four-day training, in person, involves experimentation periods, during which the participants take part in aesthetic education activities: "With the primary goal of engaging the participants in a range of experiences with works of art from various disciplines, [the participants were] invited into a full immersion that fostered a learning stance grounded in doing and the active use of the imagination" (Crête-Reizes, 2022, p. 9, translation). Reflection periods gave the participants the opportunity to contemplate the

[3] The majority of the attendees spoke French. The majority of the training was conducted in French, and the participants received translations of the LCE team's interventions into French. For the LCE team, a translation into English was also completed.

activities they had experienced and deepen their understanding of aesthetic education. Finally, planning periods gave each team time to create a cultural mediation project based on aesthetic education to present to students when they returned to their respective regions. For PDA, it was important that participants develop activities based on aesthetic education in a project of their own in order to promote learning and understanding of aesthetic education.

For the cultural mediation project, each of the 23 teams worked on his own performance piece that was part of the presenter's programming, resulting in 23 different projects. The project were of variable length, ranging from one workshop given by an artist and one by a teacher to a series of workshops given by each of them. In some projects, the presenter also took part in the workshops, while in others, the presenter only served as support for the artist and teacher (for example, by hosting the students to see a performance and take part in a workshop afterward). Some projects took place in primary school, others in secondary.

After five years of the camp, a forum set up by PDA in the fall of 2022 brought back all 23 teams, again in collaboration with LCE, to pool their experiences with the aesthetic education approach in their respective settings and reflect on future avenues.

Methodology

I carried out an inductive research study with 34 volunteers from the 23 teams in 2022–2023 at PDA's request to characterize and comprehend the impacts of this aesthetic education training camp on the artists, teachers, and presenters. This was a non-probabilistic sample. Table 2 shows their distribution by year and role.

Table 2

Distribution of volunteers by year.

	Teacher	Artist	Presenter
2018	1	2	2
2019	1	2	0
2020	1	1	2
2021	3	4	5
2022	3	5	2
Total	**9**	**14**	**11**

Three sources of data were used. Using three questions, I conducted a semi-directed individual interview to ascertain: 1) if the participants had completed any additional initiatives related to aesthetic education; if not, why, and if so, how?; 2) whether they felt that aesthetic education had had an effect on their professional practices (if so, what effect; if not, why not); and 3) if they identify needs to support them in setting up projects based on aesthetic education. The participants were invited to respond either orally in a 20-minute videoconference or in writing. By allowing them to choose the response method, I wanted to ensure the greatest possible number of responses. The interviews took place in winter 2022.

The second source of data was a participant workbook handed in during the forum. Prior to the forum, the PDA team gathered written testimonies from teachers, artists, and presenters, based on three questions: How did you use aesthetic education in your setting? How did the aesthetic education approach resonate for you in your practice? How did your project take shape? These testimonies were published in full in the participant workbook and served as data.

The forum, which took place in person at PDA in November 2022 over two days, asked attendees to discuss their experiences working on initiatives involving aesthetic education, what they took away from the experience, and, in general, to think critically about the relationship between culture and education. The third source of data was the transcriptions of the talks, which were first recorded and then written down.

To examine the data and, thus, to characterize and comprehend the impacts of aesthetic education on the participants, a qualitative-interpretive technique was chosen. Using an inductive procedure, I conducted a thematic analysis that involved transposing and reducing the corpus into themes that were indicative of the content under examination (Paillé & Mucchielli, 2016). I conducted a discursive analysis of the themes that were raised in the data corpus after methodically identifying and classifying them. The themes therefore emerged from the corpus (e.g., change of practice, acquisition of know-how, reinvestment, teaching method, self-reflection, reflection on student participation, etc.). The initial analysis was of the data from the interviews (interview transcripts and written responses). Then the same analysis was carried out in the participant workbooks, to expand on and enrich the interview data. Finally, I performed the same analysis on the forum transcripts, which allowed me to corroborate the results from the first two sources of data. I was able to triangulate the data by using these three sources, which guaranteed the stability and precision of the analyses (Savoie-Zajc, 1996b). The number of participants and three data sources resulted in data saturation (Bourgeois, 2016; Savoie-Zajc, 1996a). In this process, I tried to reflect what the participants experienced or witnessed as accurately as possible (Paillé, 2017). It is important to note that the data were not gathered or analyzed for teachers based on the subject matter they instruct, or for artists based on their artistic discipline. This is undoubtedly a constraint because there can be disciplinary (subject matter/artistic discipline) discrepancies.

