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ZÁZEMÍ

# EDU-GESTALT

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EXPERIENTIAL,  
EMBODIED AND  
EXPRESSIVE  
LEARNING  
FOR FOSTERING  
MENTAL HEALTH



## MANUAL OF ACTIVITIES

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## 1. Introduction: How to use this manual

This manual comes as intellectual output nm. 2 of the project Edu-Gestalt held by four international organizations in 2022 - 2023. This project is widely described in Chapter 3. We find it essential that the reader understands that we don't bring the manual meant to be copied into the school reality only in a technical way. We believe that what connects our cooperation at first is the attitude that brings the Gestalt therapy approach into an educational context. Once we connected as teachers, gestalt therapists, and experiential educators, we discovered that much of the language we use in our work is in common. We describe this further in Chapter 4: Connection among the approaches. Therefore, we invite you to read the activity description and further understand the Edu-gestalt approach. We believe that the personal experience (self-experience) with our activities is the only Way to deeply understand what is going on with the individuals and in the group during the Edu-gestalt process. Through your own experience, you can get your unique understanding, which leads to changing your mindset. And with that, you can adapt many activities into your lessons.

## 2. Edu-Gestalt project: Gestalt concept in Education

In this project, we explore how to support mental health by using experiential, embodied, and expressive learning activities within the Gestalt therapy framework in an educational context. We, as the authors of this manual, are a group that comes from different backgrounds: Some of us are teachers at the University Department of Developmental and Social Psychology in Rome, Italy; some of us teach at the Faculty of Education in the Czech Republic and also work in non-formal education and therapeutic hub and are Gestalt therapists and non-formal educators in Spain, and some of us are experiential outdoor educators in Lazio, Italy. In our opinion, the practical background of educational attitudes is important to be implemented in the school curriculum to bring awareness into pupils' lives.

As we see the link between learning from one's experience and the gestalt therapy approach, we introduced the concept of Edu-gestalt. We find it especially interesting when working with teenagers; at such an age, pupils seek challenge, belonging, and neophilia. At the same time, we invite you to explore how these ideas fit into your specific teaching context and to search for possibilities to adapt the activities to your space. As mentioned above, once you get under your skin with the Edu-gestalt attitude, you can invent many activities that fit your school and teaching style.

Our main goal is to describe how to support mental health by using experiential, embodied, and expressive learning activities within the Gestalt therapy framework in an educational context.

### 3. The approaches

**A. OUTDOOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING:** This is an introduction to what facilitation is good for and why it is important to work with reflection in the Edu-Gestalt context.

#### History and concept of OEL

Experiential learning has existed to a large degree outside of the formal education system and has been seen as belonging to the non- and in-formal educational domains. Nature-based and outdoor experiential learning, as it is known today, took shape in the early 20th century, when educators and youth organizations began to recognize the value of outdoor experiences for personal growth and development. In the United States, organizations such as Boy Scouts were early pioneers of outdoor education, emphasizing camping, hiking, and wilderness skills.

Kurt Hahn was a German educator and founder of the Outward-Bound program. Hahn believed outdoor experiences could help individuals develop the skills and character traits necessary to become responsible and ethical leaders. In the 1930s, he established the Salem School in Germany, which was based on the principles of experiential learning, community service, and personal responsibility. In the 1930s and 1940s, with a group of educators and outdoor enthusiasts, he formed the Outward-Bound program in the United Kingdom, designed to provide challenging outdoor experiences for young people to build leadership skills and resilience. On a philosophical level, the Outward-Bound assumptions are the following:

- one reveres's life for having experienced it in real, dramatic terms;
- from such experience, one learns to respect the self;
- from respect of self-flows compassion for others;
- compassion for others is best expressed in the service to mankind.

Today, the Outward-Bound program has expanded to over 30 countries worldwide and has served millions of individuals. Hahn's emphasis on personal growth, service,

and outdoor experiences has significantly impacted the development of outdoor experiential learning programs. Since then, outdoor experiential learning has continued to evolve and expand, with a growing emphasis on environmental education, team building, and adventure-based therapy. Today, outdoor education programs can be found in schools, universities, and community organizations worldwide, providing opportunities for individuals of all ages to engage in hands-on, experiential learning in the natural world.

## **Objectives of OEL**

- To create a deep and immersive learning experience, incorporating body, senses, cognition, emotions, and social engagement.
- To develop self-awareness and emotional regulation using appropriate interactive challenges and systematic reflection.
- To promote openness to experience and help participants to discover new possible ways of being.
- To foster positive group dynamics to create community and encourage collaboration.
- To cultivate the value of diversity as a resource for a group and a source of personal growth.
- To promote a greater understanding and appreciation of self, others, and the natural world using the environment as a source of well-being and inspiration.
- To teach the practice of reflection as an inner resource to deal with life challenges, both on a personal and group level.



## Principles of OEL

Everything we go through while living can be called experience, but this doesn't mean every learning is experiential. The conceptualization of experiential learning defines the experience as something that involves the person at a sensory, cognitive, physical, emotional, relational, and reflective level. The proposed activities explicitly engage our learners at all these levels to activate their learning process. A classical classroom lecture, a museum visit, or a guided walk in the woods with a biologist are always experienced by the students with their senses, bodies, and emotions. Still, the explanations or descriptions they receive do not directly address these levels or provide open space to interact through them. Our approach to experiential learning aims to actively involve people on all these levels, following the assumption that discoveries made in this holistic process of experience are the ones that have the most deep and durable effect in changing one's behavior since they come from the inside, from the embodied processing of real interactions. To better explain this assumption, we consider a distinction between 3 kinds of learning:

<b>Act of the Educator</b>	<b>“Gain” of the Educated</b>
Teach	Knowledge/Information
Train	Skill
Facilitate	Experience/Reflection

The core aspect we are focusing on here, and in the whole Edu-Gestalt project, as the attitudes have this naturally in common, is the difference in the educator-educated relationship between the first two and the third one. Teaching and training imply an asymmetrical positioning: one who has (the knowledge, the

know-how) or is (skilled and capable of) something is transferring this to the other who doesn't have it or isn't skilled enough. The "adult" speaks or shows; the young one listens or imitates. One gives, and the other receives.

Experiential learning doesn't work this way because everyone is considered a master of his own experience. The educator's act here facilitates the reflective process, which still requires specific skills, attitude, and preparation. Still, the learning points the students will acquire (and embody) are the outcomes of a process that requires mainly their responsibility and effort. Opening ourselves to the experience, going through it, and actively letting the group reflection lead us to insights into our inner world and interpersonal patterns are processes that rely mainly on one's agency and responsibility.

This also makes experiential learning especially suited for adolescents: it takes distance from the scheme of the authority figure that "holds power over" the unskilled ones and addresses them as the main ones responsible for their actions, understandings, and development. Moreover, it addresses three basic needs of teenagers, who are also the final target group of this project:

- Belonging and feeling connected with others and relating to them.
- Discovering new things (neophilia).
- Challenging themselves and reaching goals (going through archetypal experiences like the hero's journey).

The process of the facilitation, considering these needs, can be described as keeping the balance between challenge and safety, both on physical and mental dimensions: challenge (group tasks to achieve, obstacles and conflicts arising, a certain amount of uncertainty and discomfort to deal with) is the fuel for learning; safety, (feeling part of a welcoming group which goes through the same experience, listening without judgment, feeling empathy and compassion, sharing weaknesses, feeling the value of vulnerability) is what opens the door to self-reflection, group mirroring and meaningful insights.

The heart of our approach is individual and group reflection. Everybody normally does reflection; it's the process of making meaning from experience by listening, observing, paying attention to self, others, and context, noticing patterns, and realizing assumptions, eventually changing the way we look at things. Creating and allowing enough appropriate space for it allows us educators to support people in their transition and changing phase.

Reflective practices aim at recognizing and expressing what one is experiencing and learning in the present moment, transforming insights into practical strategies for personal growth. It's about questioning what is at stake by asking young people when and where things happened, who was there, what people did, what the situation's outcome was, and what they wanted to happen. It continues with exploring their feelings before, during, and after the experience so that they become aware of what made them feel good (perhaps making them want to feel the same way in other experiences) and what made them feel bad (perhaps making them not wanting to feel the same way in other experiences). Looking into bodily sensations and emotions helps young people identify underlying needs and wants; meeting those needs and wants helps them create fulfillment. Feelings are spontaneous and emotional responses to what is being experienced, giving good information about what's happening. A warm facial feeling might mean one is embarrassed, butterflies in the tummy can mean one is nervous or excited, and clenched teeth might signify one is angry. Being aware of physical signs allows young people to better identify how they are feeling, and engaging with how they are feeling can give them better insights into what they like, what makes them feel anxious, uncomfortable, or angry, rather than what makes them feel satisfied or joyful.

When you invite your participants for reflection, ensure it doesn't feel like an assignment, or they may resist it. Rather, make it happen as a natural part of the activity. Reflection is a complex, nonlinear process that doesn't necessarily produce immediate insights. Slowing down and allowing proper time for answering is very important in the reflective process, so once the question has been asked, pause and be patient. Silence also speaks and shows something about the group process or the reflective space itself. Quick answers from young people might reveal an attempt to assimilate the answer to their prior knowledge. It is better not to expect the "right

answer" but simply the answer that emerges at that moment. Making statements about what is true in the reflecting group will potentially close the reflective space. Allowing moments of not knowing helps young people to progressively unfold a good quality inner dialogue. Reflection is a process where part of the information is elaborated unconsciously, and insights are constructed via poetic arguments that are quite different from logical reasons.

Authentic reflection and deep personal insights happen when young people "own" what is being reflected upon and can connect it to their thoughts, feelings, values, intuitions, and experiences. The learner is given a central role and is invited to take responsibility for his/her learning, which in this way, Way becomes rooted in his/her perceptions and emotions. This is why you must balance steering and not steering, guiding yet not controlling the intrinsic learning process that occurs during reflection. However paradoxical it might seem, reciprocity is fundamental in the learner-educator relationship, where the educator is co-responsible for the learning process, and the learner owns his/her learning process. Make sure that questions are asked progressively, maybe starting from facts they noticed, and then you might go a bit deeper into how this or that fact made them feel. It's a matter of exploring by balancing the comforting and the confronting. It's better that questions are adapted to what is happening in the here and now, bearing in mind the learning context and aim of the learning experience. Asking open and personalized questions allows individuals to freely explore their point of view and avoid narrowing their perspective on the issue. The questions can extend to what and when something has been noticed, how things evolved, and the impact on the person, others, and context. It's better to avoid generic questions. You can opt for something like: "What triggered me when I reacted that way towards my companion?" "What made me feel satisfied about what I did in this situation?" or "What didn't I do that I could have done when this happened?" sound more personalized. It also helps young people to focus more on the present moment and to avoid expressing opinions rather than reflecting. It's a matter of being process-directive rather than solely content-oriented. To build a "reflective space," questioning should be driven by the genuine interest of young people with a non-judgmental curiosity for how they see, think, and feel about what is at stake. This means that providing too much information or interpreting what is being said generates misunderstandings and reduces the space for authentic and

owned learning. This attentive explorative attitude will also be reflected in the group and modeled by the young people.

Avoiding rhetorical questions, sense the group, and decide when to stop is always important. Sometimes, enough is enough.

What turns reflection into a healthy habit and, consequently, an effective tool for being more aware is finding ways of making it manifest through reflective practices that young people can return to when needed. The underlying principle is that insights and learning can happen well after a learning activity or experience. Reflective practice can help re-visit and strengthen neural connections, thus contributing to developing new habits, skills, and mindsets. Reflective practices are intended to support young people in learning to pay attention, listen to themselves, notice their assumptions and patterns, providing space for seeing the unseen and things differently. This is reinforced by the fact that reflection is systematically captured and expressed - written, spoken, pictorial, and body posture. The idea behind this is that learning comes from the 'in the head' reflection and from representing the reflection itself. When suggesting reflective practices, it would be useful to remember that individuals reflect and process information differently, according to their intelligence profile (Gardner, Howard (2011) *Frames of Mind. The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York: Basic Book.). Those who are word smart will prefer reflecting verbally or writing in a diary, those with a strong intrapersonal intelligence will prefer to reflect alone or in silence with solo moments, and those with a prominent interpersonal intelligence will prefer to reflect in a group. Others with strong bodily-kinesthetic intelligence will reflect better when walking or modeling clay. The ones with a strong naturalistic intelligence will prefer looking for an element to represent their feelings or what the experience means to them while walking in the woods. So, considering that we are all different is very important in promoting reflection through diverse reflective practices.

Remember also that if you have a big group, inviting young people to reflect in smaller groups of two/three, or four people could be useful. At times, a big group can be intimidating, and young people can feel exposed and be afraid of others making fun of or criticizing them. Once you sense that participants feel safer and trust each

other, you might want to invite them to share in a bigger group. The act of sharing is inspirational and allows the trust among peers to grow even bigger.

## **Guidelines to OEL**

In this chapter, you can find some practical hints for implementing nature-based and Outdoor Experiential Learning activities and reflective practices:

**Setting:** The physical setting for experiential learning practices can vary widely, from indoor to outdoor environments. When designing a learning experience, consider the group's needs and the environment to prepare the program, organizing the participants' materials, time, space, and bodily needs.

**Safety:** Safety is a top priority when designing outdoor experiential learning practices. This includes ensuring that the physical environment is safe, that all participants are conscious of the importance of safety, and that they are prepared and equipped for the activities they will be engaging in.

**Safe Group:** Creating a safe group is essential for effective experiential learning. This can be achieved by ensuring that all sharing and participation is voluntary. Allow various ways of expression to create a supportive and inclusive environment where everybody can find his way to participate, contribute, and experience authenticity. Every kind of participation is invited, emphasizing curiosity and suspension of judgment. Make sure it is process-oriented learning, meaning that the "outcome" must be looked for in all that happens during the social interaction, not only in the activities' eventual results or in the final product's judgment. In this way, "non-participation" can be observed and reflected upon as a choice and a way to deal with the ongoing process.

**Challenge:** Engaging in curiosity and commitment requires a certain level of surprise and difficulty, as well as opening and maintaining a space to express and experience creativity, perseverance, and courage. However, challenges must be balanced and adjusted: on one side to avoid disengagement and on the other side to prevent excessive frustration and conflictuality, which can shut down the learning process or trigger experiences that are hard to process in a group setting.



**Before:** Before beginning any experiential learning activity, providing practical guidance to participants is important. This may include tips for creating a circle, launching activities, and fostering concentration and participation. Remember that participants co-create the learning process with you. Therefore, there shouldn't be any hidden agenda from your side. Always make explicit the aim of the activity but not the learning outcomes, as you don't know what the individual learnings will be. Ensure participants have clear instructions for the session so they can make a conscious decision on how they want to engage. Always remember that challenge is by choice and that you are there to help them find their answers, as they are the main actors of their learning.

**During:** Safety management is essential during the learning experience to ensure that all participants remain safe and engaged. Observe and stay attentive to take care of this aspect, as well, because by doing so, you can identify potential risks or concerns in time.

**After:** The Reflection Process is a key component of experiential learning, as it helps participants make sense of their experiences and draw meaningful insights from them; remember that reflection can only be kindly invited and shouldn't be transformed into an assignment. Moreover, as it is a holistic process aimed at connecting participants' body and mind so for them to become more aware of who they are, what they feel, what they think, and how they relate to others and the context they are in, it can be initiated and facilitated whenever you spot the need for it. Reflection can be invited to:

- before action (for example, if you notice resistance in the group to start the activity and you would like to make them aware of what's happening to them and what keeps them from participating);
- in action (for example, if you notice that the group is stuck or if some group dynamic needs more attention);
- After action, that's when the activity is over, and you want to offer participants a space to become more aware of what happened and their emotions and behaviors.

Make sure you choose different ways to start and process reflection to tap into participants' diverse intelligence profiles. You can use images, clay, body expression, drawing, or natural elements to start or conclude the reflection process.

**Closing:** Remember to "wrap up the session" by helping learners understand how their experience applies to the world. Support them in making connections between what they have learned about themselves and others and the context in which they are.

**B. IMPROV. THEATRE: the fictional experience with real life and what is good for an educational context.**

In connection with what you read above, we must say that you find a lot of experiential learning in drama. When we talk about drama, we mean the drama process that does not necessarily aim to produce a product (performance). More likely, it links to the exploration of some topic or phenomenon. We underline methods that use improvisation for the work, which is why we bring co-creation and attunement to the field.

## **History and concept of Improv**

The roots of improvisation go back to ancient times when improvisational elements were present in the theater. Improvisation was present in the Renaissance period, and its Commedia dell'arte was a performance created on the street based on actors' knowledge of the basic plot and story. It can be found in the work of Konstantin Stanislavski, who was the first to involve improvisation in acting training, The Living Theater in the USA, partly using improvisation during performances, up to the second half of the 20th century to the well-known pioneers of improvisational methods and theatre Viola Spolin and Keith Johnston.

Viola Spolin was an American director who used drama and theater games not only to teach acting but also in social work and social education when working with immigrant children. Her invented theatre games were based on physical expression more than words. Therefore, she created a space where language and cultural

barriers were weakened and immigrants were integrated. Based on her work, a Chicago improvisation scene was developed.

Keith Johnston was conducting his Way of workshops on improvisation in Great Britain. His thoughts on improvisation and performance and behavior appeal to a wide range of groups, from actors and theater schools and companies to therapists and managers.

At the beginning of the 21st century, improvisational theater groups started to be created across Europe. Improvisational theatre, also abbreviated "impro" or "improv," is a performance that is not performed in advance, is not prepared, and thus arises spontaneously on the spot. It is based on creative cooperation and collaboration. Improv is performing without preparation. It is responding in the moment to the stimulus of our immediate environment and our inner emotions.

Step by step, improvisation has crossed the theatre space and stages and entered different areas. Using improvisation and training its principles has crossed the walls of theatre and staged performances. Nowadays, this tool is applied in different fields and areas and is known as applied improvisation. Applied improvisation means using the principles and tools of improvisational theatre in a non-theatrical environment, leading to personal development, organization development, or mental health care. Applied Improvisation Network was founded in 2002.

A lot of pilot research has appeared in recent years, suggesting that applied improvisation can be a powerful tool for fostering human growth in different areas, including a positive group atmosphere, safe space, or supporting mental health.

## **Objectives of Improv**

- To cultivate creativity, spontaneity, and imagination.
- To change the Way of perceiving mistakes (in this context, as opportunities to create something new or unexpected rather than doing something wrong).
- To foster cooperation and co-creation.

- To promote the ability to present without preconceived ideas.
- To support awareness of one's body and its use as communication.
- To support mental health and to have fun.
- To develop divergent thinking.

## **Principles of Improv**

The improv principles can be termed differently in different contexts and publications. In the following lines, we present those that are considered significant in mental health care. Examples of the techniques for training these principles can be found in the table of activities accompanying this manual.

Improv crucial principle, so-called yes, and...means accepting and supporting other peoples' ideas and proposals and building up on them, thus co-creating situations on the stage. That helps set your improv partners up for success and builds a shared reality for the performers. Yes, and it creates a non-judging and unconditional positive and accepting environment, enabling cooperation, listening to others, and being listened to.

Another important principle that supports a safe and happy atmosphere is attitude to mistakes. Mistakes are considered opportunities in improv and, therefore, are accepted as a new offer to be worked on and incorporated into the story/the game. Being allowed and allowing oneself to make mistakes gives space to authenticity and spontaneity.

Embodiment (physicalizing) is fulfilled with spontaneity, humor, and play. The name in this frame is Viola Spolin (mentioned above). Embodiment of the roles and objects means using bodies to create the stage reality and express it physically. Also, the response to mistakes is through the body, on the physical level.

Mutual attunement helps players feel "on the same page," being in the flow together, simply being together, and feeling this "togetherness" or doing the same things. Activities mirror neurons.

Thanks to the yes and principle, nothing could happen without the players co-creating, adding their bits and pieces to what they co-create, and working with these ideas. On the other hand, listening and throwing one's ideas away to co-create (not only create) is important.

Spontaneity, or being free to express and create here and now based on the perceived stage of reality, opens the door to creativity and divergent thinking. Good improvisation is not about being talented, as talent is a capacity to experience. If we improve our capacity to experience, we will become more spontaneous here and now, as Viola Spolin claimed.

Play and Humor. Play and free co-creation come with enjoyment and humor, space for risk-taking, and the freedom to make mistakes without real-life consequences.

## **Guidelines to Improv**

**Setting:** Prepare a safe room where it is possible to move freely. Usually, improv training does not work outside for all the possible distractions or unwanted spectators.

