

## Teacher meetings in Eesti Tantsuagentuur and Vantaa Dance Institute

In the Erasmus+ project Identify – Realise – Dance the main outcome of the project was a dance performance Tail but no Head for 16 dance students. However we also organized teacher and staff meetings in both schools participating the project. Teaching staff from one school traveled to another school, observed classes and had conversations with each other. We also organized an online seminar for teachers to learn about the other school and discuss about the similarities and differences we found along the process.

The overall outcome of these discussions was that we found the underlying values and principles in both school quite similar. We both saw dance studies not only a way to train artistic and technical skills but also a possibility to learn to respect one another and to value differences in other people. We also talked about how dance training can teach the students perseverance and stamina not only in the dance studio but also in other fields of life.

However there were also some differences between the two schools that we found very interesting. The most clear differences appeared in how the learning curriculum is organized and how the student proceeds in the studies. In Vantaa the student is free to choose whatever classes and studies are available for the age/skill group, whereas in Tallinn the student is part of a set dance class that trains mostly together. This was an interesting difference which we dwelled quite deeply in our conversations. It is obvious that neither system is better than the other, but the chosen model has clear consequences when it comes to organizing the daily work and also on a more fundamental level.

The difference described above was clear on an organizational level, but we all agreed that the work done in the dance studios did not differ much. Dance is an international activity, Finland and Estonia are close to each other and all influences travel quickly over the Gulf of Finland. However the teachers seldom have an opportunity to inspect each other's work in everyday life, so we all welcomed warmly the possibility to see how other teachers worked and to get inspired by them.