

Manual

Pedagogical puppeteer (PP)

Vrtec Trnovo

Suzana Antič, Mojca Garvas, Natalija Komljanc and educators of Trnovo Kindergarten





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Foreword

This manual is the third one. It is a continuation of the previous two manuals from 2013 and 2014 entitled *Pedagogical Innovation: Didactical Map* and *Pedagogical Innovation: Literary-Didactical Story*. As with the previous two, the existing manual is intended for kindergarten teachers and elementary school teachers and for those who are interested in thorough training for educational work using a puppet.

The manual points out the difference between the ordinary, traditional puppet and the pedagogical puppet. It also discusses the meaning, purpose and usage of the pedagogical puppet. The pedagogical puppet is a thoroughly forethought and intentionally created tool, figure, being whose purpose is to support a person's thinking development and to assist in the process of adaptation – learning, educating and self-educating, while being open to the current challenges and/or thinking development of a child and educator. In the educational process, a pedagogical puppeteer uses a pedagogical puppet in a systematic and meaningful way.

Those interested in such educational work can familiarise themselves with it by reading the manual or qualify for it by taking part in training in the puppet laboratory in the Trnovo kindergarten in Ljubljana. The educators in the Trnovo kindergarten have formed a program with a professional Pedagogical Puppeteer that has been established in the framework of the Innovative Project and in cooperation with the National Educational Institute of Republic of Slovenia.

Opinion

Natalija Komljanc, Ph.D in Pedagogy: Over the years of research within the Innovative Project (IP) entitled the *Work with a Puppet Project*, the Trnovo kindergarten has initiated a new professional Pedagogical Puppeteer. The educators of the Trnovo kindergarten have formed an educational programme based on self-creation, self-education and specialization over more than a decade of self-reflective work and with the support of various experts from pedagogy and puppetry. Skilled in self-analysis and self-improvement, the teachers have created an efficient training model that they would like to share unselfishly with others who believe in the power of a puppet and pedagogical work with children. Within the *Work with a Puppet Project*, a Pedagogical Puppeteer is one of the unique holistic forms of an open learning environment with an optimal possibility of adjusting innovative learning for the youngest.

I wish the management, the educators of the Trnovo kindergarten and all interested Pedagogical Puppeteers success in the development of Pedagogical Puppets in the pedagogical laboratory in the Trnovo kindergarten and a qualitative application of knowledge in a learning environment.

Introduction

Suzana Antič, the headmistress of the Trnovo kindergarten raises a question: “Why is it so important to talk about the puppeteer?” and answers: “Because a puppeteer has to train in pedagogical communication with a puppet.” Her question and answer reflect the fact that it is not enough to like the puppet and to enjoy educating. It is essential to educate and train in a way that enables the professional upgrading, improvement and specialization of knowledge and desires and to be able to present the abilities and competences of the Pedagogical Puppeteer in any pedagogical or learning situation and thus increase the understanding of learners. It means that we are capable of thinking about the benefits of a puppet, about how it can support us in encouragement and direct learning in an innovative way, and at the same time, we are capable of bringing the puppet into life.

In order to take advantage of the puppet's power in a pedagogical process, not only from time to time but in a more complex, holistic and lasting way, it is reasonable that the educational work is lead, implemented, assessed and evaluated by a team of professionally trained Pedagogical Puppeteers.

As this complex and unique knowledge is not simple to acquire or apply masterfully, we present a brief introduction, as well as the content and methodology of the training program for the Pedagogical Puppeteer. This manual can be used for personal or professional development within an individual educational institution. After all, the vocation of an educator, like any other profession, needs constant improving and

self-development. Thus, it represents an introduction to a pleasant story of professional and autonomous self-development, as well as joint training for the Pedagogical Puppeteer in an open learning environment.



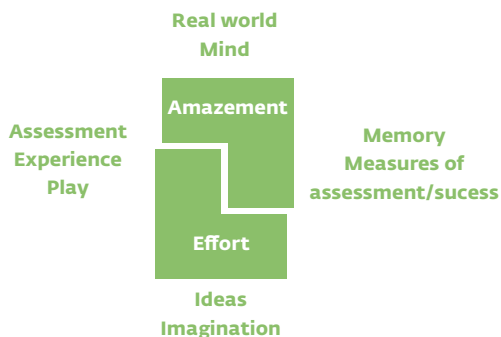
Pedagogical puppeteer (PP) I

1 A literary¹-didactical story about the children, the puppet and the Pedagogical Puppeteer

1.1 The influence of play on cognitive² development

Research questions (RO): 1. What role does a Pedagogical Puppeteer have in the development of a child's (human's) mind? 2. What role does a Pedagogical Puppeteer have in guiding a child's (human) thinking adjustment in the learning process?

"Helpless in reality, capable in an imaginative world"



With perceptions, child creates the reality of his generation, the game raises awareness of the real world of adults.

Figure 1: Mental world according to Kant in Gavrič, 1991

A puppet is a medium for visualizing reality in imaginative worlds and acting as though it was real. The puppet brings the challenges closer to

¹ artistic

² emotions and reason



"The puppet as a subject and object of solving real problems in an imaginative world."

the child reflects the interests and knowledge of curious children.

As children grow and develop, they do not cope³ well with the real world of grownups. Sometimes they are even afraid of it and therefore defensive against it (further reading: fairy tales and real

³ Young children are helpless in real world, yet more capable in the imaginative world. Fludd (1619) mentions a scale with faculties of knowledge, such as sensual perception (senses and emotions), imagination, ratio, intellect, intelligence, verbs. See also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Fludd

Key words: *child, mind, art, will, beauty, imagination, play, growth and development, referential power, desire, puppet, experiencing, unfolding conundrum, mood, the experience of imaginative representation and the creation of the world, attraction, friendship, relationship, dialogic viewpoint, love*

stories) until they finally understand it. A human copes with fear as soon as (s)he can define its form and transform it into some familiar object, Schiller (2003) discovers in his understanding of fear.

The youngest observe, emote and imagine before they enter the rational world of reason. The drive for reason is awakened by the experience gained through one single power: will power (acc. to Schiller, 2003). Mind is the capability of thinking and recognizing while art is the capability of



Essence: *Play as reflection of beauty in free adjustment to the world. Deep down, play contains the art of living (acc. to Schiller, 2003).*

creating work with aesthetical value linked to emotional perception (impressions) and expression. Art is beauty and a spirit that looks for expressing beauty through life principles. Beauty stimulates the emotions and imagination and awakens reason. By defining the term beauty, the term verges on science (Schiller, 2003).

Children are more autonomous and capable in their imaginative world as they are becoming aware of the real world of adults while playing and creating their own reality in their imaginations. Children experiencing healthy growth and development visualize the abilities, they try to be the most powerful, first and best, they strive for excess – for the innovative search for new powers. Children form a referential power in a play. This power is a success criterion that children follow curiously and in expectation in order to achieve the desired goal. Because of their desires⁴, children perceive the world and gradually control it (in the field of art, creation and science).



The children experience the world because of the desired goals/wishes/referential power and gradually control it. This is the development of independence.

Figure 2: Growth and development

⁴ Desire is one of the most powerful emotions (feelings) that direct our goals (according to SSKJ).

Play is their mental path and remains the path of inventors when comparing their referential criteria with adventures from reality and imaginative worlds. More or less interesting experiences are kept in different brain centres. Some of them are forgotten about after a while and others are reinforced or replaced.

From aesthetic education theory's⁵ perspective, play is reflection of beauty in a free adjustment to the world. Play enables the vivid formation of the world. It is based on the free perceptions of a sequence of ideas. Schiller (2003) says that one is only fully a human being when one plays. Play contains in it the art of living.

... the process in which the referential measures are compared to experiences in a) reality and b) imagination

Inventing is ...

A play is ...

... child's method of understanding + remains the method of comprehension of inventors. Mental path of children / way of thinking

Figure 3: A play is ...

Children are aware of reality through sentence and emotion (external and inner perception) in self-communication and in communication with others. By reviewing the criteria (referential and current), they build and therefore upgrade their memory. In addition, their ideas help them develop their minds (according to Kant in Gavrič, 1991, see fig.1). Astonishment forces them to continue



and the effort strengthens the acquired knowledge. Play helps children become aware of the things and notions that they have not completely understood yet. When observing and enriching their ideas, perceptions that represent the absent parts of the intellect, children improve their perceptiveness. Genuine and complete knowledge is preserved while shallow knowledge falls apart or strives for new transformation. The mental picture changes constantly in order to preserve and clear up or transform.

As ages pass, a "giant" becomes closer to a "God" when setting the highest referential goals – the values of a certain period and preserving the world



⁵ Schiller, F. (2003). Aesthetic Education of Man.

limited in time seemingly eternally. Let us read fairy tales, myths, folk tales, mythological stories etc. and watch the growth and development of the worlds of children and adult through the folk tradition.

1.1.1 *The puppet sets up a bridge between objective and subjective comprehension*

Research question: "What does a puppet mean for us?"

