

# LEARNING FROM GOOD PRACTICES

*Tàndem and L'art de parlar*  
educational projects:  
working for democracy

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# INITIATOR OF THE PROJECT

*The Tàndem Project* and *L' Art de parlar programme (The Art of Talking)*, are both **co-creation projects** between the [\*Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya\*](#)<sup>1</sup> and two educational communities.

Both communities include **socially and economically disadvantaged families** and are highly **culturally diverse**. This makes communicating in a common local language one of the main challenges for students.

*The Tàndem schools programme*<sup>2</sup> is an innovative project that supports an initial 3-year collaboration between a state public school and a cultural institution. During this period the school has to specialise in a subject related to the institution, which in this case is art and heritage .

Our [\*Tàndem alliance\*](#)<sup>3</sup> between the former Miquel Bleach Elementary School ([\*Institut-Escola ARTS\*](#)<sup>4</sup> to-day) and the museum started in 2013 as a response to the school educators' need to develop strategies to generate a **sense of community** among the teachers, students and families and increase their **opportunities** of getting involved in **cultural life**.

[\*L'art de parlar\*](#)<sup>5</sup> [\*innovation project\*](#)<sup>6</sup> was born out of the successful experiences of the *Tandem* project and the necessity to give students in adult education institutions better chances to improve their **oral competence** in **second languages**. In this case, the museum has worked hand-in-hand since 2016 with the lifelong learning management Service of the Catalan Ministry of Education and the adult education community in order to build an artistic curriculum for language learning using the museum collections.

**Democracy** in these projects is about the **revolutionary power of dialogue and conversation**: how an artwork and a group of people talking about it with the help of a facilitator can transform our relationships and the way of teaching and learning.

1 Museum website

2 *Tàndem Schools Programme* website

3 *Tàndem* between the *Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya* and *Miquel Bleach* school

4 Elementary-Secondary Arts School website

5 *L'art de parlar* description at the Museum website

6 Map of adult schools implementing *L'art de parlar* innovation programme

Museum of Catalonia. Source: Wikimedia



# MOTIVATION

In our Tàndem the main objective for the school was to achieve a **methodological transformation towards an inclusive school model**, which matched the school's diversity and complexity. Building this singularised project of **learning through art** aimed to improve the **prestige** of the school.

For the museum, this project was an important piece of its [social mission](#). Besides establishing a long-term alliance with a nearby school, it made it possible to work with immigrant families who don't normally visit the museum.

*L'art de parlar* programme is aimed at **adult education** schools, which provide lifelong learning to students who need social and cultural immersion in order to avoid being excluded from the system.

Although the focus of the programme is on speaking practice in **second language learning**, it also includes other dimensions, such as communication, mediation, attitudinal and plurilingual dimensions of language syllabus.



# METHODOLOGY

In the Tàndem project we used two methodological tools: the **project-based methodology**<sup>7</sup>, an experiential learning model centered on children's interests using predominantly art, heritage and research tools; and **the Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)**<sup>8</sup>, an inclusive methodology that uses a structured debate mediated by a facilitator, based on the participant's own references in relation to selected works of art.

The aim is not to provide information, but to guide people through a process of curious exploration, **critical reflection** and **collective meaning-making**.

In *L'art de parlar* programme<sup>9</sup> the VTS methodology is used for second language-learning following a **competence-based approach** to language teaching in adult education.

We have created a **visual curriculum** with three thematic itineraries aligned with [the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG\) of the UNESCO Agenda 2030](#):<sup>10</sup> [Human relationships](#)<sup>11</sup>, [Society and culture](#)<sup>12</sup>, [Nature and places](#)<sup>13</sup>.

Both projects, which are meant to be sustainable, have been developed in the following areas:

- **teacher training**, based on modelling and peer learning.
- **school organisation**, promoting co-creation, sharing and decision-making spaces among teachers, students and families.
- **community action**, focused on the organisation of artistic events to share with families and the creation of a yearly magazine *Creixem amb l'art*<sup>14</sup> (*Growing with Art*).
- **creation of networks**, including museums and keepers of heritage, neighbourhood associations, artists, educators and schools.

7 Project-based Learning explained

8 Origins of the VTS and its implementation in the Museum

9 Video-description of *L'art de parlar*

10 UNESCO and Sustainable Development Goals

11 *Human Relationships* thematic itinerary works of art at the Museum

12 *Society and Culture* thematic itinerary works of art at the Museum

13 *Nature and Places* thematic itinerary works of art at the Museum

14 *Tàndem* magazine sample





# OBSTACLES / BARRIERS

One of the main drawbacks in the implementation of the two programmes has been the **mobility of school educators**, which makes it harder to fulfil a complete formative action. The consistent and deep involvement of headmasters and peer-teaching is key.

The transformation of the Tandem School into a bigger school including secondary levels implies that **new teachers have to be trained every year**.

