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To cite this article: Philip A. Woods, Suzanne Culshaw, Karen Smith, Joy Jarvis, Helen Payne & Amanda Roberts (2023): Nurturing change: Processes and outcomes of workshops using collage and gesture to foster aesthetic qualities and capabilities for distributed leadership, Professional Development in Education, DOI: [10.1080/19415257.2023.2187432](https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2023.2187432)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2023.2187432>



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Published online: 06 Apr 2023.



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Nurturing change: Processes and outcomes of workshops using collage and gesture to foster aesthetic qualities and capabilities for distributed leadership

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ABSTRACT

This article reports findings from a study using arts-based and embodied (ABE) approaches to enhancing capacity for distributed leadership and explores the professional learning which took place as a result. The data reported in the article are from the UK research which formed part of the ENABLES (European Arts-Based Development of Distributed Leadership and Innovation in Schools) project led by the University of Hertfordshire, UK, co-funded by an Erasmus+ grant over a two-year period between 2019 and 2021. The article indicates why we see the professional learning as transformative and proposes a concept of aesthetic grounding to express the nature of change arising from the ABE approaches used. Aesthetic grounding has a generative and organic quality that introduces new elements and potential into participants' future reflexive deliberations concerning their professional practice. Through enrichment of aesthetic grounding, there is potential for, but not certainty of, transformation of practice.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 10 May 2022
Accepted 1 March 2023

KEYWORDS

Professional learning; arts-based learning; embodied learning; affective scaffolding; awareness; aesthetic grounding

Introduction

Use of arts-based and embodied (ABE) approaches to leadership development has grown, especially in business (Woods *et al.* 2020), but they are less developed and researched in educational settings. More needs to be understood about the professional learning that (potentially) takes place when ABE approaches are used. This article reports findings from a study using ABE approaches to enhancing capacity for distributed leadership and explores the professional learning which took place as a result. We indicate why we see the professional learning as transformative and propose a concept of aesthetic grounding to express the nature of change arising from the ABE approaches used. Aesthetic grounding, explained further below, refers to the personal resources and capabilities that nurture aesthetic and embodied sensibilities and is a feature of a person that may be enriched. It has a generative and organic quality that introduces new elements and potential into participants' future reflexive deliberations. Through enrichment of aesthetic grounding, there is potential for, but not certainty of, future transformation of practice.

The data reported in the article are from the UK research which formed part of the ENABLES (European Arts-Based Development of Distributed Leadership and Innovation in Schools) project

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led by the University of Hertfordshire, UK, co-funded by an Erasmus+ grant over a two-year period between 2019 and 2021 (<https://www.herts.ac.uk/study/schools-of-study/education/research/enables>). As well as the University of Hertfordshire, partners comprise the universities of Innsbruck (Austria), Jyväskylä (Finland) and Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Iași (Romania), and the Institute of Lifelong Learning and Culture «VITAE» (Latvia). The purpose of the ENABLES project was to strengthen distributed leadership of innovation in schools by developing and disseminating innovative ABE collaborative leadership development. Each of the partners in the project undertook action research trials using different ABE approaches.

The UK trials involved the design and conduct of nine online workshops (involving 44 participants) carried out in 2021 (Woods *et al.* 2021). ABE forms of professional learning are less familiar than more traditional forms (such as study sessions, courses and coaching) and can be challenging. In the workshops we sought to create a safe space for participants (see, e.g. Holley and Steiner 2005). Workshops were designed to create an aesthetic environment in which educators (e.g. teachers, school leaders, school improvement advisors, teacher educators and leadership development facilitators) undertook expressive activities (collage creation and gesture-response exercises) and explored, through aesthetic and collaborative reflexivity, their feelings, assumptions, experience and perspectives concerning leadership and leading change with others. Rather than a linear, mechanical way of envisioning change that constitutes professional learning, we envisaged change being *nurtured* in the trials. The term ‘nurtured’ highlights an approach where change can emerge through engaging in and with an aesthetic environment. This contrasts with seeing change as an outcome determined by variables stipulated and manipulated by providers of professional learning. The term ‘nurtured’ also recognises that change may be an ongoing process of growth seeded by a professional learning event, rather than an immediate outcome.

The reflections and explorations in the workshops were able to cover not only ‘what works’ in relation to practice but also ‘what matters’. Qualitative data were collected on participants’ experiences of the workshops and the extent to which these appeared to result in perceived changes in aesthetic qualities. The term ‘aesthetic qualities’, and other key terms, are defined in the next section on the study’s theoretical framework. More detailed discussion is available in Woods *et al.* (2021).

The article proceeds by outlining the theory informing the research, explaining the design of the UK action research trials and data collection and analysis, setting out findings on change experienced by participants and discussing how the concept of aesthetic grounding helps us understand the nature of professional learning. The final section presents our conclusions.

Theoretical framework

Professional practice is a process in which factors such as feeling, thinking and reflection are integral, yet emotions, values (and the sentiments that underpin these) and embedded patterns of feeling, thinking and acting may be hidden and unexplored. The contention behind the work reported in this article is that paying greater attention to the aesthetic dimension of reflexivity and practice is essential to transformative professional learning. The ENABLES project aimed to trial how ABE approaches could enhance aesthetic qualities and leadership capabilities that can in turn strengthen the practice of distributed leadership. In this section, we set out the theoretical framework and key concepts that guided our research.

The concept of the aesthetic is foundational to this framework. We see the aesthetic as referring to the gamut of affective experiences that arise through the images and messages that reach us via our bodily senses and our internal interaction with these. Such affective experiences are integral to a sense of an embodied self that emerges from the person’s navigation through their environment and in which the immediate moment of their sensing is not mediated by language (Archer 2000: chapter 4). Skills in bodily awareness offer possibilities to acknowledge such ‘embodied – often pre-reflective – knowledge’ (Payne and Jääskeläinen *forthcoming*, p. 4). Hence, the aesthetic is not first and foremost informed by the intellect or cognition, but is ‘the physically-based “felt sense” we experience of other

people, things, entities or our surroundings' (Ladkin 2010, p. 79). Constitutive of these affective experiences are feelings, moods and emotions, as well as the personal valuations they engender. Feelings, moods and emotions refer to different kinds of affects (affects being internal processes distinguishable from those of cognition and volition); with emotions being bio-psychosocial reactions that are distinctive by their transience, and which can involve behaviour (such as crying or blushing) that communicates a feeling state to others (Dale and James 2015, James *et al.* 2019). Personal valuation is the positive or negative sense (a liking or disaffection) experienced as part of the activity of feeling (or other affect) arising in response to something apprehended by the person: this kind of valuation entails a sense that the something apprehended is, for example, pleasing or not and ethically good or not (Macmurray 1961, Woods and Woods 2010).