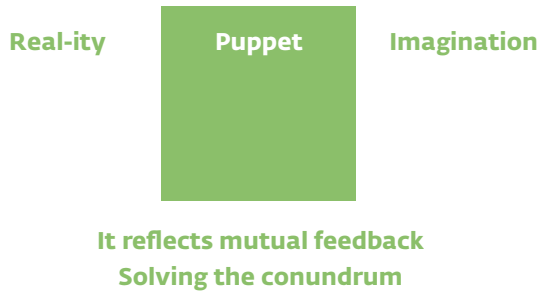


Figure 4: Puppet is a bridge between the objective and subjective

The puppet represents a passage, accepted by children, between the visualization of reality in the imagination and play acted as reality where



an adult joins a child as a co-actor rather than as a traditional educator. An adult strengthens his/her role with a puppet in hand. The puppet's words come from the adult's mouth and are expressed through the mimicry, character and spirit of place and time. Sometimes the puppet replaces the real educator's face with its own. This face represents the world between the reality, which is distant, unknown and sometimes even unreachable for children, and a play, representing the world in which a child plays and experiences reality – real reality in his/her own way and in cooperation with others. A child is forceful in play, is a competent creator trying out the possibilities in an optimistic and realizable way.



1.1.2 The puppet is a reflection of interpersonal impressions and expressions in the comprehension process

The puppet's character encourages and develops interpersonal relationships and emotions.

The puppet reflects the expressed thoughts, the feedback of educators and children and resolves conundrums.

When a child accepts a toy, the child plays with it in his/her own way. However, when the toy attracts attention (unconsciously), the child not only surrenders to it, but establishes a hormonal and emotional connection with it and builds up a friendship. A child has many puppets and toys in

the environment, but nevertheless, (s)he graciously accepts only the one that arouses strong feelings and encourages the functioning of hormones and consequently competences. Therefore, it is important who and which puppet brings the world of challenges closer to a child in real children's play or adjusted pedagogical play. Not every puppet is successful in doing so. Only a puppet that reflects (expresses) the interests, knowledge and curiosity of the children with whom it shares and multiplies its knowledge prospers.

Which puppet provokes emotions - hormone of happiness?

The one that reflects, expresses part of interests, knowledge and curiosity of children. When making a puppet, it has to include all the diagnostics of pre-knowledge and interests and needs of children. The puppet is based on child's recognition, expectations, beliefs and desires.

Figure 5: The puppet's power

The exchange of impressions and expressions unfolds in three-part communication in which body language expresses characteristic features that define the genetic target code of self-orientation. Self-knowledge occurs when we feel psychic movements, give them meaning, verbalise them if necessary, express them out loud or silently, write, draw or paint them. The climate reflects the atmosphere that a person perceives and expresses it in the form of a mood. An inhalation initiates impression and exhalation expression. Three-part communication (physical, psychical and spiritual)

is verbalized through the children's reactions that can be seen in their encounter with a puppet.

Communication with puppet, puppeteer and children is three partite:

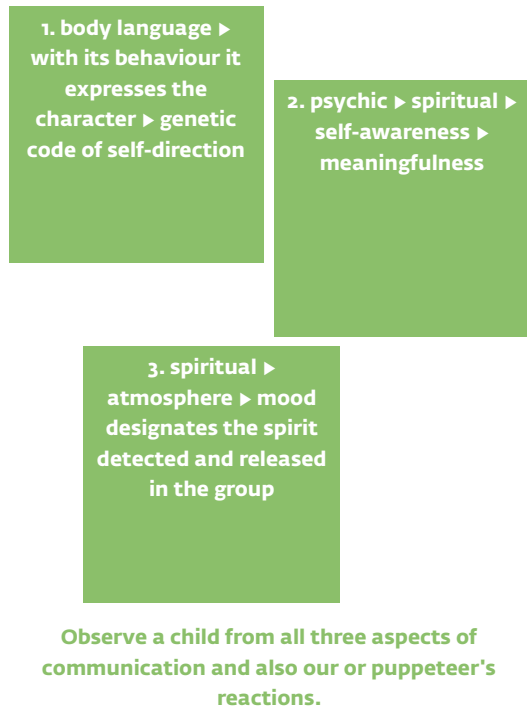


Figure 6: Three partite communication

Let us observe a child – the manner of non-verbal communication, the behaviour and mood. How does (s)he feel in the environment, what does (s)he perceive, what spirit is (s)he in? How does (s)he express it, how does (s)he behave, how does (s)he use this knowledge in the process and in what mood? How does the reaction reflect on others? In what way does a puppet feel these relationship dynamics, how does it react and combine, what does it provoke in its communication?

In the pedagogical work, it is reasonable to set more observation eyes (cameras - qualitative

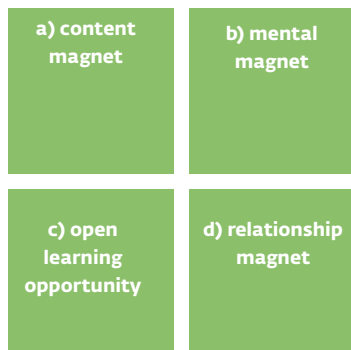
formative assessment) in order not to miss the critical mental periods and therefore miss learning opportunities or reactions of children in the direct innovative learning game where their learning story and opportunity are born. These opportunities can guide the children toward the unexpected mental perceptions, experience, imagination and creation of the world.

1.1.3 The puppet intrigues and internalizes the learning story

In the introductory event, the puppet attracts and forms an attachment with a child through content that is interesting for the child. When meeting the puppet, the children's emotions are released, their emotional world and their nervous system and consequently their movement, breathing and heartbeat encourage thoughts and start the story. The first impression happens. It is powerful and it remains in the child's consciousness, it outlines and overflows the child's emotional world. In that very moment, the puppet becomes "you". The attraction establishes the "you-relation", which means that the puppet becomes owned, or "mine" from the child's point of view. The child addresses the puppet as "you" so it becomes "yours" – "my" puppet and thus "yours" – "mine" – "our" learning story.

A friendly relationship representing a tie between "me" and "you" is established. The puppet in synaptic contact becomes a part of a child and (s)he perceives it as a part of him. From the child's point of view, it is a part of "me" and therefore the puppet is no longer whoever or whatever but "you", so it becomes and stays a part of a child's community forever. In "me", in a child and in a group, the puppet became domesticated. It became a part of "mine", "our" mental process, a part of "my" life⁶.

⁶ The very experience is described in *The Little Prince* written by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Puppet in educational play:**Figure 7:** The puppet in educational play

Why does not every puppet have the same power and attraction? What does it attract? (my interests do not attract and it is not necessary that his (child's) interests would either). The puppet is domesticated in this way. Only then it is worth of person's care and love.

ESSENCE! The puppet must reflect the child's interest, it must attract him to become a friend who cares and sticks to it. Because of that the child develops caring and responsible relation with the puppet. This is a child's self-development. An appropriate pedagogical puppet accelerates and guides self-development of a child. The child needs and expresses the desire for help only in extremely complicated challenges. The puppet is a child's reflection.

Figure 8: "Mine, your, our" puppet

"I now take care of "you" - puppet. I care for it very much and if necessary, more friends are willing to care for it as well, to love it together." The first, second, third or fourth time, a child begins to not only be taken care of by others but to care for others or a group of children collaborate. A child is not alone in a group, there is also an educator

who assists if necessary, and there are other children and parents. We are aware that besides the parents, we – as a puppet character – are the most desired inner guest of a child's heart. Together we form pleasant company.

"You" is my dear, eternal friend with whom I experience, discover and learn. The puppet – "you" – is the child's ego, which reveals the wonders of the world but at the same time asks for help and support and in this way leads him toward self-development. In play with a child, a puppet may be beautiful, nice, interesting, unusual, funny, weird, miraculous, warm, demanding and sometimes even difficult. It brings the possible and impossible. "The weird thing though is that the puppet's demanding character is 'my effort', which is in reality a pleasure – my joy and my happiness, even if the situation is really difficult to resolve.

Story - creation: ESSENCE

- 1. The first impression ► strong, so that it stays in one's consciousness and overflows the emotional world of a child**
- 2. Care ► love establishes and cultivates persistence and continuity. Cooperation.**
- 3. Child's effort ► extremely demanding challenges influence on the child's development of thought, creation, existence and life cycle.**

Figure 9: Care and story

The puppet influences my (the child's) way of thinking, it affects my life, creation, sleep, dreams and my exceptional, unique, unrepeatable life in this world. It is my happiness, my life goal", taken from the assessment of work with a puppet in the Trnovo kindergarten over the years.



1.1.4 *The puppet is a dialogic and multilogic viewpoint through a personal window of comprehension*

To describe the development and understanding of the world and dialogue in life, Panikkar⁷ uses the metaphor of the window. From birth, every child has the possibility to look through a personal window on life or the world around him. The more we understand our existence and the world we are looking at, the clearer the glass and the clearer the vision of the world and of our own personality. Early in our youth, we are aware that the others look through the window of their life. Considering the neighbourly relations and listening, we realize that the view through the window is diverse and varied – everyone sees it in a similar but also in a different way.

