

LEARNING PROGRAMME

Empowering Properties of Puppets in Education and How to Create Them

5-DAY COURSE

25 learning hours | Course programme

Empowering Properties of Puppets in Education and How to Create Them – 5-Day Course

Introduction and Description

This intensive, five-day training programme is designed to introduce educators to the pedagogical, emotional, and creative potential of puppetry in contemporary education. The course explores how simple puppets, rod puppets, object characters, and persona dolls can become powerful mediators for communication, social-emotional learning, conflict resolution, and inclusive classroom practices.

Grounded in relevant educational theories—including symbolic play, embodied learning, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL)—the course provides a balance of theoretical input and sustained hands-on practice. Participants learn how puppets can increase learner engagement, support emotional expression, reduce anxiety, and create psychologically safe environments for exploring sensitive topics. Special emphasis is placed on the use of persona dolls as anti-bias pedagogical tools for fostering empathy, addressing discrimination, and opening guided conversations around challenging themes in age-appropriate ways.

Throughout the week, participants engage in practical workshops on creating sock puppets and rod puppets using accessible, low-cost materials suitable for school settings. They also explore fundamental non-verbal animation principles such as movement, focus, rhythm, stillness, and intention, without relying on voice work. Animation tasks emphasise clear physical expression and clarity of gesture to support children's comprehension and communication.

The programme further examines how puppetry can be integrated across subject areas to enhance literacy, language development, SEL competencies, intercultural understanding, and classroom climate. Participants design prototype learning activities, take part in micro-teaching sessions, and receive individualised support to adapt puppetry practices to their own schools and learner needs. The course concludes with reflective dialogue and practical guidance for future implementation, ensuring that participants leave with both creative skills and pedagogically sound strategies for embedding puppetry in their daily teaching practice.

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. Understand the Educational Benefits of Puppetry

- Explain how puppets support emotional expression, communication, symbolic play, and cognitive development.
- Describe the role of puppetry in inclusive education, SEL, conflict mediation, and UDL frameworks.
- Identify how puppets help create safe learning environments and reduce learner anxiety.

2. Develop Technical Skills in Puppet Construction

- Design and create classroom-friendly sock puppets and rod puppets using accessible, cost-effective materials.
- Apply basic construction principles (structure, balance, simple mechanisms) to create durable, expressive classroom tools.
- Troubleshoot structural issues and make adaptations for different age groups or subject needs.

3. Apply Animation Principles without Voice Work

- Demonstrate non-verbal animation skills including focus, stillness, movement intention, rhythm, gesture, and spatial awareness.

- Communicate character emotions and actions through physicality rather than speech.
- Use puppetry techniques to model conflict resolution, emotional regulation, or social interaction in clear, developmentally appropriate ways.

4. Facilitate Persona Doll Pedagogy

- Create rich, realistic personas for persona dolls while avoiding stereotypes and ensuring cultural sensitivity.
- Conduct persona doll sessions that address sensitive classroom topics such as exclusion, bullying, diversity, and empathy-building.
- Apply safe and supportive facilitation techniques to guide student conversations around complex or emotionally charged issues.

5. Integrate Puppetry into Teaching Practice

- Design learning activities that incorporate puppets across curriculum areas including literacy, languages, SEL, arts, and interdisciplinary subjects.
- Adapt puppetry strategies for diverse learners, including those with special educational needs, limited language proficiency, or social barriers.
- Use puppets to support routines, transitions, classroom communication, and group cohesion.

6. Enhance Professional Creativity and Reflective Practice

- Reflect critically on personal creative processes and beliefs about arts-based education.
- Identify opportunities to embed puppetry sustainably into school culture or long-term teaching practice.
- Demonstrate increased confidence, creativity, and adaptability in using embodied and arts-based pedagogies.

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: 400 €

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 (25 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	Creating and Animating Sock Puppets
09.00 - 09.45	Character design
09.45 - 10.30	Construction workshop
10.30 - 11.15	Finishing & detailing
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Animating sock puppets
12.15 - 13.00	Micro-improvisations
Day 3	Creating and Animating Rod Puppets
09.00 - 09.45	Introduction to rod puppetry
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	Persona Dolls
09.00 - 09.45	Foundations of persona doll pedagogy
09.45 - 10.30	Creating doll personas
10.30 - 11.15	Persona doll classroom approach
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Simulated persona doll sessions
12.15 - 13.00	Reflection & practical application planning
Day 5	Integrating Puppetry into Daily Teaching & Reflection
09.00 - 09.45	Pedagogical applications across curriculum
09.45 - 10.30	Designing puppet-based learning activities
10.30 - 11.15	Hands-on micro-teaching sessions 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.