InterAct

LEARNING PROGRAMME

Empowering Properties of Puppets in Education and How to Create Them

10-DAY COURSE

50 learning hours | Course programme

Empowering Properties of Puppets in Education and How to Create Them – 10-Day Course

Introduction and Description

This comprehensive, practice-oriented training programme is designed for teachers and educational professionals who wish to explore the pedagogical, emotional, and creative potential of puppetry in teaching and learning. Rooted in contemporary educational theory and arts-based pedagogies, the course provides an in-depth understanding of how different types of puppets—sock puppets, rod puppets, persona dolls, object puppets, and symbolic figures—can be used to enhance communication, strengthen social and emotional development, foster creativity, and create inclusive and supportive learning environments.

Across ten days, participants engage in a structured process that integrates theoretical input with sustained hands-on practice in puppet construction, animation, and performative storytelling. Through practical workshops, simulations, and performance-based group tasks, participants learn to design and create their own puppets using accessible materials; develop character identities, voices, and movement vocabularies; and skillfully animate puppets in educational contexts. Special emphasis is placed on the use of persona dolls for addressing sensitive topics, anti-bias pedagogy, social-emotional learning, and conflict resolution in early childhood and primary education.

Building on principles of creativity, symbolic play, embodiment, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL), the course demonstrates how puppetry can support learners with diverse needs, facilitate participation of shy or anxious students, encourage perspective-taking, and strengthen intercultural understanding. Participants also work collaboratively to develop a short puppetry performance, integrating scriptwriting, stage design, puppeteer teamwork, and classroom theatre practices.

The course concludes with a final performance presentation, reflective dialogue, and individual consultation to support transferability to each participant's local educational context. By the end of the course, participants are equipped with practical tools, creative strategies, and pedagogically sound methods for implementing puppetry as a powerful medium for expression, communication, inclusion, and whole-person learning.

Methodology and Assessment

The course is based on experiential, arts-based and constructivist methodologies that integrate theory with continuous hands-on practice. Participants engage in guided workshops on puppet construction, non-verbal animation, persona doll facilitation and classroom activity design. Learning is supported through modelling, collaborative tasks, reflective dialogue and micro-teaching exercises. Emphasis is placed on creativity, embodiment, inclusion and the safe exploration of sensitive topics. Assessment is formative and ongoing, focusing on participation, practical skill development, reflective discussions and the ability to transfer puppetry techniques into pedagogical planning. A final reflection and personalised feedback help participants consolidate their learning and plan future classroom implementation.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Pedagogical Understanding

- Demonstrate knowledge of the psychological, social-emotional, and cognitive benefits of puppetry in formal and non-formal education.
- Analyse how puppets function as mediators for communication, emotional expression, distancing, and symbolic play.
- Explain how puppetry supports inclusive education, UDL principles, anti-bias education, and social-emotional learning.

2. Technical Skills in Puppet Creation

- Design and construct various types of puppets (e.g., sock puppets, rod puppets, persona dolls) using accessible and safe materials.
- Apply structural principles (joints, rods, mechanisms) to create durable and expressive classroom puppets.
- Solve creative and technical challenges during puppet construction.

3. Animation & Performance Skills

- Animate puppets using principles of breath, focus, gesture, synchronisation, intention, and characterisation.

- Develop unique puppet voices, physicality, and personality traits.
- Perform short improvised and scripted scenes using single- and multi-rod puppets.

4. Application in the Classroom

- Plan and facilitate educational activities that integrate puppetry for literacy, language development, conflict resolution, SEL, cultural awareness, and curriculum-based learning.
- Use persona dolls to safely address sensitive topics, challenge stereotypes, mediate classroom conflicts, and promote empathy and inclusion.
- Integrate puppetry into diverse subject areas and age groups, adapting approaches for different learner needs.

5. Creative Collaboration & Performance Production

- Collaborate in small groups to develop a classroom-friendly puppetry performance, including scriptwriting, blocking, stage layout, and prop-making.
- Apply performance-based methods to enhance creativity, teamwork, communication, and student engagement.
- Evaluate puppetry scenes using constructive peer feedback and reflective practice.

6. Personal & Professional Development

- Reflect critically on one's own creative processes, teaching approaches, and emotional responses to working with puppets.
- Identify strategies for embedding puppetry into long-term teaching practice and school culture.
- Develop increased confidence, creativity, and pedagogical versatility through artistic and experiential learning.

Preparation

After registration participants will receive pre-course questionnaire which will be used by the trainer to learn about participants' teaching backgrounds and to assess their exact needs. Before the beginning of the course a basic reading list will be suggested to participants to prepare for the training. Participants will also be asked to prepare a presentation about themselves, their professional context and their culture. The presentation will be presented on the first day of the course to facilitate networking opportunities. Participants will receive information about the country they are going to visit in order to prepare them for their cultural experience.