Another difficulty we have faced is getting immigrant families to come to the museum on a regular basis outside the school context.

In the case of *L'art de parler* programme, we have faced language issues due to **lack of fluency, as well as** difficulties in finding rooms for the VTS sessions and co-ordinating teacher timetables. In relation to adult education in prisons, there is an extra barrier in terms of even visiting the museum.

Last, but not least, due to school and museum closures during the COVID-19 pandemic , we have had to start experimenting with **online VTS sessions and online training**.

*L'art de parler* working team is currently dealing with these issues.



# IMPACT / CHANGE

*The Tàndem project has transformed both the school and the museum*<sup>15</sup>. As a result, the **communicative abilities** and **self-esteem** of students have increased and both students and teachers feel empowered. Families' participation has increased by up to 70% and now the school is more attractive to a wider diversity of families. **Art and heritage** have become core elements for the school.

*This inspiring partnership experience*<sup>16</sup>, that continues to this day, has helped the museum to rethink some aspects of its educational and social policy.

Even though *L'art de parlar* programme is still in an early phase of implementation in 17 adult schools from the public Catalan network, the first indicators also show a considerable improvement in the verbal and communicative skills of the learners.

The evidence shows that the programmes not only strengthen the **collective bonds** of the participants and improve **group cohesion** at school, but they also encourage the ethical and cultural dimensions of participants as citizens and contribute to **equality, equity and social justice**.

VTS curricula and methodology together with the SDG approach allow inclusion of all kinds of cultural and artistic expressions, thus bringing citizens closer to their own and local cultural heritage and the surrounding environment. Active participation in the programmes promotes **discussion about global issues** and an intensive use of the museum galleries, that become a **democratic open space** to learn and have fun with others.

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<sup>15</sup> Three years of *Tàndem*: the school and the museum, partners in education (blog article)

<sup>16</sup> *Tàndem* Art at the School Documentary

# LESSONS LEARNED

Through the implementation of these projects, we have learned that constructing shared knowledge with the community is possible and also that it can inspire other audiences.

We have also learned that increasing collaboration with museums and associative networks in the neighbourhood is necessary.

Lastly through the adoption and application of the VTS methodology, we have rethought teacher training in the museum education programme.



# WEBOGRAPHY

## About the Museum

*Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya* website  
<https://www.museunacional.cat/en> (link1)

## About the Tàndem Project

*Tàndem* Schools Programme webpage  
<https://www.fundaciocatalunya-lapedrera.com/en/tandem-schools> (link 2)

*Tàndem* presentation in the Museum website  
<https://www.museunacional.cat/en/escoles-tandem> (link 3)

Arts School website  
<https://agora.xtec.cat/iearts/> (link 4)

Project-based Learning Wikipedia entry  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project-based\\_learning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project-based_learning) (link 7)

*Creixem amb l'art* (Growing with art) *Tàndem* magazines (in Catalan):  
<https://www.museunacional.cat/es/revista-creixem-amb-lart>

<https://www.museunacional.cat/es/revista-creixem-amb-lart-num-2> (link 14)

[https://www.museunacional.cat/sites/default/files/styles/adaptive/public/jocs\\_0.jpg](https://www.museunacional.cat/sites/default/files/styles/adaptive/public/jocs_0.jpg)

<https://www.museunacional.cat/es/revista-creixem-amb-lart-num-4>

<https://issuu.com/mnac/docs/creixemart6>

Three years of *Tàndem*: the school and the museum, partners in education  
<https://blog.museunacional.cat/en/three-years-of-tandem-the-school-and-the-museum-partners-in-education/>  
(link 15)

*Tàndem* Art at the School Documentary

[Tàndem art a l'escola Documentary with English subtitles](#) (link 16)

## About L'Art de Parlar Project

*L'art de parlar* programme description  
<https://www.museunacional.cat/ca/programa-lart-de-parlar> (link 5) (in Catalan)

Information and map of adults schools of the Programme of Pedagogical Innovation

<https://innovacio.xtec.gencat.cat/programa/66> (link 6)



# WEBOGRAPHY

Departament of Education video presentation of *L'art de parlar* (with English subtitles)

<https://youtu.be/IOblh-hn8FA> (link 9)

*Not all the spoons are the same* (Blog article with a teacher's personal experience)

<https://blog.museunacional.cat/en/not-all-the-spoons-are-the-same/>

UNESCO and Sustainable Development Goals

<https://en.unesco.org/sustainabledevelopmentgoals> (link 13)

## About the VTS Methodology

Origins of the VTS and Museum implementation

<https://blog.museunacional.cat/en/visual-thinking-strategies-vts-a-necessary-educational-methodology/>  
(link 8)

VTS explained

<https://blog.museunacional.cat/en/visual-thinking-strategies-looking-thinking-and-communicating-through-art/>