**Safety:** All the techniques and activities should be voluntary. Being an active observer is a form of participation, too. Everyone should also know that they can leave any activity at any time. Sometimes, violent acts appear when creating statues or short scenes, which is perfectly normal. Make sure to point out there will be no real violence between the players.

**Reflection:** During or at the end of the training, ask about the participants' (and possible observers') experiences. How does the training experience overlap with their reality? Was there something different, etc. (What was happening that they decided to step out?).

**C. PLAYBACK THEATRE: embodied stories and why narration of personal stories is important in social experience.**

## **History and concept of PT**

Based on improv, storytelling, and psychodrama, playback theatre came to be a widely used method. Jo Salas and her husband, Jonathan Fox, founded the idea of meeting the community in 1975. They established the original Playback Theatre Company in the Hudson Valley of upstate New York in the USA. In decades, many new companies have appeared all around the world. In 1990, the International Playback Theatre Network was established, and in 1993, the School of Playback Theatre was formed in New York, today called the Centre for Playback Theatre. You can check out playback companies and possible workshops in your country online.

The art of playback theater is to embody the narrated experience with various artistic elements. Thanks to this, we can find the meanings of our stories literally "played back" by theater. It's like putting on glasses with different filters. It mixes the possibilities of storytelling and theatrical expression; at the same time, it teaches us to listen actively. It connects individuals in a group, so it creates a dialogue. You get the full cycle of contact in Gestalt Therapy - in touch with your experience and emotions. It is a full way of reflecting on your own life story.

Playback theatre is used worldwide in education, personal growth, activism, and recovery. It brings the audience's narrated individual stories to the stage and then lets the actors improvise so they reflect the narrator's story. By playing a metaphor of the emotional line of the story, the audience can see themselves in one another's story.

## **Objectives of PT**

- To experience and learn active listening.
- To experience that my story is important.
- To get to understand what kind of emotions there are in each narrated story.



- To experience that one's story can also link to my story.
- To experience a safe space for sharing stories.
- To learn how to embody other's story (by using the playback forms), therefore be able to use their body more consciously.
- To experience and understand the meaning of the rituals in society.
- To co-create artistic and social space by following given rituals.
- To experience the relationship as the connection to another person by connecting with his/her story.
- To learn about the importance of dialogue

## **Principles of PT**

Playback Theatre uses improv to work with narrated stories. Continually using it allows us to listen and empathize when embodying someone else's story. Connecting to emotions in the story expands one's emotional intelligence and activates our mirror neurons. By combining the artistic space (the theatre) and social space (the stories) and framing it with rituals, we invite people to co-create a safe space and a community-building attitude. We bring the feeling of belonging and acceptance.

The playback performance includes a group of actors, musicians, a conductor (facilitator), and the audience. When using playback in the classroom, you can also vary from using only single forms as the teaching tool for different lesson goals to making the students become actors themselves and providing them with all the goals that playback theatre brings.

Actors are small groups (2-6) of people who are trained to improvise together. They know each other's embodiment habits, they know what names the conductor uses for assigning the forms for each story, and they are not here to be performing stars but to serve the teller. They can cooperate with the other actors and musicians.

Musicians are usually one or two people, but it depends on the group's possibilities. They sit aside and bring the music as an intro for each story, add music during playing back, and can even be very helpful for the actors, finally bringing the ending melody. Again, it is not an individual performance, but another way to underline the elements of the story, another human sense of listening to the story and bringing it back to the audience.

The conductor is the facilitator, who facilitates communication between the performing team and the audience. He/she is the one who asks for stories and supports individuals in sharing a story or sharing it in pairs with other audiences. The conductor usually names what form will be used, as we have several forms to be known in playback that lead the actors to the way to perform the story technically. You can use, e.g., fluid sculpture, chorus, corridors, and pairs. There are many more, and some playback groups even invent their forms, so don't be afraid to invent.

## **Guidelines to PT**

Prepare the safe space by making the setting clear and kind of in the circle so everybody can hold the stories. Also, make sure that everybody sees and can be heard well.

Let the actors and musicians connect with eye contact before starting the performance. Give them space to be ready to listen to the stories and play those back together. Each of them will embody different elements, and being a team on the stage is important.

Always ask for personal stories and never play back stories from secondhand. It is almost impossible to connect to the experience of someone who is not here. However, you can always ask the teller what his experience is when he/she is in touch with this story of his friend or another person. What does this tell about him/her?

Give questions, not advice, as you want to explore the story and not find a resolution. Playback theatre brings the space to let the story be as it is lived through.

Let the actors look at the teller after each story so they can honor the story by giving it back to the teller. It is a very easy principle to get in real contact.

**D. PROCESS DRAMA: how to step into the other's shoes and reflect on the lived experience**

## **History and concept of PD**

In the 1920s, thanks to social changes, Americans became more aware of education in art subjects. Immigrants came from Europe and were among the first to bring cultural richness and extracurricular activities to immigrant children and workers. The programs were largely focused on education and training art. Society's interest in drama and acting grew as the new film industry grew. The changes enabled the emergence of new forms of art education, and these changes in the theory of education led to the development of creative drama. This new movement in education was named progressive education and focused on how to raise and educate children in the 20th century.

A new reform type of pedagogy is emerging—pragmatic pedagogy, represented by John Dewey. This pedagogy is based on pragmatic philosophy, thus striving for the usable value of knowledge. This pedagogy supports "learning by doing," so it extensively uses the project method, plans, etc. Until the 1930s, although drama was part of the teaching, it was meant to be memorizing and then reciting plays and poetry on occasional holidays and important events.

Winifred Ward, the mother of so-called creative drama and other advocates of progressive education, believed that the process is much more valuable than the performance itself. Ward experimented with exercises with her students, taking careful note. She observed successful activities and developed a systematic approach to dramatic activities and dramatic teaching. She later called this creative drama.

On the other side of the world, drama was applied mainly as a hobby in Great Britain. Later, drama was incorporated into education, and the name drama in education was settled (drama in teaching). Considering the relationship between

theatre and teaching, important personas of the second half of the 20th century were Peter Slade (and his book *Child Drama*) and Brian Way (*Development Through Drama*). Slade and Way influenced drama teachers in Great Britain, the US, Canada, and Australia. Slade's ideas are based on spontaneity and the absence of an audience while having the whole class engaged in the activity. On the contrary, Way focused on small groups and pair activities to develop the concentration and intuition of the learners and their personal development.

As known today, process drama was based on Brian Way's approach. Some famous names connected to process drama, practitioners or theoreticians, are Dorothy Heathcote, Gavin Bolton, Cecily O'Neill, and Jonathan Neelands.

## **Objectives of PD**

- To explore a certain story from the inside (historical period, book plot, fictive story...).
- To step into different characters' shoes and explore different perspectives.
- To foster social and emotional development.
- To build cross-curricular lessons and deliver various learning content.
- To explore and understand a wider context.
- To discover one's attitudes and values.

## **Principles of PD**

Process drama (also called structured drama) is typical for its structured approach, which comes with a safe space to experience. The structure provides a lot of control over the participant's actions, and the structured parts allow the facilitator to flexibly change or adjust the agenda to the actual needs of the group. Within the given structure, we explore a certain story together; we co-create it. It can be a

historical topic, a story based on a book or a movie, or a fictitious story. Being in the story and being an active part of it awakens curiosity. Process drama brings us into the roles in the stories, where we can step into someone else's shoes. Typical is entering different characters for a wider understanding of the context from the character's point of view and to be confronted with our values and behaviors. Even if working with a historical piece, everything we create on the spot is fiction for us, which means we can use the benefits of so-called "magic if." Magic allows us to experience various situations, try, and behaviors, and be protected by the roles of the characters we step into. This Way, we experience something we would never have experienced in reality.

Process drama can offer cross-curricular bridges to different yet interconnected content. One process drama can, therefore, at least partially cover topics from history, literature, and civics while providing space for social-emotional learning.

## **Guidelines to PD**

**Setting:** Prepare a safe room where it is possible to move freely. Experiential drama work generally does not work outside of all the possible distractions or unwanted spectators.

**Props:** When stepping in and out of the characters, having some props ready can help clearly distinguish which character (or facilitator) is doing the actions right now. Having a prop is especially important for a teacher-in-role (TIR) technique. The attached table of activities describes that in detail.

**Safety:** All the techniques and activities should be voluntary. Being an active observer is a form of participation, too. Everyone should also know that they can leave any activity at any time. Invite participants to the theatre space or "laboratory" where they can try to be different without judgment. They can try to be something or someone they are not.

**Reflection:** During and after the process drama, reflection is necessary. Ask about the participants' (and possible observers') experiences. How do the drama's

experiences overlap with their reality? Was there something different, new? Read more about facilitating the reflection in chapter 3. a.

#### **E. GESTALT THEATRE: action in the scenery to get to know yourself better.**

### **History and concept of GT**

Gestalt Theatre is a therapeutic approach formed by Stanislavsky's Theatre of Experience and Gestalt Therapy, created by Fritz Perls in the 1950s. Claudia Fress, a Spanish Gestalt therapist and actor's trainer, created its basis. Gestalt Theatre aims to improve the emotional health and self-awareness of the person participating. This therapeutic discipline moves through interpersonal conflict, integrating movement and emotion, and being aware of oneself and all one's senses in the here and now. We also find these topics important in education, and therefore, we shift the application into the educational context with educational objectives.

Gestalt Theatre is a methodology that allows the deconstruction of what is to be human using the individual as part of the theatre scene, especially its emotions. By using human processes as essential parts, it gives legitimacy and credibility to the action that takes place in the scenery. At the same time, the participant is doing theatre. Still, the main goal is to use this method to get to know themselves better, their needs, usual behaviors and reactions, and triggers using their emotional memories. Consequently, emotions are authentic, as they come from the participant during the scene.

The advantages of using fiction are the absence of responsibility about what comes out in the scene and with what emotions the individual connects, carrying a sense that there will not be a punishment independently of what one chooses to do. On the one hand, this allows the person to explore emotions avoided throughout their lives or in specific moments and connect with them even if they would be judged or punished daily. On the other hand, nothing that the "actor" will say will change their biography because they are not acting as themselves. There is no good or bad censorship and judgment. Thus, when acting under those circumstances, fiction relates to the chosen circumstances but not the individual's feelings.



Gestalt Theatre uses fictional situations that can be improvised by using theatre essentials: conflict, characters and roles, terms of bonding, and the urgency of resolution. Theatre also helps people feel comfortable with feeling ridiculed and using their bodies. Another technique that can be used is improvisation, which enhances the probability of free associations, spontaneity, and creativity and brings up unconscious aspects of someone's personality.

Therefore, the person does not act as themselves in the scene – can be another person, animal, object, or abstract phenomenon - but assumes the circumstances given to them about their character and acts freely according to that, permitting themselves to react the manner they choose to. Thus, participants express themselves as if it is not allowed to them or there is not enough time to put the effort into acting differently. By doing so, they connect with their past, truths, and emotions and can relive them, become aware, and integrate, leading to new possibilities.

Individuals' subconscious will come to the surface, letting visible psychological and emotional material that does not come up daily and that they already know about themselves. This is only possible by creating a safe distance from the known self. Using Gestalt Theatre is believing that there is an underlying understanding of the individual that it is possible to transform even if the circumstances are severe because there is always creative potential and possibilities to regenerate the shape and the background in a healthier way.

## **Objectives of GT**

- To question different aspects of someone's personality using fiction: construction of characters and the adoption of roles.
- To reconnect with emotional memory and past personal experiences to get to know one better and their needs.
- To improve spontaneity, creativity, and ability to express artistic and emotional skills.
- To develop mechanisms to deal with unfinished personal situations and approach conflicts constructively.

- To facilitate the experience of being here and now and to be able to take responsibility based on tools of Gestalt theatre and personal resources of each one that is not usually used.
- To have a place to share strengths, vulnerabilities, achievements, and insecurities based on one's identity and their place in society.
- To have a holistic approach to themselves: to be in contact with one's thoughts, body, and emotions and to exist in harmony.

## Principles of GT

Gestalt Theatre combines three principles that are all connected, and they are:

1. To live in the Here and Now – It has a space and time dimension. A space dimension because thoughts must be related to where the body is, so it does not get distracted, and the needs of the individual continue being satisfied. A time dimension since theatre happens in the present moment when it is being acted and, therefore, the future still has not arrived, and the past is no longer available. The physical and emotional experience of the individual is in service of the role given to the participant.

2. To take responsibility for one's actions, thoughts, and emotions, as the individual is responsible for the circumstances of their character when acting. The Way an individual answers to something is not only the responsibility of the stimulus, but also of themselves.

3. To realize what is happening and to learn to be more aware of oneself and what is needed in one's life, accepting the experience as a whole: with themselves, others, and the context.

**Group:** Working in a group improves the experience of Gestalt Theatre. The process is supported by what happens in the group, and it increases the opportunities for connecting and relating at an interpersonal level. At the same time, the dialogue and reflection process are accompanied by several people, and the group is the context and background where it is happening.

Conflict is used in Gestalt Theatre to create the conditions for starting a scene between two individuals (or more) who have opposite wishes and needs at the same time and space. It is a form of connection between opposite forces and a resource for solving problems and moving forward. However, today, it is also something people are quite afraid to step into.

## **Guidelines to GT**

### **1. Conflicts that may arise during the sessions**

In Gestalt Theatre, conflict is always present because it is an element within the theatrical scene. There are three basic elements: the bond of the characters, the conflict, and the urgency of the conflict. For the scene to develop, the conflict must be active, and the participants must get into it; otherwise, working with the scene would not be possible.

The facilitator stands safe, leaving space for the working participants to develop the conflict. The facilitator allows the conflict to occur in the scene since it is the seed for them to learn how they behave, their habits, their styles of communication and conflict resolution and management, how they feel, etc.. Hence, the conflict is essential for therapeutic work and awareness.

Conflict can occur in its very presence or even in its absence. Sometimes, it happens between the participants that once the scene is over, they remain at odds with each other, with a feeling of conflict. In this case, the facilitator must remember that we are working from a fictional context; there should not be conflicts in the real life of the people but imagined conflicts, which are used in the work with scenes.

This is not contradictory to touching emotions that are real, but the conflicts should not touch real circumstances of their lives, as for the emotions that the participants experience in the scenes, the facilitator must give space for those emotions to be expressed freely by the participants, not to run away from them, but to motivate the participants to be able to name their emotions, and feel them in the scene, giving more consistency and authenticity to the characters they are embodying.

If the participants get stuck in the conflict, the facilitator should bring them back to the scene and put them in a theatrical context to resolve and explore what has happened to them and why they are still at odds with each other. People may not have been able to get enough distance between the character they played and real life, which may be because the character they played shares certain real circumstances of the participant. For example, it may be that the conflict was not so fictitious and that it touched them a lot at their own life story level. The person can get hooked on their partner and feel in conflict with them because of what they have lived. Still, in that case, it is necessary that they talk and express what happens to them and clarify what has happened to each one and, if necessary, return to the scene so that from the scene they can finish releasing what they could have been hooked on.

As conflict is a group process, if there are conflicts in the group, whatever they are, but they have arisen in the group, the recommendation is that conflicts are always brought to the group, and the parties are allowed to express their feelings about the conflict and any needs they have about the other person or about themselves.

As a last step, the facilitator asks what the parties propose to resolve the conflict, their feelings and needs and the proposals for resolution.

It is also important that the facilitator is aware of his attitude towards conflicts, how he manages them emotionally when they occur in a group, his perception, his reaction to them, and how he deals with them. This is necessary so that they are very aware of the type of work they will face and assess if they have their own emotional, professional, personal resources, etc., to carry out this work in which they will face people who may come into conflict.

## **2. Emotional management**

The facilitator must be very clear that it is a job in which it is impossible not to feel anything emotionally since the raw material with which professionals work are people's emotions. That is why the facilitator must have a minimum of

self-knowledge of themselves and how they manage their emotions (sadness, anger, joy - both his own and those of others). Knowing how to deal with different emotions necessarily requires having done their process or at least having considerable maturity and experience in the field of personal work. Suppose the facilitator has not worked on their emotionality previously. In that case, they may find it difficult to support or accompany situations or may not even help the participants go through the scenes and get to a healthier place if they need additional support.

They mustn't open conflicts or scenes that they think may result in a release of emotions that they cannot sustain. In an educational context, it is advisable to focus on emotional literacy, which means that people learn to name what they are feeling, develop communication skills, expressive and corporal capacity, creativity, spontaneity, etc.

As the facilitator goes deeper into the emotional aspects of the participants or into biographical emotions, they must be prudent. If the professional does not do good emotional work within themselves, the objectives of the workshop may not be achieved so easily. In short, it is necessary for the facilitator to be very careful and work based on their internal resources and theoretical knowledge to support the group, the person, and the emotions that are put into play during the improvisations.

### **3. Difficulty coping with one's emotions**

Once the Gestalt Theatre facilitator begins facilitating the activities, they will gradually become aware of which emotions affect them the most and which are the most difficult to process. They will also observe which circumstances are more difficult for them, such as personal losses (grief), abusive situations, conflict with parental figures, etc.

It is necessary to pay attention to which circumstances make it more difficult for them to work on themselves personally and support the group when it is related to that circumstance.

In any case, and as previously said, the work to be done is within the educational context. Therefore, even though it is required that the facilitator has enough management over their emotionality, they should not deal with issues that fall within

the scope of psychotherapy as it would be unconventional to open something that will not be able to close. In an educational environment, there is no option to work at a therapy level since it is neither the setting nor a context for that nor consented to by the users.

#### **4. Confidentiality with and within the group**

The framing should be done at the beginning because it sets up the guidelines to keep the group doing effective and respectful work. Framing is a way of taking care of the group, and it can also guarantee that there will be no misunderstandings. It also helps to avoid confusion (you can leave some time at the end to solve any doubts that may have arisen). It is about establishing a clear basis for everyone, and this helps to create security and transparency in the work that will be done. As a result, the work can be more effective and useful.

Punctuality in attending work is always essential, but especially if it is going to be long-term work with several sessions, care should be taken to ensure that people are punctual. Not only at the start time but also if there are breaks in the middle of the session. You should always ask them to keep that discipline of . If punctuality someone is absent, you can't start explaining the dynamics because you would have to repeat it when they join the group.

#### **5. The role of the facilitator in Gestalt Theatre and aspects to consider**

In principle, the facilitator who will implement these activities in educational contexts is not a therapist. This means that these activities should be limited to the educational approach. They will consider the differences between the educational and therapeutic contexts in Gestalt Theatre.

It should also be considered that the dynamics and techniques in the table of activities are not adapted to the context and characteristics of the groups that will benefit from them. Therefore, the facilitator should observe and adapt the activities to the context, circumstances, and quirks of the participants they work with. This is especially important with people with special needs or mental illness.



## **6. Appropriate order and sequence of the activities for the realization of an effective Gestalt Theatre workshop**

A basic structure of a Gestalt Theatre workshop could have the following structure:

**1. MEDITATION:** First, a meditation that usually lasts no more than 10 minutes. It is an active meditation where participants are not usually seated but remain standing. In this case, the facilitator can choose the technique that they consider appropriate to facilitate the group to place themselves in the present, at the moment they are, and to become aware of how they arrive at the workshop. It is a space of introspection, of silence in which the participant can look inwards to observe how they arrive at the workshop and become aware and name that feeling and how they are.

**2. AWAKENING SENSES:** A second phase would be to work through different dynamics, awakening the senses and exercising and warming up the body. This phase is very important not only to facilitate the body expression of the participants during the theatrical work but also to generate a greater awareness of the body and the senses, which positively impacts the subsequent theatrical work.

**3. WARM-UP EXERCISES:** Thirdly, there would be theatrical warm-up exercises, which help to relax, disinhibit, gain more confidence, and increase group cohesion. These exercises, in a way, predispose to greater openness and permission. Less internal judgment also facilitates the improvisation of Gestalt Theatre.

**4. GESTALT THEATRE EXERCISES:** Fourthly, it would be in Gestalt Theatre's actual improvisation activities, which are the central pillar of the activity.

**5. DEBRIEFING:** Finally, getting back to the group and reflection is essential to collect the learning and facilitate the awareness of those issues that the participant had been able to touch. In this sense, the facilitator will first attend to the emotions and feelings experienced during the activity, helping the participant to be able to name said emotions and to analyze their strategies as well as their values and ideas that may have been part of their work during the activity of theatre work.

## **7. Rules for safe and respectful improvisation**

- Do not harm yourself.
- Do not harm your partner.
- Do not damage the space.
- Do not go into explicit sex.
- Do not work under the influence of any substance or drug.

