

Between Nature and Fantasy



BASIC IDEA

The basic idea is to use theatrical entertainment as a didactic tool, which is:

- able to support processes of interpretation and representation of reality;
- suitable for integrated experimentation of narrative, music, figurative, corporeal and gestural language;
- able to start symbolic, semiotic, emotional, relational and cultural processes.

According to this perspective, theatrical entertainment is a fundamental part of the curriculum, and it is performed with meetings which are run directly by the acting company and combined with activities run by teachers. Therefore, the idea of performing theatrical entertainment only aimed at an extemporaneous performance is left behind.

The methodological system has to be set by the parties, both on organizational-thematic and communicational- relational level. Special attention has to be paid to children's growth.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The format complies with the National Guidance for nursery schools, regarding:

- **development of personal identity** – for its intrinsic nature, this activity promotes the sense of belonging to a team, the ability of taking on a role in a collective context, the strengthening of the self;
- **strengthening of personal autonomy** – children can exercise their creation, expression and verbal communication skills, in an immediately gratifying context; moreover, in a relational contact, they are emotionally pushed to cooperate with others;
- **development of basic skills** – in relation to motor control and gestural expression; linguistic improvement and verbal communication and subjective interpretation skills; listening and understanding skills; strengthening of symbolic “doing”;
- **development of the sense of citizenship** – children are asked to contribute and to measure themselves against the others and the team, in order to reach a common goal, following roles, turns and rules in a contributive and significant way.

PLAN OF ACTION

The activity is organized as follows:



Moments of animated narration,
run by the acting company, inside the school;



Animated path into the wood near the lake, with the participation of children's families and the local community.

This program is combined with **activities run by teachers** in every single class.

The exploration of the environment, the wood in particular, **is the basic theme**, which is developed in harmony with school programs.

The animated narration is used as a communicative channel, able to catch an active involvement, to stimulate emotions and imagination, and to support the building of knowledge and sense.

The modular planning makes it possible to manage every stage with flexibility.

1. THEATRICAL ENTERTAINMENT AS WARMING UP



This stage introduces some paths of exploration and knowledge, creates a positive emotional atmosphere, raises curiosity and expectations, stimulates imagination, and creates new senses.

OBJECTIVES	<p>Cognitive level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ understanding a plot;○ memorizing some parts of the story;○ extracting information from the story (i.e. characters of the environment)○ getting basic relationships which occur randomly between events and changes;○ establishing connections of time (before-after);○ improving organizational skills;○ living and expressing sensations. <p>Discovery level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ discovering reality and changes;○ discovering new forms of narration;○ creating personal images;○ expressing with the body what children have imagined. <p>Relational level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ discovering the importance of connecting with external people;○ listening in an active way;○ improving dialogue and personal expression skills.
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<p>ACTIVITY</p>	<p>THE NARRATING VOICE – An actor reads the story on a very big book. There are no images, so that children are stimulated to create personal mental images.</p> <p>Then, these images will be discussed, compared, mimed, and expressed graphically and bodily, with the help of the actor.</p> <p>Voice, intonation, modulation, along with mimic and gestural expression, are communication tools which have to be get, interpreted, understood and imitated.</p> <p>TEACHERS' ACTIVITY – The activity goes on in every class, with mimic games, nursery rhymes and dramatizations, run by teachers. The aim is to strengthen the memorization and the understanding of the story through repetition, expression, creation of senses, in a collective and interactive exchange; the experience becomes significance through shared action, in confrontation with the classmates.</p> <p>The children represent graphically what they have experienced with greater intensity and they explain their creation.</p>
<p>CONTENTS</p>	<p>ANIMATED NARRATION OF A STORY, created in collaboration with teachers, having the wood as background, which has to be investigated.</p> <p>There are routine characters, which will reappear in the entire project as knowledge and awareness mediators and as involvement and communication facilitators. These characters belong to the classical repertoire of fairy tales literature (the fairy, the dwarf...), but they are also fantastic (the guardian of the spring, the granny of the wood...) or realistic (the woodcutter, some typical animals...).</p>
<p>RESOURCES</p> <p>SETTING</p> <p>SCHEDULE</p>	<p>Acting company – teachers - educators.</p> <p>Children from every class are gathered in a hall and follow the story in perfect listening conditions (pillows, carpets, favourite position, and elimination of disturbing elements).</p> <p>Classroom in case of activity with teachers.</p> <p>Meeting with the actors: 2 hours, divided in two mornings, with the simultaneous presence of two classes.</p> <p>Activity with teachers: more than one morning. The children are divided in different age groups.</p>

2. THEATRICAL ENTERTAINMENT AS LEARNING TOOL



The aim is to introduce the development of a specific theme in a narrative form, by orienting children's curiosity towards an empirical phenomenon in an analytical way, stimulating questions and hypothesis, promoting a positive atmosphere which supports the pleasure of searching and learning, encouraging personal reinterpretation through actions.