The dialogue between people who describe the view through the window enriches both. Through the experience, people therefore realize that you cannot see everything through one's own window. Our eyes do not provide the complete picture; however, we can construct it through self-reflections and other people's viewpoints in order for it to come clearer. For the same reason, it is reasonable

to listen to yourself and others and to hear and to communicate what is being heard, what is perceived as important, where, how and why others see things differently. In this way, dialogues and lives can be enriched. Personal and dialogic viewpoints are formed in this way and sometimes we agree with them, we like and support them.

**Guided mental
development of
person's adjustment ►
learning**

Figure 10: Guided mental development of person's adjustment - learning

Other time we do not. We learn to repeat, defend, support other people's thoughts, intertwine them with similar ones and upgrade them with the thoughts of people who have comparable ideas. All of this leads to the development of a culture of communication and coexistence.

⁷ More about R. Panikkar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kvsov6OuTWs>



2 Innovative learning for the youngest

2.1 Play is the path to innovative learning

Pedagogical play is a symbol of creative learning that brings the educator or teacher and the child together. They both give what they can in order to create and activate the best idea.

In pedagogical play, an educator and a child or children reasonably complete knowledge by: 1. experience, 2. observation and 3. if necessary, experimenting in open and laboratory learning environment. Gaining experiences without the feeling of security can become dangerous and imperfect. It is itself an experience but it does not necessarily

provide good insight in general situations. Observation (spontaneous and guided) can help us in formatting opinions, gathering information and communication, but it can become boring if it is not wisely encouraged. The experiment is one of the methods that enables the control (testing, experimenting) of one or more variables. The received outcome is frequently harder to understand since it is isolated from real life, especially if we are not taking part in the experiment from beginning to end to know what and why something is being tested. The combination of all three forms of perception is reasonable since it provides better insight into the development and comprehension of the world around us, especially if we do the experiment in an open, laboratory environment⁸.

The educator already has experience of the adult's real world, however, (s)he simulates the story through research before presenting it to the children. In this way, the educator/puppet is more confident, interesting and exciting. Moreover, the curriculum is more accurate and predictable. The puppet can therefore more clearly encourage (through a research question) children to experience new things. To those who enter the world of exciting moments, the puppet ensures an interesting and safe, but at the same time exciting co-operation. The educator increases the awareness in children of real life situations so they are able to find the best solution.

Moreover, it is not only a question of teaching how to tie shoe laces but also discovering how to rescue somebody from a tree or from the water or to help somebody succeed in his/her profession. With a research question, a puppet signals to a child that it has total confidence in him and

⁸ According to R. Panikkar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kvsov6OuTWs>



believes that (s)he would be able to solve a conundrum that at first appears unattainable, unsolvable but so very exciting.

A child has an extraordinary natural ability to develop play and to act in it. In their play, they are not slaves and robots (though they might be if they decide to play the role), they are leaders, directors, researchers, discoverers, magicians, parents, “the ones”. In their play, they can prove to themselves and to others that they are capable; they develop their abilities and give meaning to the play. Moreover, they help develop the abilities of people they love and who need their help or support. Of course, they can discover completely new, unusual professions, not thinking about abilities but observing the possibilities as they feel and experience them and are aware of them.

Children with a pedagogical puppet are not only competent virtuosos acting in a spontaneous children's game but they are capable of playing pedagogical games, and outstanding roles in real stories with real life experiences that are stored in their long-term memory. This memory is available in every future life situation and is labelled “I

can because I have already done this successfully in the past.”

Experiences with a puppet in a pedagogical game become part of a child's unconscious and conscious mental world and wealth that strengthens the children's prefrontal cortex and mirror neurons and develops empathy. Nature endowed humans with the ability to play (natural learning method) and the curiosity (form of motivation) that is part of the play. It is a desire, motivational light, buoyancy, momentum and declared goal (a purpose limited in time and place). It is also an encouragement for and measurement of success on the path towards the goal. It is a manner and style of functioning. The puppet in a pedagogical game is not only a content magnet or mental attraction, it is also an open learning opportunity for research and discovery and relation attractor – a mediator between a child and an educator and others involved in the life-learning story.

The experiences gained in the pedagogical games with a puppet become part of the unconscious and conscious mental system and a treasure for the Pedagogical Puppeteer who enriches his/her educational potential and kindergarten curriculum⁹.

⁹ Will is the ability of desire (according to SSKJ), conscious management of behaviour in order to reach the goal. The basic will is in the unconscious instinct Will is freedom. The first phase is the battle of motives, the second phase is the selection and the third one is the reaching the decision.

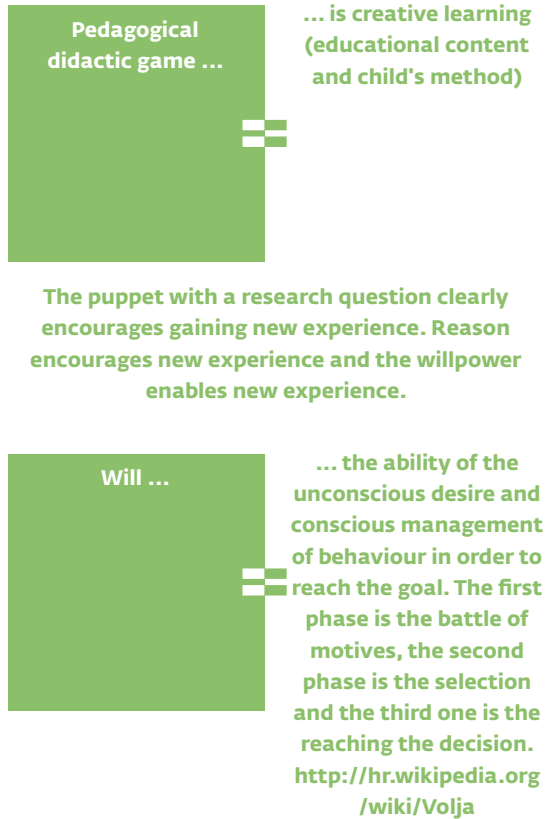


Figure 11: Game, puppet and will

2.1.1 Innovative learning as a form of self-comprehension

Learning is the ability of constant unconscious and conscious thinking and a search for knowledge in many different ways that enable survival and a good life. In addition, it is self-changing based on behaviour and knowledge or the self-regulation of thinking. Innovation means the self-transformation of existing knowledge and behaviour into a better, possibly new and different form. Innovative learning is the ability of living beings to change the world for the better by innovative referential measures.

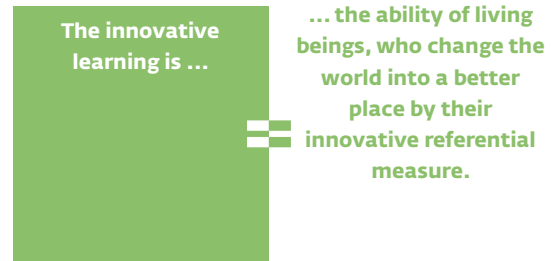


Figure 12: Innovative learning

The principles of innovative learning¹⁰ are as follows: 1. All attention is focused on the child and the child's attention is focused on the adjustment – learning; 2. Learning is a social activity that brings interesting and rich experiences – memory; 3. Emotions are an important determination of thinking for formatting referential measure of success; 4. Awareness of the differences in thinking (and pre-knowledge) and the resulting expectations of various learning opportunities; 5. Learning environments adjust and reinforce their flexibility; 6. Positive feedback in the learning process and 7. Specialization in individual disciplines only happens after integrated transparency over the disciplines. Ways of learning: 1. thinking about the things we already know (being familiar with the learning topic) and about the improvement of our pre-knowledge and a positive influence on the knowledge of all children; 2. being aware of the mental picture of the topic that is being studied and compared to other people's images or alternatives; 3. providing current and constant mutual feedback about the functioning of the topic and about the benefits of the instructions and messages received for learning.

The educator's and teacher's abilities required for innovative learning are: 1. working with the source of the current knowledge of the children;

¹⁰ According to School-jena plan, OECD, 2013.

2. using empathy for cooperation; 3. being aware of pre-knowledge (own, not the children's) and 4. being able to use it in formatting beliefs; 5. being an excellent expert; 6. being capable of qualitative formative learning assessment.

Educator's/teacher's ability in innovative learning:

- + working with the source of current knowledge of a child/learner
- + using empathy for cooperation
- + awareness of pre-knowledge and its usage in creating beliefs
- + distinguished expert, capable of qualitative formative assessment of learning/artistic expression

PWP is Innovation Project - educational movement, which organized educational process as a form of reasonable qualitative mutual feedback. At the same time, it searches for the possibilities for learning approaches in which a learner could use his/her pre-knowledge as a starting source and real learning source - challenge and in which (s)he could look for the opportunities for more intensive creative beat in the direct learning environment.

Innovative educator deals with the energy of learning with the principles of learning, mechanisms of assessment and mental processes.