## **8. Technical tips for a better and more effective theatrical improvisation**

For improvisations to be as fluid as possible and for the work to be more effective and cleaner, there are a series of tips that have to do with improvisation itself on a technical level, which will help participants to go deeper and work more effectively.

*a. Accept the conflict proposal.* When the partner brings a conflicting proposal that initiates an improvisation, if the person in neutral denies it, or if they question it, it leaves the partner of the proposal in a situation of emptiness, where the scene would be finished before starting. Therefore, it is important that the person receiving the scene always accepts it when faced with the conflict proposal. Either using a "yes, and?" or "yes, it was me," affirming and taking for granted that the situation is true in the scene's context.

*b. Laughter.* We have all experienced situations where something new makes us tense, and this can make us laugh uncontrollably. This is a symptom of excitement, nervousness, insecurity, etc. So, as it can occur naturally, we invite the facilitator to let the participants know they can include it in the scene. For example, the one who is laughing can say, "I'm laughing at you" or "I'm laughing so I don't cry." The partner who observes that the other is laughing can also include them in the scene, saying, for example, "Wow, you are laughing a lot; that's because you don't care about what I'm telling you."

*c. Speak loud and clear.* Remember to modulate your voice to be well heard and not turn your back to the audience while you are on stage.

*d. Do not invent objects or solutions magically.* Even if it is a fictitious framework in which nothing of what they are doing has to do with them, at the same time, they are asked to trust and enter the emotions that the scene produces in them. The combination of fictitious elements, such as objects that do not exist, non-existing papers they have in their hands, doors that do not exist, etc., only generates a greater climate of unreality, making them escape the scene and not believe the scene they are working on. Therefore, the proposal always works from a relational dimension. In the scene, the only available elements are themselves, you and me. There are no other objects unless the facilitator proposes using a specific object because it is interesting for the action or the scene itself.

*e. Give your partner enough info about their role.* Finally, the person who proposes the conflict must always remember that when they enter the scene, they must give their partner, in the first sentences, the minimum necessary information as soon as possible so that the partner can find themselves in the scene and work knowing who they are, what relationship they have, and what conflict confronts them.

## **9. Debriefing and reflection after Gestalt Theatre improvisations**

a. Essential aspect without which there is no work of conscience.

First, it must be said that reflection is the first thing that one wants to promote through Gestalt Theatre. Without this element of introspection, there is no realization, no awareness, but merely an action that does not change anything in the person taking part, so the facilitator needs to ensure sufficient time is allocated to this phase of the exercise. The most important thing about the activity is to have enough time for the participants to explore what has happened to them, how they felt, and what they are aware of.

b. Structure.

When reflecting, a possible structure the facilitator can follow is asking how they have felt. Remember that people not used to this dynamic type tend to narrate what happened. In this case, the facilitator can again ask the person to talk about their feelings and not describe the events they experienced. In the second phase, you can ask them what has happened, what they have observed, etc.

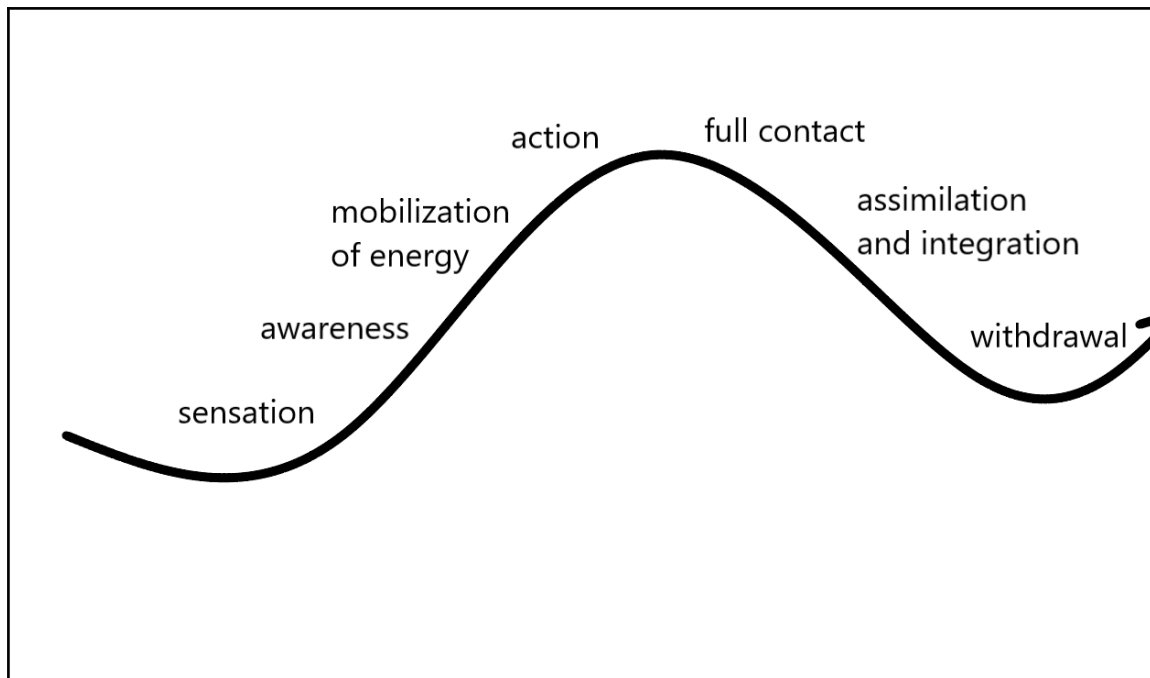
Participants can also point out what strategies they have observed in themselves and what has struck them about their behavior reactions, if anything has surprised them, and what their character contributed to their growth. Finally, asking what you notice about yourself after this work is always good.

## 4. Connections among the approaches

As we mentioned in the introduction, we believe that there is much in common when you go for these approaches when working with teenagers (and people in general). Mainly when you focus on mental health, support spontaneity, and healthy cooperation. In the Gestalt concept, we talk about contact with organisms or the environment. We first work with limitations and rigidities, and then explore frozen adjustments (reflection). Then, we search for creative adjustment. That can happen thanks to awareness - the ability to re-discover spontaneity and safety in the group. Therefore, this leads us to 5 skills that are an essential part of learning for a pupil's future life and, thus, their reflected state of mental health: self-awareness, responding, inter-relating, embodiment, and experiment.

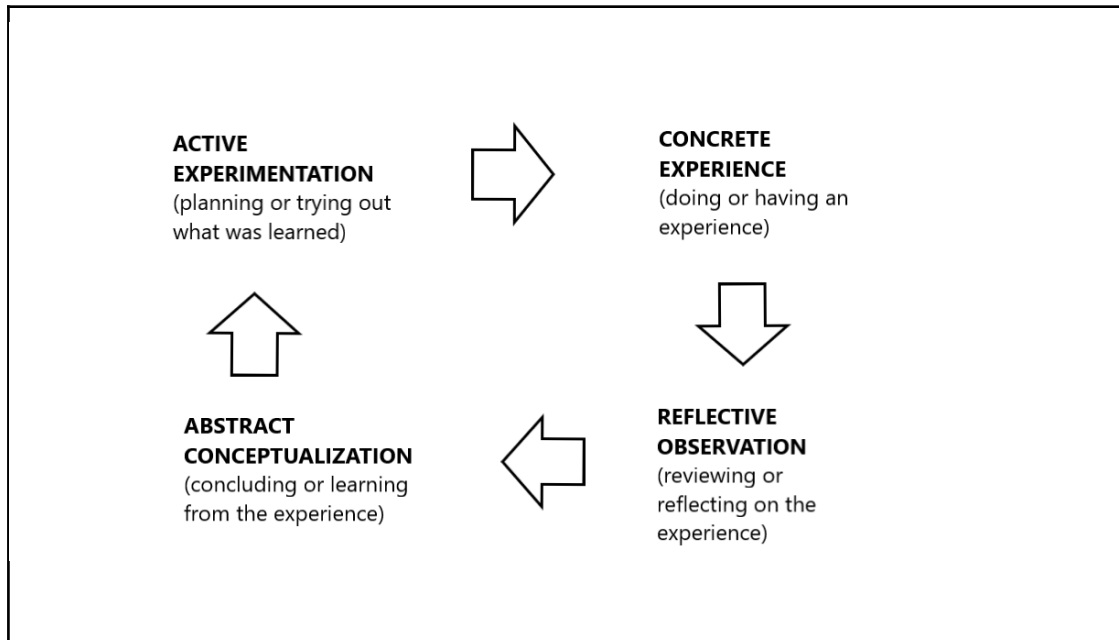
What is good to have in mind is the cycle of contact (Picture n. 1), also known as the cycle of experience or the cycle of formation and demise of gestalt. Seven phases follow each other. They stay in the background while one of them comes to the foreground and forms the figure. Fluently, the figure steps back and leaves the space for another figure. This is called the cycle of contact, and if the figure is satisfied (in the context of our needs), we get closed gestalt.

The phases of the cycle of contact, which are also helpful in understanding the Edu-Gestalt attitude, are sensation, awareness, mobilization of energy, action, full contact, assimilation and integration, and withdrawal.



Picture n. 1: the cycle of contact in Gestalt Therapy

You learn about a similar process in Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (Picture n. 2), and we believe both theories have an important parallel.



Picture n. 2: Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory

Each of us grows as a personality by collecting personal experience and integrating the coping mechanism, after all. The wholeness of the experience is

gestalt. There are several elements that we, as a team coming from different backgrounds, find helpful. We want to share them with you:

**a) Invite the challenge to happen:** work with the comfort zone and bring the students behind it (safely). Offer the challenge and work with their responsibility to say stop. On the other hand, be supportive that they can step towards the challenge.

**b) Work with metaphors:** Make the students' world of experience wider by using everyday metaphors. The huge conflict in the role can be understood on another level if you offer the conflict of jam and all-encompassing doze that doesn't want to let it go into the world freely. The picture of metaphors often opens other topics and ideas.

**c) Focus on needs and limits:** Be open to listening to and reflecting on one's limits. Be ready to respect what students need, even if it does not support your aim. It is supportive of their ability to express themselves and their ability to be embodied.

**d) Meet the reality:** Be attentive to what is going on in the group, and describe what you see, not your interpretation of the situation.

**e) Work also with silence:** silence doesn't mean nothing is happening; often, most of our embodied processes happen during that time. As the world gets faster and louder, youngsters often don't have time to stay silent with themselves. And what happens if they do? Ask them.

**f) Bring up the topic of aesthetics:** Pay attention to aesthetics in the world. The way we perceive the environment is an important experience that influences our personal growth and mental health. At the same time, participate actively in creating aesthetics and be part of the community that takes action.

**g) Let one learn about himself/herself through the group:** Give the space to explore and ask questions so one can find his/her own answers. Let them interact, get in contact, get in conflict, and together find the way to peace. Let them learn that in a group, there is a strong potential for personal growth.

**h) Use playfulness and fun in the body:** open your body to what is fun, not everyday stuff. Embody the sounds and weather, juggle with it, and make it creative and playful to switch off any kind of judging for the feeling of joy.

**i) Be here and now:** Stop overthinking, be here with the people you currently can be, and actively listen to the stories around you now. Be present.



## 5. The role of the teacher in the class environment

In many countries, the primary concern for school teachers is to provide their students with knowledge about the world around them that can enable them to understand life. However, we believe that the teacher's role should not be limited to conveying information to the student who is considered a *tabula rasa* ready to receive it. However, the teacher's role can be to construct and enable the learning process, which assumes, first and foremost, the individual and his or her surroundings. Unlike the traditional teaching approach, in the proposed approach, the focus of interest is no longer on what is being conveyed but on the process itself. Perhaps for some, this might seem to be a limiting role because the teacher is no longer seen as a starting point in this process; conversely, for others, it could be seen as a role that is too challenging because it requires skills not learned during one's training. What is asked of the teacher is to be present in this learning process for students both in an active and passive form, allowing them to experience and benefit not only educationally but significantly in terms of mental health.

We would like to emphasize that for this to happen, the teacher must understand his or her role and how to be present. A starting point in this approach is the authentic readiness of the teacher who first agrees to experience experiential learning, grasps and realizes its benefits and potential through self-reflection, and only then proposes the same process to his or her students. There is no list of excellent teachers because it depends on the classroom, individuals, and the surrounding environment. Yet, one of the concerns should be to improve oneself to enable students to have more and more. We propose helpful reflections for anyone who works with adolescents or youth in schools or educational settings and cares about their learning and mental health, which can be transformed into educational practices.

In proposing this process to the class or group of students, the teacher must be sensitive to his internal attitudes, those of the students, and the stimuli of the environment. In this type of learning, it is essential that the teachers, like facilitators, create an atmosphere of trust between them and the whole group through attention

to the personal aspects of each individual. Therefore, they must convey that they are willing to accommodate positive and negative emotions that may appear.

We want to distinguish the process of reflecting personal emotions from the time of discussing opinions and ideas. You come with different goals in each of these, and not to say that one is better than the other; facilitators should always be aware of what their goal is. Good to remember is that it's useful to guide the participants in both cases to speak from their point of view (e.g., "I think" vs. "People think"; "I felt" vs. "We felt").

Reflecting personal emotions: brings questions about feelings. Facilitators ask for feelings going on now, can describe what they see (e.g., I see you have tears in your eyes when talking about that experience), or ask about how the process was. It is easy to deflect by bringing up factual discussion, as staying in touch with someone's emotions is not always easy. Don't push it. But don't throw reflection off the table by generalizing or forcing your opinion.

Discussion: focuses on the level of knowledge or understanding (e.g., asking the participants: What kind of cooperation did you experience?). It is helpful to share openly in a safe way. Or to wrap up some important information that came out from the experience.

Be creative if you are a teacher who wants to use different kinds of reflective settings. Sitting in a together circle is often helpful, but you can also manage smaller groups first. Participants who don't like to speak up especially appreciate this setting. If there is a deep topic, often reflecting in a couple makes sense. We also used written or drawing methods to change the format and use self-reflection. This usually depends on the atmosphere in the group, the daytime, the possibilities of the classroom, and the individual preferences of the facilitator.

## 6. Activities and basic rules

Gestalt Theatre (GT) rules needed for every activity:

- 1) There can be no physical harm of any kind to the person you are working with (this also includes that you cannot use real life arguments in scenes that could harm your partner. For example, if one of the characters, in real life, has a physical disability, it would be totally forbidden to use that disability as an argument in the scenes).
- 2) We cannot hurt ourselves either.
- 3) We cannot break or destroy anything in the space (curtains, windows, ...).

### a. OUTDOOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

a.1. The reducing island	
<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Experiential learning warm-up.
<b>Topics:</b>	Group decision-making, roles, and cooperation, getting acquainted with proximity.
<b>Duration:</b>	15 minutes (depending on group number and level of challenge).
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Min 6, max 20 (preferred number of participants for the reflection group is 10 people or creating smaller groups of 2-4 people).
<b>Materials:</b>	A 4m x 4m tarp. Preferably an outdoor flat area, however also indoor is possible if there is a space wide enough for participants to move.

<b>Learning objectives:</b>	<p>Team communication management.</p> <p>Awareness of diversity and plurality of contribution styles.</p> <p>Emotional and physical implications of being close to others.</p>
<b>Preparation:</b>	<p>This activity can be a warm-up for group building. It is also a great opportunity to introduce them to the concept of challenge by choice and for introducing them to reflection.</p>
<b>Step by step description:</b>	
<p>Put the tarp fully open on the ground and ask participants to step on it and find their place. When they are all on the tarp, you can tell them the story that they are standing on their island and that, due to climate change and the melting of the glaciers, the level of the water around the island is rising and submerging it (1). This means that they will have to squeeze in, if they don't want to be washed away by the waves.</p>	
<p>Ask them to step away from the tarp and fold it into half. Ask them again to step on it and to find a strategy not to fall in the water.</p>	
<p>At this point challenge them a bit more and ask them how small the island can get for all of them to be on it (2). You will notice that in the group some will overestimate, and some will underestimate their capacity to squeeze. Bear in mind that you shouldn't push them to set a high goal. However, if you notice that not all possibilities have been taken into account, you can facilitate a little reflection during the strategy defining phase, to make them aware of eventual limiting beliefs such as: "it's not possible, we'll never make it" or even "we can't do more than this". This means that you can ask them in action reflection (3) questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is happening in the group?</li> <li>• What could you do that you haven't done yet?</li> </ul>	

- What impediment do you see?

If the group succeeds and you see that the tarp can be folded further, you can ask them if they think they can all stand on a smaller piece of land.

### **Reflection:**

- How satisfied are you with the result?
- How satisfied are you with group cooperation?
- How were the decisions taken?
- How satisfied are you with your contribution/participation?
- Is there anything you could do that you haven't done?
- How did you feel during the work?
- How easy/difficult was it for you to be so close to each other?

Some of the questions, such as rating how easy/hard or satisfying it was to do something, can be answered also with body scales (i.e.: show how satisfied you are from a scale from 0 to 5, where 0 means you're not satisfied at all and in this case you'll squat; and where 5 means you're completely satisfied and in this case you'll stand and stretch your body up high as much as possible. Any position in between will represent the other scale levels).

### **Note to facilitators:**

(1) Images capture participants' attention, arouse emotion, and draw them into an experience or reflective discussion. Brain research suggests this might be because using metaphors and symbols in conversation stimulates multiple areas of the brain involved in other senses making this another effective activity to promote multiple neuronal connections and pathways to learning. A visual or tactile representation of an experience can be an effective reflective prompt long after the experience is over, reminding a group or participant of the key lessons learned.

(2) It can happen that some participants encounter difficulties in being physically close to someone else (multicultural groups, introverted people, participants that have been abused, etc.). It is important that you don't force them to do the activity you are suggesting; instead, you can invite them to choose how they would like to contribute to the success of the group (for example they can spot people or contribute to finding a strategy or can be observers to check on the quality of the result). At a later stage or right away, depending also on the level of intimacy of the group, you can ask the reluctant participant what is holding them back from doing the activity. According to the answer you can further ask what would make him/her more comfortable to still participate in the activity and/or what could the group possibly do, as for him/her to feel more comfortable.

(3) Reflection is much more than mere evaluation or a logic process of cause-and-effect. Rather it is a holistic process of discovery and deep insight. It is a process in which individuals connect body and mind to become more aware of who they are, what they feel, what they think and how they relate to others and the context they are in. Reflection can be invited to:

- before action (for example if you notice resistance in the group to start the activity and you would like to make them aware of what's happening to them and what keeps them from participating);
- in action (for example if you notice that the group is stuck or if some group dynamic needs more attention);
- after action, that's to say when the activity is over and you want to offer participants a space where they can become more aware of what happened and of their emotions and behaviors).

## **a.2. Cane in the wind**

**Methodological framework:**

Experiential learning warm up.

<b>Topics:</b>	Creating trust in the group, getting acquainted with proximity, participation and sense of belonging, courage.
<b>Duration:</b>	15/20 minutes not including reflection (depending on group number).
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Minimum 8, no given maximum.
<b>Materials:</b>	A forest, or a park with a flat grassy area. If indoor or urban outdoor, sufficiently quiet, and wide open flat grassy space for the subgroups to be far enough to avoid disturbing each other and to be concentrated.
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	<p>Team communication management.</p> <p>Awareness of diversity and plurality of contribution styles.</p> <p>Emotional and physical implications of being close to others.</p>
<b>Preparation:</b>	It is important that you stress this is an exercise of trust and that it's an important stage in the development of the group. Invite your participants to be silent as much as possible, to be present and co-experience the movement and feelings of the person in the middle.

<b>Step by step description:</b>	
Form subgroups of minimum 8 participants and ask them to stand close in a circle, where they are touching shoulders and facing inwards.	

Invite everyone to bend their arms in front of them with their palms facing the middle of the circle. Ask if there is someone brave enough to stand in the middle of the circle with his arms on his chest or at the sides.

Ask this person to have his/her body stiff and, when ready, to ask the group if they are ready to start. After hearing a positive reply, he/she closes his/her eyes and says, "I'm falling ". With the body perfectly firm, he/she falls back into the hands of the other participants. His/her body goes from hands to hands all around the circle. Everyone must be careful not to let him/her fall. Invite participants in the circle to spread their legs or to have one leg behind the other, both for their balance and for putting more strength into holding and pushing the body. If you notice that it is difficult for the people in the circle to hold the body, make the circle smaller.

The person in the middle switches after 30 – 40 seconds. Each person of the group should experience the position in the middle and give his/her body to the hands of his/her mates.