In the design of the workshops, we identified distinguishable aspects of what we anticipated the workshops would entail. These were: the aesthetic environment; expressive activities, and related processes of surfacing, aesthetic reflexivity and reframing; and, professional learning in the form of change in aesthetic qualities and capabilities for distributed leadership. They were defined as follows.

Aesthetic environment

This refers to features of a location and gathering and how these influence the feelings, moods, emotions and personal valuations experienced by those involved. The environment concerned may be a physical space or (as with the UK trials) an online space. Feelings engendered may include, for example, a sense of comfortableness and safety, or otherwise; personal valuations may include a sense of the environment being morally and/or spiritually uplifting, or otherwise.

Expressive activities

These are the ABE approaches engaged in by participants. Two approaches were used in the UK workshops through which participants could express their experience of leading change with others: collage-creation – a creative process that helps participants to surface feelings, emotions and ideas and to make meaning and connections across the person's lived experience (Roberts and Woods 2018, Culshaw 2019); and gesture-response – an exercise, informed by the field of embodied psychotherapy (Panhofner and Payne 2011), in which participants were invited to represent their experience through full bodily gesture (rather than facial expression). The processes we anticipated accompanying these activities (informed by work such as that by Sutherland 2012, Ludevig 2015, Maiese 2016) were:

- **surfacing:** raising of awareness of the aesthetic (feelings, affective personal valuations, etc) and generation of new thinking and insights as a result, which are made visible and help to enhance aesthetic awareness.
- **reframing:** revising familiar frames of meaning, including established patterns of feelings and emotional responses as well as established patterns of thinking and behaviour.
- **aesthetic reflexivity:** critical, probing reflection that raises and addresses challenging questions about the patterns and assumptions in our aesthetic experiences and awareness. (This also appears below as part of the qualities that it is proposed will be nurtured and enhanced).

Aesthetic qualities

The proposition underpinning the study is that expressive activities and associated surfacing, reflexivity and reframing will nurture and enhance participants' aesthetic qualities. The latter are defined as comprising affective attributes, aesthetic awareness and aesthetic reflexivity. Running through these is a distinction between self-orientated and other-orientated awareness.

- **affective attributes:** refers to virtues and affective predispositions and capabilities that characterise our interactions with the world. Affective attributes are not reducible to the accumulation of skills. They are complex, ‘non-rational, non-logical capabilities’ (Sutherland 2012, p. 26), and include attributes such as humility, respect, empathy, trustworthiness, active listening and integrity (Fields et al 2019).
- **aesthetic awareness:** appreciativeness of and sensitivity to the aesthetic and an ability to learn from this to enrich ourselves and our practice and to foster ethical sensibilities.
- **aesthetic reflexivity:** (as defined above) critical, probing reflection that raises and addresses challenging questions about the patterns and assumptions in our aesthetic experiences and awareness.
- **self-orientated awareness and other-orientated awareness:** A distinction within the above qualities can be made between the aspects of these qualities that involve self-orientated awareness (which is about connecting within the self and awareness of the feelings and sensibilities that form part of our internal conversations¹) and the aspects which involve other-orientated awareness (which concerns our awareness of and felt interconnection with others and the external world).

ABE methods of professional learning have the potential to surface and catalyse reflections on ideas, perceptions and experience in ways that cognitive-focused professional learning does not. ABE approaches facilitate ‘embodied, emotional experiences of self and leadership’, often through physicality, manipulation and bodily movement that enhance awareness of people’s ‘embodied selves in the moment’ (Sutherland 2012, p. 34). Research suggests that personal and professional learning is enriched by the noticing of bodily sensations and human movement embedded in experience and by aesthetic qualities evoked through creative and playful arts activity enabling new ways of feeling, seeing and making meaning of the familiar (Di Paulo *et al.* 2010, Sutherland 2012, Cozolino 2013, Maiese 2016, Payne and Brooks 2017, Antonacopoulou and Taylor 2019, Ulvik 2020, Woods *et al.* 2020). ABE methods can thereby help to surface what is underpinning action. This then enables the practitioner to reflect upon and enact practice in ways that are more knowing and aware of the aesthetic features integral to practice. One of the potential disadvantages of ABE activities as research methods and as modes of professional development is the discomfort they may engender for some; though offering people activities that are different from the taken-for-granted ways and that may be unsettling can also be part of the value for participants and researchers (Culshaw *forthcoming*). We consequently sought to minimise any off-putting discomfort as we designed and facilitated the ABE activities.

Figure 1 is a diagrammatic representation of the elements of practice that we designed as an analytical framework for the study. It relates to the study’s concern with professional learning about distributed leadership, but expresses a fundamental view of practice as a process integrating feeling, thinking and reflection. The diagram embeds action (the visible element of practice) in the less visible elements comprising the practitioner’s aesthetic qualities, collaborative leadership capabilities and view of leadership that also constitute practice.

The following points, one general and one specific to the ENABLES UK research, are important to highlight:

- Whilst a flow of influence is posited from engagement in the expressive activities to outcomes conceptualised as change in aesthetic qualities, the distinction between ‘process’ and ‘outcome’ is blurred. For example, aspects of the *process*, such as heightened sensibilities to aesthetic reflexivity or the reframing of certain patterns of feeling, may in turn become enduring *outcomes* of engaging in expressive activities.
- For the purpose of the ENABLES UK research, we took the view that collaborative leadership capabilities, as explained in Woods and Roberts (2018), described capabilities needed for the kind of distributed leadership the project was seeking to develop. The research therefore



Figure 1. Analytical framework: elements of practice

examined whether growth in these collaborative leadership capabilities could be identified as resulting from the action research trials. These include aesthetic dimensions of awareness and sensibilities and comprise capacity for pro-active agency (initiation and enactment of change with confidence and conviction to carry it through), status adaptability, communicative virtues, relational capabilities and reciprocal leadership learning. (See [Appendix](#) for details.)

Participants were invited to engage with the expressive activities and to share and discuss their experiences and viewpoints with other participants. We were interested in the changes that occurred or stirred within participants individually and collectively as a result of this. Data collection was designed to generate insights into the professional learning resulting from what the participants themselves did, felt and thought within the trials.