Figure 13: Innovative educator, teacher

The Innovative Projects (IP) and its Work with a Puppet Project (PWP) and Pedagogical Puppeteer (PP) are learning activities that organize educational process as a form of meaningful, qualitative, mutual feedback. At the same time, they look for possibilities for open learning approaches in which

learners would be able to use their pre-knowledge as a starting point and learning source – a challenge to look for possibilities for the more intensive creative impulse of learners in the direct learning environment. The innovative project in which the knowledge of Pedagogical Puppeteer is indispensable encourages precisely this.

Innovative educators deal with learning energy, learning principles, assessment mechanisms and mental processes.

Innovative children perceive the learning space and time as their own thinking process and cooperation with other learners and the puppet. Most children perceive this as having more freedom and not as a burden, even though their learning intensity increases. An innovative form of learning is thus an independent form practiced by people (children, educators, parents and other experts) who are not scared of change or transformation and have the vision how to improve the world, their pre-knowledge and enrich formal education.

Innovative children perceive the learning space and time as their own thinking process and cooperation with other learners and the puppet. Most children perceive this as having more freedom and not as a burden, even though their learning intensity increases.

Figure 14: Innovative children

This very idea is discussed in Innovative Projects (IP) and the Work with a Puppet Project (PWP). The principle of simulative, open learning in open environment therefore represents a constant dialogue and multi-way communication in various forms of coordination of thoughts – even more so with

a pedagogical puppet who links the dialogue and upgrades it mentally.

2.1.2 *The formation of knowledge is a complex life-long process of self-formation*

Gaining knowledge is a complex and prudent process in which we create conclusions, summaries and predictions. The knowledge we acquire in the process enables us to predict the situation and to choose the right behaviour. This process is called adaptation or learning¹¹. Formative assessment is a natural form of mental process that triggers meaningful adjustment – learning that satisfies the learners' needs and expectations. Assessment is the comparison of current knowledge with referential knowledge but it is nevertheless vital to have a desire and personal goal that activates optimal adjustment in accordance with pre-knowledge and competences. The process of self-assessment enables and activates the self-regulation of adjustment and therefore encourages feedback and the presentation of learning stories. Success is a product containing motivation for learning and considers Vygotsky's¹² zone of proximal development in the learning process. The greater the curiosity, the greater the productivity can be.

Theory of the mind deals with analysing the understanding of other people's thoughts (empathy). Mirror neurons play an important role in this. The theory of the mind is actually an ability to understand different mental states such as: beliefs, interests, desires, pretence and knowledge from our and others' point of view. Learning¹³ is establishing

the differences, similarities and the development of abilities for mutual adjustment.

The educators take into account all these findings in their educational process and their work with the youngest. Learning through understanding always develops knowledge at higher stages, beginning with pre-knowledge. An educator includes a child in active learning and follows his/her partial or final reactions or learning outcomes because a child brings a unique perception of the functioning of the world into the playroom.

If children are deeply engaged, we expect them to be ready to participate in creating learning concepts, collecting and selecting learning sources and to have their goals, expectations and beliefs already formed to certain extent. An educator helps the children work out the current ideas and shapes of the world, and integrates them into renewed learning stories. Through these stories, children get to know and recognize essential connections and relations. The educator is aware that the learning process begins where it had ended and continues from there into the future. In this way, (s)he helps the child in the process of self-transformation to build a spiral/developmental open kindergarten curriculum (acc. to Bruner, 1960¹⁴).

It is important that an educator develops the abilities of a child and that (s)he gives him the opportunities for researching, improving and strengthening. For that purpose, an educator organizes learning so that the children can re-organize their knowledge, paths and working methods. Moreover, the learning environment has to enable the child to take over at least some part of the control over

¹¹ Adapted from cognitive learning theory

¹² Vygotsky: zone of proximal development

¹³ Flaherty, AW. (2005). Frontotemporal and dopaminergic control of idea generation and creative drive. J. Comp Neurol. Dec. 5; 493(1): 147 – 53. Equally recommended for further reading

Neuroscience in magazine Sustainable Development in School and Kindergarten. 2013, year 7, no: 1-2.

¹⁴ J. Bruner, 1960: The Process of Education (Bruner).pdf -judzrun-children

the learning process. When a child's mind is active, the mental process forms categories for processing information (Gibson, 1950¹⁵). Experiences in extending knowledge play an important role as they can considerably increase the complexity of new knowledge and behaviour in a very short time. The educators think in the same way and therefore, it is best to observe the children and encourage them within the learning activities. Learning activities that include an educator as an equal thinker and partner enable the sharing of feedback, which continuously and immediately improves the learning and teaching level in the mutual learning story. The active learning environment recognizes that the educator and the child are both in the centre, are oriented toward the upgrade of pre-knowledge, they assess and regulate learning dynamics and that learning happens in the group¹⁶.



¹⁵ Gibson, 1950

¹⁶ The characteristics of the so-called outstanding teaching approach







Pedagogical puppeteer (PP) II

1 Training programme

The structured programme shown below answers three interlinked questions: “What?”, “How?” and “Why?” is a pedagogical puppet/puppeteer involved in the educational process.

Part II of the programme Pedagogical Puppeteer
Answers to the questions:



Figure 15: Questions in the programme

SEQ. Nº	Nº OF HOURS	CONTENT	GOAL	AUTHORS/PERFORMERS
1.	8hrs - 10hrs	“Puppet is, puppet isn’t” The story of the pedagogical puppet and Pedagogical Puppeteer	1.The puppet as a protagonist 2.Perception of the puppet – impression 3.Communication with a puppet – expression 4.Creating a puppet - appearance	Expert workers of the Trnovo Kindergarten
2.	8hrs - 10hrs	“Why, where and when a puppet?” The story of the kindergarten curriculum	1.The puppet creates a literary-didactic story (Didactical Map) 2.Formative assessment of education by a puppet 3.Reflection and summative evaluation of Pedagogical Puppeteer	Expert workers of the Trnovo Kindergarten
3.	8hrs - 10hrs	“How to handle a puppet?” I create and assess my own story	I improve communication flows and enable experiencing	Expert workers of the Trnovo Kindergarten

1.1 The first part: Puppet is, puppet isn't.

The story of the pedagogical puppet and Pedagogical Puppeteer

Puppet is:

- a link between the world of the human and the imagination (Žigon, 1992,5);
- a figure that represents, imitates, performs, casts a spell on life (Semolič, 1987, in: Matjašič, 2011);
- an educational learning means that stimulates, increases excitement, reacts, encourages thought and fantasy, enables expression and intimate experiencing of the world (Žigon, 1992);
- the main expressive means with a puppet system of signs. It connects the animate and inanimate worlds (Trefalt, 1993);
- a figure that represents something or someone – “essence”. A puppet is a being, animated by a human force. A person lends his/her energy to a puppet (Jurkowski, 1991);
- an animator, someone who gives life to, a recipient, someone who assures life to the object that (s)he animates and manipulates (Omerzu, 2010, 16-18);
- a three-dimensional figure that gets its full meaning and purpose only in the hands of the one who animates it. It overcomes the motionless, dead state and becomes a being that can do whatever it wants and desires that cannot be achieved in the real world. We only need some imagination and skills and the puppet becomes what we want it to be – our, my imaginative being (Matjašič, 2011);
- a being with a psychosocial developmental aspect (Jurkowski, 1991,26);
- a new or additional communication channel for planning the achievement of educational goals (Korošec);
- a medium, an art element that opens the imagination, in our case “a child’s friend” (Antič et al., 2013, 41);
- a protagonist (main character), a communication with a metaphor, someone to whom a child can communicate needs and expectations more easily than to an educator. It has a power and it grows together with the human’s will, it also gets a symbolic meaning, it becomes a being and a puppeteer’s energy brings it to life (Antič et al., 2015, 35);
- a song (rhythm and melody – synchronization of pedagogical dialogue) that co-creates impressions and expressions (Antič et al., 2015, 36);
- there so we are not scared (a 5-year-old girl in Antič et al., 2015, 39);
- half human and half fabric (a 5-year-old boy in Antič et al., 2015, 39);
- a toy, a friend (a 5-year-old girl in Antič et al., 2015, 39);
- a kind, gentle, emphatic and interesting being, meant for teaching the youngest (educators’ opinion in Antič et al., 2015, 41);
- a powerful educative influence (one of the parents in Antič et al., 2015, 44).

Puppet = a link between the world and the imagination, a figure, a hero, a protagonist, the main means of expression, an educative means, a communication channel, animator, an element of art, a medium, a song, half human and half fabric.

Puppet = Puppet ≠

“Puppet is half human and half fabric” (a 5-year-old boy)

Puppet = a link between the world and the imagination, a figure, a hero, a protagonist, the main means of expression, an educative means, a communication channel, animator, an element of art, a medium, a song, half human and half fabric.

Puppet as a protagonist guides and brings closer the roles of others so the things that need to happen really come true and prevents things that should not (yet) happen.

Figure 16: Puppet is, puppet is not

PUPPET ...

... amusement, relaxation, integration, comfort, a means for achieving a goal

... play, curiosity, theatre ▶ mirror, improvisation, creative imagination outdoors and indoors

... a puppet ▶ one that is a part of you, one who suits your personality, your second pole that enables balance

PUPPET ...