Follow up

After the course participants will be asked to share what they have learned with the rest of the staff in their schools. Further books and articles to deepen the topic and contacts with some other practitioners all over Europe and in the world will be suggested by the trainer. The methods shared and explored and the bibliography given will allow the participants to complete and improve their educational path.

Certificate

Certificate complies with the guidelines of the Erasmus+ programme and includes the topic, number of didactic hours, dates and location of the course. We can list the record of learning outcomes on the Europass Mobility Document on request of participants. In case a participant requires a specific format of certificate we can accommodate that if requested at least one week before the start of the course. It is necessary to attend at least 80% of the hours in order to receive the certificate.

Accommodation

We do not directly offer accommodation and subsistence and participants are responsible for organizing it by themselves.

Paperwork

We also provide all the support with paperwork you might need for your Erasmus+ project documentation such as mobility agreement and registration letter.

Fee: 800 €

Cancelation policy

We have a flexible cancellation policy in force at the moment and you can cancel your registration up to 30 days before the course and receive a full refund. In case you don't cancel the registration more than 30 days before you will not receive any refunds, but you will be able to choose to attend any other confirmed course session later (within 6 months) without any additional costs. In case you are not able to travel, your school can send someone else to take instead of you and you can change the details of the participant any time before the start of the course at no additional cost.

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME (50 didactic hours - 5*45min per day) Monday to Friday	
Day 1	Welcome, Group Building & Foundations of Puppetry in Education
09.00 - 09.45	Introductions & Icebreakers
09.45 - 10.30	Course Overview & Learning Agreement
10.30 - 11.15	The value of puppetry in education
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Learning with puppets: theoretical approaches
12.15 - 13.00	Creative warm-up for the week
Day 2	Types of Puppets & Principles of Animation
09.00 - 09.45	Overview of puppet types
09.45 - 10.30	Materials & tools
10.30 - 11.15	Principles of puppet animation (part 1)
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Principles of puppet animation (part 2)
12.15 - 13.00	Micro-improvisations
Day 3	Creating & Animating Sock Puppets (part 1)
09.00 - 09.45	Design stage
09.45 - 10.30	Practical workshop: construction (part 1)

10.30 - 11.15	Practical workshop: construction (part 2)
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Fine detailing
12.15 - 13.00	Micro-scenes
Day 4	Creating & Animating Sock Puppets (part 2)
09.00 - 09.45	Finishing construction
09.45 - 10.30	Animation masterclass
10.30 - 11.15	Educational applications
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Designing short scripted scenes
12.15 - 13.00	Group presentations and feedback
Day 5	Persona Dolls: Theory & Practice
09.00 - 09.45	Introduction to persona dolls
09.45 - 10.30	Developing doll personas
10.30 - 11.15	Simulations in classroom scenarios
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Facilitating difficult conversations
12.15 - 13.00	Practice & reflection
Day 6	Creating Rod Puppets (par 1)
09.00 - 09.45	Types & structure
09.45 - 10.30	Design stage
10.30 - 11.15	Construction workshop
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Assembly work
12.15 - 13.00	First animation steps
Day 7	Creating Rod Puppets (par 2)
09.00 - 09.45	Finishing the puppets
09.45 - 10.30	Animation training

10.30 - 11.15	Voice, gesture & personality
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Integrating classroom themes
12.15 - 13.00	Mini-showcase
Day 8	Working Toward a Puppetry Performance (part 1)
09.00 - 09.45	Introduction to classroom puppet theatre
09.45 - 10.30	Scriptwriting workshop
10.30 - 11.15	Group division & planning
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Rehearsals & coaching
12.15 - 13.00	Feedback session
Day 9	Working Toward a Puppetry Performance (part 2)
09.00 - 09.45	Refinement of scenes
09.45 - 10.30	Creating simple props & set pieces
10.30 - 11.15	Full-run rehearsals
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Final adjustments
12.15 - 13.00	Semi-public run
Day 10	Presentations, Reflection & Closing
09.00 - 09.45	Final rehearsal (part 1)
09.45 - 10.30	Final rehearsal (part 1)
10.30 - 11.15	Final puppet performance and feedback
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Evaluation & Reflection
12.15 - 13.00	Validation of learning outcomes and certification

*This is only a tentative timetable. The exact hours or the course might differ and will be announced for each session 2 weeks before the start. However, there will always be a total of 5 didactic hours per day and all will be in line with the Erasmus+ quality standards. The trainer might slightly modify the content in response to the needs of the group.
**Cultural and social programmes will be organized in addition to the academic programme. The exact cultural and social programme depends on the location, season, weather, etc.