### **Reflection:**

- How was it for you? What kinds of thoughts and emotions were occurring during the exercise?
- What made it possible for you to trust your companions?
- What was happening that impeded you to trust your companions? (in case participants express feelings of fear and/or disappointment in the previous question)
- How was it for you to take care and accompany your companion in the middle?
- What did you enjoy about the experience and why?

Possible questions to answer with body scales:

- To what extent were you trusting the others?
- To what extent did you feel responsible?



**Note to facilitators:**

In order to feel connected, we need to create an environment in which students can be vulnerable without fearing of being judged and we need to build trust for that to happen.

**a.3. Acid river**

<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Experiential learning activity.
<b>Topics:</b>	Cooperation and group strategy, Failure/Success, Rules, Diversity, Contact.
<b>Duration:</b>	20-45 minutes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Min 6, max 12 per group
<b>Materials:</b>	Any open space: Platforms, around 2*pax/3, can be logs or anything flat and resistant enough to walk on, around the size of an A4 notebook. Something to represent the riverside borders, like sticks or ropes.
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	Awareness of personal style and approach to group challenges. Dealing with body diversity implications. Creating a common strategy considering everyone's needs.
<b>Preparation:</b>	Build the "acid river" on the ground, creating 2 visible riverside lines: river width is (platforms number +1) steps. Steps can be longer or shorter according to the level of challenge.

### Step by step description:

Gather the group in a half circle “on the land” facing the river, and then nobody can touch the acid flow anymore.

Facilitator stays in front of them, back towards the river, and explains the challenge: All the group must reach the other side.

With the following rules:

- Nobody can touch the waters of the acid river,
- If acid waters are touched, all the group has to start again,
- Platforms are acid-resistant,
- Platforms are lost as soon as they are left in the river without any body contact (1)

(Eventually) Within time limit

After briefing, put the platforms on the ground near the border and step aside to let the group start its process.

Facilitator is the one checking if any rule is being broken and taking away the platforms left in the river without any contact to the body. Facilitator will also send the group back to start if anyone touches the river.

### Reflection:

Possible questions:

How did you create the strategy?

- How else could the others have helped you?
- How else could have you helped the others?
- How did you feel when you made a mistake?
- To what extent were the rules hard to respect?
- To what extent were the rules helpful?

Possible questions to answer with body scales:

How much do you think the group used all the possible resources?  
- How comfortable were you during the task?

**Note to facilitators:**

Acid river is one of the common names for this activity, but the narrative of the briefing can be changed with any kind of situation the facilitator can describe to create playfulness and engagement in the game, as far as it justifies the rules of the game.

(1) About this rule, flexibility is important: if the group fails a lot, it will trigger dynamics in the group, interesting to reflect on later (or also in the moment, stopping the activity for a while if really needed) but too much frustration won't lead to learning. If the game instead is too easy, they will not feel the challenge and there will be no material for reflection. Best thing is to start it with a good challenge level, and then if needed you can negotiate with the group about rules (e.g. a number of free trials, where they can have the lost platforms back when they start over, or even deciding to give them all back every time they start over, or also accepting a very short time in which is allowed to leave the platform untouched).

**a.4. Guide through Senses**

<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Experiential learning.
<b>Topics:</b>	Responsibility/taking care of the others, trust/sense of safety/loss of control, sensorial exploration, and perception.
<b>Duration:</b>	25 minutes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Min 6, no given max
<b>Materials:</b>	Blindfolds for half of the participants; a park or a forest, or any sufficiently wide (quiet) open

	space where pairs can move around freely and find natural things that safely stimulate senses.
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	Focusing on senses. Awareness of impulses and regulation/control. Feeling the other.
<b>Preparation:</b>	<p>Before briefing the activity, help the group to enter a reflective mindset (1), even only walking 10/15 minutes in nature to get in contact with the environment.</p> <p>Underline the importance of seriously taking care of the other, staying focused on his physical and emotional safety, and the value of respecting each one's chances to have an authentic experience.</p>

<b>Step by step description:</b>
<p>Gather the group, divide participants in pairs (2) and explain them they're about to take the other in a <b>guided sensorial experience</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one blindfolds the other,</li> <li>• then guides him/her with physical contact in silence for 7 minutes,</li> <li>• making him/her hear, touch, smell and taste the environment around.</li> </ul>
<p>After the time limit is over (eventually gathering the whole group in a circle before unblinding) they'll switch blindfold and roles.</p>
<p>After the time runs out the second time, gather all the pairs back to remove blindfolds all together and sit for reflection.</p>
<b>Reflection:</b>

Possible questions:

- How was it to be blindfolded?
- What stimulations did you prefer/didn't?
- What emotions were arising for you?
- Did you experience fear? If yes, when and what was fearful for you?
- What was exciting for you?
- What made you curious?

Possible questions to answer with body scales:

- To what extent were you nervous while guiding/being guided?
- To what extent did you feel safe?

#### **Note to facilitators:**

(1) Taking time to “slow down” (e.g. with rhythm and the facilitator's tone of voice, inviting to do the same) the group interaction before starting can help setting the silence and focus on the present experience.

(2) You can make pairs randomly or ask them to make the pairs themselves. You can give them an extra challenge (making it explicit) and invite them to pair up with people who they know less and with whom they usually don't hang out. Of course, this depends on the group needs and maturity.

#### **a.5. “Journey” Hike**

<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Experiential learning
<b>Topics:</b>	Adventure/Mission, Group responsibility, Sense of agency
<b>Duration:</b>	At least 2 hours
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Min 8, no given max

<b>Materials:</b>	Trail, water/food, hike equipment (shoes, backpacks), map or any other navigation system, first-aid kit.
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	Connecting with the others' needs and deciding/behaving after them. Facing challenges.
<b>Preparation:</b>	This experience requires preparation in the days before: all participants must receive information about the environmental characteristics, eventual weather conditions, equipment they will need (1), and about hike duration and timing of the breaks.
<b>Step by step description:</b>	
Gather the group in a circle at the beginning of the trail and frame (2) the experience of the journey as if it were an adventure representing life challenges and a path of growth and discovery.	
State clearly to participants the rules of "Walking as a group": <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a common pace, being aware of the distance of all the members and changing speed accordingly (or ask the others to do so)</li> <li>• One person is the head and another one is the tail, everyone else is in the middle.</li> <li>• If group is big, you can agree on stop/go hand signals</li> </ul>	
During the walk, or the breaks, you can use the setting to do some activities to make participants experience the others and the environment and discover something new.  Two possible activities while going:	

-Walk and talk in pairs: the group walks as a row of pairs (invite participants to pair with someone who's not already a close one) and they have some minutes to share their answer to a given question. A quick stop to change pairs and ask the second question, and so on, walking and talking.

-Solo moment: facilitator stops the group and creates the setting for an immersive reflective experience inviting to be in contact with nature and self. Eventually you can invite them to explore what emotions and sensations are arising in that very moment (this is also an ideal setting for the Self Nature Reflection activity)

### Embodying the Journey (3):

At the end of the hike, leave the group a bit of time to rest and prepare the setting for an embodied reflection on the experience. Draw on the ground (4) a representation of the trail you just did (if the soil is hard, you can also use a rope to draw the outline).

Then show it with all its details to participants and invite them to “embody their experience”. This means that each person will walk, one by one, on the outline of the path and will show to the others how the experience was for them. Invite them to express with their body movement how they were feeling in the different moments of their journey, or what they were focused on. While one is performing the others are a respectful and silent audience, they can move to follow.

Another step you can add (if group and time allow it), is the following: when every “performer” ends his/her embodied reflection, ask him/ her to step aside and become the audience. All the others now must choose one of the “embodied moments” they just saw according to what resonated with them the most. Invite participants to place themselves exactly on that spot of the outline where the embodiment took place and tell them to repeat with their own body what the performer was doing.

### **Reflection:**

Possible questions to ask the person embodying his/her own experience:

- What was the part of the experience that you embodied that touched you the most and why?
- What was the part that you saw the others embodying that touched you the most? What was happening with you there?
- Have you felt fear? When?
- What was exciting/made you curious?

Possible questions to answer with body scales:

- To what extent do you feel safe? (You can ask this during the journey, either if you feel that something is happening in the group or at an individual level; or if you want to check the mood of the group to understand what could be useful for the group at a later stage).
- To what extent did you feel free to express yourself during the embodied reflection?

### **Note to facilitators:**

(1) Suggest wearing shoes and clothes suiting the environment and possible weather conditions. Ask participants to take water and food with them according to the duration of the journey. Ask them to bring a torch or front light if there's a possibility that it will get dark before you finish the activity.

(2) Framing and using metaphors can help participants in making meaning of their experience, as they associate it with what they are going through in real life and therefore learn more. This can be aimed at triggering reflection on what they're facing in life. The environment, and the map representing it, with its ups and downs, peaks, plains, nature elements or weather conditions, can be symbols of what they're going through in real life. This can indeed be a stimulus for reflection and learning.

(3) Embodied reflection can be very emotionally activating and take some time. Therefore, you can consider inviting participants to share "only through body expression", avoiding questions or comments.



(4) Depending on the type of ground you're on, you can use different natural elements or the soil itself to draw the path. What's important is that it is big enough for people to move along it when expressing the different stages of their experience, and that it allows them and the others to identify what moment of the hike they're referring to. So, the outline needs to be between 2 and 5 meters long and needs to clearly show the different parts participants went through, like uphill or downhill, peaks, challenging parts, places where you did some activities or where something happened.

<b>a.6. Beauty hunt</b>	
<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Experiential learning.
<b>Topics:</b>	Connection between Self and Nature, Identity, Personal qualities, and strengths.
<b>Duration:</b>	80 minutes for the activity and 30 minutes for the reflection. The bigger the group, the longer the time of the activity (80 minutes is calculated for about 13/15 participants).
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Min 6, 25 max (for reflection see the comment of the first activity).
<b>Materials:</b>	Forest, or any park or garden that can host an immersive experience.
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	<p>Identifying your own qualities and sharing them with others.</p> <p>Using natural and environmental elements as metaphors to describe one's inner reality.</p>

<p><b>Preparation:</b></p>	<p>Start by asking participants to stand in a circle and allow some time for grounding with a breathing activity of 2 minutes. Tell them to breathe in and out paying attention, with intention, to the air that enters and exits from their nose trails. Tell them that it's normal that thoughts arise, ask them to observe what the thoughts are about, without judging them and to let them go as if they were clouds moving in the sky (1). It can happen that participants might feel a bit uncomfortable and that they start laughing or moving. It is completely normal, especially if they have never done mindful breathing before. In this case, stay present yourself, suspend judgment and kindly invite them to either close their eyes or look on the ground in the middle of the circle to avoid external disturbances.</p>
<p><b>Step by step description:</b></p>	
<p>Brief the activity by telling participants they have 20/30 minutes to individually explore the natural setting to look for beauty in the environment, to stop as many times as they want to contemplate the beauty and to come back in the circle, with the intention of presenting to the others the beauty they found. Remind them that it's a solo activity and invite them to be curious and to wonder in nature with fresh eyes, as if they were looking at things for the first time. Ask them to describe the beauty they see in their notebook. Tell participants that after 20/30 minutes you will make a sound to announce solo time is over and that they can come back to the circle. When you brief them, tell them that this is the moment in which they will present their experience to the others by presenting them the beauty they found (2).</p>	

Allow 1 minute maximum per participant for the presentation, that can be in whatever form the participant likes. It can be a drawing, a sound, a poem, a sculpture made with natural elements, a picture taken with a camera, a gesture, or a body sculpture. Tell them they can be as creative as they want. During the presentation allow 10 to 15 seconds of silent pause to acknowledge and appreciate each presentation and for creating the space and attention for the following presentation.

After the presentation is over allow for a 15/20-minute break for participants to relax and refresh.

Then ask them to find a place in nature, take the notebook on which they have previously written the beauty they saw and invite them to turn the objective description into a subjective one by putting an I whenever they are describing nature (for example if in the notebook one writes “the tree has strong branches and beautiful verdant leaves” it would turn into “I have strong branches and verdant leaves”. This of course it’s not to be taken literally but more on an imaginative level. The message for oneself would be of being strong and alive) (3).

After having turned the narration of beauty into the “I” person, you can either ask participants to form trios and to read to each other their narration (if the group is mature enough to do so) and to share how reading it resonates with them and what was surprising for them or call them back in the bigger circle and ask them the same question.

### **Reflection:**

Possible questions to deepen/encourage the sharing:

- How easy/hard was it for you to find beauty in nature?
- What did you enjoy about being in nature?
- How was it for you to create your presentation and to present your experience to the others?
- How did it feel to read your narrative in the “I” form?

- How did it feel to listen to it (with the invitation of letting the piece resonate in us before answering)
- What did you discover about yourself?
- What did you discover about the others?

Some of the questions that ask to rate how easy/hard it was to do something, can be answered also with body scales.

### **Note to facilitators:**

(1) Attention to the breath—and intention of the breath—is a fundamental facet of mindfulness, the practice of cultivating non-judgmental awareness of the present moment. The breath is a great anchor to the present moment because it's with us and happening naturally all the time. If we get in the habit of using our breath as an anchor, and become more aware of our thoughts and emotions, we can stop them before they gain momentum in a way that contributes to stress or anxiety. Mindful breathing techniques promote calm, reduce stress levels, and regulate negative emotions, easing anxiety symptoms.

(2) Tell your participants that presenting the beauty they found has nothing to do with performing and that it is more about sharing and letting the others know what has touched them. It's almost an act of kindness. The word presentation, in fact, comes from present, that has the double meaning of gift and being present in the here and now.

(3) We see in the outer world something that also exists within us. It is a psychological mechanism according to which we all project onto the world in general and people in particular aspects of our inner world, much as the movie projector projects the film onto a blank screen.

How we respond to the outer world and the people around us, contributes to how the outer world and other people respond to us. So, to some extent, we literally create the world we live in each moment by what we project onto the world. Having some awareness of this can give us greater control of how we interpret the world around us and, consequently, how the outside world will respond to us.

Therefore, in the beauty hunt exercise participants, by training to spot beauty in nature, become aware of their inner beauty and learn how to look with more kindness to themselves and consequently to others.

<b>a.7. Nature Mimesis</b>	
<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Experiential learning
<b>Topics:</b>	Connection between Self and Nature, Embodiment of the Other, Nurturing the creative mind.
<b>Duration:</b>	30 minutes activity, 30 minutes reflection
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Min 8, no given max
<b>Materials:</b>	Forest, or any park or garden that can host an immersive experience.
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	<p>Discovering the diversity of nature and humans through body experience.</p> <p>Training empathy through embodiment.</p> <p>Exploring a trustful and non-judgmental atmosphere in the group (1).</p>
<b>Preparation:</b>	<p>Prepare the setting for an immersive embodied experience and ask participants to have a sensory walk in nature. Give the group the time to create a reflective mood.</p> <p>Gather participants in a circle, wide enough to let everyone move freely in the space and ask them to do some breathing for focusing before you give them instructions.</p>

**Step by step description:**

Tell participants they are about to have the chance to get in deep contact with the elements of nature, embodying them at the point they will become that element with their whole body. Invite them to suspend judgment and skeptical observations. Ask them to focus on their body impulses when you ask them to be water, tree, stone, or any other natural element. Invite them to create an image in themselves and to listen to their senses and their body moving when they become that natural element. Invite them to explore the idea/feeling of the natural element, until they become it. Tell them they can move in the space and make sounds freely to follow their inspiration, trying not to interfere with the experience of the others.

Give them some time to explore the natural element they are embodying and then invite them to explore a new one (2). You can eventually add some descriptions or examples of the natural element you are mentioning, to help participants getting involved into the expressive process.

**Reflection:**

Possible questions to start the sharing:

- What element was easier for you to represent? What was the hardest? Why?
- What kind of emotions did you experience while embodying the elements?
- What surprised you?

Possible general questions to answer with body scales:

- To what extent were you busy with the thought of the others watching you?
- To what extent did you feel you “became” the natural element?

**Note to facilitators:**

(1) This exercise can easily trigger dynamics of shame/judgment/feeling ridiculous, a very hot topic for teens. It's hard to participate “seriously” for a group

with a low level of confidence in the others, where there's a consistent expectation that others will laugh at you. So, we recommend you do this activity with a group that already has gone through some reflection moments and that has built trust, responsibility towards the others and ability to take the activity seriously. However, it's also a very interesting opportunity to explore with the participants the typical resistances, like "this is stupid" "it's ridiculous, I don't want to be ridiculous" "why should I do something pointless like this", reflecting with them on the reason for these thoughts and feelings.

(2) Elements can be anything like *water, wind, sand, tree, bush, rock, some plants*. To help the participants you can add some verbs like "flowing water" or "falling sand", but the less you say, the more they'll have the chance to express the element the way they imagine it spontaneously. You can also try calling animals, but this is very likely to break the mindful atmosphere and provide a lot of fun, so you can use this if you want to release some tension with laughs, as an ice breaker or funny conclusion.

a.8. Self-Identification in Nature	
<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Experiential learning.
<b>Topics:</b>	Connection between self and nature, identity, diversity.
<b>Duration:</b>	30/40 minutes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Min 8, no given max
<b>Materials:</b>	Forest, or any park or garden that can host an immersive experience
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	Identifying one's own qualities and sharing them with others.

	Using natural and environmental elements as metaphors to describe social reality.
<b>Preparation:</b>	<p>Before briefing the activity, create the setting for a reflective process to happen. Invite participants to walk 10/15 minutes in nature and give the group the time to enter in contact with the environment.</p> <p>Choose a good spot to start the activity and ask people to gather in a circle.</p>
<b>Step by step description:</b>	
<p>Invite participants to experience a <b><i>solo moment</i></b> for self-reflection. Send them out to look for some natural element in the surroundings, that symbolize or represent them, or some aspect of them (1). <i>Solo moment</i> means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being alone and respecting one's own as well as the others' self-focusing, without trying to interact.</li> <li>• Respecting silence and creating a peaceful atmosphere</li> <li>• Exploring with one's senses, feeling nature and reflecting on the facilitator's question/s for 15 minutes.</li> </ul> <p>Before letting the group go, explain to them that when it's time to come back together in the circle you will make a sound; so, ask them to move freely around following their feelings, but staying within a distance that they can hear your call.</p>	
<p>After the group is back in the circle, invite them to show the object and share his/her story and meaning.</p> <p>If you notice that participants are a bit resistant to sharing in a bigger group (maybe because it's in its forming stage or trust has not grown enough), you can ask them to share in smaller groups (for example trios) and then come back in the bigger group to share something new they have discovered about self or the group.</p>	



### Reflection:

Possible questions to deepen/encourage the sharing:

- How easy/hard was it for you to find the element?
- Do you think the others would have chosen this object for you?
- 

Possible general questions to answer with body scales:

- Move your body representing how impatient you were to finish and talk/do, stay still.
- How happy/satisfied are you to have taken time for yourself?

### Note to facilitators:

Identifying yourself in nature is an abstract process that can convey great insights through the link between natural life structures and dynamics and the subject's experience. To help the participants in this metaphorization, facilitator can specify one aspect of their self to reflect on and search for in the world close by, (e.g., one's role in a particular group/situation, how they feel in the present moment, their phase of life, life challenges, desires and aspirations, growth points. *"Find something in the nature around you that represents or anyway tells you something about- yourself/how do you feel in this moment/who you are in this group/what are you living in this moment of your life/who you want to become/what you would like to learn/acknowledge and value your talents or good qualities/..."*

(1) It's useful to start from a place where everybody can spread around and easily find an area to explore alone and have a "solo" experience. Facilitator should ideally be positioned in the center, so when making the sound to call participants back in a circle, they can easily hear without having to suddenly interrupt their "moment".

### a.9. Shelter building

<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Experiential learning.
<b>Topics:</b>	Group decision-making, roles and cooperation, participation, and sense of belonging.
<b>Duration:</b>	20 minutes at least (depending on group number and challenge level).
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Min 6, no given max. Participants can also be divided into subgroups of 6-10 participants.
<b>Materials:</b>	A forest, or a park with fallen branches. If indoor or urban outdoor, sufficiently wide-open space and randomly spread building materials (1).
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	<p>Team communication management.</p> <p>Awareness of diversity and plurality of contribution styles.</p> <p>Emotional implications of engaging for a common objective.</p>
<b>Preparation:</b>	The group is close to the area, standing in a circle and listening to the facilitator.
<b>Step by step description:</b>	
<p>Give them the challenge of building a shelter altogether.</p> <p>With the following rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has to be big and structured enough to hold all the group sitting in a circle</li> <li>• Within the time limit (2)</li> <li>• (Using only dead materials on the ground)</li> <li>• (Choosing together the position and architecture) (3)</li> </ul>	

“Now you’ll have to build a shelter for the group, meant to be a protected space where we all can rest comfortably and sit together to eat, talk, or play. You’ll have to choose your position and architecture together as a group and then build your nice shelter in 30 minutes.”