Effects on professional practice

Aesthetic education allowed some participants to identify the elements of education in and with the arts that were already present in their practices, confirming for them the methods they were already employing. One teacher, for instance, was already inspiring her students to create by beginning with a piece of art. She also had them engage in creative work before going to see a performance. On the other hand, since completing the aesthetic education training, a teacher said that "aesthetic education jumpstarted my practices, what I was already doing. Now I do even more of it" (teach.2019). For two of the artists, aesthetic education not only confirmed what they were doing as cultural mediation activities but also gave them confidence in their practices. Both said they are doubtless about what they do to engage students with a work of art, for example when they asked question to the students or put them in action.

The training camp enriched activities for cultural mediation in the educational setting. For some of the teachers and artists and one of the presenters, the aesthetic education tools and approach gave them the means to enrich their professional practice. For example, they said it gave them more "arrows" (art.1-2021) or "strings" (teach.2019) for their bows, "another approach to put in my teacher's toolkit" (teach.2020) or more "materials (inquiry, observation, questioning, contextual information)" for teaching (teach.2020, teach.1-2022). For some, aesthetic education let them dare to "take risks" (teach.2-2021); it "liberated" their teaching-learning practices (teach.2018) or opened the door to the "power and possibilities" of cultural mediation (art.1-2019, teach.2020). As one teacher mentioned regarding a project carried out with her students in winter 2023, "I don't think I would have done this other multidisciplinary project if I hadn't participated in the camp. At least, not a project of this scale, involving poetry, drama and visual arts" (teach.2-2021). To explain how their practices were enriched, these participants specifically evoked having acquired certain kinds of know-how. They learned how to ask questions to "engage the students" (art.1-2019), "open up the path" (pres.2-2021), to allow the student to "find their own key to enter the artwork" (art.3-2021). Two participants said they learned how to attentively observe an artwork and guide the students in their observation using varied questions. This know-how is now part of their practice: "What I do now that I didn't used to do: look, observe, name what I see without interpreting it. Now I get the students to do it" (teach.2019). One artist learned how to lead the students to experience the creative process.

Some of the teachers gained know-how that fuelled their practices to develop the competency "appreciation," a competency that appears in the elementary and secondary Arts and French programs in Quebec. They also underscored the close ties between that competency and aesthetic education. One educator reported that aesthetic education gave her the tools to work more practically on this competency with her students, and ever since the camp, she has been including it into her appreciation lessons. Another teacher spoke of a "richer" way to work on the "appreciation" competency with her students (teach.1-2022). For another, aesthetic education made her aware that she wanted to guide "the students to feel competent with regard to art, but also with regard to the beauty of the

world" (teach.1-2021). This way of developing the "appreciation" competency poses a challenge for some of the teachers, however: the usual tasks for working on and evaluating this competency change with aesthetic education, which requires the teacher to adapt. Finally, aesthetic education allowed one teacher to change her reading evaluation practices even if reading was not directly covered in the training, partly by changing her terms for accessing reading: she no longer restricts herself to oral or written responses to evaluate her students' reading ability but also allows them to use artistic creation.

We can see from the data that some aspects of aesthetic education were integrated into professional practices and reinvested, which many of the participants also confirmed. For example, one teacher and one presenter now connect their activities to a work of art or to artists to expand opportunities for giving the students aesthetic experiences. One teacher used the activities that she herself experienced at the training camp in other teaching contexts. One artist created tools for teachers to support her aesthetic education mediation activities. Two artists and one presenter said that aesthetic education is now part of all their mediation activities, not only those for the school setting, and that the approach has coloured their other professional activities. Finally, the aesthetic education camp allowed two participants – one teacher and one presenter – to reconnect with an artistic practice they had abandoned, and it fuelled the artistic practices of three artists.

Very few participants – only three – said they had not reinvested anything they took from the camp or done any activities using the aesthetic education approach. One presenter evoked the pandemic, which reduced their opportunities to present activities based on aesthetic education, and another cited the lack of time, energy, financing, and recognition which, in their opinion, is slowing down the creation of cultural mediation activities based on aesthetic education. The use of the aesthetic education approach and its transfer to other activities is not evident for everyone. One teacher asserts that "reality catches up with us" (teach.2-2021), making it impossible to apply aesthetic instruction to every group or activity.

Questions about the roles of the mediator and the students

The aesthetic education camp elicited a reflection on the way mediation and, more broadly, teaching is conceptualized. Although our study is qualitative, more than half of the 34 volunteers mentioned that the camp caused them to question the role of the adult doing the mediation and, consequently, to change that role. Rather than explaining, handing down information as an expert and controlling the students' explorations, the participants realized the importance of leaving more room for the students' experiments, for "their words" (teach.2-2021), for "living and letting live instead of explaining" (art.1-2021). They came to see their role as that of a guide who sets up activities that engage the students and open dialogue. As one teacher pointed out, she now gives her students more latitude to "ask themselves questions, discuss, seek" (teach.2-2021). Aesthetic education also led the participants to vary the students' modes of expression and exploration: they now call on many senses and different modalities (moving, writing, drawing, miming, etc.) to encourage the students to enter the artwork or to work on the teaching goals.