... a burden, addiction, worry, fear, intrusiveness, anti-therapy

Figure 18: Puppet is not (gathered responses from participants in the Pedagogical Puppeteer training 2015)

PUPPET ...

... is a medium with which we begin to deal consciously, unconsciously

... knowledge without limits, empathy in a puppet and a person

... protagonist = a hero who creates the story; intensive, complete communication

... love increases the level of comprehension/ action

... puppets ask children for help

Figure 19: Puppet is (gathered responses from participants in the Pedagogical Puppeteer training 2015)

Figure 17: A puppet is (gathered responses from participants in the Pedagogical Puppeteer training 2015)

1.1.1 Protagonist

When we ask the children what a protagonist is like, their answer would be that it is someone who



is diligent, who behaves the way (s)he should. A protagonist is a hero that spurs children, educators, parents and other participants into action. The protagonist “pulls us into”¹⁷ the project – the implemented kindergarten curriculum – so that things happen as they should. The protagonist (from Ancient Greek protagonists¹⁸) is the main figure of the story. It is all about the protagonist, the complete literary-didactical story is about him/her.

The basic purpose of the puppet protagonist is to clearly communicate the vision and common goal. Everyone bears it in the mind during a certain event or experience from the planned pedagogic, didactic and literary event. The event is an introduction, beginning, entanglement before formatting the learning story.

The event is logically followed by reactions that are assessed, upgraded and included in the story, until the climax and resolution of the problem. The puppet – protagonist logically follows the

suggestions, solutions and doubts of the children, parents and educators, and includes them in the story – in an open (educational) curriculum. Gradually, they become a part of an important story, they become co-creators of the literary-didactical story. The puppet as a protagonist and therefore performs virtuosic communication and pedagogical work (action) through its extremely good performance. It also guides and brings closer the roles of others so the things that need to happen really come true and prevents things that should not (yet) happen. The puppet as a protagonist keeps the thread and the events in the story, which are innovative learning activities. The puppet is the centre, a meeting point of minds and a focus of learners. The main characters of learning the literary-didactical story become small heroes – giants of self-development – the children that get the support from the Pedagogical Puppeteer, their educators, their parents and other performers in the educational process.

Puppet as a protagonist is a guide ensuring that only the things that should happen, really happen and prevents those that should not (yet) happen.

**Impression
Perception**

Expression



**Creation /
figure, name**

Figure 20: Impression and expression create the image, name

¹⁷ attract

¹⁸ The opposite character is antagonist

1.1.2 Impression¹⁹

If we want to achieve the above mentioned and if we want it to last for a longer time period, a puppet has to be very powerful and pass on efficient messages that become and remain learning magnets – attractions. The puppet itself has to be a form that exerts attraction and catches one's eye. The puppet gets its attraction through its figure but the impression only happens when the puppet intensively transmits the message that it bears within. Only then it can attract the learner. The point is not the puppet as a hero who knows everything and is the strongest. These kind of tales are not the object of our learning process, because the events are the children's vision and the puppet normally remains the one with the question (problem, conundrum) or dilemma. A puppet therefore has a strong desire and reasonable goal that it wants to accomplish but knows at the same time that it cannot be successful without help and support. The puppet is the children's friend that comes closer to the children and the group with its abilities and capacities and therefore its desires and goals. Because of its presence and resemblance to the children and their interests, the puppet attracts, makes contact and remains a friend of the children in the learning process. In this way, we can set the impressions that we recognize, feel close to, cope with, admire and learn from, gradually, consciously and developmentally.

The impressions usually settle in our hearts, suit our mind, are clear, and have a bright image – solution. The impression(ism) is not related to heroism but to cosiness, the warmth of life, openness to cooperation and for play with colours and light. Everyone that starts to communicate makes

an impression. The impression might sometimes be vague and negative or sometimes strong and positive.

The puppet gains its attraction through its image but the impression happens only after the puppet in its form intensively expresses the message it carries inside.

The real impressionists are interested in the occurrence and meaning of things in the area. They want to capture the synthesis of that occurrence and meaningfulness in time. The same goes for a learning process. Obvious moves of influence, the transmission of sensory impressions and the creating of different moods and perceptions are very important. The impression is as short, clear and strong as the message²⁰ should be.

Impression:

1. Puppet ► form ► attraction ► attracts one's eye
2. Puppet ► carries messages
3. Getting closer with a child and group
4. Impression settles in
5. Expression represents warmth, openness
6. The real impressionists are interested in appearance and meaningfulness of things around us
7. Impression ► a short and strong yet expected feedback, continuation, response

The puppet gets its attraction through its figure but the impression only happens when the puppet intensively transmits the message that it bears within.

Figure 21: Impression

¹⁹ Perception of a puppet - impression

²⁰ According to Aleš Justin, impressionism, djaški.net

**Impression ► inhale ► dialogue educator, puppet,
contact with children, strong, strong feelings,
impulse**

Impression ► contact ► warmth ► astonishment

**Game: reality, world, imagination,
discovery/effort/departure, game of reality and
imagination**

**Story of action research ► authentic, strong
message/experience**

**Animation ► accomplished ► event ►
astonishment, unusualness**

**Entire action ► engagement: research, discovery ►
effort**

Taste ► assessment

Solution ► result

Conclusion/end of story ► solution

Figure 22: Impression according to the participants of the training program PP 2015

1.1.3 Expression²¹

The communication is influenced by body language, the puppet's figure, its tone of voice and the words, of course. A person selects a moment and formats it in his/her personal impression in different ways and in different sequences. It is not a question of exaggeration in order to be heard, it is a question of the clearness, pureness and importance of a message – expression. Expression always arises as feedback for a certain impression. It is a logical consequence of a certain impression and therefore learning activity begins where it ended, which is in a child – in the child's thinking, desires and expectations.

The communication link between a child and a puppet is unusual, special and exceptional. A child would never disappoint a puppet; (s)he would work even harder because of it. If you want to become a puppet or guide a puppet, you have to know how to change your voice, since every puppet has its own voice. The voice very efficiently directs attention most of the time because a child likes to imitate it, adopt and help it. It is all due to love, interest, care, joy, pleasure and happiness. Example: <http://supersimplelearning.com/blog/2013/07/03/puppets-as-communication-aids/>.

It is important that a puppeteer selects the right timing for bringing children closer together with a puppet because the effect depends on the quality of communication. Our unconscious posture mimics our character and the atmosphere (spirit) we feel, influences the tone of our voice and the rhythm and melody of expression. Moreover, a child's mood influences the quality of responsiveness.

Among other things and along with all the messages, a pedagogical puppet has to express and radiate the so-called pedagogical love. At one of the training sessions, the educators and teachers defined what this pedagogical love ensures. In the first place, it ensures safety, which enables mutual trust, and in the second place, it ensures joy that leads to pleasure (enjoyment).

1. Therefore, it is reasonable to follow the pedagogical principles of peaceful coexistence rather than exaggerate the use of rules and, as a consequence, the introduction of various measures.
2. Ensuring synchronized communication; harmonizing a melody with rhythm and expression with the purpose of creating new qualitative, efficient and useful impressions.
3. Ensuring the optimal functioning of the nervous system (brains for linking the

²¹ Communication - expression with a puppet

unconscious, spontaneous with the conscious mind) that enables one's own findings and innovations in coexistence. 4. To make a reservation and give time not only for emotional reactions but also for creative reflections (immediate, quick, consequent or creative inspiration that simply has to come out and produce an idea or thought) and reactions in research (science) where we are dealing with the possibility of classification, assessment and selection before closing thoughts. 5. To give a person (teacher, child or parent) the possibility of artistic and scientific expression and for presenting the results or knowledge in the process of adjustment (of learning and the literary-didactical story).

Learning activity begins where it ends, which is in a child - in the child's thinking, desires and expectations.

The puppet as a pedagogical figure enables children to traverse the activities and it allows an adult to select (the space, time, educator or teacher) freely, which means that everybody can pick up his/her own way of research according to his/her competences²².



EXPRESSION

1. The communication is influenced by body language, the puppet's figure, its tone of voice and the words,
2. A child would never disappoint a puppet ((s)he would disappoint him/her self);
3. Every puppet has its own voice
4. Mood influences the quality of responsiveness
5. pedagogical love ensures safety, happiness, optimal functioning of nerve system, time for creative reflections, possibility for artistic and scientific expression

Learning activity begins where it ends, which is in a child - in the child's thinking, desires and expectations.

Figure 23: Expression

**Expression ► with the support of an expert
Expression, solution, challenge,
learning dialogue ► research + discovery
Inventiveness ► ingenuity, resourcefulness,
communication**

Expression ► exhale ► tasks, solving ► challenges

Impression ► getting closer, expression = growth + development

The expressions of children always happen with the support of an expert/adult/experienced one

Connection ► link with the environment, present, modernization of a problem

Figure 24: Expression - definition by the participants of the training programme PP 2015

The participants have expressed the need for more knowledge about the

²² see in Marjanovič: Razvojna Psihologija

production technique and animation of puppets.