Observe the group.

After the shelter is finished, gather the group inside their new home and sit in a circle for reflection.

### **Reflection:**

Possible questions:

- How do you feel now in your new home?
- How did you choose your position and architecture?
- How did you feel during the work?
- What would you like to come and do here?

Possible questions to answer with body scales:

- How much do you think the group was cooperating?
- How comfortable were you during the task?

### **Note to facilitators:**

(1) Consider providing “proper” building materials to manage the anticipated issue of possible resistances sounding like lack of imagination “there’s nothing to build here” or “it’s impossible” (helping the engagement with more physical, less abstract, playing).

(2) The time limit is either a pushing factor or a fixed way to deal with the conclusion of the construction. An alternative can be to tell the group they also have to decide when it’s ready, considering the actual time frame limits.

(3) Giving explicitly this rule about common decision making can be helpful if the group is very likely to start the activity fragmented, with some of them already

moving materials while others are trying to reason and discuss. It can be sometimes more interesting not to be directive with the rules, but just observe what happens spontaneously and then reflect on it together. However, this is also likely to open more conflict in the group that will have to be managed.

<b>a.10. Stuck</b>	
<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Social presenting theater form Theory-U.
<b>Topics:</b>	<p>Sense more deeply into one's current reality.</p> <p>Suspending judgments.</p> <p>Paying attention to our "body-knowing" and to the social field.</p>
<b>Duration:</b>	60 minutes at least
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Min 5, no given max
<b>Materials:</b>	<p>A park with a flat grassy area.</p> <p>If indoor or urban outdoor, sufficiently quiet, and wide, silent, and open flat grassy space for the subgroups to be far enough to avoid disturbing each other and to be concentrated.</p>
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	<p>Becoming more sensitive and honest about the feeling-quality of one's current situation.</p> <p>Emotional and physical implications of being close to others.</p> <p>Trusting and taking care of others.</p>
<b>Preparation:</b>	Before stepping into the activity allow for a 5-to-10-minute preparatory body work. It could

	<p>be that you ask participants to walk in a certain area with different kinds of speeds. You can use images like that of moving slowly as if they were on the moon or fast as if they were in a busy and crowded subway. Ask them to move in different directions and to avoid touching each other. Next ask them to look each other in the eyes to stop and to greet each other when doing so. Then ask them to shake hands or to hug each other when they meet. Allow yourself to be creative, with the intention to prepare participants to feel their body sensations and to pay attention to the latter.</p>
<b>Step by step description:</b>	
<p>Form subgroups of 5 participants and ask them to identify a place in their life where they feel stuck. That means something they are trying to create is not moving forward. In the subgroups each participant will embody (1) their own feeling of being stuck. Suggest them to feel in their body where the feeling of being stuck could manifest and ask them to show it with a gesture/posture. Ask them to freeze that posture into a statue and to take some seconds to notice how it feels. Ask the others that witnessed what they noticed (tensions, discomfort, etc.) and what they felt when witnessing (what was resonating with them?).</p>	
<p>Then invite participants to follow the impulses of their body and to allow their stuck shape to move. Tell them that when the movement comes to an end they can stop.</p>	
<p>Allow a brief reflection in subgroups on what each person experienced doing the exercise and witnessing the others.</p>	
<p>Allow one minute of silence in the subgroups for them to feel the social body of the group. Then ask the group to choose one of the embodied stuck and work with</p>	

it collectively. One person places the others in their stuck sculpture to emphasize, augment, or clarify their feeling of being stuck. As a collective, invite participants to stay with the feeling of being stuck, deepening into it. Tell them to pay close attention to the collective or social body as it begins to move, shift, or change. Tell them not to talk during this phase. When the group feels that the movement has come to an end, ask them to rest in this new sculpture/shape. Remaining in the sculpture, each person says one sentence from the “I voice” (for example one could say “in this position I can see further” or “now I can see you” etc. of course according to what arises for them in their new position). Ask participants to reflect as a group on what they noticed, saw, and felt. If you allow for another person to do their stuck exercise with the whole group, allow a gap of silence.

### **Reflection:**

Possible questions:

- What is the difference between the stuck shape and sculpture 2? How are they different?
- What was the movement from sculpture 1 to sculpture 2?
- Where did the movement begin in the body?
- Where did the movement begin in the social body (the others)?
- How was it for you? What kinds of thoughts and emotions were occurring during the exercise?
- What did you enjoy about the experience and why?
- What surprised you about yourself and the others?

Possible questions to answer with body scales:

- To what extent were you trusting the others?
- To what extent did you feel comfortable doing the exercise?

### **Note to facilitators:**

The exercise is a practice taken from the social presenting theater (SPT) created by Arawana Hayashi. SPT is an art form and “social technology” that brings together social change with creative expression and it’s part of Scharmer’s Theory U, a framework for affecting change at an individual, organizational, and social level.

Through a synthesis of mindfulness, creative embodied expression, and group dialogue, SPT directs our consciousness to our own body, as well as the social body, and its deeper knowledge. It allows individuals to learn more about a current situation in their life where they feel stuck. Using body intelligence rather than thinking about the situation, individuals get new perspectives into a freer, healthier, more creative, and less stuck future situation to appear. All of this without the need of talking about the situation itself!

(1) This exercise can be used by individuals or groups as a practice for letting the intelligence of the body guide us in decisions and actions. Fully embodying our situations gives us direct feedback that informs our decisions. Noticing the interdependence of many factors and influences in every situation gives us a broader perspective.

## b. IMPROV THEATRE ACTIVITIES

b.1. Yes, and	
<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Improv
<b>Topics:</b>	Group cooperation, accepting others and diversity
<b>Duration:</b>	60 minutes (with 20 participants)
<b>Number of participants:</b>	10-30 participants

<b>Materials:</b>	Enough space
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	<p>To accept other people's ideas.</p> <p>To elaborate on other peoples' ideas.</p> <p>To start the process of co-creation.</p>
<b>Preparation:</b>	<p>It is important that in the field the participants accept the offers of each other. They should really avoid explaining their original ideas of the proposing gift and they should also avoid criticizing or commenting on how the story went wrong because of the one word someone used.</p> <p>It helps to mention that sometimes those activities are about forgetting about your own ideas and about the fun of finding a solution to unexpected situations.</p> <p>What does not work very well is trying to be super original or somehow special. On the contrary, being usual and obvious works the best.</p>
<b>Step by step description:</b>	
<p><b>Present giving</b></p> <p>Let the participants walk around and find different partners with which they will exchange imaginary gifts within each round. Once they are in pairs, let one of them mime a present that is to be given to their partner. Using miming, they show a suggested shape, size, and weight of the present they are giving to the partner. Saying what the gift is and what they are going to do with it is up to the receiver. If the receiver names the object differently than was intended, the giving person needs to accept what was said. The giving person adds one more information about the gift.</p>	



- Addressing the person (mom, teacher, neighbor) helps the receiver to come up with a nice, original gift.

- Being happy about whatever gift works the best.

*A: Look, mom, I have got something for you (miming holding something in his hands)*

*B: Oh, wow, a handful of sand!*

*A: Yes, you know, you always talk about holidays by the sea we cannot afford...*

### **I know what you were doing last night**

Let the participants walk around and find different partners for each round. In the pair, let them have a conversation:

*A: "I know what you were doing last night!"*

*B: "Really? What?"*

*A: "You were..."* the person offers a statement by making something up (e.g., *running in a park in a panda costume/ kicking to a parked car/ eating grass/ talking to a trash bin*) - basically something a bit unusual.

*B: "Yes! I did it! I did it because..."* the person accepts the information as if it was a fact. His/her task is to justify the behavior by finding a good reason for doing so.

A and B take turns, then create different pairs.

### **One word/ sentence story**

Let the participants make pairs or little groups in which they will be telling a story. They take turns, but each time they can only use one word.

*A: One, B: sunny, C: day, A: a, B: little,*

*C: kitten, A: came, B: to, C: our, A: garden,*

*B: full stop, C: I, A: was, B: so, C: happy...*

Variation I:

An inspiration can be provided (e.g., tell a story about a little kitten/ fearful giant...)

### **What are we doing?**

Let the participants make pairs or little groups. They take turns in asking and answering a question “What are we doing?”

Whatever the answer, the pair/group must start doing the action. After a while of performing/miming the action, another person asks, “what are we doing?” again for a new action.

To support the acceptance, you can ask the participants to say “yes” to the proposals.

*A: “What are we doing?”*

*B: “We are reading a book.”*

*A: “Yes! We are reading a book.”*

*Both start reading an imaginary book.*

### **What are you doing, Mr....?**

Can be played in a circle or pairs or little groups again.

Person A starts doing a repetitive action (e.g., digging a hole, painting a picture, ironing...), an inspiration can be used as a typical action of a particular profession. Person B probably recognizes the action and the profession and asks: “What are you doing Mr./Mrs...” Instead of using the profession he/she really sees, says something completely different. Person A keeps doing the action while justifying why he/she is doing that. The activity is somehow connected to his/her profession, though.

When they take turns, person B takes the used profession as the miming inspiration.

*A: (miming painting a picture)*

*B: What are you doing Mr. DJ?*

*A: (accepts he/she is a DJ doing such a movement) I am practicing my special tai-chi movements before the upcoming concert.*

*B: Oh, I see, I see.*

*B: Starts miming a DJ's movement.*

### **Reflection:**

- How do you feel now?
- How was it for you?
- What was the most powerful moment for you and why?
- Was there anything difficult?

### **Note to facilitators:**

It is important that in the field the participants accept the offers of each other. They should really avoid explaining their original ideas of the proposing gift and they should also avoid criticizing or commenting on how the story went wrong because of the one word someone used.

It helps to mention that sometimes those activities are about forgetting about your own ideas and about the fun of finding a solution to unexpected situations.

What does not work very well is trying to be super original or somehow special. On the contrary, being usual and obvious works the best.

<b>b.2. Mistakes</b>	
<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Improv
<b>Topics:</b>	Accepting mistakes, floe
<b>Duration:</b>	60 minutes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	10-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Enough space
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	<p>To start accepting mistakes as part of the learning process.</p> <p>To learn to appreciate a mistake and cope with it.</p> <p>To change the embodied response to mistakes and raise awareness of the bodily processes associated with making mistakes and change the bodily response to mistakes.</p> <p>To understand the power of the group that can compensate for the individual and profit as a whole (gestalt).</p>
<b>Preparation:</b>	It is more than useful if you as a teacher take part in all these activities, to support the co-creation and strengthen the relationship with the group.
<b>Step by step description:</b>	
<p><b>Whoosh</b></p> <p>Let the participant make a circle, in which they will be sending a magic ball. Start with one person who waves his/her hands to their neighbor saying “<i>whoosh</i>”.</p>	

The ball has just moved in front of the neighbor. The ball can go through the circle this way. There are other sounds + movements that can be used:

Stop - the person stops the ball by saying stop and putting hands in front of himself/herself. The sending person needs to send the ball in the opposite direction.

You - the person can point at someone in a circle and the ball appears in front of that person.

Ramp - the person creates a ramp above his/her head, which makes the ball jump over one person in the ball's direction.

New sounds and gestures can be invented once the group manages to play with the current rules and possibilities.

#### Mistakes

If a mistake appears, everybody's task is not to make it obvious. The group is not to blame the individual but has to compensate. It is approached as a challenge to integrate what happened into the game, get back to the flow and play as if it was planned that way.

#### **How many legs**

Let the participants make a circle. They take turns around the circle. There is always a set order of actions which is as follows:

- the number of animals and what animals
- the number of legs they have in total
- the follow up action that is specific for the chosen animal, is valid for as many people as was the number of animals.

*E.g., A: One mosquito. B: 6 legs. C: "<clap>". D: 2 mosquitoes, E: 12 legs. F: "<clap>" G: "<claps> H: 3 mosquitoes, I: 18 legs, J: "<clap>" K: "<clap>" L: "<clap>"*

*M: 4 mosquitoes" ...*

The aim is to keep the flow while not making a mistake in either the number of animals or legs or in the number of people taking the action.

Mistakes:

If the person *M* from the example above said 5 mosquitoes or would be thinking for too long, it would be a mistake. When this happens, everyone appreciates a mistake by an applause and the person *M* starts again from the top saying “*one mosquito.*”

Variation I:

When the group starts to manage the flow, it is a good time to add another animal.

- mosquito - 6 legs - “clap”
- spider - 8 legs - “scream”
- chicken - 2 legs - “chicken sound”
- cow - 4 legs - “cow sound”

The number is always +1, independent of the mentioned animals.

*E.g., 1 mosquito - 6 legs - <clap> - 2 chickens - 4 legs - <chicken> - <chicken> - 3 spiders - 24 legs - <scream> - <scream> - <scream> - 4 chickens...*

**Up to 7**

Let the participants make a circle. Let them count from one to seven. The first person says one, the neighbor says two and they continue up to number seven. After number seven, there is number one again.

Add a gesture to the number. When saying the number, the person taps his/her shoulder. The chosen shoulder signalizes the direction of the counting.

### Variation I:

Once the group can keep the flow, add one new rule, that is choose one of the numbers and change it into something else. It can be a word, exclamation, gesture...

e.g.

- 3 = <clap>
- 1 = jump
- 5 = pronouncing the person's name
- 7 = double clap
- 6 = 4
- 4 = vacation
- 2 = OH MY GOT!

### Mistakes:

If a mistake appears, the person making it celebrates it by running one round around the circle and happily screaming and clapping for him/herself. Then comes back to the spot and joins the game again. Meanwhile, the rest of the group continues playing the game.

### **Reflection:**

- Include a discussion of mistakes at the beginning or during. For example, you can ask questions:
  - What does a mistake mean to you?
  - What does your body do when you make a mistake?
  - How do you feel when you make a mistake?
  - Is it different when you are part of a team/group? How?

- It may be negative and dismissive or dismissive reactions. State the goals of the session and carefully frame that mistakes are part of the process and we can try to learn to accept them better, either by changing our mindset or through the body, by changing the automatic response.
- At the end of the lesson we can ask:
  - What was it like for you to try to approach the mistake differently?
  - How would you like to work with making mistakes in your life and what would you need from yourself/others to do so?

#### Note to facilitators:

It is more than useful if you as a teacher take part in all these activities, to support the co-creation and strengthen the relationship with the group. Open a discussion about mistakes either in the very beginning or after the first activity.

### b.3. Building trust

<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Improv
<b>Topics:</b>	Communication without words, embodiment
<b>Duration:</b>	60 minutes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	10-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Enough space, chairs, background music
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	To connect to other participants in the group. To perceive the group as whole. To be able to remain in contact with other participants in the field.
<b>Preparation:</b>	Needing empty space for the group.



### **Step by step description:**

#### **Leading variations**

- All the variations happen in pairs.
- You can use music as the background for this activity but think about what atmosphere you want to bring by the chosen music.

##### **a) Fingers**

Make pairs. This activity is in silence. They put the tip of their index finger together. This is their leading point. One becomes the leader and the second the follower. The leader can do whatever, but their index fingers need to be in contact all the time. After a while, they switch, and the leader becomes the follower and vice versa.

##### **b) Colombian hypnosis**

Make duos and one of them sticks his/her eyes to the palm of the second one. Only by this he/she is led around the space, in different levels (e.g., up, down, on a side, ...).

##### **c) Blindfolded**

One person closes his/her eyes while the other one becomes the leader and caretaker of this person. Meanwhile, put some objects (chairs) to the room and create a variation of different obstacles the duos can overcome.

##### **d) Name whispers**

One of the two closes' eyes while the other one leads this person by calling his/her name. The blindfolded one reacts to the calling of his/her partner by turning and walking the direction of the voice. This is the way the leader should navigate the follower in the space. Be careful, there are other pairs doing the same.

#### **Clapping mosquito**

Let the participants stay in a circle and tell them that there is a mosquito flying upon their head. It is one mosquito and moves from above one head to another, and every time the two participants next to this person with the mosquito try to kill

the mosquito by clapping upon the head. The one with the mosquito makes the space for clapping by making a squat. The mosquito immediately moves onto the next head of the next person and claps and the squat comes again. It continues around the circle and once the participants understand the movement, they can make the whole thing faster - needs focus and cooperation.

### **The pendulum**

Make groups of 8-10. Each group creates a circle. One person becomes the pendulum and comes to the center of this circle. This person will stick the feet to the floor, not make any steps, tighten the body, and try to imagine he/she is a pendulum. Having the eyes closed, this pendulum will be swung between the people creating the circle.

Everyone in the circle should be ready for catching the pendulum and gently swinging it to a different person. It is important to take a wide stance and use the power to catch the falling person. The neighbors in the circle should also provide support.

They take turns.

### **Falling leaves**

The participants walk freely in space and while mingling around, some of them can decide that he/she will become a falling leaf. This means he/she will call the group “*me*” and start falling like a leaf. The people around should be ready to react and catch the person before really falling.

### **Reflection:**

Reflect on important moments.

### **Note to facilitators:**

All these activities should be voluntary. It is important to know the group, keep an eye on what's going on.

b.4. Group attunement	
<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Improv
<b>Topics:</b>	Attunement through fun and cooperation
<b>Duration:</b>	120 minutes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	10-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Enough space, music, stopwatch
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	To become aware of others. To feel as a part of the group.
Step by step description:	
<p><b>Circle claps</b></p> <p>Make a circle. The group task is to keep the flow of sending a clap signal around the circle. It is always two people standing next to each other who clap together at the same time. When they do, the person standing in the direction of the signal turns to the person on his/her other side and now those two try to clap together (co-clap).</p> <p>A claps with B, B claps with C, C with D...</p> <p>When this is managed, it is time to add another possibility. It is possible to change direction by co-clap with the same person twice.</p> <p>A claps with B, B claps with C, C claps with D twice, C claps with B, B claps with A...</p> <p>When this is managed, it is time to add another possibility of co-clapping. It is co-clapping with anyone in the circle, not necessarily the neighbor. It is also a prevention from having only half of the circle sending the signal back and forth.</p>	

When this is managed, it is possible to play with the pace a bit, to speed up and slow down again.

### **Walking in space**

Let the participants walk in the space and emphasize that without talking. Ask them to avoid walking in circles all the time.

There are different possibilities that can be used separately or combined.

#### **1) Speeds 1-5**

Ask the participant to make sure they all walk at the same pace. This is pace number three. Ask the group to try to speed up a bit to speed number four. Try speed number one. The task is to keep the same pace all the time as a whole group.

#### **Variation I:**

They can try to change the speed themselves from within, without you giving the instruction to do so. However, the activity is still without talking. They can do it by simply adjusting the speed. The group should notice the change and adjust the speed accordingly. However, if more people start the change at the same time, some should give up on their idea and start following again. It is not about the power of insisting on the speed somebody chose, but about being able to adjust for the sake of the group while bringing some new elements (in this case the speed).

#### **2) Stop-walk-clap-jump**

There are four instructions the group can receive and follow: stop, walk, clap, jump. The group should be in a movement all the time, not watching you giving instructions but rather be aware of their united speed. Whenever you say a specific instruction, the group should try to react as a whole. That is to clap at the same

time, jump at the same time, stop at the same time, and start walking again at the same time.

Variation I:

Swop the instructions: walk for stop and jump for clap. Whenever you say stop, they should keep walking, walk means to stop, clap is jump and jump means to clap.

Variation II:

They can try to introduce the instructions themselves from within, without you giving the instruction to do so. However, the activity is still without talking.

3) Point at someone who...

a) Names

While the participants are mingling around, tell them to stop and close their eyes. Ask them to point at...and choose a name of someone from the group. Then, they can open their eyes to check if they were right. Repeat with more/all the names.

b) Details

While the participants are mingling around, tell them to stop and close their eyes. Ask them to point at someone who they think wears for example, black socks. They will probably not know, so encourage them to try to guess and point somewhere. When everyone is pointing somewhere, they can open their eyes to check. After a while of them walking and probably observing other a bit more, tell them to stop, close their eyes and point at some point.

**Mirroring**

This activity can be performed also with some music. Be aware of the possible slight shift of the atmosphere when choosing a song.

Make pairs. They will stand facing each other. One of them is a mirror and the other one is looking in the mirror. The one looking in the mirror starts doing slow movements with his/her arms, legs, body. The mirror person is mirroring the movements.