Having outlined the study's theoretical framework, in the next section we outline the purpose of the ENABLES UK action research trials (ARTs), the design of the ARTs and the research questions framing the trials. We also share how we recruited participants for the online workshops and how we collected data.

Design of the UK action research trials

The purpose of the UK ARTs was twofold. The online workshops had a developmental purpose, by which we mean they were an opportunity for educators to engage in professional learning. They also had a research purpose, to allow the research team to explore the extent to which ABE approaches can support and strengthen capacity for distributed leadership.

The UK ARTs consisted of three elements: an introduction, a workshop, and a follow-up evaluation. On occasions, the introduction and workshop were blended into one session. Because the ENABLES project took place throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the workshops were all conducted online. All sessions were facilitated by two members of the UK ENABLES team, one acting as the facilitator, the other as a researcher. In eight of the nine trials there were two to four participants. We also facilitated one larger trial with 22 participants. Ethics approval for the UK research was gained through the University of Hertfordshire's Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities Ethics Committee (protocol number EDU/SF/UH/04807).

Very early on in the design phase, we recognised the need to establish an aesthetic environment (defined in the previous section) with our participants, within which the expressive activities could take place. The idea was that the aesthetic environment would ‘hold’ the space in such a way as to stimulate and enable expressive activities and nurture participants’ aesthetic qualities. Skilful and sensitive facilitation was identified as part of the aesthetic environment and was seen as being key to the success of the workshops; the willingness of participants to bring a sense of ‘playfulness’ to the workshop was a further factor (Woods *et al.* 2020).

The design of the workshops was informed in part by leadership coaching practices, which have been defined as a form of personal learning for leaders to support them in leading more effectively (Stokes and Jolly 2014). Coaching has the potential to ‘disrupt the normative’ (Western 2012, p. 39), to ask individuals to look differently and hence to engage in deep rather than surface learning (Entwistle 2000), with transformative effect. However, we must stress that we did not put ourselves forward as coaches, nor did we promote the workshops as sessions that would enable coaching.

Nevertheless, appreciation of two coaching discourses helped clarify our role. The ‘soul guide’ discourse is a ‘non-directive’ approach to exploring meaning and values in a space which is a kind of ‘sanctuary’ where the coach may seek to offer an interpretation or a thought as a stimulus (Western 2012, p. 285). In the spirit of this, but without presenting ourselves as leadership coaches, we invited participants to explore issues of meaning around their experiences of leading change; our approach was to be non-directive about any learning they might take from the process. The second discourse, ‘network coaching’, encourages awareness of interconnections with others and emotions associated with feeling connected and disconnected (Western 2012, p. 203). Encouraging participants to think about and reflect on how they see and feel about themselves as being interconnected with others was a key aspect of the workshops.

A review of the literature was conducted (Woods *et al.* 2020) and we set out our thinking for the ARTs in a framing paper (Woods *et al.* 2021: Appendix). This led us to establish the following three research questions:

- (1) Is there evidence that the arts-based and embodied methods being used strengthen participants’ capacity for distributed leadership? If so,
- (2) In what ways does the use of arts-based and embodied methods have an impact on participants and strengthen their capacity for distributed leadership?
- (3) How do these methods foster the learning that brings about an impact and strengthens that capacity?

The project findings reported below relate mainly to the first research question.

We turn our attention now to sharing details of the UK ARTs, outlining the structure of the sessions, how we recruited participants and the nature of the expressive activities in the workshops.

UK action research trials

As it became clear that the global pandemic would have a considerable impact on our ability to facilitate in-person sessions with participants, we quickly resolved to host all of the trials online. This had an effect on our thinking about a range of issues such as group size, duration of workshops and nature of activities.

As indicated, the trials consisted of three elements: an introduction, a workshop and a follow-up evaluation. They took place between January and June 2021. Workshops were undertaken online, using Zoom. Introduction sessions and follow-up evaluations also usually took place on Zoom, though occasionally follow-up feedback came via email communications. The introduction was an opportunity to establish a rapport with participants and to start the discussion about distributed leadership. The workshop was the main session in which participants were invited to engage in

expressive activities. The follow-up evaluation offered participants the space a few weeks after the workshop to reflect further on their learning and experience of taking part.

We acknowledged the importance of recruiting participants for the success of research and were keen to attract as diverse a range of participants as possible. Drawing on an approach used previously by one of the UK team members (Culshaw 2020), we created a short promotional video to support recruitment of participants and shared the video on social media (Twitter), via gatekeepers and within our professional networks. Participants from across the UK were able to join us online in the workshops as there was no need for them, or us, to travel to a specific workshop venue. Participants were recruited from a range of roles (including senior and middle leaders, classroom teachers, governors, consultants, school improvement advisors) and across all phases of school education (including early years, primary, secondary, alternative provision).

Expressive activities

The expressive activities were a key part of the online workshops. Each partner in the ENABLES project chose a different ABE approach; the UK team designed workshops to explore the use of collage-creation and gesture-response activities. Other ABE methods, by our European partners, included narrative expression, drama and improvisation and visual imagery.

The design of the UK workshops was informed by the view that cognitive or linguistic expressive activity do not necessarily need to predominate. ABE approaches tend to be characterised by (Woods *et al.* 2020):

- effective facilitation
- playfulness
- attention and reflection
- connecting body, feeling and intellect
- activities of making

Expressive activities such as collage-creation and gesture-response enable a different way of thinking; they can encourage visual and embodied thinking rather than linear, linguistic thinking (Arnheim 1969, Marshall 2007). There are times where words are inadequate to express that which is most profound or personal (Frosh 2002, Leitch 2006, Roberts and Woods 2018) and so ABE methods such as collage-creation can enable new things to be communicated or the same things to be expressed in a different way (Mavers 2003). Collage-creation can allow participants to access words and meaning via a different route (Culshaw 2019). With this particular form of collage, participants have agency in a physical process because they can move materials as their thinking develops, as well as choosing the materials they wanted to use (Roberts and Woods 2018).

Gestures are a form of non-verbal or non-vocal communication in which visible bodily actions communicate particular messages and include movement of the hands, face or other parts of the body. By focusing on the body and its sensations and tensions, we hoped that participants might be able to start to make sense – in an embodied way – of how they lead change with others. Gestures allow us to express embodied metaphors (see, e.g. Homann 2010, Fuchs and Koch 2014, Berrol 2016, Payne and Brooks 2020).