1.1.4 Appearance²³

When we begin to make the puppet and create its image, we consider the goal and vision that the puppet/protagonist is to experience together with the children. On the one hand, we have to consider its didactical purpose and literary beginning, on the other the introduction and the first meeting. Based on this, we can already begin to draft the basic elements of the puppet. Considering the foreseen basic activities, it is reasonable to pick material that would be useful in numerous learning situations.

Regardless of the content or purpose, it is reasonable to think about the strong key aspects of the puppet. The image of the figure or puppet is marked – formatted and created by: 1. form, 2. light, 3. colour and 4. movement. The biggest and strongest discernible element of the situation is a face, especially facial features (brains have special centres for that). A person can recognize them very quickly and reacts to them immediately. A face is basically represented by two dots and two lines: (. . --) in varying positions and relationships. The quickest and strongest expression is achieved by two dots in mutual dialogue that represent eyes.

Eyes are the most important element for receiving impressions. The next most important feature is a vertical line in different directions, carrying the message of the puppet. Eyes (two visible dots) give the impression (reflect the character) while the mouth represented by a line transmits the message of the puppet (mimics, verbal communication). Eyes and mouth provide more accurate information about



²³ Creating, representing the appearance - of face, expression of a puppet



development. It is also a supporter and assistant in the process of adaptation, learning, education and self-education with the precisely defined purpose being simultaneously open for current reactions or the procedural mental development of children and educators (pedagogical puppeteers).

A puppet as an image gets its own name. The name is usually part of the message of educational vision.

The image of the figure or puppet is marked – formatted and created by: 1. form, 2. light, 3. colour and 4. movement. Eyes represent impression, the mouth represents expression and the nose represents atmosphere. A puppet has a name.

the puppet's way of thinking and communicating. If we add another vertical line representing a nose, the puppet also reflects its mood (atmosphere, the spirit it shows and looks for in the surroundings). Two dots (on the same level) and two lines (vertical and horizontal) represent the elements of the non-verbal message (expression) about what the puppet knows, how it feels and why it behaves in a certain way. It only takes a few moments for children to receive that message. Based on this, they create a philosophy (vision) and course (strategy) of adjustment or reaction (functioning), and the course of learning and disseminating knowledge²⁴.

When the basics of the puppet have been created, we begin to embellish it. Aesthetics is one of the basic human needs, as mentioned by Maslow.

A pedagogical puppet is a carefully thought through, planned and formed tool, figure or being with the intention of supporting a person's mental



Aesthetic aspect

Name

The image of the figure or puppet is marked ► formatted and created by:

1. form
2. light
3. colour and
4. movement

Figure 25: Appearance

²⁴ According to Kandel, 2014



RO



MINU



TRAJA



KRALJ MATJAŽ
AND ALENČIČA



SREČKA



JAGODKA AND
CENE



KARLO



PERLITA AND
FERDO

1.2 Part II: Why a puppet, where and when?

The story of the implemented kindergarten curriculum

In its essence, a puppet carries a spirit of a past period²⁵. Animism²⁶ can influence the functioning of real current forces (energies). The secrets from the past empower contemporary life and open the possibility for bringing back to life and breathing new life into motionless objects represented by a puppet. Jurkovski lists different types of puppets such as religious, aristocratic and folk. We would add the Pedagogical Puppet to the list as well.

The puppet comes among giants and gods (children and educators) to encourage mental growth and development – mental breakthrough. The puppet can communicate and connect the giants and gods who sometimes may not like each other so much since those who already know what is right do not see the point in making things better and those who know how it is would like good or even the best things. Giants show their power, they want to climb the ladder and thus the smallest ones at least stand on the tips of their toes before they can answer.

Giants like to be noticed so they gather and manipulate information, sometimes even by force with a lot of thunder and lightning. But the path of the gods is different. Gods solve issues in a more peaceful way. They are able to permanently and reasonably upgrade good tradition and do not change the divine world in which they feel good. Permanent and constant improvements are only a light breeze so we can breathe more easily and keep good spirits. The Gods do not only hold power, they get it for a reason and they do not show

off with it. The power settles in them because they have created the best possible conditions for optimal or at least improved functionality. Because of this ability, the Pedagogical Puppet and Pedagogical Puppeteer are unique, extraordinary and vital elements in a period of sustainable and deep mental adaptations. The Pedagogical Puppet is not an ordinary, traditional puppet that passes on a good thought or moral but it encourages us to the best possible creativity in time and space. This puppet masters the skills of current pedagogical communication that encourages innovative learning. Moreover, it knows how to find exceptional learning sources that enrich mental process and enable the development of referential goals and it has the ability to release the scent for experiencing (formatting memory), imagining (imagination) and creating (realizing new mental constructs for humane purposes).

1.2.1 *Creating the Didactical Map*

As it says in the Encyclopaedia Slovenia (1992, p. 340), puppetry is a form that turns an inanimate object into a theatrical figure animated by an actor/puppeteer. Pedagogical puppetry is a form that transforms the puppet into a learning theatre figure that encourages the thinking process with the intention of creating, evaluating, improving and presenting current products of children / future citizens in an innovative community – with the support of educators and other experts and parents.

The Pedagogical Theatre or Pedagogical Stage denotes a type of literary-didactical art in which a puppet plays the role of a teaching magnet. The magnet is logically connected to thoughts that are fast as lightning, not only to gain admiration but also to get attention in such a way that it creates

²⁵ Collectively unconscious according to Jung

²⁶ In Jurkovski (1995), read more in Propp, Bethlehem, Bruner

a permanent memory as opposed to an occasional visit to the theatre. The scenic stage represents an open learning environment.

Mise-en-scène is an expression used to describe the arrangement of actors and scenery on a stage and the setting for action and speech regarding the content of a work (SSKJ, 2000). In a pedagogical mise-en-scène, this arrangement is called the implemented kindergarten curriculum or Didactical Map.

The text in puppetry is literary material for puppet performance²⁷. The text of a puppet used for pedagogical purposes is a literary-didactical story created in advance and corresponding to the implemented kindergarten curriculum that remains open for creative attempts by children and for the reactions of the Pedagogical Puppeteer.

The puppet represents a kind of connection with ancestors and has experiences from the past while the Pedagogical Puppet offers both pre-knowledge and challenges. Nevertheless, any puppet only represents itself.

For creating the Didactical Map, the educators stick to the following pedagogical principles: 1. teamwork for mutual revision, 2. possibilities and opportunities for children and educators to change groups, 3. proactive cooperation with parents, 4. being aware of the mission of education, 5. learning through discovery, 6. the integration of the new into the good old things, 7. being aware of the presence of a hidden curriculum, 8. social communication network, 9. perceiving children as the essence of the educational programme and 10. respecting children²⁸.

The literary-didactical story is the story of all times. It is a contemporary and true story that can be changed, adjusted, tested, checked, concluded, focused or created according to the needs and expectations of the children and educators. The story in which we live and which we so-create is alive, malleable and open. The story has already begun and already happened but today, we have the chance to relive it and change or adjust it to our needs, expectations or beliefs. This is a pedagogical story that unfolds before us and which we live and create. It is mutual, our, your and my life story. The imagination and reality come closer, intertwine and together create a talent and a gift. The story enables reflection on and the creation of something that has not yet existed. By mutual learning and one's own thinking, we build a new world. In this new world, new thoughts, desires, ideas and goals are born that lead to new mental novelties.

"The pedagogical story is created on the basis of a research question and upgraded two to three times a year as we solve the literary-didactical conundrums that arise in the form of a learning challenge. The conundrum represents a learning problem and/or necessity that needs to be resolved so our lives can continue without further disturbances. In this way, the story offers both large and small learners a chance to resolve the so-called thinking processes using different techniques, skills and meaningful materials that help children solve the conundrum or unfold²⁹ the story.

²⁷ Encyclopedia Slovenia, 1992, p. 343

²⁸ In Antič et al., 2013, 2015: "Children are seen, heard and respected."

²⁹ From Pedagogical Innovation, Literary-Didactical story, 2015, p. 16, Antič et al., 2015.