The aim is not to be funny or to surprise the mirror so that he/she can't keep the flow but the opposite. The ideal situation is that one can hardly recognize who the mirror is.

Take turns.

Reflection:

*How is it for you and what is enjoyable/fun/challenging about it?*

Change pairs.

Variation I:

Group dance. While mirroring in pairs, support the participants to keep in mind all the other pairs in the space. The aim is to co-create beautiful movements as the group, not only focusing on my pair, but onto the whole group of pairs.

### **Old granny**

Ask each participant to place a chair somewhere in the space. Let everybody sit down on their chairs and place one extra chair in the room.

The facilitator becomes an old granny, the room turns into a tram in which the granny wants to sit down (on one of the chairs - the empty one).

The facilitator is slowly walking towards the only free chair intending to sit on it. The group has to defend the free chair by having someone leave the original chair and going to sit on the free one before the granny does so. Suddenly, there is a different free chair for granny to start walking towards.

The rules:

- do not harm anyone,
- do not move the chairs,
- do not touch or stop the granny,
- once your butt stops touching the chair, you need to sit on a different one, only then you can sit back to the original one.

Use a stopwatch and challenge the group to keep the granny walking for at least 90 seconds.

If they fail, let them discuss a strategy and try it out.

There is a great energy if the granny walks to the rhythm of a song (we recommend electro swing).

### **Reflection:**

Circle claps: Ask the participants what helps them to clap really at the same time. Let them incorporate it into the game. It will probably find out that what helps is working with the body: making eye contact, being slow with the approaching hand, keeping the rhythm of the claps, relaxing your legs and body, and having your hands ready.

### **Note to facilitators:**

The old granny: some of the participants (especially kids) might ask if one of them can be the old granny. It is good to realize what your aim is. In our case it is important the facilitator is the granny because the group plays against the granny. The aim is the group to be attune. However later, encourage them to a version when there is no not just one-person directing the game. They should manage themselves and the whole group. Also, sometimes the people on the middle chairs do not move at all, so it's good to encourage the group to involve the people as well.

<b>b.5. Embodiment</b>	
<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Improv, playback theatre
<b>Topics:</b>	Attunement on one's body, touch
<b>Duration:</b>	90 minutes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	10-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Enough space, music
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	To express oneself through the body.
<b>Preparation:</b>	Make sure the music is easy to put on and loud enough.
<b>Step by step description:</b>	
<p><b>Led by a body part</b></p> <p>Let the participants walk in space. Play some music.</p> <p>After a while, let them focus on one part of their body, e.g., an elbow. Give them instruction that it is their elbow leading the rest of the body. You can also add a characteristic, e.g., shy elbow leading you.</p> <p>Change the body part, its characteristics, and the music. E.g., a curious nose, a lazy head, flirty hips, brave chest, indecisive knee...</p>	
<p><b>I am...(creating an environment)</b></p> <p>Give the participants an environment, e.g., <i>a train station</i>. Their task is to create a train station by building statues. They should represent the people and objects, atmosphere and even emotions in such an environment. They come to the space one by one, making a statue and describing it saying, "<i>I am...</i>", e.g., <i>I am a train/ I am an abandoned suitcase/ I am a pigeon/ I am a lonely traveler/ I am the smell of coffee...</i></p>	



### **Story in sculptures**

Make pairs. Each pair will be telling a story in statues. They will keep taking turns in making the statues. Give the group a topic, e.g., summer holiday.

Person A creates a statue (e.g., *someone browsing on the internet*) and when person B nods as a verification that he/she has seen enough, person A releases the position. Person B reacts by creating his/her statues. (e.g., *someone who is lying on the sofa and drinking*). A nods, B releases the position. A's turn. E.g., *A makes a frowny face*. B nods. A releases the position. B creates a statue, e.g., *a person looking at the magazine and pointing at one page*. A nods. B releases...until they go through the whole story.

Variations:

- I) The pair can be either representing one person and this person's story.
- II) They can represent two different people (as in the example above).
- III) They can set who their characters are before going into the statues.
- IV) They can figure out during the game being played what their relationship probably is and what their characters are like.
- V) Can be performed in the pair or also for the others. The others can guess who the people in the statues are. What is their relationship, what are probably their characteristics. In this case, make sure you distinguish between the people performing and the characters they represent. We always want to comment on the characters.

### **Who/What am I in space**

Let the participant walk in space while making weird movements.

Tell them when you clap, they should freeze, that is stop moving and hold the position they are currently in.

When you clap, ask a question “*Who or what are you in...*” and add an environment. *E.g. a park*. The participants should get inspired by their body position.

Touch someone's shoulder as a sign that the person can say who or what he/she is. *E.g. a bench, a dog, a flower, a tree, a piece of garbage, a trash bin...*

When all of them say who or what they are, you can clap again to unfreeze them. A new round can start.

Variation I:

You can add a rule that when in motion, the participants have to be in some kind of contact with at least someone else. They do not necessarily need to hold hands or so, but some contact should be there. They keep the contact even in the statue and they should use it when asked who or what they are as a part of their statue. *E.g. if one person is a piece of garbage, then the person touching him/her should somehow react to that. Maybe he was thinking that is a person picking flowers, but suddenly there is a piece of garbage in his/her hand. So, he/she has to adjust. E.g. I am a volunteer cleaning the park.*

### **A picture (I am, and I take)**

Make a circle. Tell the participants to imagine that we are going to draw a picture from our bodies in the middle.

One person comes to the middle of the circle, makes a still body position, and says who/what he/she is and possibly what is doing, *e.g. I am a deeply rooted tree*. That is the first element of the picture.

A second person can come to join the picture and “draw” another element in the same way (still body position, saying who/what he is and possibly even what he is doing), *e.g. I am a fallen leaf on the ground*. What was drawn before has to stay there, the others can add something to complete the picture.

When the third person comes to join the picture (still body position, saying who/what he is and possibly even what he is doing), the picture is done. *E.g. I am a little bird sitting on the biggest branch of the tree.*

The one who was there first decides who stays there for the next picture. *E.g. I am the tree and I want the fallen leaves to stay here.*

Now there is one person holding a body position from the previous picture but has to think of a new character and a different activity according to his body position, which is an inspiration to start a new picture. The other two leave the stage.

*E.g. I am a broken vase.* And a new picture starts with this element.

Variations:

I) The pictures are even more interesting when the people do not represent only human beings, but also things, moods, emotions.

II) Let the participants understand the principle, then add a new rule to the game. The first one in the middle has to start with something neutral. The second one comes with a problem, while the third one has to solve the problem. (*E.g. am a clown making people laugh. I am a hungry lion who decided to eat the clown. And I am a cage for the lion.*)

III) Another variation has a different pattern, that is something neutral – problem – something even worse, which causes the situation to be ruined completely in the end. Or vice versa, start making the picture more and more pleasant and sweet.

IV) Encourage all the participants to join the picture to create a big one as the whole group. In this group pattern all the variations can be used too.

### **The machine**

Give the group a real or invented machine or ask what kind of machine they would be happy to have. The participants will create such a machine by coming one by one, adding themselves to the machine. Each person comes with a repetitive movement and sound for the part. When all the participants are in the machine, you can play with the power of the machine. The speed they are in can be only a 50% power, so make it 100%...150%...200%...until the machine goes into overdrive and explodes. Or vice versa, the machine can start losing the power until it stands still and turns off.

<b>Reflection:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were important moments?</li> <li>• What did you see (focus on observation)?</li> <li>• What does it make with you (focus on interpretation)?</li> </ul>
<b>Note to facilitators:</b>
Support the participants to get in physical touch with each other, however don't push them, make it gentle for them according to their age and group atmosphere.

## c. PLAYBACK THEATRE ACTIVITIES

<b>c.1. Movement and voice</b>	
<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Playback Theatre
<b>Topics:</b>	Voice expression, body work
<b>Duration:</b>	60 minutes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	10-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Enough space with no furniture
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	<p>To gain contact with one's body and with the awareness of one's emotions.</p> <p>Be able to express emotions with one's body and voice.</p>
<b>Step by step description:</b>	
How do I feel today	

Let the participants stand in a circle and ask them to introduce themselves with movement and voice, representing how he/she feels today. Not moving out from the circle, one by one.

Once one of the students shows his/her movement and voice, he/she stays still and watches the rest of the group in the circle, all the others repeat his/her movement and voice. So he/she can see him/herself from outside.

### **Movement and voice in different parts of the day, week**

Let the participants walk around the space. Instruct them to modify the walk in different moods:

- 1) without any interaction with others
  - neutral,
  - tired as if it's early morning and you go to school,
  - being in stress that your bus will be late,
  - looking forward for the lunch,
  - etc.
- 2) with short interaction with another
  - you see someone you didn't want to meet,
  - you meet someone who you admire,
  - you meet your teacher from 1st Grade,
  - you meet someone that you didn't see for a long time,
  - etc.

### **Getting on the hill**

Bring all the participants on one side of the room facing to the other side of the room. Tell them a story about this hill in front of us, where the top is by the wall opposite from us. You give them instructions:

- One by one get on the top of the hill in any creative way you want to. Use your imagination, anything is possible when getting onto this hill.
- Once you are at the top, look down into the valley at us and loudly shout your name to us.

- We (the rest of the group) will repeat the name in the same intonation as we were the echo.

After that the one on the top can take the journey back down from the hill. You as a facilitator don't need to join this.

### **Reflection:**

How was it to be focused on your body and voice?

How was it to be or not to be in the interaction with others?

How was the echo of your name?

### **Note to facilitators:**

Make the participants work only with their body and voice. Do not let them use any props, lead them to the full embodiment, make them find and explore their own body and voice as props themselves.

Give all the participants space to decide when they want to reach the hill, don't call them out.

The journey ends when he/she gets back to the other pupils. Decide if you like to include at that moment clapping of the group or using a bell to end his/her improv, or just saying thank you.

Do not let other participants step onto the hill before the previous pupil ends his/her journey (we all give full attention till the end).

It is not necessary that the facilitator join, but it depends on the character of the group. However, I don't think it is a good idea to go first, keep the imagination to the pupils at first.

## **c.2. Movement, voice, and emotions**

<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Playback Theatre
<b>Topics:</b>	Body work, emotions
<b>Duration:</b>	120 minutes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	10-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Empty room, bell.
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	<p>To open one's creativity and body-voice recognition of him/herself, to understand and express his/her emotions.</p> <p>To learn about understanding each other on the level of not only narration, but also on the level of emotions.</p>
<b>Preparation:</b>	Make sure there is enough space.
<b>Step by step description:</b>	
<p><b>How do I feel today</b></p> <p>Let the participants stand in a circle and ask them to introduce themselves with movement and voice, representing how he/she feels today. Not moving out from the circle, one by one.</p> <p>Once one of the students shows his/her movement and voice, he/she stays still and watches the rest of the group in the circle, all the others repeat his/her movement and voice. So he/she can see him/herself from outside.</p>	
<p><b>Knife, spoon, fork</b></p> <p>Divide the participants into three groups and tell them that each group becomes a knife/spoon/fork.</p> <p>The group as a whole will perform the object by using movement and voice. They get around 8 minutes to get ready and after that they perform for the other two groups.</p>	

It is good to ask after every performance:

- What did the audience see?
- How did the performers achieve that?
- What worked?

### **Fairy Tales**

Ask four people to be actors and stand up in a line. The rest of the participants are the audience. Bring a story of a fairytale character (e.g. the Little Red Riding Hood). Let the participants listen to a narrated moment of the Little Red Riding Hood experience. So, you tell them shortly (e.g.):

*“The Little Red Riding Hood arrived at the edge of the wood. She stood for a while still, wondering if it was safe to walk in, remembering that her mum warned her. Then she decided to go there.”*

Ask the actors to perform, after you ring the bell, the moment of LRRH deciding. Remind the actors that they use only their movement and voice (as they did in the activity Knife, spoon, fork), while cooperating - all of them are the LRRH.

Say this sentence to the audience *“Lets watch”* to start playing the experience back, and ring the bell. Ring the bell again to end this fluid sculpture.

Ask the audience, what they saw and what emotions they can connect to.

Then ask the other four participants to take the role of the actors and come up with a different fairytale (or possibly with another moment from the LRRH).

### **Personal stories**

Stay with four actors and now ask participants in the audience if somebody can share his/her short experience from today's morning or last days. Be patient with waiting for the story.

After somebody shares his/her moment, support the actors as in previous activity, to use movement and loud voice, not to look into the teller's neither audience's eyes.

Finish the story with your bell ring. Ask for another story or swap the actors.



## Reflection:

### Community building through stories

Once the participants are in the flow of playing back the stories and embodying the narrated emotions, and if the space is safe, you can easily open the dialog, after every story, with the audience:

- Who knows similar emotions from his/her life?
- Who has a completely different experience in such a story?
- Are there different stories on this topic that come to your mind?
- How do you feel now after watching this story? What is your emotion here and now?
- What was the story about for you? What is the theme?
- What did you learn about reality out of the played back piece?
- Why do you think this story came up after the previous story?

### Note to facilitators:

Tell the actors not to look into the audience's eyes. You don't make eye contact when you play a story from the past back, it often bothers you as an actor and the audience.

When asking the stories, do not let the participants use secondhand stories, always ask for their personal moment.

## c.3. Active listening

<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Playback Theatre
<b>Topics:</b>	Narration of stories, listening to stories
<b>Duration:</b>	60 minutes

<b>Number of participants:</b>	10-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Empty room, bell, Orff instruments or any other set of different instruments
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	To learn to listen to other people's stories. To be able to react or reflect on others' stories.
<b>Step by step description:</b>	
<p><b>I am this and I do this</b></p> <p>Make the participants stand in a circle. You start first by telling a sentence:</p> <p><i>"I am (your name) and I (the activity)."</i></p> <p>At the same time, you do different actions with your body. E.g.: <i>"I am Veronika and I ride a bike."</i> And my body acted as I was reading a book.</p> <p>Then the one staying by your left hand acts out what you narrated (in our example he/she rides a bike) and says by words something else.</p> <p>This way you go through all the circles, no stopping, no need to put anybody out, if he/she is not correct, support them to take it right.</p>	
<p><b>My story with partner of emotions</b></p> <p>Make duos and one is the teller, the other one is a sculpture. While the first one narrates his/her story, the other one fluently acts out sculpture with visible emotions of what the first one narrates.</p> <p>Make the first one to find the end of the story and then swap the teller and the sculpture.</p>	
<p><b>My story in Orff's language</b></p> <p>Bring in the group box of Orff's instruments. Let the participants explore as many of them as they want. Then let them choose one instrument and make</p>	

couples. As in the previous activity, one is the teller and now the second one expresses the story by music (using the two instruments in this couple).

Make the first one to find the end of the story and then swap the teller and the musician.

### Reflection:

Reflection on the experience with active listening:

How do you know that the other listens to what you say?

Who are the people in your life that really listen to you?

How do you listen to your close friends and relatives?

### Note to facilitators:

Get back to contact cycles and mind what are the listening styles of specifically your participants and focus on that in the exercises.

## d. PROCESS DRAMA ACTIVITIES

d.1. Rudolf	
<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Process Drama, by Šárka Dohnalová
<b>Topics:</b>	Diversity, bullying, safe relationships
<b>Duration:</b>	180 minutes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	10-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Enough space, something to play a video on, lyrics of a song and its translation, a prop

	for the main character (cap/scarf/ book) and a prop for Santa (hat/scarf).
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	<p>To find one's own experience in a story of bullying.</p> <p>To get familiar with one's role in the story and reflect on that.</p>
<b>Preparation:</b>	<p>Describe what the process drama is about. Prepare the group that they will be stepping into and out of different characters' shoes during the drama.</p> <p>Explain that it is a role, not them doing the actions in the scenes.</p> <p>When leaving a character (especially an antagonist), it is useful to shake the character off, or make a huge step to leave the character behind.</p> <p>When there are two different or opposite ideas shown in the scenes, admit they are all possible. Anything is possible, until there is another storytelling part that reveals more from the story. Then, choose what is relevant.</p> <p>It is important to explain how a prop works. If a facilitator speaks to the participants without the prop, he/her herself is talking from the role of a facilitator. Whereas if he/she wears the props, it is the character talking to the participants.</p>
<b>Step by step description:</b>	
<b>Lead in</b>	

a) Let the participants walk in space without talking. Give them instructions to walk, stop, jump, clap. Whenever you say one of those, they should react accordingly.

b) Swap instructions: walk for stop and jump for clap. Whenever you say stop, they should keep walking, walk means stopping etc.

c) Give the group an instruction to walk in a specific role. Let them walk in each of those for a while: student, teacher, mother, father. Each time, ask them to embody the character, focus on the speed they walk, body position, thoughts...then can even add some words or sounds to the character.

### **Couples planning**

Make pairs. The pair becomes a couple expecting a baby. Let them have a conversation about that. What do you have to prepare? What will be the hobbies of their child? Plan the future.

### **Representation of the future**

Make a circle. Go one by one, each participant saying one claim about the child and his/her future. While saying that, the participant should also show a gesture. E.g. He/She will be very strong. While saying, the person is miming strength. He/she will love walking in nature. While saying, the person is miming walking in nature. The rest of the group repeats both the sentence and the gesture after each claim.

Variation: If it is a boy/girl...

It is possible to form the claims a bit differently: If it is a boy/girl, he/she will...and address the sex of the child. It may be an opening to reflect on the topic of gender stereotypes.

### **It will be a boy!**

a) Announce the participants that the baby is a boy! Let them agree on his name.

We will call him Simon for now.

b) Announce to the group that Simon was born with a face mutilation. Do not be too specific, there is just something about his face that is not usual. Otherwise, he is a normal kid.

### **A day in the life**

Make groups of 3-4 people. Each group will perform a series of scenes from Simon's life to the other groups. Give each group one environment: At home with parents, at grandparents, in the kindergarten/at school, at a playground, his birthday celebration.

a) Simon at the age of 3

- watch all the scenes

b) Simon at the age of 7 (first school day)

- watch all the scenes

c) Simon at the age of 9 (3rd grade)

- watch all the scenes

(Probably, some kind of bullying will appear)

Variation:

It is possible to start with frozen pictures. The group creates a frozen picture - a starting position of their scene - and the others try to guess what is happening in the picture. Then the scene is played.

### **Summary and Reflection**

Try to respond to the content created by participants, allowing for various possibilities. For example, "Anything is possible. Maybe Simon experienced beautiful moments with his grandparents, perhaps he was even the smartest first-grader, well, and maybe sometimes he didn't have very happy moments. Like when they took away his snack."

*What do you think his moments were like when...?*

### **Bullying**

Tell the group that Simon is a victim of bullying at school. You can use some information from the scenes and make it part of the story. Ask the participants to prepare a frozen picture from Simon's classroom.

Explain how **props** work. A prop represents the main character. If someone has it, they take on the role of the main character for a while, and all interactions are with the character, not the prop holder (we are in the role, story, and fiction, not reality).

### **Frozen picture I.**

Place a chair in the space. That is a chair for Simon. Use either a prop, a volunteer wearing this prop, or be the one who sits on the chair, wear a prop. Let the others come one by one to the picture and make a statue, until there is everyone in the picture.

Variation:

It is also possible to make two groups and two statues. One statue is built, the other group describes what they see in the picture.

### **Voices in the head I.**

a) Start the frozen picture again. Let the participants come one by one to the picture, make a statue and add a sentence their character represents (come, make a statue, freeze, say a sentence, freeze again).

b) When the whole picture is created, start pointing or tapping the participants shoulders. It is a sign to repeat the sentence again. You can “play” them in some order or more at the same time.

Shake off the characters.

### **Reflection:**

*How was the experience for you?*

### **Rudolph revelation**

Tell the participants that this is a story of *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer*, Play the song and have a little conversation about it. Who knows it, who does not. What is the song about?

You can also sing the song:

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=rudolph+the+red+nosed+reindeer](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=rudolph+the+red+nosed+reindeer)

### **Alley of consciousness**

a) Tell the group that Simon is already 13 and he is really depressed. He is thinking about leaving the town, possibly about committing a suicide.

b) Create an alley. Simon (represented by the facilitator or a volunteer) will be slowly walking through the aisle which is created from the group. They stand in two zig-zag lines, facing each other and leaving enough space for a person to walk in between the lines. The people in lines will give Simon a piece of advice about whether he should or should not leave the city. Let them think for a while what would they do if they were in Simon's situation. Ask them to start their advice *"If I were you, I would/would not leave the city because..."*

c) Simon makes little steps through the alley, looks into the eyes of each person, while listening to their advice. The moment he reaches the end of the aisle, Santa comes.