Session plans were drawn up for the workshops which, after a short introduction, allowed up to 40 minutes for the collage-creation activity and about 20 minutes for the gesture-response activity. A further 25 minutes were built in for individual and collaborative reflection, before a final 15-minute plenary.

Participants were invited to express their response to the stimulus question ‘how do you lead change with others?’ as a collage and as a gesture. We wanted the stimulus question to have an experiential focus. We were also mindful of not steering participants in a way that discourages their

Box 1. Suggested collage materials.

In preparation for the collage activity on (date), you might like to have a look around at home for materials of different colours and textures. For example, arts and crafts materials, stationery items such as paper clips, paper, pens, post-it stickers, buttons, ribbon. . . general bits and bobs, whatever you've got lying around that you might like to use. *You do not need glue for this particular form of collage.*

answering in as open a way as possible that reflects their own priorities and what is important to them.

We detail now the collage-creation process. When facilitating in-person sessions in the past, members of the UK team have provided a range of materials in 'collage boxes' for participants to use. Consideration of the risks of COVID-19 transmission led to our deciding not to send collage packs to participants in the post. The creative solution was to give participants an indication of the types of materials they might like to gather in advance of the workshop; participants were therefore free to select a range of items to create a collage. All participants received guidance via email (Box 1).

After the period of collage creation, participants were invited to share their collages (as photos) and the meaning of their collages to the group in the workshop. They were also encouraged to respond to each other's collages. This was an opportunity to surface 'equally plausible – though sometimes competing and ambiguous – meanings and interpretations' (Rose 2007, p. xiii) of how they lead change with others. Indeed, ambiguity in a collage may provide a 'way of expressing the said and unsaid' and can reveal both 'the intended and the unintended' (Butler-Kisber 2008, pp. 268–9). Rather than it being perceived as a problem, ambiguity in the collage data is perhaps to be embraced (Knowles and Sweetman 2004). For example, participants are able to show contradictory feelings and uncertainties through the types of item they choose and the textures, colours and positionings of these in the collage – without having to be tied down by language.

The second expressive activity in the workshops – gesture-response – involved embodied movement. There is a literature that explains that it is actually normal to feel a bit uncomfortable in undertaking this activity (more so than with collage, for example); in modern, industrial society, we tend to be cut off from our bodies (Payne 2017). To turn the focus towards the body, the workshop facilitator led a short, guided body-awareness exercise before modelling a gesture to express how she leads change with others. Participants were then invited to do a gesture, either on or behind camera, to express how they lead change with others.

In contrast to the collage-creation exercise, participants were not invited to talk immediately after the gesture-response activity. Remaining silent can help us to stay with our bodies rather than attention creeping back up to our heads. Instead, participants were offered the chance to engage in a kind of bridging activity – expressing themselves in written words and/or drawing as a form of 'linguaging' (Panhofer and Payne 2011) – to transition from the embodied experience.

We now describe the methods and processes of data collection to explore participants' experiences of these ABE approaches and the collaborative sharing amongst participants in the trials.

Data collection methods

We identified a range of ways of collecting data in all three elements of the trials. We were keen to collect data to support our exploration of the research questions, but we also sought data which could be used as textual and visual resources for the ENABLES project website. The data collection methods were as follows.

Interview schedules: An interview schedule was created for each session in trials one to eight (the introduction, the workshop itself and the follow-up evaluation). The questions and prompts were designed to answer the research questions indicated earlier in the article. Topics covered included the images participants associate with leadership, their views of distributed leadership, their experience of leading change with others as expressed in their collages and gesture-responses,

and any ways they felt that the workshop influenced them and their intentions for future leadership practice. Data were generated from 22 participants in trials one to eight through oral responses to questions and ensuing discussion amongst participants. In the larger (ninth) trial, it was not possible to collect data in the same detail.

Visual: Visual data included 28 photos of collages (22 from trials one to eight and a sample of six from trial nine) and videos of eight workshops (in trials one to eight).

Written reflections: Following the expressive activities, participants were invited to reflect on what they had experienced and to write down their reflections on any learning they felt they had gained, any new awareness of self and others, how the collage and gesture-response activities helped learning and how this might lead to future changes in their leadership practice. Written reflections were collected from all 22 participants in trials one to eight.

Researcher notes: The two team members facilitating the trials wrote researcher notes during and after the trials.

We wanted to ensure the smooth running of the workshops, to meet the developmental and research purposes of the ARTs. For this reason, one team member was designated as facilitator of the activities, another team member was designated researcher to oversee data collection.

Analytical approach

The workshops were designed to elicit rich data collected via a range of methods. Whilst this added to the complexity of the analytical process, it also served to enhance the validity of the findings. The power of the participants' narratives and expressions of leading change with others lies not in their 'faithful representations of a past world' (Riessman 2005, p. 6) but more in the way they exhibit what Bunge calls 'symptoms of truth' (1961, in: Holstein 2017) and re-present and make sense of the past.

Data sets were analysed from the 22 participants in trials one to eight. (As noted, collection of detailed data was not possible in the larger trial nine.) A template was created to guide the analytical process and data were prepared and organised. The template consisted of a series of questions and data collection points as indicated in each session plan (introduction, workshop, follow-up). It also included a 'researcher reflection' section where we were able to note down emerging thoughts about participants' learning and engagement in the expressive activities. We started by analysing each participant separately, before looking across participants.

Members of the UK team were randomly assigned different participants' datasets to undertake a preliminary analysis. Each dataset consisted of visual (photos and video), verbal (recorded via video) and textual (transcriptions of discussions and written reflections by participants) data. The automatic Zoom transcription function allowed us to access a transcript from each session, sufficiently accurate for our purposes and which we checked as needed against the video recording. We highlighted sections of the textual and visual data and summarised our thoughts at the end of each section.