Furthermore, the reflections about aesthetic education that were raised by the camp awakened some participants to the importance of cultural mediation, "regardless of the audience" (teach.1-2018), and of the importance of "approaching the audience more effectively and steering them to express themselves through art" (art.1-2018). Mediation is seen as the responsibility of all the players in the cultural setting, and in this sense, two presenters positioned themselves as an "important link" between culture and school, between culture and community (pres.1-2018, pres.2-2020).

Training in mixed teams: Shared vocabulary and the emergence of a community of practice

The analyses revealed one major discovery: the effect of the mixed-team format on the participants. This training method, which was chosen specifically by PDA, required collaboration among the artists, teachers, and presenters, a kind of collaboration that was not necessarily part of their usual practices. It fostered the development and use a "shared vocabulary" that allowed the participants to "develop a better understanding of the other people's work" (teach.2019) and to "advance in the same direction" (pres.1-2022). It also enabled the participants to collaborate more with each other and with various partners outside the camp. For example, one teacher (teach.2019) now does far more work in advance with the artists when she organizes activities for her students. Three artists collaborate more with colleagues in the artistic community, "regardless of their responsibility" (art.1-2019).

For some of the participants, an informal community of practice was even created through this training method at the camp, one that has carried on since then. This community allows them to network and fosters the sharing and pooling of their respective professional practices: "We exchange ideas among teachers and artists, among teachers and presenters. The idea of sharing with the artistic and cultural community has stayed with us" (teach.2019). Some participants also evoked the need for occasional meetings with the people who took part in the aesthetic education training camp. They say these meetings would "remind them about aesthetic education, remind them to share what they are doing, see what others are doing and not go back to their old comfort zone" (teach.2019). They mentioned the need for meetings to share aesthetic education ideas, practices, readings, and tools.

Discussion

I want to revisit some specific elements and the potential of such training. Of course, all the results come from the participants' comments on their declared practices. Nevertheless, the aesthetic education training camp left traces in the professional practice of the participants, as revealed by their statements and examples they gave me or at the forum. The results of other studies on teachers and artists using an aesthetic education approach (such as Cabaniss, 2003; Easton, 2003) or on teachers trained in aesthetic education who apply the approach in their classrooms (such as Beaudry & al., 2024; Figueroa Murphy, 2014; Gulla, 2018) have also shown that using aesthetic education

leaves traces in the practices and stances adopted by teachers and artists. Acting as a cultural mediator, as required by both Quebec's cultural policy for various stakeholders in the cultural setting and the *Référentiel des compétences professionnelles pour les enseignants* [professional competency frame of reference for teachers] (MEQ, 2020), is a complex competency. It demands both soft skills (having a personal interest in arts and culture, being curious about various artistic and cultural events, including student events) and hard skills (organizing and piloting activities that allow the students to *actually* experience arts and culture). Cultural mediation is still a fluid concept, with multiple definitions and disparate practices. Aesthetic education appears to offer a promising way for artists, teachers, and presenters to serve as mediators. Aesthetic education could thus be part of initial or continuing training, both for teachers and for cultural workers. Above all, it seems that the format of the training, which brought together both teachers and cultural workers, lasted several days, made it possible to live concrete experiences in aesthetic education and then to test some in its environment, may explain some of the changes in participant practices. They were able to experience, understand the basics, and then see for themselves the effects on the students and on them.

Gulla (2018) identifies a certain level of student agency that seems to be triggered by aesthetic education: "By engaging in prolonged inquiry around works of art and then having the opportunity to make their own creative works, aesthetic inquiry leads students to find and channel their voices. The ability to express themselves lends these young people a powerful sense of agency. They begin to believe in themselves in ways they might not have thought possible before" (p. 111). A similar agency seems to have arisen for the artists, teachers, and presenters in our sample, who granted themselves the right to explore, test, take risks and, in so doing, change the way they work with students and even with other audiences. This latitude of exploration offered by aesthetic education and by the format of the training seems essential to allow artists, teachers, and presenters to renew their practices, and thus offer meaningful cultural mediation activities for students.