Terminology:

Pedagogic puppetry is a genre in which a puppet(eer) encourages thinking, creating, evaluating and presenting the learned things

Pedagogical theatre represents the variety of literary-didactical art in which a puppet plays a role of teaching magnet

The stage is represented by the open learning environment

Pedagogical mise-en-scène = Didactical Map/implemented curriculum

Text of a puppet is literary material for the pedagogic influence of a puppet or a Literary-Didactical story. It is alive, malleable story, which we live and co-create. It is a pedagogical story created on the basis of a research question and it solves the literary-didactical conundrums

Pedagogical puppet is a connection with the challenges in time

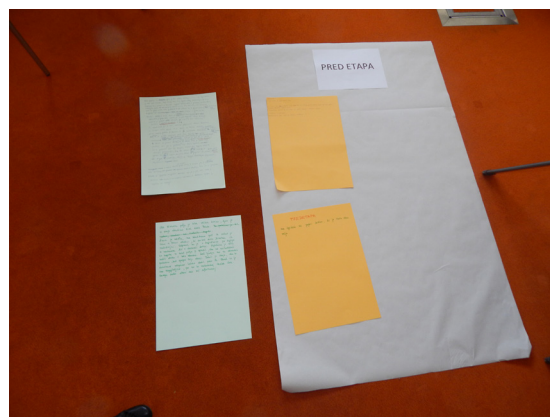
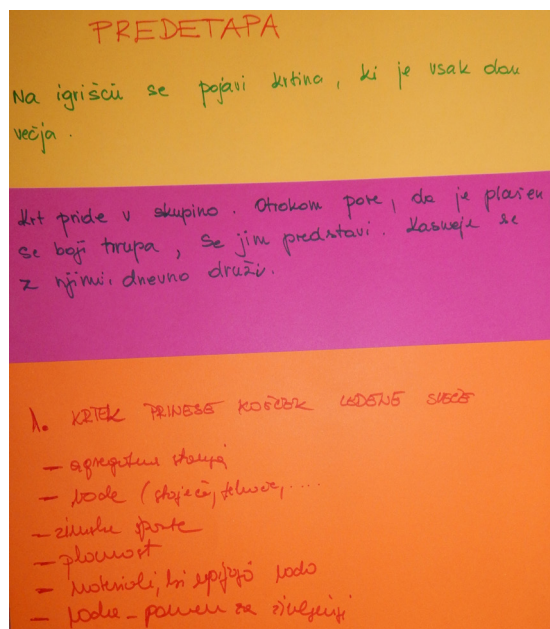
Figure 26: Terminology

The participants in the training have realized that the learning story is not a trick but a true story, which becomes such when created together by children and adults. Each story follows a learning goal and includes all five measures according to Dewey. The story can be closed or open. The open one is more flexible for the pedagogical process.

1.2.2 Assessment

The didactical Map is a tool for assessing the implementation of the kindergarten curriculum in an educational institution and is therefore intended for all educational workers (educators, teachers

and management). The Didactical Map is written according to the development of the literary-didactical story. The story is developed in accordance with the self-regulation of learners (learning groups, including educators, parents and other participants). Self-regulation is an autonomous form of control or assessment of events accompanied by the quality evaluation of the events and the partial (current)



outcomes. In this way, coincidences often happen but we give them meaning and include them when implementing the so-called spiral curriculum, which is one of the open forms of planning for the educational process. There, pre-knowledge and existent knowledge integrate into the learning process and influence future learning³⁰.

Assessment of educational process with a puppet

The Didactical Map is a tool for assessing

The story is developed in accordance with the self-regulation of learners (learning groups, including educators, parents and other participants). Self-regulation is an autonomous form of control or assessment of events accompanied by the quality evaluation of the events and the partial (current) outcomes. It enables the implementation of the so-called spiral curriculum (according to Bruner), which is one of the open forms of planning for the educational process. There, pre-knowledge and existent knowledge integrate into the learning process and influence future learning.

Every plan has a subject and content (content units) and a research question forms a didactical unit. The research question outlines and forms the goal of the learning path. It is not just the question of a result. In addition, it offers possibilities for checking and assessing the measurements for the successful achievement of the desired goal. The puppet(eer) improves educational process, it is a form of innovative learning.

Puppeteer = inventive educator with pedagogic vision: "Getting closer to the children for their optimal achievement of educational goals"

Figure 27: Assessment

Every plan has a subject and content (content units) and a research question forms a didactical

unit. The research question outlines and forms the goal of the learning path. It is not just the question of a result or achievement but it defines the path toward the goal (strategy). In addition, it offers possibilities for checking and assessing the measurements for the successful achievement of the desired goal. It also provides learning sources, materials and the formation of the scene or learning environment. The learning environment is not only a space but it represents the philosophy of work, concrete learning actions for provoking and creating thoughts and skills. The Didactical Map foresees possible detours or changes, adjustments and improvements with the purpose of strengthening the basic purpose (learning goal).

The didactical story is a learning process. Complexity, dynamics, tolerance influence on the educational process. Therefore, it is reasonable to change and to regularly collect proofs of the quality of vivid learning to enable holistic growth and full development through regular feedback (learning actions). Feedback represents the activation energy of education involving educators, parents and other experts. The Didactical Map includes an active bank of information that help us decide how and where to continue. Through meaningful reflections, action research³¹ with the principle of triangulated gathering, and selecting and interpreting information, the path of discovery that guides and plans the content of future learning is enabled. Reflections on information gathered from triangulation will help us outline the most logical learning path in the future.

The future of learning. Learning proofs should be stored at least for a while or until the end of the project. The Didactical Map not only shows

³⁰ According to Bruner, 1960

³¹ Encourages the use of different methods of gathering and interpreting information

the paths we went through and planned for the future, but it also denotes all the milestones of qualitative mental breakthrough and success and time for celebrating achievements. It is a harvest time, time for picking the fruits and a time for the meaningful and natural conclusion of the learning cycle before planting new ideas and creating desires and goals³².

1.3 Part III: How to deal with the puppet? I create and assess my story

The puppet(eer) is a catalyst³³ and link to learning content³⁴.

A puppet is an individual essence and part of the educator and child. How do I as a puppeteer and educator act in this role and the experience of the puppet? How do I as an educator create my part of the story with a puppet? Self-reflection. An experiment and recognition. Everybody probably has their own personal story of a puppeteer. The story refers to the educator in the role of a puppet, his/her consideration of what (s)he should say, what is his/her message, what does (s)he want to see and know before (s)he transforms into a puppet. The educator has and plays three roles: 1. The role of an educator (e.g. "I am Frančka and I am an educator."), 2. The role of a puppeteer that brings the puppet to life to make contact with children (e.g. "I, Frančka, animate the puppet named Perlita.") and 3. Frančka who lends perceptions, emotions and mental reactions to the puppet Perlita and at the same time keeps her perceptions as an educator and as an individual. In the role of a Pedagogical

Puppeteer, I create and assess my three-part literary-didactical story in the following way:

1. I am the educator Frančka. I am the way I am and I educate in a certain way. My colleagues, children and parents see me in a certain way.
2. I am the Pedagogical Puppeteer Frančka and I animate the puppet, for example Perlita. I am the way I am. My colleagues, children, parents and others see me in a certain way.
3. I, Frančka, as Perlita am the way I am. My colleagues, children parents and others see me in a certain way.

Based on the reflections (analysis), we can identify our role, our expressions and learn how to professionally improve holistic communication in education within the implemented curriculum. "In the learning process itself, the educator plays the role of a Pedagogical Puppeteer in a way that enables him/her to switch between different roles and start a polylogue. The puppet does not change its role but passes from one role to another. The highest level of polylogue³⁵ is simultaneously held."

1.3.1 Improving communication channels and enabling experience

I improve communication channels, enable experience, analyse and self-reflect, I look for advice and ideas on how to improve my mission as a pedagogue in the role of a Pedagogical Puppeteer.

"The Pedagogical Puppeteer (PP) programme is open. It can be updated and upgraded. The same applies to the story and the process of lifelong learning. A strong aspect of the awareness of puppet animation is our guideline. During the process of creation, we create an awareness of the case study and examine why a puppet is accepted. It does not happen overnight, it

³² More on Didactical Map in Pedagogical Innovation (Antič et al., 2013)

³³ Stimulator and guide, chemical substance that changes the speed of chemical reaction, not becoming part of the reaction (acc. to SSKJ).

³⁴ According to Majaron

³⁵ Suzana Antič

took us more than three years of training and participating in several training sessions under the leadership of our dear colleague Brane Vižintin, who is a professional puppeteer.

It is the question of perception, the combination of multiple components and a different environment (theatre) in which a child has to draw together the threads of the action. The puppet remains the core of the educational programme. A child and an educator need to master the process of planning and the puppet itself and they need to know how to identify with the role of the child and the puppet. Years of practice enable immediate supervision.

How a child communicates with a puppet is important. The Pedagogical Puppeteer always has the function of an actor in a dynamic action. The Pedagogical Puppeteer does not take the role of an adult. The key

element is learning from the context. The element of emotions is also very important in the process.

Likewise, it is important that a constant polylogue is taking place between the children, the puppet and the educator. In imaginative worlds, we solve real problems. Reality is therefore processed in the imagination and thus the reality is less painful and more secure. The presence of thread is also important. The puppet enters and departs. The thread from the point of view of the adults and children is intertwined within different stages. All stages are afterwards united in conundrums/centres and within the process an expert falls in love with a puppet. This only happens when the puppet is homemade for its intended use. Only then can it radiate love, which is the most important feature for the youngest at this stage. Moreover, adults can use the puppet for solving problems. An educator asks the puppet in order to get the response from children."



1.3.2 What can I learn by participating in the Pedagogical Puppeteer training

With the active use of this manual, participation in the training and qualitative self-assessment we can learn how to:

1. Create a puppet and operate with it.
2. Create, assess and evaluate one's own pedagogical work (self-evaluation).
3. Create and follow one's own Didactical Map (one's own methodology or mechanism for self-development).
4. Plan the open kindergarten curriculum of the educational process (to outline the course of innovative learning in an open environment).