The identification of themes was underpinned by an analytical framework designed to orientate the analysis of data towards *change*. We were looking for evidence of change in four analytical categories: aesthetic qualities, collaborative leadership capabilities, view of leadership, and action – all, as explained above (see [Figure 1](#)), features of practice. The focus of the findings reported in this article is our first research question concerning strengthening the capacity for distributed leadership. As indicated in the section above on 'Theoretical Framework', we wanted to find out about change in aesthetic qualities and leadership capabilities because enhancement of these can in turn strengthen the practice of distributed leadership. Changes in view of leadership indicate whether there are signs of greater interest or commitment to leadership as a distributed process; whilst any changes in action provide indicators of (actual or intended) change in what participants do. (The label used for action was originally 'practice', but as shown in [Figure 1](#) above, the label 'action' was adopted, and is used in this article, as being more consistent with our broader conceptualisation of practice.) Although we formulated four main analytical categories, we remained open to 'other'

Table 1: Categories and elements of change

Categories	Elements of change
Aesthetic qualities	A1 affective attributes A2 aesthetic awareness A3 aesthetic reflexivity A4 self-orientated awareness A5 other-orientated awareness
View of leadership	L1 view of leadership
Collaborative leadership capabilities	C1 capacity for pro-active agency C2 status adaptability C3 communicative virtues C4 relational capabilities C5 reciprocal leadership learning
Action	P1 actual P2 intentional
Other	O1 other

changes. Each category, except view of leadership and ‘other’, comprised multiple, defined elements of change. The categories and their elements are shown in [Table 1](#).

Following the preliminary analysis, a detailed analysis was undertaken by two team members. The data sets were examined in order to decide for each participant which (if any) elements of change numbered in [Table 1](#) applied to them. For example, if the data indicated evidence of self-reported change in affective attributes resulting from the workshop, the participant was coded as reporting change in A1. The two team members undertaking this detailed analysis discussed in detail how they each had assigned codes and interpreted the data. The final determination that evidence of change was present involved discussions between the two team members in which they shared with each other their interpretations and coding of change and the rationale for these justified by plausible data from participants. Any uncertainties and inconsistencies concerning interpretations and coding were made explicit. These were discussed in detail, to check how the definitions of elements of change ([Table 1](#)) were being interpreted and how plausible was the inference from the data that change had taken place. In light of this, the two team members formulated an agreed set of interpretations and coding which included in some cases concluding that evidence of change was not present.

In the next two sections, we turn to the findings on change and our interpretation of these.

Findings on change

Our focus in this article is on presenting findings relating to the first research question:

Is there evidence that the arts-based and embodied methods being used strengthen participants’ capacity for distributed leadership?

In this section, an overview is given of the findings about participants’ perceptions of change emergent from the workshops. Further detail can be found in Woods *et al.* (2021). This overview leads into the discussion in the next section of the concept of aesthetic grounding as a way of understanding the nature of the change that we suggest is apparent from the findings.

[Table 2](#) shows which analytical codes were allocated to each of the 22 participants in trials one to eight and the totals for each element of change. The table offers an overview of ‘what changed’ for the participants (indicated by a tick).

Change was most evident in relation to:

Table 2: Allocation of analytical codes per participant

PARTICIPANTS CHANGES IN	1A	1B	1C	2A	2B	2C	2D	3A	3B	4A	4B	5A	5B	5C	6A	6B	7A	7B	7C	8A	8B	8C	Totals	
Aesthetic qualities																								
A1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
A2																								19
A3																								0
A4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	15
A5																								12
View of leadership																								
L1	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	12
Collaborative leadership capabilities																								
C1						✓						✓					✓	✓						4
C2																								0
C3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	12
C4	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	14
C5																								0
Action																								
P1		✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
P2	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	15
Other																								
O1							✓																	2

Key: 1A etc in top row are codes for each participant; A1 etc in left-hand column are codes for type of change (see Table 1); ✓ = where change was identified

- aesthetic qualities (aesthetic awareness, self-orientated awareness and other-orientated awareness – A1, A4 and A5 respectively)
- collaborative leadership capabilities (namely, relational capabilities and communicative virtues – C3 and C4 respectively)
- view of leadership, which included widening perspectives on leadership and awareness of distributed leadership (L1)

Table 2 does not present the whole analytical picture. The process of analysis involved an intense period in which we qualitatively examined and familiarised ourselves with the data. This allowed us to present interpretive accounts of what changed and where change was not evident, which weaves into our analysis the complexity and richness of the data.

For example, in our qualitative analysis we noted the strength and significance (for the four participants who did so – 2C, 5A, 7A and 7B) of experiencing change indicative of increasing capacity for pro-active agency (C1). One participant (5A) highlighted an immediate effect which led to a strong and productive process of collaborative reflection (outside the trial) with colleagues who were also participants in the same workshop. We saw this as an enhancing of their collective capacity for pro-active agency (C1) which was manifested in action (P1) (a meeting in which they ‘opened themselves up’) and a determination to bring about further intended action (P2) (finding a different way of testing their pupils). Participant 5A explained:

we’d opened ourselves up in that room [where they were meeting] . . . All of a sudden, we were just talking and we just thought why are we giving them [their pupils] a test? Why don’t we just look at what they already have . . . So we thought well why don’t we do it in a different way? (Participant 5A)

The distribution of change amongst participants in Table 2 suggests that change was more extensive for some than others. For example, the data from participant 8B indicate change in one element (A2), compared with change in 8 elements in relation to participant 5A. This is not to say that the one element is not significant for participant 8B. Our qualitative analysis indicates that the change by some participants was seen by them as especially powerful or moving. To illustrate this, we created vignettes of three participants which are reported in Woods *et al.* (2021). An insight into these ‘exemplar’ participants – Sandra, Celia and Maria (pseudonyms of participants 2D, 7A and 6B respectively) – are given in the following section. Their accounts show how they felt what they took away from the workshop experiences was potent and important for future practice.

The findings indicate that the workshops and engagement with expressive activities, to different degrees amongst participants, helped enhance awareness and nurture aesthetic qualities and involved a high degree of individual and collaborative reflexivity. The learning would seem to be transformative in the sense that it touches people deeply, it involves at some level change in their selves as people (rather than solely the acquisition of information and skills) and is characterised by critical reflection that entails willingness to question assumptions and engage in reframing. These features of the learning perceived by participants are central to the concept of transformative learning (Meijer *et al.* 2017, Taylor 2017). Many participants felt themselves to have new feelings and sensibilities and ways of perceiving the phenomena they had been reflecting on, with new possibilities for their future practice. They did not acquire cognitively-held scripts or procedures to follow that would ‘deliver’ improved distributed leadership practice (the topic of the ENABLES study, but which is not the specific concern in this article). What emerged from the workshops were aesthetic and embodied awareness, experiences, reflections and reframing that constituted qualitative changes (of varying levels of reported significance) in participants’ personal resources and capabilities.