But while we can see that the participants have transferred some aspects of the aesthetic education approach – for example, observation, and questioning – it appears, above all, that they redeveloped or reconstructed previously acquired ideas or behaviours (Lauret, 2007, p. 9). In particular, aesthetic education led the participants to rethink their role and the role of the students: they ended up placing greater value on the students' words and prior experiences (acquired in or out of school) and the expertise the students drew from them. This change of stance among the artists, teachers, and presenters allowed them to recognize the students' expertise and to solicit their full participation in the cultural activities (Kerlan & Robert, 2016; Lemonchois, 2015). They adopted practices that let the students decide for themselves, make artistic choices, and express themselves freely (Lemonchois, 2015). In so doing, they invited the students to create their own pathway through the aesthetic experience. This kind of participation is essential in an approach that involves placing the students at the heart of experimentation with the arts. And this, as Kerlan rightly points out, is a new democratic requirement: "allowing everyone to access a true aesthetic experience. A new and essential step in the

democratization of arts and culture demands universal access to the experience" (Kerlan, 2015, p. 267, translation).

That said, training in aesthetic education and offering projects rooted in this approach poses some challenges for the participants. Because aesthetic education may be at odds with the stances taken by some people (for example, more masterful mediation or teaching), because it requires good advance preparation, particularly in terms of knowing the work of art the project focuses on, because it demands openness to the students' responses and proposals, this approach may seem complex. Since the student is at the heart of the process and the mediator serves as a guide in aesthetic education, employing this method could lead to instability for teachers, artists, and school administrators since they do not fully control the student experience, as pointed out by other researchers (for example, Gulla, 2018; Guyotte, 2018). Some participants mentioned having found it a challenge to invest so much time and effort to implement the approach in workshops. They also said that the approach takes time to master, precisely because aesthetic education requires a change in the usual mediation practices, for artist, teacher, and presenter alike. The top-down transmission or expert approach does not work in a process that focuses on investigation and experimentation. As one participant pointed out, "if we want to use the same model, we need time. You cannot apply it all right away. It takes times. You have to learn to master it. It isn't spontaneous. The change takes time: it requires reflection" (teach.2019). Two needs mentioned by some participants – especially presenters – were time and money. Cultural mediation initiatives, regardless of duration, that embrace the creative process require more time and financial resources to produce than infrequent receiving activities like going to a conference or theater play, or visiting a museum (Park & al., 2015). These are the elements that have to be taken into account in order to set up such training.

Furthermore, aesthetic education requires the mediators to reflect on their own cultural, artistic and mediation practices (Greene, 2001), as well as their representations of culture and its role in the school setting (Nadeau, 2021). As Gulla (2018) explains, "To practice aesthetic education is to be aware that we are in a constant state of becoming, and to understand that there is always more to be seen and heard" (p. 113). This kind of reflection may sometimes feel threatening for some people, but it also seems to generate change in stances and practices. As other researchers have noted in relation to teachers who use museums in their teaching, it is only when they themselves have developed an attachment to the museum and an understanding of its possible contributions to the development of students "that they can share their interest and passion with their students" (Meunier & al., 2019, p.8). We can assume that it is the same for all artistic forms. It is after reflecting on their artistic practices, the role and possible contributions of art, having opportunities to develop a personal relationship with various art forms that teachers and cultural workers can fully play their role as cultural mediators.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, the results show that the PDA/LCE training camp, its form and its basis in aesthetic education offered potential to the participants. It had positive effects on the professional practice of the participants in our sample, in particular by helping them acquire know-how and encouraging artists, teachers and presenters alike to (re)view their conception of their role and that of the students in cultural mediation activities. The multidisciplinary team format chosen by PDA fostered the development of a shared vocabulary and, for some participants, the emergence of a community of practice, decompartmentalizing the cultural setting and the school setting. The findings are based on practices that were reported; more study is undoubtedly required, especially to determine exactly how artists, teachers, and presenters apply aesthetic education with students. Similarly, it seems necessary to get students' opinions regarding these mediations. In particular, the participants declared having given more latitude and freedom to the students; it would be relevant to hear what students have to say about this.

In a situation where people from cultural and school settings are called on to serve as cultural mediators with students, it seems to us that this kind of initiative is crucial for reinforcing culture in schools and, above all, offering students activities that allow them to experience the arts and, ultimately, become participants in culture. Training in aesthetic education, in the form of this camp or another, could support teachers and cultural workers in their role as cultural mediators. Dewey (1976) thinks that among other things, schools should draw inspiration from artistic works. Schools, and specifically university programs that provide initial and ongoing teacher training, should draw inspiration from training that is started by a cultural institution, both in terms of format and content. It is regrettable that this initiative has been completed.

Acknowledgments: This study, which met the ethical standards of our university, received funding from the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec and from Place des Arts de Montréal.

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