### **Santa comes - Teacher in role**

At the end of the alley, Santa comes asking Simon for help and guiding his sledge (just like in the song). *"Hey, Simon with your nose so bright, won't you guide my sleigh tonight? I need you; you would be the best for this role! You are special!"*

Variations:

If the facilitator was the one walking through the alley, he/she can have a prop for Santa ready at the end of the alley and change it for the prop of Simon. At the same time, you can put the Simon's prop to one of the participants and talk to him/her from the role of Santa.



Simon stayed in town, he was now famous and admired. Let's have a look back to the classroom.

### **Frozen picture II.**

Place a chair in the space for Simon. Let the others come one by one to the picture and make a statue, until there is everyone in the picture. This time they do not bully Simon but admire him.

### **Voices in the head II.**

Start the frozen picture again. Let the participants come one by one to the picture, make a statue, and add a sentence their character represents (come, make a statue, freeze, say a sentence, freeze again). The sentences changed into admiration and appreciation.

### **Reflection:**

There are little reflections during the activity. The final one can be based on the following:

- How was the experience for you?
- What would you do if you knew someone was being bullied?
- Who would you talk to?

### **Note to facilitators:**

Open a discussion on the topic of bullying, elicit how the children behave and tell them what the possibilities are.

Also put emphasis on the power of the group. It is about the group of people, who they will support (the aggressor or the victim) - not about the aggressor as much. He is probably some kind of a victim too.

d.2. The Saddest King	
<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Process Drama, based on a book <i>The Saddest King</i> (Wormell, 2008), written by Patrice Baldwin, adjusted by Tomáš Andrášik and Lucie Moravčíková
<b>Topics:</b>	Emotions in our society, one's authenticity
<b>Duration:</b>	180 minutes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	10-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Chair, crown (plastic or paper one), gadgets for taking a video, paper sheets and pens.
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	<p>To open space for the topic of living out emotions and getting in contact with them.</p> <p>To understand the importance of different emotions in our lives.</p> <p>To experience what happens if our emotions are not allowed out.</p>
<b>Preparation:</b>	<p>The participants will experience a few different roles, different perspectives in this story (inhabitants, king's advisors, guards, and a secret police).</p> <p>It is important to explain how a prop works. If a facilitator speaks to the participants without the prop, he/her herself is talking from the role of a facilitator. Whereas if he/she wears the props, it is the character talking to the participants.</p>
<b>Step by step description:</b>	

### **Lead in**

Let the participants walk in space without talking. When you clap, they make a statue of what you say (anger, fear, happiness, freedom, disgust, sadness, prohibited, excitement)

Ask them to look into somebody's eyes each time they meet someone while walking. After a while, they smile at the one they meet. After another while, they frown at the one they meet.

### **Intro reading**

Ask the participants to sit for a while to listen to your reading. They can even close their eyes.

*“There was once a country where people were always happy. Nothing ever made them sad or cross or miserable. They would smile and laugh when the sun shone down. But they would also smile and laugh when it rained. And even when the snow fell, and the chattering of their teeth was like an orchestra of rattles they were still happy. They were delighted when given a bunch of beautiful flowers, but they were just as happy if the flowers were dead ones. And a rotten apple seemed to please them as much as a box of chocolates. If someone tripped and fell and landed on their head in that country, they'd most likely say: “What a lucky moment! I think this bump suits me, don't you?” If they missed a bus, they would smile saying something like: “There is another one coming in an hour, let's just wait for this little while.” If dinner was burnt, they'd cry: “Brilliant! That's just the way we like it, burnt and crispy. And if the fathers met in a pub and found out there was no beer left so they had to drink water instead, they were happy anyway.*

*Nothing ever made the people miserable. They were always happy. Or at least they seemed to be.”*

### **A day in the life - the country**

Make groups of 2-4 people. Each group will perform two scenes to the other groups.

a) One scene will be a given one from the reading:

- given rotten apple
- having a bump
- getting dead flower
- missing a bus
- burnt dinner
- having water instead of beer

b) The second scene is to be created by the group. They should represent something they think might be also normal in such a country.

### **Reflection:**

*How was it for you to be happy in those situations?*

*Why do you think the people were like this?*

### **Back in time**

Tell the group you will now go back in time to see what happened.

*“There is a king in this country, and you will now become his advisors for a while. The King wants to announce something very important. The scene you will see now already happened some time ago in that country.”*

### **A new law – teacher in role (TIR)**

The facilitator comes in the role of the king wearing a prop (crown) and a fake smile on his face (a mask).

*“I wish everybody to be happy in my country, so there will be a new law. Everybody has to be happy all the time. I want the advisors to create and write this law word by word.”*

*(You can also talk to the advisors for a while, ask about their opinions on how to make sure everybody is happy. In the end, if it is their idea or not, you choose the law.)*

### **Running competition**

Make 4 groups. Each group must use 20 words precisely to write the law for the king. When they finish, make it a running competition. Let the groups stand on a

start line where they can see a draft of their version of the law. Place a flipchart paper a few meters in front of each group. In their groups, one person at the time can run to the flipchart, write only one word, and come back to the start line so that the next person can run to write another word. Who will be the first to deliver their version of the law to the king in this relay-race?

### **A day in the life - pretending**

*“The king was happy about his new law. However, the inhabitants were not always as happy as the king. There were situations in which they were pretending to be happy because of the law.”*

Make small groups. Give them some time to think about a situation in which the inhabitants had to pretend they are happy because of the law, even though they may have felt differently.

### **Nightmares creation**

*“Because people could not show their real emotions and true reactions to their experiences, the true and real emotions were invading their dreams. Many of the inhabitants were having nightmares.”*

The group goal is to use symbolism, sounds, lightning, words. To create a nightmare an inhabitants could be experiencing.

Start slowly and calmly, the facilitator serves as a scale using a hand to show the intensity. The higher the hand is, the more intense the nightmare becomes. From the most intense moment, start slowly calming the nightmare down to a fade out.

(It is possible to put empty chairs in the middle of the nightmare, representing the inhabitants. Another option is having a facilitator sitting there. It is also possible to allow two or three volunteers to sit in the middle. In this case, give them a possibility to leave the activity anytime.)

### **Reflection**

*How was this experience? (to the people in the middle but also for the creators)*

### **Confidential talks I.**

*“People could not handle living like that anymore, and so they started sharing their real experiences and emotions with someone they could really trust.”*

Make pairs. Let the participants share - in roles of inhabitants - what they really feel. They can have conversations about their dreams, how they perceive the law or about their experiences. Tell them that there will be the guards walking around, so when they see them approaching or being close to them, they should switch into the happy faces and happy talks again. Whenever the guard is not close, they can speak freely.

Ask two to four volunteers to become the king's guards. They will be walking around the talking people without reacting to them.

Stop the activity and explain a second round. Second round will be similar, but this time the inhabitants will talk freely even when the guards are around as if they just did not notice the guards.

### **King's guards reporting (TIR)**

Kings' guards (now all the group) will meet the king (teacher in role) to tell him that it seems that the inhabitants only pretend to be happy, but not really being happy. The king does not want to believe it.

Finally, the guards should suggest (or the king will introduce) a secret surveillance to find out the truth.

### **Confidential talks II.**

The activity confidential talks with a little change.

Make the same pairs again. Let the participants share - in roles of inhabitants - what they really feel. This time there will be a couple of volunteers walking around representing the king's guards, recording videos of the behavior of the inhabitants and what they say.

Remind the group that the cameras are secret surveillance, so they will not be seen by the inhabitants. Therefore, they should go on with their sharing and free talking without noticing the guards around.

Each of the guards (three to four) should have their own video recorder. Make sure that it is audible what the inhabitants say in the recording. Each inhabitant should be recorded for some time.

### **Secret police**

Everyone will step into the shoes of the secret police. Make groups matching the number of video recorders. They analyze the recordings trying to find the worst violators of the law. They prepare a list of the violations that they will report to the king.

### **Reporting to the king (TIR)**

The king comes to listen to what the secret police has to say. Listens to the violations of the law and asks for the specific names of the inhabitants. Choose two to four worst lawbreakers.

### **Tickling dungeons - TIR**

Ask the secret police how they would treat the violators in order to make them happy again. Listen to the suggestions and then decide for “tickling dungeons”.

Tell the secret police that tickling dungeons will be introduced and the methods in them are totally up to the secret police.

### **Scenes from the tickling dungeons**

Create groups - each of them creating the process in the tickling dungeon with one of the accused violators.

Ask the participants to prepare their own scene with the process of making the person happy again. Perform to the other groups.

### **The celebration and city gathering**

*“The king decides to have his statue built to celebrate the prosperity and happiness in the country. There will be a gathering at the square to celebrate the revelation of the statue. Also, the “cured” former violators of the law will be shown and interviewed to present great results of the tickling dungeons.”*

### **Statue building**

Ask the participants to build the statue. They can use the material they find in the place, or you can have some material prepared.

Meanwhile, choose three participants or ask for volunteers to be given a special role (two guards and one crying little girl/boy) and explain to them what will happen:

- the revelation of the statue
- king's speech
- interviews with the cured violators
- king leaving the square
- little boy/girl crying and guards taking him/her directly to the king
- freeze and thoughts in the head
- conversation of the little boy/girl and the king

Prepare participants:

At the square, the king will say that the next violator of the law will be brought directly to the king. The little boy/girls should start crying when the king leaves the square. He/she will be taken by the guards. The scene will be frozen for a while.

Tell the participant representing the little child how the conversation between the king and child will go. Tell the participant about unmasking the king.

The guards only need to know when they see the little child crying, they will go after him/her saying they are taking him/her to the king.



Explain to the whole group what will happen (king appears and leaves, the scene will be frozen, they remain in their characters as citizens, the scene ends the facilitator). Explain the activity Thoughts in the head.

### **Statue revelation (TIR)**

The king comes to a huge applause from the whole country, talks about the situation and prosperity, points out how great the tickling dungeons work and asks the cured violators a few questions about how happy they are again. They are shown as good examples.

Before the king leaves, he mentions if another violator appears, he will be brought directly to the law. Points at the guards (who already know what will happen soon).

Immediately after the king leaves, the small child starts crying. the guards take him in the direction of the king. The facilitator claps and the scene is frozen.

### **Thoughts in the head**

Explain this activity before starting the statue revelation in the role of the king.

When you point at someone/touch their shoulder, their character says one word or sentence representing what is currently happening in the mind of the inhabitant/what is he/she thinking about the situation that is happening.

After hearing all the inhabitants (not the child), clap to unfreeze and finish the scene.

### **Child and king meeting (TIR)**

Ask the participants to watch the following scene.

*King: What do we have here...*

*Child: \*crying*

*King: What is it on your cheek*

*Child: I am crying because I am sad*

*king: Sad?! Everyone is happy in our country*

*Child: But they are just pretending they are happy....*

*King: Who would want to be sad?*

*Child: I want to be sad!...Because I am sad! And I do not care what you do to me.*

*King: Why are you sad?*

*Child: Because my dog died.*

Beneath his mask, the king starts crying, too. The child hears the king crying and takes down his mask.

*Child: Are you crying your majesty?!*

The scene ends after unmasking the king (clap and take down the prop).

### **Hot seat (TIR)**

The participants do not enter any roles now. They have a possibility to ask the king anything. If they ask the right questions, they will find out what happened to the king.

The king reveals the story from his childhood. When he was a little prince, his dog also died. Everyone was sad, the whole country was covered in black, and he did not want such sadness to be present in the country ever after. So, when he became the king, he introduced this law.

The king can also ask for some kind of advice from the participants. They will probably say to cancel the law and explain why.

### **Final scenes**

Make small groups. Ask the participants to create short scenes of what happened after the king met the child. Perform each version to the other group.

### Reflection:

- How are you now?
- What was the story about for you?
- What was important for you?
- What was the most powerful moment for you and why?
- Who was an important character in this story for you?
- What is your experience with this topic?
- What are your thoughts about the King now?
- What kind of masks do you wear in reality? And why are they useful for you?

### Note to facilitators:

Put emphasis on safety. Anyone can step out of an activity if it feels too much for the person.

When rehearsing for a scene, there is no need to strive for a perfect one. Give the participants time to think it through, but not necessarily rehearse word by word. They can improvise the details.

## e. GESTALT THEATRE ACTIVITIES

### 1. WARM-UP ACTIVITIES

e.1.1 Emotional impulses	
<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Theatrical warm-up
<b>Topics:</b>	Spontaneity, creativity & self-awareness
<b>Duration:</b>	60 minutes

<b>Number of participants:</b>	6-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	None
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	To train different ways of emotional expression through the body, explore different experiences, train one's own ability to be spontaneous.
<b>Preparation:</b>	<p>The facilitator will let the group know that they are going to explore different ways of expressing themselves through their bodies, without thinking about what they are going to do, by trying to be as spontaneous as possible.</p> <p>They will walk around the space and follow the instructions given by the facilitator. Everyone will work at the same time.</p>
<b>Step by step description:</b>	
<p><b>Walking through the space freely</b></p> <p>Participants begin to walk through space freely. They move spontaneously. It is preferable that they do not move in a circle, but that each one lets themselves be carried by their feet. At the facilitator's signal, they make an emotional impulse, the first one that comes to them. They can express it in many ways: make a scream, stay quiet, jump, make a gesture, say a word, etc.</p>	
<p>When the group has done the first round of emotional prompting, the facilitator invites them to continue doing emotional prompts. They will do at least four. They do it in the same way as the first one: they walk, the facilitator gives the signal, they do the impulse, they keep walking, next signal, and so on. At the fourth impulse, the facilitator is going to ask you to stop, close your eyes and try to notice what is the repeating pattern in the different emotional impulses they have done. Maybe they have been standing up all the time, maybe they were always shouting, maybe they were always quiet, maybe they were lying on the floor, maybe they</p>	

were wordless sounds, etc. In other words, let them observe what the different impulses they made have in common. Next, the facilitator will tell them that they are going to continue making emotional impulses but trying to make sure that none of them resembles the previous one.

Little by little the facilitator invites them to make new emotional impulses, always different from each other. In this step the facilitator can point out if participants notice any similar patterns in the group (for example, that everyone tends to shout, or to throw themselves on the floor, that no one interacts with anyone, etc.) and invite them to introduce more changes so that each round is different from the previous one.

In this case the facilitator makes small groups of about 4 people. Within each group they are numbered from 1 to 4. Firstly, number one is asked to stand in the middle of the group and to make an emotional impulse. He will do the first impulse that comes to him. As soon as they do it, numbers 2, 3 and 4 imitate him exactly in what they do. The round continues with number 2 standing in the middle and the same dynamic is repeated: number 2 makes an emotional impulse, and the others imitate this participant. This is repeated until all the members of the subgroup do it.

Once this generic small group round is done, the facilitator gives the groups a topic on which they should do the emotional prompt.

Examples of topics:

*Emotional impulses related to anger or rage,*

*Emotional impulses related to sadness,*

*Emotional impulses related to joy,*

*Emotional impulses that are related to disgust,* (in this sense it must be specified that the idea is that the emotional impulse that makes the partners disgusted is a disgusting thing not that they simply express the emotion of disgust).

**Reflection:**

The facilitator makes a round of reflection, in the small or large group. The facilitator reminds them of the emotional impulses that have been coming out in the group work: anger, happiness, sadness, and disgust. Afterwards, they ask them which one has been the least and the most difficult for them to represent and to see what this difficulty has to do with them, what information it gives them about themselves.

**e.1.2 The mirrors**

<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Theatrical warm-up
<b>Topics:</b>	Body & emotional expression
<b>Duration:</b>	40 minutes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	6-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Music that connects with each of the mirrors they are going to work with.
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	To train different ways of emotional expression through the body, explore different experiences, train one's own ability to be spontaneous.
<b>Preparation:</b>	They are informed that they are going to do an activity for theatrical warm-up where they work with body expression and with the sense of judgment and shame.
<b>Step by step description:</b>	

Divide into pairs and decide who is person A and B.
<p>Person A is going to be a mirror and person B is the one who looks in the mirror. B does a very specific action, so that the mirror can easily follow him. They will avoid doing a sequence of actions. For example: brushing teeth, whistling, making an insult with voice or hand, sitting on the floor. The person acting as a mirror adapts the reflection of the action depending on the type of mirror. Some examples of mirrors that can be proposed: mirror of narcissism: whatever partner B does, the mirror (A) returns exaggerated, intensified, big, expanded. The mirror of the opposite: B does one action and A does what they consider to be the opposite action. The mirror of masculinity/femininity: B performs an action and A returns it feminized or masculinized, depending on the mirror in question. Other examples: of old age, of childhood, vulnerability, anger, joy, sensuality, etc.</p>
<b>Reflection:</b>
The facilitator does a round of reflection on how they have felt, which one cost them the most, which one cost them the least and what they realize.

e.1.3 Avatar dance	
<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Body work
<b>Topics:</b>	Empathy, trust & self-awareness
<b>Duration:</b>	10-15 minutes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	6-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Fun music to dance to

<b>Learning objectives:</b>	To learn to let go of control, to generate a Relaxed atmosphere in the group, to develop trust and group cohesion
<b>Preparation:</b>	The facilitator tells the group that they need to be divided in pairs. In pairs they decide who is A and who is B.
<b>Step by step description:</b>	
<p>Person A stands in front of B with their back to B, B stands behind. Person B will grab person A's wrists and from that part of the body, person B will move, shape, and walk around the space, as if B was a puppet. It is important that A lets himself go. (See note 1)</p> <p><u>Note 1:</u> When the facilitator invites them to mold the partner, it is important that the word "manipulate" is not used under any circumstances, as this could lead to resistance.</p>	
Turn on the music and allow approximately 4-5 minutes for the pairs to move around the space. The facilitator can invite them to play, interact, explore, have fun to the rhythm of the music or as they wish.	
Repeat the process but switch roles: B is the puppet and A is the puppeteer.	
Have them talk with each other about how they have felt in both roles.	
<b>Reflection:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did you feel in the role of puppet?</li> <li>• How did you feel as a puppeteer?</li> <li>• What was the most fun and what was the least fun?</li> <li>• What do you realize about yourself?</li> </ul>	



e.1.4 Warming up the voice	
<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Theatrical warm-up
<b>Topics:</b>	Voice work
<b>Duration:</b>	Approximately 10 minutes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	6-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	None
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	To warm up the voice before theatrical work, to develop creativity and spontaneity through voice work, to create a relaxed playful environment.
<b>Preparation:</b>	The group is invited to stand in a circle. They are told that they are going to do an exercise to warm up their voices and prepare for the theatrical work that will follow.
Step by step description:	
The facilitator says a two-syllable word, and the person on the right must repeat it, but changing the intonation, so that the next person has to say it again with a different intonation. The same intonation cannot be repeated.	
After the first round, do another round, but try not to have any silence between each person's moment.	
The facilitator asks a participant to come up with a syllable of two words, and we do another full round. The facilitator can invite more people to continue proposing more two-syllable words. This will depend on whether they want to extend the duration of the activity or if they need more training time to achieve the objective of the exercise.	

**Reflection:**

It is a preparatory exercise. The facilitator can decide if they want to open a space to reflect on this dynamic if they see it necessary.

**e.1.5 The drumstick**

<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Cooperation and group cohesion
<b>Topics:</b>	Attention & movement
<b>Duration:</b>	10 minutes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	6-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Wooden drumsticks (or other material). Varied music (classical, techno, pop, relaxing, etc.).
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	To develop skills for cooperation. To encourage motor coordination skills. To activate attention and active listening when carrying out tasks.
<b>Preparation:</b>	The group is divided into pairs and each pair is given a drumstick. They are told that they are going to work in pairs with the task of holding the drumstick with one finger at each end, so that it never falls to the ground. They should listen and feel the movement that arises between them, being the drumstick of connection between both people. If the drumstick falls, everyone will have to change partners immediately, and start all over again.

<b>Step by step description:</b>	
This is done silently without music. When a drumstick falls on the floor, new pairs are made (If the facilitator deems it convenient, the pairs could remain the same).	
As new pairs are made, in each round the facilitator can play new music, or the same music as preferred.	
<b>Reflection:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did you feel about this task?</li> <li>• Are you satisfied with the work you have done?</li> <li>• What made the task more difficult? or easier?</li> <li>• What does it take to be able to successfully collaborate with someone in real life?</li> </ul>	
<b>Note to facilitators:</b>	
The idea is for the pairs to hold on as long as possible without the drumstick falling to the ground.	

e.1.6 The clay statue	
<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Theatrical warm-up
<b>Topics:</b>	Sensory development
<b>Duration:</b>	20-25 minutes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	6-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Fun music in the background

<b>Learning objectives:</b>	To encourage the development of a climate of trust in the group. To generate a feeling of closeness and security among the members of the group. To facilitate body relaxation and emotional and sensory openness of participants.
<b>Preparation:</b>	Divide the group into pairs and ask them to decide who is person A and who is person B.
<b>Step by step description:</b>	
A will start by opening a space, which will be closed (leaning for example their arms on the wall, so that the person's body together with the wall and the floor make a closed space). The partner will have to cross that space while looking at each other.	
Once A has created the space and B has passed through it, B creates another enclosed space that A must pass through while maintaining eye contact. This is repeated alternating one and the other, continuously. Each time a space is created it must be different from the previous ones.	