To illustrate the nurturing of qualitative changes referred to in the previous paragraph, we include in the next section on aesthetic grounding accounts from the three participants mentioned above. The glimpse that these accounts give into their experience helps to show the interconnection and meaning of elements of change for them. The accounts include examples of critical reflection

and reframing which highlight how Sandra experiences a shift in her thinking through what she describes as a deeper level of reflection that leads her to delve into new territory, Celia describes the experience as a catalyst to opening up to how she saw herself and to finding herself, and Maria reframed her view of her self in relation to leading, concluding that (although she had not thought of herself as a leader) ‘it’s nearly everything I do’.

The changes we found amongst participants seeded new elements and possibilities for their future reflexive deliberations. Such deliberations are, following Archer (2007), the normal, everyday, internal dialogues through which people weigh up their concerns, context and potential courses of action. Change in aesthetic and embodied awareness brings openness to new concerns and to different courses of action that are sensitive to the aesthetic features of practice and how one’s own and others’ senses may be enriched or harmed.

To conclude this section, we can, with confidence, suggest that change was nurtured through the aesthetic environment created in the trials and the expressive activities facilitated – that is, collage-creation, the gesture-response activity and participants’ (written and verbal) accounts of meaning. Participants felt that change and learning took place through the ABE activities, the interactions with other participants and experiencing the session as a safe space. The aesthetic experience provided by the trials, together with collaborative engagement with fellow participants, was experienced as enabling participants to surface ideas and issues, reflect on them and to engage actively in reframing or thinking afresh about matters concerning leadership. A strong theme in this change was enhanced awareness, apparent in relation to aesthetic qualities, and participants’ views of leadership where an opening up to wider perspectives and to distributed leadership was evident.

Aesthetic grounding

The findings indicate that many participants felt that what they took away from the workshop experiences was or would be important for future practice. Reflecting on how participants expressed this led us to begin viewing such change as grounding or embedding something in the person and to the development of the concept of aesthetic grounding. In this section we explain this concept and what we consider its significance to be.

Aesthetic grounding refers to the personal resources and capabilities that nurture aesthetic and embodied sensibilities, experience and expression. This idea of grounding, which carries with it the metaphor of earth and soil, expresses a generative and organic quality of that which is gathered together in the person. Such grounding comprises a complex amalgam of aesthetic features apparent as awareness and associated predispositions, memories and qualities. It includes aesthetic awareness and qualities, ethical sensibilities, collaborative, reflexive and critical capabilities, and openness to newly ‘seeing’ the other and to awareness of learning through and from bodily experiences (which for our participants includes memories of feelings evoked by experiences of collage-creation and gesture-response). The richer the aesthetic grounding, the more it is a source of nourishment for a person’s sensory life, their openness to embodied learning, and their capacity for expressing and learning from aesthetic sensibilities and feelings in ways that enrich themselves and others. And, the more aesthetic qualities and embodied awareness grow, the greater the generative power for aesthetic and embodied expression, learning and growth. This process is not about the sequential acquisition of distinct capabilities. It is, when working best, a flow of continual transformation. It has implications for identity, the very sense of self. Aesthetic grounding helps to foster identities as professionals who experience, as sources of awareness and knowing, the inter-connection of body and mind and carry with them a consciousness of consequent powerful learning.

The concept of aesthetic grounding complements that of affective scaffolding. The need for the two, complementary concepts is apparent if we look at the idea of reflexive deliberation, referred to in the previous section. Reflexive deliberation is a process of considering the self in relation to contexts that exert an influence on our selves and social action. As well as considering and being

influenced by the self's aesthetic grounding, such deliberation is also concerned with and influenced by external factors in the environment. External conditions may foster or hinder the generative power of aesthetic grounding. The concept of affective scaffolding points to these conditions (Maiese 2016, Candiotta and Dreon 2021). Affective states, argues Maiese (2016, p. 3), are 'environmentally scaffolded'. That is, they are conditioned by affective scaffolding. This affective scaffolding comprises environmental resources and interpersonal scaffolds and plays a central role 'in the evocation and expression of various affective states' (p2), not only evoking emotion and encouraging the adoption of particular 'bodily affective style', 'but also support[ing] the development of capacities for self-awareness and interpersonal understanding' (p1). The elements of affective scaffolding can be described in terms of a trialectic framework of social life (Woods and Roberts 2018). The elements are *relational* (the patterns and climate of relationships, as well as interpersonal dynamics of a group or working colleagues), *cultural* (such as templates, ideas, works of art, expectations about dress, and the availability, standing and cultural acceptability of activities like meditation and drama as modes of professional development) and *institutional* (such as the architectural environments we inhabit and the procedures and conventions that are structured into organisational life such as the kinds of authority and formality inscribed into meetings).

In summary, aesthetic grounding refers to the *internal* mix of aesthetic features, personal resources and capabilities (and associated predispositions, memories and qualities) that nurtures the person's sensory life and capacity for aesthetic and embodied sensibilities, experience and expression. Affective scaffolding refers to the *external* conditions (relational, cultural and institutional) that shape, foster and hinder the person's sensory life and aesthetic and embodied sensibilities, experience and expression.

A key aim of the ENABLES project was to enhance participants' aesthetic grounding. The project nevertheless was concerned with affective scaffolding in two ways. Firstly, the ENABLES workshops constituted affective scaffolding at the micro level through the structure and conduct of the workshops, which aimed to create a positive aesthetic environment, and the expressive activities and discussions facilitated. Secondly, the project had a focus on the external conditions and affective scaffolding in the broader environment. A part of the later scope of the ENABLES work was the creation of resources to support the use of ABE approaches to leadership development and a website to house these and make them available. This initiative, with the website and resources being launched in 2022, is itself a way of adding to the affective scaffolding that supports activities that facilitate growth in aesthetic grounding (<https://www.herts.ac.uk/study/schools-of-study/education/research/enables>).

This section concludes by illustrating the change in aesthetic grounding in relation to the three examples (Sandra, Celia and Maria), whom we introduced in the previous section.

Sandra (Participant 2D) by her own accounts gained much from creating and talking about the collage and from the gesture-response activity. She took things away with her from those experiences that, in our theorised description here, lend nourishment to her aesthetic grounding. In this brief vignette of Sandra we use her own words as much as possible to convey her sense of the experience and her learning (and similarly with the examples that follow).

How Sandra sees awareness of herself growing is apparent in the extract from her written reflections below. What she writes of are further additions to the resources in her aesthetic grounding, which concern learning of the significance for her of emotion and physicality, as well as intellect, and the importance of being aware of energy. The awareness of energy is an example of a participant's attention being drawn to a matter that proved significant to them, through the collaborative dialogue in the workshop (collaborative learning being a theme of all the workshops).