OBJECTIVES	<p>Cognitive level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ listening and understanding;○ remembering and repeating;○ extracting information from the story and the experience (i.e. characters of the environment);○ using information and lexicon;○ getting basic random and temporal connections (before-after);○ knowing how to follow a path with indications and explaining it. <p>Discovery level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ getting qualities of the matter and its possible transformations;○ improving sensations and perceptions;○ comparing, getting analogies, inferring;○ creating personal images;○ expressing with the body what children have imagined.○ improving organizational skills;○ understanding and combining sensations and emotions. <p>Relational level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ interacting personally also with external people;○ discussing, explaining, making themselves understood;○ speaking waiting their turn;○ having an active role.
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<p>ACTIVITY</p>	<p>The actor uses a form of narration rich in dialogues, with wide spaces of verbal and gestural interaction with children, both individually and collectively.</p> <p>The children listen to the story, act guided by the character, speak, pose questions, reinterpretate with forms of role playing, mimic and represent.</p> <p>The teachers run some research activities, leading children to “doing”, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ forms of brainstorming; ○ observation and dialogue; ○ tactile paths; ○ dramatizations/role playing; ○ graphical-pictorial activities; ○ manipulations and use of tools (lenses, tools to pour, mixtures...).
<p>CONTENTS</p>	<p>One of the routine characters meets the children to propose “its story” (the theme is always decided with the teachers), as an input to do a specific research about the theme.</p>
<p>RESOURCES</p> <p>SETTING</p> <p>SCHEDULE</p>	<p>Acting company- teachers- educators.</p> <p>The scene of a theme environment is prepared in the classroom where “the experience” takes shape. The actor narrates and acts, leading the children to immerse in the context and to do sensorial and expressive activities through tactile paths mediated by the story.</p> <p>The scenery of the classroom-wood becomes a laboratory, useful for extra experiences of exploration, dramatization, sensorial games, fantastic paths made by children led by the teachers.</p> <p>Children are provided with:</p> <p>Tools to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ watch and enlarge (i.e. lenses); ○ manipulate (i.e. tools to pour...); ○ gather material (posters, photos). <p>Generic material: stones, soil, water, herbs, wood, branches, leaves, nests, fabric, polystyrene...</p> <p>1-2 mornings with the acting company Some mornings in the classroom-wood, for two weeks. The children are divided in age groups.</p>

3. BETWEEN NATURE AND FANTASY

ANIMATED PATH FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES



It is an explorative and aggregative experience, through which children and their families immerse in a deep contact with the forestland, which has been turned into a stage, in order to discover its typical naturalistic features, to live suggestions and mysteries of the fairy world, to enjoy natural beauties, to foster the link between man and environment from an eco-friendly point of view.

This activity merges with the explorative path experienced by children and strengthens what they have learnt.

OBJECTIVES	<p>Cognitive level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ getting to know the area and its naturalistic and environmental features;○ extracting information from the experience and the stories;○ supporting the development of an eco-friendly thinking;○ stimulating fantastic thinking;○ living and expressing sensations;○ knowing how to read a map;○ improving sensorial and perceptive skills;○ knowing and identifying characters, places and environments; <p>Discovery level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ taking possession of near places and spaces;○ living positively a direct relationship with nature;○ discovering rules and the importance of respecting the environment;○ discovering eco-friendly relationships. <p>Relational level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ developing a sense of belonging;○ supporting the ability of sharing in family and in a group;○ listening to the others in an active way;○ improving the ability of speaking and expressing personally.
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ACTIVITY	<p>It is a guided path, including animated scenes created with the contents developed in the previous exploration and laboratory activities.</p> <p>The animation includes wide spaces of direct interaction, both on a dialogic and sensorial-experiential level (touching, identifying, listening, smelling ...)</p> <p>At the end of the path, there is a graphic-expressive space for children and an opinion survey for adults.</p>
CONTENTS	<p>The tales of fairy creatures (dwarfs, fairies, speaking trees), of realistic characters (the woodcutter) and fantastic characters (the lady of the herbs, the old sage, the guardian of the spring...) will let children discover naturalistic and local aspects, understand the elaborate life of the wood and eco-friendly relationships, experience a sensorial activity, strike up a friendship with the forest.</p>
RESOURCES	<p>Acting company, teachers, volunteers from some local associations, experts.</p> <p>The wood near the lake is the scenery. The ring itinerary twists and turns in the Parco Valle del Lambro, on the shore of the lake of Pusiano (Lc).</p> <p>The path complies with adequate length and safety conditions. Along the itinerary there are signs to inform about typical and local trees.</p> <p>The natural beauty of the environment is enriched by the realistic scenery of <i>Via delle tane</i> (Nests street), <i>Funghilandia</i> (Mushroomland), the positioning of typical animals, and the staging of fairy villages (the village of dwarfs, the houses of fairies ...)</p> <p>According to the plan, different groups will start at regular intervals, guided by a team leader.</p> <p>Children are provided with a map, suitable to their age from the symbolic point of view.</p> <p>At the end, children are given a “diploma”, to certificate their friendship with the wood.</p>
SCHEDULE	<p>Animation: Sunday morning. The itinerary lasts about 2 hours.</p>