1.3.3 Reflection and evaluation of the Pedagogical Puppeteer training

Beside reflecting on the implementation of the pedagogical story written in the open kindergarten curriculum, it is of great importance to reflect and evaluate in a summative way the Pedagogical Puppeteer program. When doing that, it is indispensable to set desires or referential goals and, in accordance with that, the measurements of success, proofs of current reactions and self-evaluation or assessment of qualitative implementation (analysis of work) with suggestions for (self) improvement. Evaluation and mainly the analysis will show how to animate the puppet, what can be created with it and how it can improve the educational process. This is a form of innovative learning.

The puppeteer is an inventive educator with a pedagogical vision: "Getting close to the youngest to help them with their optimal achievement of educational goals". With the help of a puppet, educators and children update expectations according

to our needs. In real life, a puppet(eer) opens the door to imagination. A puppet(eer) is a friend, a leader, supporter and challenger, also having a role in stimulating curiosity in children and in encouraging both children and educators. (S)He settles in the child's endurance because it assures a safe world of pleasant and interesting learning³⁶.

Suzana Antič, headmistress: An axiom³⁷ of a Pedagogical Puppeteer is a principle of laboratory and teamwork because pedagogical work with a puppet is vivid story and formation that arises in a multidirectional communication channel.

Desire or referential learning goal and measurement of success, proofs, self-evaluation, assessment of qualitative implementation with the suggestions for improvement

Figure 28: Reflection and summative evaluation of Pedagogical Puppeteer

After discussion with participants in the training, the lecturers realized that unfortunately this sort of training does not exist or that there are only a few seminars that tightly blend theory and practice (demonstrations, exercises, changing rooms, enriching the pre-knowledge of participants with the knowledge of lecturers and the pre-knowledge of other participants). The content of the training

³⁶ In Literary-Didactical story, Antič et al. 2015, p. 12

³⁷ Axiom as an indisputable principle, fundamental truth that does not need any further proofs. Suzana Antič.



was realistic, we carried out real learning actions, real games and performances in which the participants were actively engaged and challenged to co-create. The participants in the training and lecturers together formed a new didactical story – the Didactical Map. Thus, they felt the energy of teamwork and the mutual planning of the implemented curriculum.

They got closer to each other while genuinely exchanging knowledge and making plans for a new story that was a challenge for both the participants and the lecturers.

The participants expressed a desire for more and emphasised how good it is to be part of the process. They realised that they had created “from themselves”. In this way, they felt the difference between the classic individual planning and the innovative planning of the learning story of the entire

kindergarten. The training, though, was affected by early dropping out, as some participants (2) were not prepared for such open training.

After the seminar, we discussed how we could improve the quality of the training and thought about the selection of the target group. Perhaps, it would be better if the entire educational and teaching staff takes part in the training or at least a group of experts from one educational institution.

Likewise, we realised that the participants should get and read our three manuals before they apply for the training so they can more easily coordinate the expectations with the offer and decide whether or not to take part. Moreover, it would be wise to organize the open day event in the kindergarten for potential participants.

The expert workers of the Trnovo Kindergarten unselfishly and openly shared their knowledge



with the participants. They opened the doors of the playgrounds to the participants where they could observe the educational process and talk with the educators about the content and tested themselves under the direction of their mentors. In this way, the educators were faced with a new challenge. The constant active participation was enabled by the work in workshops, discussion and reflections. The participants were thrilled and expressed an interest in further cooperation. There is a big difference between working as an educator/ Pedagogical Puppeteer in a social learning group and with colleagues you have not met before.

The participants discovered a different aspect of puppets; they were introduced to the Pedagogical Puppet. The Pedagogical Puppet has its own personality, story, feelings, love and attachment. The friendship between "me", "us" and the puppet is strong. The Pedagogical Puppet lives and breathes with children, it is close to them and it does not live (only) on the stage but coexists with the group. The Puppet has an expression and the educator's and children's souls bring it to life. The extraordinary teamwork of educators enabled the lecturers to demonstrate the holistic pedagogical work.



The participants quickly saw the difference between a puppet from a store and a "homemade" puppet, which is made with a special pedagogical purpose. In this way, the puppet can have a special communicative value. Moreover, the puppeteer can more easily identify with a homemade puppet so (s)he can function in other directions. The puppet encourages empathy in relation to the children, the puppeteer, the educators and the parents. This sort of work enables qualitative independent and mutual reflections, reflections in pairs as a form of learning based on one's own and other people's experiences. The feedback from children about the puppet is of great importance and has a major influence on the quality of education for the educators and parents. The homemade puppet maintains a constant interactive link between the vivacity and dynamics of learning. In this way, we can more easily and quickly observe the changes in the child's understanding in the learning process as the emotions and dialogue between children, educators and puppet is based on the intensive emotional connection. This experience influences the quality of the communication and the puppet optimizes it. The puppet represents a real problem,

challenge and work with materials. It offers the chance to discovering forms and content as we deal with the gradual transformation of classic focused learning into innovative learning³⁸.

The lecturers realised that the participants in the training had different expectations. The programme, nevertheless, greatly exceeded the expectations since we not only presented the different techniques of puppet animation but we showed and invited the participants to actively participate in learning how to make, use and evaluate pedagogical work with a puppet for a holistic training programme. It was a great innovation and challenge³⁹ for everyone.

1.3.4 Definition and job description of a Pedagogical Puppeteer⁴⁰

The profile of Pedagogical Puppeteer (PP) requires the knowledge of a puppeteer and educator, as well as experience or training. Naturally, the training and the Pedagogical Puppeteer cannot come to life without practical work in groups with children and without the support of parents. It is a performance of the open implemented curriculum, which allows participation in the relevant fields, problem-solving strategies, working with materials, methods of presenting the results, creating ideas etc. In a respectful, pedagogical and moral way, we extract the children's ideas based on the imagination that is released by the pedagogical input/impressions to encourage the development of thinking product⁴¹.

³⁸ Opinion of participants in the PP training programme in accordance with the source UNESCO 2020.

³⁹ Adapted from final evaluation of work in the PP training programme

⁴⁰ The structure of the text is adapted from standardized description of professions, Zavod RS za zaposlovanje

⁴¹ The closing thought of lecturers in reflexion after the training programme

1. Title	Pedagogical Puppeteer
2. Short description	The Pedagogical Puppeteer is an educator, teacher, pedagogue (a person with pedagogical education) who know how to create a learning puppet. (S)He knows how to manipulate it and manage the educational process in a way that guides the learners to achieving the educational aims.
3. What does (s)he usually do	The Pedagogical Puppeteer is an educator, teacher, pedagogue (a person with pedagogical education) who know how to create a learning puppet. (S)He knows how to manipulate it and manage the educational process in a way that guides the learners to achieving the educational aims.
4. Field of work	The expert in one or more educational fields, reasonably including the puppet as a learning magnet or medium between the educator/teacher, children/learners, learning topic and the environment.
5. Work Accessories	An implemented kindergarten curriculum, for example a Didactical map, material, a place for making and simulating a child's play or the implementation of the curriculum and others if necessary.
6. Products and services	The puppet and other proofs of work and learning results, opinions and achievements of children gathered through systematic assessment and the implementation of a spiral curriculum.
7. Knowledge and skills	Knowledge of action planning and implementing the educational process in the context of the spiral development of the so-called open curriculum, creating and manipulating the puppet, presenting the puppet as a medium or learning magnet that is present throughout the school year.

8. Psychophysical competences	The capacity of sober judgement and maintenance of active communication in different roles at the same time. The manipulation and animation of puppet and at the same time managing the learning group and contact with different learning sources. Changing learning stages in a closed and open learning environment. Working with large or small heterogeneous social learning groups. The skilful performance of polilogue.
9. Interests	Art, science, humanism, dance, communication, empathy etc.
10. Working conditions	The support of the management, staff and parents is desired, as well as a convenient learning place. The possibility of constant improvement.
11. Risks	Possible confusion of the Pedagogical Puppeteer with an ordinary puppeteer or to carry out the implemented curriculum without previous additional training or special knowledge and the development of special skills in the creation, animation and manipulation of a puppet, reacting for pedagogical purposes without considering the basic pedagogical or didactical principles of education.
12. Employment possibility	In kindergartens and primary schools and other educational institutions.
13. Education	The module or training programme Pedagogical Puppeteer (PP). At the end of the programme, the participants receive a certificate.
14. Other information	It is advisable to think about personal experiences and expectations before participating in the training programme.
15. Related professions	An educator with additional knowledge of pedagogical puppeteering, a puppeteer with additional knowledge of guiding learners through the learning process.

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All stages are afterwards united in conundrums/centres and within the process an expert falls in love with a puppet. This only happens when the puppet is homemade for its intended use. Only then can it radiate love, which is the most important feature for the youngest at this stage.

Suzana Antič, headmistress of the Trnovo Kindergarten