I guess this leads me to what have I learnt about myself. That for me leading change is a process to which I commit whole heartedly – intellectually, emotionally and physically. I give completely of myself and to draw on [a colleague participant's] notion of energy, the process of leading change demands a huge amount of energy from myself in creating relationships with others and inspiring them to be actively engaged in leading

change but that whole process also energises me. As long as I have the right support mechanisms in place, this is fine, but I have to make sure those mechanisms are in place. (Sandra, 2D)

Sandra was not sure what to expect of the gesture-response activity and indicated that it definitely took her out of her comfort zone. She explained after the activity how moving it was, even as she wrote this reflection:

“The gesture I made arose from within – it felt really strong, as if there was no other option but to express leading change in that way. I have never experienced anything like this before. It felt incredibly intimate, almost as if I was baring my soul. Watching others’ gestures felt as if I was seeing into their souls also – that they were openly making their true selves bare. What a privilege. I feel quite moved actually as I write and reflect on this”. (Sandra, 2D)

In a follow-up evaluation session after the workshop, Sandra reinforced how moving the gesture-response activity was and that the experience stayed with her. She indicates that she may feel emboldened enough to try it out with others. This is an example of how Sandra’s aesthetic grounding now has within it the feelings associated with the new experience of gesture-response activity, the knowledge of this as an aesthetic and embodied activity and the glimmerings of confidence to share it with other colleagues as an exercise. What this leads to in terms of new practice depends on Sandra’s future reflexive deliberations.

... [The] embodiment activity [was] something that definitely took me out of my comfort zone, but I was just very fascinated by how it moved me and how moving it was to watch [other participants] ... that really stays with me ... You might have emboldened me and I will think about trialling that with a very safe group of people. (Sandra, 2D)

Through the workshop and the collage-creation, as well as the gesture-response, Sandra highlighted becoming more aware that leadership is three-dimensional and more aware of the physicality and the shifting and changing nature of leadership. She explained that during collage making ‘[b]eing able to move items around was vital as was talking to myself to review what I had created and think about what I needed to do next’, and this process led to what she felt to be a deepening of understanding: ‘I felt I was starting to shift from representing what was already obvious to me about leading change to what was under the surface’. She elaborated further during a follow-up session:

“I certainly found it really helpful to express my experience of leading change in that creative way, because I think words can get in the way and I think, by having to express what you mean in moving objects around and making sense of them was really good. You could refine your thinking by moving things around which was really helpful. ... Because I could see my thinking was getting clearer, it enabled me to access a deeper level of reflection. ... I started to delve into territory that I hadn’t gone into before”. (Sandra, 2D)

The second example, Celia (Participant 7A), experienced the collage-creating exercise as a ‘catalyst to opening up to how I saw myself. ... to finding myself’. The positive and affirming nature of creating the collage was of great importance to her. Celia explained that the process was ‘affirming what I saw myself as a leader, rather than criticising what I saw as a leader in myself. ... [It was] a catalyst to finding my authentic self as leader’. It generated feelings of happiness: ‘the collage made me happy ... because I was using stuff that that really had memories for me ... It felt like it pulled together lots of different aspects of my life into that space’. Celia expresses in her written reflections the hope that she will build on this. Or, to put it in the way we are articulating here, Celia’s aesthetic grounding for future practice has been enriched.

“All that I have learnt and lived and experienced so far is within me and has formed me into the leader I am now, and this is what I can offer. I would hope that I build on what I’ve gained in this session, to feel confident in bringing peace (and regulated spaces for children), professional love, coaching, time, space and authenticity to my leadership roles and educational leadership path that I travel from here”. (Celia, 7A)

Celia explained further in her written reflections on the workshop:

“Lots of learning, but also encouragement, affirmation and growing confidence in self, through the workshop. To hear – and actually listen – to the sound of my own voice in what I say, in what I can offer, and to own that self-belief!

Realising that I can offer things that are unique to me, through my ‘embodiment of my experiences’ – through metaphor, image, art, creative learning, inspirations, growth, passions and leadership struggles and dilemmas – all of these things bring the richness of what is held on my shoulders – how I see the world, and how my perspective of education is shaped and formed.” (Celia, 7A)

In a subsequent email providing further feedback, Celia indicated that ‘the 2-hour session has completely fuelled and empowers me to develop my work and professional self’.

The third example is Maria (Participant 6B). She found narrating the collage-creation very powerful and that by doing this she really became aware of how she leads others: ‘this is how I work’, adding ‘I didn’t think I was a leader until I started talking about the collage. . . but it’s nearly everything I do. It’s really opened my eyes’. Here we concentrate on Maria’s gesture-response. This is the description of it by one of the researchers in the workshop:

Maria had been sitting on the floor, so stands up and steps back. She then sits down again, glances over her shoulder and appears to be beckoning others. She shrugs her shoulders and indicates a certain look of doubt, uncertainty and/or intrigue. She gestures over to someone else to join, she looks back and seems a bit concerned or interested. She seems to be encouraging the other person, perhaps even pulling them along – is she holding their hand? She stands up again and seems to be walking away, perhaps with the other person? The gesture response seems to have ended and so the workshop facilitator steps in, but Maria continues with the activity for a few more seconds. It is a really detailed and expressive response.

Maria admits that she had been a bit worried about the gesture aspect of the workshop but, on reflection, she realises that she actually quite enjoyed it. She seems to have told herself not to be scared and to let go a bit. At a follow-up evaluation session a few weeks later, Maria shares with us how after the workshop she had continued thinking about the gesture activity. She had not really felt at the time of the workshop that it had helped her in any way. But she continued to reflect and her awareness of that activity seemed to have heightened. She explains how she ‘naturally went and sat beside someone and listened’. By stating this, she realises that ‘my style is to listen, and I’m more aware of that’. That image of her sitting down and listening came into her mind a few times in the weeks following the workshop, which had surprised her ‘because at the time I didn’t think it made any difference’. But she goes on to add: ‘but it must have done because subconsciously it’s there’. Taking part in the workshop helped Maria strengthen her understanding of a number of things about her leadership, such as the way she places a priority on listening. It was a reminder of her tacit knowledge and the importance of sharing that with others. The memories and the unfolding awareness that followed the workshop are examples of how Maria’s aesthetic grounding was enriched.

