

Sensory Theater Project S3ITA

Target audience: secondary school students S3ITA

Duration: modular course (8 sessions starting in February 2026, held every two weeks and concluding in April 2026)

Field: theater education, emotional and inclusive education

Project description

The sensory theater project offers an immersive theatrical experience in which the body and the senses become the main tools for exploration, communication, and storytelling. Students are guided on a journey that focuses on listening, movement, touch, the use of the voice, smells, sounds, and images, reducing the importance of the written text and emphasizing direct experience.

Through theater exercises, improvisation, sensory games, and moments of reflection, students experiment with alternative modes of expression, learning to perceive themselves, others, and space in a more conscious way. The journey can culminate in a performance in which the audience is involved on a sensory level.

The project is designed as an inclusive environment, capable of enhancing different abilities and encouraging the participation of all students.

General objectives

- Promote harmonious personal development through physical, sensory, and emotional expression.
- Promote inclusion, cooperation, and respect for diversity.
- Enhance self-awareness and awareness of one's own expressive abilities.
- Specific objectives
 - Develop sensory perception and body awareness.
 - Improve verbal and nonverbal communication skills.
 - Stimulate creativity, imagination, and expressive abilities.
 - Strengthen active listening and attention.

- Encourage the expression and management of emotions.
- Promote teamwork and collaboration.
- Increase self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Encourage empathy and the ability to relate to others.

Educational value

Sensory theater is a cross-curricular educational tool that:

- develops verbal and nonverbal communication skills;
- promotes learning through experience (learning by doing);
- stimulates creativity, imagination, and divergent thinking;
- enhances attention span, listening skills, and concentration;
- improves body and spatial awareness;
- strengthens collaboration and teamwork skills.

The project is linked to school subjects (English, art, music, civics) promoting interdisciplinarity and the acquisition of key European skills, in particular personal, social, and citizenship skills.

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Methodologies

The project adopts an active, workshop-based, and experiential methodology, centered on the student as the protagonist of the learning process.

In particular:

Learning by doing: learning through direct experience.

Theatrical games: playful exercises to encourage involvement and lower emotional resistance.

Guided sensory activities: exploration of sounds, smells, materials, movements, and visual stimuli.

Theatrical improvisation: development of spontaneity and creativity.

Cooperative work: activities in pairs and groups.

Circle time and moments of verbalization: reflection and sharing of experiences.

Inclusive approach: adaptation of activities to different educational needs.

Tools and materials

- Suitable space (theater room, gym, or empty classroom)
- Sheets, fabrics, materials of different textures
- Everyday objects for tactile and auditory stimulation
- Simple musical instruments (drums, maracas, bells)
- Audio player and music tracks
- Soft or colored lighting (if available)
- Scents and natural materials (spices, essences, leaves)
- Sheets of paper, colors, and materials for graphic reworking
- Notebook or logbook

Assessment criteria

- Assessment is formative, not selective, and takes into account each student's individual progress.
- Assessment indicators
- Active participation in the activities proposed.
- Ability to listen and respect group rules.
- Willingness to collaborate and work as part of a team.
- Level of emotional and expressive involvement.
- Progress in body and sensory awareness.
- Ability to express and communicate (verbally and non-verbally).
- Autonomy and personal initiative.
- Respect for others and shared space.

Assessment tools

- Systematic observation by the teacher/facilitator.
- Qualitative observation grids.
- Student self-assessment (oral or written).
- Group discussion and reflection.
- Documentation of the process (photos, assignments, logbook).

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

The project consists of a series of 1.5-hour sessions over a period of approximately five months, involving 20 secondary school students (class S3ITA), covering L1, mathematics, and science. It concludes with a day open to the public. A large room is all that's needed for the event.

ELISA FRASCA'

Elisa has a background in literature and theater (DAMS degree from Bologna). During the 1990s, she collaborated with various Italian and European theater companies and, at the end of the decade, she encountered Vargas' Teatro Sensoriale. From that moment on, she created a research group (TeatroTocco) in the city of Parma, presenting Percorsi Sensoriali (Sensory Journeys) in theaters, festivals, and exhibitions. At the same time, she collaborated with schools and private organizations, sharing the language of this theater with the world of childhood, in the belief that it is the most appropriate form of theater for children.

Final outcome

The course can conclude with:

- a sensory theatrical performance open to classmates or families;
- an experiential performance;
- a narrative or multimedia documentation of the course.

COSTS

The cost of the entire project, which includes: planning, classroom hours, materials, and final performance, is €800.00 net.

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