The accounts of these three participants offer an insight into what the experience of the workshops and their impact felt like and what we have attempted to represent through our theorising and the idea of aesthetic grounding. In the next section, we summarise our conclusions.

Conclusions

This article has reported on a project that sought to explore the potential for ABE approaches to enhance capacity for distributed leadership. Through a facilitated professional development workshop, participants engaged in expressive activities (here collage-creation and gesture-response) which aimed, through a process of surfacing, aesthetic reflexivity and reframing, to develop aesthetic qualities, collaborative leadership capabilities and understandings of leadership, and thus provide a powerful and potentially transformative professional learning experience.

Growth in awareness was a strong theme in our findings. This is about becoming aware of aesthetic features that underpin the way the person enacts leadership but are often hidden or

unacknowledged, and, once aware, paying more attention to these in their practice. The findings showed changes in participants' aesthetic awareness, self-orientated awareness, and other-orientated awareness, and growth in awareness of differing perspectives on the topic of the workshops, leadership, and in participants' own leadership capabilities, namely relational capabilities, and communicative virtues.

These changes in awareness came from active engagement in the expressive activities, which led to participants experiencing different feelings, sensations and views of the phenomenon (here leadership) that they were reflecting on. Our findings indicate how some participants found the experience – and what stayed with them afterwards – moving, powerful and full of interconnecting insights. We have suggested that this enriched what we term their aesthetic grounding, which is distinct from the affective scaffolding external to the person. Aesthetic grounding is the internal mix of aesthetic features, personal resources and capabilities that nurtures the person's sensory life, their openness to embodied learning and feelings, and their capacity for expressing and learning from aesthetic sensibilities and feelings in ways that enrich themselves and others. Enrichment of aesthetic grounding has potential to seed ongoing change and would seem to be transformative in the sense that it touches people deeply and involves at some level change in their selves. Hence, we would suggest that ABE approaches to professional development have the capacity to enrich aesthetic grounding and through this nurture professional learning that is transformative.

A limitation of this project is that, after an initial follow-up evaluation, there has not been subsequent contact with participants to see the extent to which the experience has continued to support professional learning and the development of professional practice.

While the impact of the workshop experience was clear for some, the changes were not equally strong for all – which suggests that transformative professional learning might not happen for everyone. This project involved self-selecting participants who responded to an open call to engage in a workshop that involved taking part in guided arts-based and embodied movement activities and sharing any learning from the workshop with the research team, and other participants. In responding to the call, participants demonstrated an openness to this kind of activity. As a professional learning opportunity, such ABE approaches have the potential to cause discomfort and to foster resistance. Our project demonstrated the importance of facilitating a nurturing aesthetic environment, where participants felt safe to engage in the activities and to share their reflections in a supportive, collaborative space.

In the project reported here, the workshops were required to be online due to COVID-19 restrictions. While the move online did cause some limitations – for example, on participants and researcher/facilitators observing the gesture-response activities – it did offer benefits. The most obvious benefit for all was the ease and flexibility of access, without having to travel to attend the sessions; and a familiarity with online environments garnered during the earlier months of the pandemic meant a comfortableness within that environment. The move online allowed for other, less expected, benefits. Within the online environment, the facilitators had to relinquish some of their control over that environment to the participants. Participants had agency in choosing an environment that was comfortable for them to participate in, whether they kept their cameras on and where their cameras were positioned, and in selecting the materials for their collage, which proved to be significant for some in terms of engagement. For those looking to replicate, we would highlight the following. When working online, the issues of maintaining attention, privacy and aftercare, in the process of engaging in what could potentially be uncomfortable, challenging and moving activities, are particularly important to consider. When working in-person, it is valuable to consider how to maintain some of the affordances that the online environment provided, in terms of choice (materials, spaces) and, if uncomfortable, the ability to step back.

Spending time to develop those safe spaces is key; in this project, time was given to introduce the project, to enable participants to make an informed choice about their engagement and to develop rapport. Reflection time was designed into the activities, with opportunities for further reflection

and de-briefing opportunities post-activity. This deliberate approach helps support the creation of a safe aesthetic environment that is conducive to playful activities and new ways of thinking. Such an engagement in expressive activities, within a collaborative environment, can, for some, support the enrichment of aesthetic grounding and engender transformative, rather than transmissive, professional learning, with the potential to transform practice.

In conclusion, we suggest that the distinction between the ‘now-ness’ of experience (*Erlebnis*), which is intense and youthful and brings discovery and freshness of seeing, and the amassing of experience (*Erfahrung*) (Docherty 2006, pp. 62–65) is a helpful one for understanding what participants gained in our workshops. Docherty’s (2006) analysis of the fundamental importance of the aesthetic for democratic relationships and the generation of change suggests that experience that has the character of ‘now-ness’, with its immediacy and child-like character, is crucial for sparking a passion of the possible. This passion of the possible is, as Kierkegaard puts it, ‘that eye which everywhere . . . ever burning, sees possibility’ (quoted in Docherty 2006, p. 86). Such a seeing of new possibilities is certainly evident in what most participants took away with them.

Note

1. See Archer (2003) on internal conversations.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Funding

This work was part of the ‘European Arts-Based Development of Distributed Leadership and Innovation in Schools’ (ENABLES) project, supported by a grant from the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union (project reference number: 2019-1-UK01-KA201-061963; November 2019 to October 2021).

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Appendix

Collaborative leadership capabilities (Woods and Roberts 2018: 121)

capacity for pro-active agency	capabilities that include ‘critical reflexivity, clarity of values, confidence and a creative and problem-solving mindset’
status adaptability	‘being able to shed or take status as appropriate, which includes recognising, working with and negotiating multiple authorities’
communicative virtues	predispositions, affective attributes and skills that contribute to constructive and open dialogue, including ‘being honest and transparent, tolerant, patient, self-controlled, as clear as possible in communications, prepared to express a view, and willing to take criticism and re-examine one’s ideas and assumptions; as well as developing abilities to listen, ask questions and respond with feedback in discussions and meetings’
relational capabilities	predispositions, affective attributes and skills through which collaborative relationships emerge, including ‘skills in developing and sustaining community, working collaboratively and facilitating collaborative work and conflict handling, as well as a predisposition to co-operative working and a sense of co-responsibility’, and kindness and compassion
reciprocal leadership learning	capabilities which support ‘others in nurturing their leadership’ and in which one shares one’s own learning and experience of leadership in supportive ways”