<b>Reflection:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did it feel to go through the spaces created by your partner?</li> <li>• Have you noticed any differences in yourself? Has there been competition, enjoyment...? What do you think this exercise is for?</li> </ul>
<b>Note to facilitators:</b>
The facilitator will explain that it represents a metaphor for life, in that sometimes we must go through conflicts that are not easy. It is a metaphor that

serves as a prelude to the explanation that will be given later that conflict is necessary in theater to be able to enter improvisation.

#### e.1.7 Open spaces

<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Theatrical warm-up
<b>Topics:</b>	Body work
<b>Duration:</b>	20-25 minutes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	6-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Relaxing music in the background, soft volume
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	To create the bond among participants. To awaken spontaneity and bodily creativity. To use the dynamic itself as a metaphor for working with conflict, as a situation people can go through to learn and grow as people. To generate a relaxed atmosphere in the group of participants that invites them to play.
<b>Preparation:</b>	The group is divided into pairs and asked to decide who is Person A and who is Person B. They are told that they will work in turns. A will close their eyes and B will become the sculptor of A, who will have to follow the steps indicated by the facilitator.
<b>Step by step description:</b>	

<p>Person A closes their eyes and allows himself to be shaped by their partner. B starts to do as if applying clay on the body of A. They will put their hand in a hollow, concave form and will press it on the partner's body as if it were clay. (2-3 min)</p>	
<p>After two or three minutes of making the shape with the hollow hand, they are asked to define the figure of their partner with their fingertips, so that they press with their fingers as if trying to define the clay that surrounds the figure. (2-3 min)</p>	
<p>The participant must polish the clay with their open hand. They will have to make circular movements so that the figure is as shiny as possible. Continue doing it all over the body. (2-3 min)</p>	
<p>They do as if they were giving a water bath from above, which removes the clay shavings, so that it is as clean as possible. (2-3 min)</p>	
<p>The sculptor (B) stands in front of A and waits for the facilitator's signal. Then when A opens their eyes, B will greet them with a smile and a hug if desired.</p>	
<p>Once they finish, they switch roles and start over.</p>	
<p><b>Reflection:</b></p>	
<p><i>How did you feel about the contact? What did you like the most? Is there anything you didn't like? What was it? How do you feel before and after working with sculpture? What has it been like for the sculptor? Which role has been more comfortable?</i></p>	

## 2. GESTALT THEATRE ACTIVITIES

e.2.1 The rooftop	
Methodological framework:	Gestalt Theatre

<b>Topics:</b>	Conflicts
<b>Duration:</b>	20-30 minutes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	6-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Background music, cushions (at least one per person)
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	To become aware of the person's perception of the notion of conflict. To illustrate what we understand by conflict in the field of Gestalt Theatre (hereafter GT), understood as two desires that oppose each other in opposite directions. To learn that conflict is an essential element in GT and without it is not possible to have scenes neither in Gestalt Theatre nor in regular theatre.
<p><b>Preparation:</b></p> <p>The participants will be told that they will do a guided visualization in which they walk through a city. They will have to be still and preferably with their eyes closed to imagine what the facilitator is telling them. During the first part of the visualization, it should be emphasized that the idea is to imagine the action, and that they will not have to do it.</p> <p>The facilitator will say, <i>"Now, we call the elevator, the door opens, and you get in the elevator"</i>. The participants will stand up and get on the cushion, which will be in front of each one of them. This is the only moment when the participants will make use of physical movement. The same will happen when the facilitator says, <i>"get out of the elevator onto the terrace"</i>. Normally they will step down forwards, not backwards.</p> <p>After, it will be told to participants to open their eyes (second part of the dynamic) and start to represent now, with their body movement, what the facilitator tells them.</p>	

It should be pointed out to them that it is the second part. That is to say, the dynamic has two times: an initial one in which the visualization is presented, and they do it preferably with their eyes closed and only use the movement to go up and down the cushion and a second part in which they open their eyes and represent with their body the crossing of the cable.

The group must be divided into two subgroups, each subgroup in front of the other and in line, so that each person in each group has a partner in front of them, with whom they will work later.

You can also prepare background music: for example, music for when the elevator is going up, the sound of doors opening or music to make it more suggestive when they are crossing the steel cable.

#### **Step by step description:**

Tell the group that they are going to do a guided visualization. They must be divided into two groups and line up each of the subgroups, so that each student is facing a person from the other group with approximately 5 to 6 meters if space permits. If it is possible to have more, it is even better.

Each person should place a cushion in front of them, symbolizing an elevator, which they should get on when the facilitator says, "*get on the elevator*", when the facilitator says "*get off the elevator*" they should get off the cushion.

Begin with ambient music that symbolizes the environment that the person begins to walk through in their imagination. Here begins the guided visualization that goes like this:

*"You are walking through a city; you are walking through New York City. Observe how are the buildings around you, what is the atmosphere in the city, what time of day it is, if there are people or if there are no people, what is the smell, what are the colors, what do you observe ... and in general how is the atmosphere of this city of Manhattan where you're walking."*



*You keep walking and little by little you will be looking for the tallest building in the city. Once you have located it you will go directing your steps towards this building, until you arrive at the front door.*

*You enter the entrance hall, observe the atmosphere in this building: there are people around, there are no people, what are people doing there, how many people in the building, what is the atmosphere, what feeling it gives you ... then I'm going to ask you to locate the elevator. Once you locate the elevator, you direct your steps towards it, you stand in front of it, you call it, the door opens, and you get into the elevator."*

*The participants at that point must get on the cushion. "Mark the last floor of the building: floor number 100." At that moment you can connect a sound that symbolizes an elevator going up and you start counting the floors. "5 floors, 10 floors, the elevator keeps going up and doesn't stop. 20 floors, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50 floors... The elevator keeps going up, 60 floors, 70, 80, 90 and 100 floors. The elevator door opens, and you get down from the elevator".*

*At this point the participants must get off the cushion. "You get to the terrace of the building and, from there, (still with your eyes closed you keep imagining) observe the city, what you can see from above, how far your view reaches, what buildings you see, how you feel at that height...At that moment you will realize that from the terrace of the building, a steel cable starts and, that steel cable connects the roof you are standing in with the roof of the building in front of you. Open your eyes.*

*The facilitator asks the participants to open their eyes. "You notice that in front of you there is another person looking at you, who is also on the roof of another building. From this moment on you have a task, a mission that you must accomplish. Your mission is, using the steel cable, to cross over to the other rooftop. That is your mission."*

*When you are ready, we will count 3,2,1 and you will cross to the other side, using the cable. The facilitator can play some music to create a tense atmosphere for this delicate moment of crossing the cable. "Three, two, one. Start the cable crossing."*

The guided visualization is finished, and the participants are crossing the wire with open eyes. The facilitator pays attention, without intervening, to what happens during the crossing moments of the different pairs.

*"Once you reach the other side of the terrace you get a new mission. The mission is as follows: you must return to the terrace of origin, but on your way back you will have to prevent the person on the opposite terrace from reaching their destination. So, you have two tasks in this new mission: on the one hand, to get to your home terrace and on the other hand, to prevent the person going to their home terrace from reaching their destination."*

*People are going to cross the cable for the second time. Here the observer must pay close attention to what is the reaction of the people when they are given the second task, what happens in that crossing, what are the different strategies that the participants use.*

### **Reflection:**

Group discussion in which we talk about how we manage conflicts in life, how we perceive them and how many people remembered that they were doing theatre, that they were acting.

Once the crossing is finished by all the participants, the facilitator asks the group *"How was the crossing on the first occasion? and how was the crossing for you on the second occasion? How did you manage it? What strategy did you have on the first crossing? What strategy did you have on the second crossing?"*

The participants sit together, and the facilitator gives these questions for them to reflect on:

*What was it like for you the first time you had to cross? What strategy did you follow when you crossed the person on the cable? At the second crossing, what was your first impression when you received the instruction that the other person was not to arrive at their destination? What relationship do you observe between what happened in the activity and your own perception of the conflict? Did anyone remember that it is only theatre? Did anyone enjoy this game?*

### Note to facilitators:

After this discussion it is a good idea to invite the group to re-do the second crossing of the wire so that they can experience the exercise with a greater awareness of the fact that it is theatre and that they can do things they would not do in real life in such a situation. Once they have done this part of the activity the facilitator can ask again how the exercise went for them this time and how they felt.

In GT we always try to do something different from what we would do in real life. The goal is to give yourself permission to do something new, different, that you wouldn't do in real life to experience the consequences of it.

At the same time the aim of the activity is for the participants to explore to what extent they can give themselves permission to do something that is not within the logic of real life but of fiction and theatre. There is a discussion about it, they express their opinions and observe what they realize by participating in it. The last question would be what they notice about themselves and about the conflict itself, as an element that is present in the dynamics with other people.

### e.2.2 Hooked scenes

<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Gestalt Theatre
<b>Topics:</b>	Spontaneity, creativity & communication
<b>Duration:</b>	Approximately 7-8 minutes per couple. Depending on the number of participants the time of the activity varies. It is recommended that no more than 16 people do it, as the activity would take too long.

<b>Number of participants:</b>	6-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Nothing is required. Optional: stage lighting to create a greater sense of stage space. If it is a new group that has not done theatre-related activities, it is not recommended to use this type of lighting as it can be somewhat intimidating, in any case it is advisable for the facilitator to assess whether it is appropriate or not.
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	To develop the spontaneity and creativity of the participant through spontaneous improvisations. To develop the participant's ability to resolve a conflict empathically. To develop communication skills, verbal and non-verbal, necessary for conflict management by the participant. To develop skills for assertive communication. To develop active listening skills. To develop awareness of oneself and one's own psychological functioning mechanisms and behavioral patterns.
<b>Preparation:</b>	It should be explained to the group that they are going to carry out a theatrical improvisation that is characterized by its spontaneity, meaning the people who go on stage, invent a conflict proposal, in a spontaneous, unplanned way: totally improvised. The work is always based on this spontaneity.
<b>Step by step description:</b>	

The group is told to number themselves from 1 to 10, for example, in the case of 10 people. Once they know their numbers, explain that person number 1 will come on stage and take a *neutral role*. (See note 1)

Note 1: *neutral role* means that the person at the beginning of the scene has no role assigned to them, no link with any other person and remains *neutral* until person number 2 enters the scene and brings them a conflict proposal, which will give them the necessary information to enter the improvisation and develop the relationship with the person proposing the conflict. Therefore, the person who is *neutral* initially has no role, no identity, and doesn't know who they are until the second person enters the scene. When the second person enters the scene, it will help the *neutral* person not to be so neutral and to get situated and enter the conflict proposal that the second person brings.

Once person one (neutral role) is on stage, wait for person two to enter. The second to enter arrives with a conflict proposal (see note 2).

Note 2: When the second person enters with the proposal, an improvisation takes place between them where there must be always 3 elements:

- 1) The link they have between them, what is the role that each one has.
- 2) What is the conflict between them?
- 3) The urgency to solve the conflict in question that requires an immediate solution. If not for that, the scene could drag on and go nowhere, and become boring for the audience. These elements should be given by the one who enters the scene with the conflict proposal, e.g.: "Hi honey, why have you left the house keys to your mother again?". From this sentence it can be intuited that both are a couple or have an affective bond, as well as that the conflict can reside in the fact that the one who enters the scene does not want the other character's mother to have the house keys.

Once the dynamic has been explained, it begins in such a way that the first person *is hooked* – it is named a hooked improvisation because the first person (the one in neutral) receives a proposal from the second person. Then the improvisation takes place until the facilitator considers that it is enough. Then, the first person leaves the stage to rest and the second person who entered stays and prepares as *neutral*. Person number 3 enters the scene with a new conflict proposal. Again, the improvisation takes place until the facilitator marks it, number two leaves and person number three take the neutral role. And so on until number 10 adopts the neutral role and the group closes with number 1 (in this example there were 10 people) being the last one to bring a conflict to the stage, since at the beginning they didn't (see note 3).

Note 3: This exercise could be done in two complete rounds where the first round is a warm- up and each scene runs for no more than three minutes, as a quick way to see what conflicts the group participants are proposing. Then a second, more in-depth round can be done where, having become more familiar with the methodology, they can be ready to develop their creativity further.

### **Reflection:**

Once everyone has finished, the facilitator can ask the group *"how did everyone feel during the exercise; what did they realize about themselves; what did they discover; what did they think about the conflict proposal that the partner brought them; did the scene, the character, the role of the conflict that they played, help them to realize something? what do they think about their own style and strategy for dealing with conflict, did that strategy work, or not?"*

### **Note to facilitators:**

While the improvisations are taking place, the facilitator can interrupt the process by approaching the protagonists and asking them how they feel in the

situation they are improvising. The aim of this is to help them become aware of and connect with the body and the emotion the characters are in.

You can also ask them what they are thinking, if they realize what their strategy is for dealing with the conflict, if they are familiar with what they are doing and finally you could also suggest that they try a different strategy by doing something they wouldn't do in real life. On stage they can give themselves that permission that in real life they can't afford, because it doesn't change our biography and it doesn't do them any harm.

### e.2.3 Couple to couple scenes

<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Gestalt Theatre
<b>Topics:</b>	Flexibility, communication, conflicts
<b>Duration:</b>	40-50 minutes (can last longer with groups of more than 10 people)
<b>Number of participants:</b>	6-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	None. Optional: costumes or make-up if the facilitator or group wishes. Stage lighting.
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	To facilitate the participant's contact with their own spontaneity. To encourage the participant's creative spirit and their ability to improvise and adapt to an unexpected situation. To develop the ability to make decisions and create awareness about the values that lie behind decisions. To generate an improvement in the

	participant's verbal and non-verbal communication skills. To develop awareness of oneself and one's own psychological functioning mechanisms and behavioral patterns.
<b>Preparation:</b>	The facilitator divides the group into pairs. Each of these pairs are distributed forming a unit each pair, in a big circle.
<b>Step by step description:</b>	
<p>Once all the pairs are seated in the circle, each pair will think of a scene proposal to give to the pair on their right. All the pairs will simultaneously prepare the conflict for the pair sitting to their right. They should think about these three elements: 1) role or link of the protagonists, 2) what is the conflict, 3) what is the urgency of the conflict (see note 1).</p> <p><u>Note 1</u>: The couple preparing the scene should not add any additional information to what is specified, such as: how the characters feel, how they are to behave, etc. It is very important that the participants, on the other hand, make sure that the scene they receive is not a scene that corresponds to the reality of their life, if that is the case it is necessary to change it to be fictional for them.</p>	
<p>When they have finished preparing, each pair should give the scene to the next pair and they themselves will assign the role to each member of the other pair. That is, who plays which role depends on the pair that proposes the conflict (see note 1).</p>	
<p>Start working with the scenes. The scenes can be played simultaneously, the group can also be divided in two and while half of the group works, the others observe, or you can even do it one by one while the rest of the pairs observe. It is up to the facilitator to decide. The fastest option is that all the pairs do it simultaneously: it can be more chaotic, there can be more noise in the room and</p>	



logically the facilitator will not be able to give all their attention equally to all the pairs. An intermediate formula is to have a few couples on stage, separated in the distance while the rest of the pairs rest.

### Reflection:

The role of the facilitator in this dynamic requires that they intervene, helping the characters to become aware of how they feel, what are their strategies used in the conflict and to encourage the participants to ask themselves if they want to use a different strategy to the one they are using. This allows them to experience how they feel when they express themselves in a different way to the one they do in real life, taking advantage of the permission that theatre gives to be as one wants to be.

The facilitator can make small interruptions making it easier for the person working to go deeper into what is happening to them. The work of the facilitator is oriented so that the person acting has the time and the opportunity to realize *what is happening to them, how they feel, what direction they would like to give to the staging of the conflict.*

It is important to first allow enough time for the pairs to enter the scene and for the facilitator, listening to their intuition, to pause and suggest to the participants, without disconnecting from the state in which they are in the scene, to *close their eyes, take a deep breath and receive the facilitator's instructions.* These can be done, for example: *how do you feel, do you feel tension in any part of your body? Take the palm of your hand to that area of tension, now that you feel it, give it voice: what would that part of your body say, what would that tension mean, what is the strategy of the conflict you are using, is it familiar to you, would you be willing to do something different?*

If the facilitator detect that the strategy consists of being a conciliatory person, who seeks to resolve the conflict, so that the other person doesn't get angry, etc., the character they may experience can be provocative, selfish, defiant, ignoring the person in front of you as if they were passive, etc. Sometimes a good question

to ask when you pause is *think of a way to continue this conflict that you would never have done in real life. And give yourself permission to try it out, experiment with it and see what happens.* Another hint for the facilitator could be to invite the group, when the action is suspended, to *think of a superhero* from their childhood.

#### e.2.4 Scenes with objects

<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Gestalt Theatre
<b>Topics:</b>	Metaphors, symbolic language & projections
<b>Duration:</b>	Approximately 90 minutes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	6-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Quiet background music. Personal notebook. Optional: Scene light.
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	To open a space for the participant's creativity and fantasy. To create a space for work with the projection that each participant makes of their own qualities (positive and / or negative). To improve the participant's ability to make decisions in situations that are important to them. To develop skills such as empathy, active listening, assertiveness, or conflict resolution in the participant. To develop awareness of oneself and one's own psychological functioning mechanisms and behavioral patterns.

<p><b>Preparation:</b></p>	<p>The facilitator should explain to the group that they are going to perform a type of improvisation where they are going to become objects, inanimate beings. They are objects that could have a conflict if they were alive. Examples: a glass jar and strawberry jam. The jam does not want to rot inside the jar and wants to go out to explore the world, and the jar does not want to be left by the jam because it does not want to be left alone and be thrown into the bin. A candle and a lighter: where the candle does not want to be lit by the lighter because it has little left to run out and disappear and the lighter wants to light it because if he does not, the owner of the house will replace them with electric light.</p> <p>The participants will work in pairs.</p>
<p><b>Step by step description:</b></p>	
<p>Each pair thinks of two objects for another pair (see note 1) and about what conflict there might be between the objects and how urgently the conflict needs to be resolved. The object will be embodied by the other pair. Once everyone has the objects thought of, the pair should tell them in front of the group so that everyone can hear which object they have assigned to each one. The couple that chooses the two objects is also responsible for assigning the concrete object to each of the members of the other couple (for example: Mary will be the spoon and Mark the glass). The facilitator must supervise that the conflicts have the following characteristics: link, conflict, and urgency.</p> <p>Note 1: the assignment of the couple to whom they are going to think the objects can be done as in the previous dynamic, arranged in a circle, or in any</p>	

other way that guarantees that all the couples have another couple assigned to think about their objects.

Each person writes in their notebook the characteristics of the object they were given. For example: I am a colorful teapot, I am soft, made of porcelain, etc.

The person who has written their qualities as an object has to choose three of them that could have to do with themselves as a person and at the same time have to do with the object. Once they have chosen them, they must read them out loud.

Next, each person must humanize these objects little by little: walking, giving voice, etc. with the characteristics they gave to the object. This means they must rely on the qualities that the object has that they have described before and use them in their body movement, their voice, etc. They do a work of individual character that they should enjoy and that contributes something to them.

For example, in this case, the facilitator can ask them *what is the emotion that predominates in the object*. They then can look for a more human and more comfortable way to hold and maintain the quality of the object, since it is not comfortable to maintain a position that they are not used to. The facilitator can ask the participants to make a gesture, even a small one, that helps them to get into the object and that still reminds them of what they are representing to integrate some quality of the object.

It is an individual process in which they give life to the object, so it is recommended that they do not interact with each other and focus on their own process of creation.

The last step would be to visualize the scenes one at a time or, depending on the time the facilitator has, they can have everyone work at the same time. In that case you can stop a little bit in each scene so that when they see it appropriate, they can say *STOP: we are going to see a little of this scene* (of a particular pair), let's *continue...* and everyone goes back to their scenes.

However, the facilitator should keep in mind that this is not recommended if there are more than 5 pairings. Another option for working in a large group is for the facilitator to pass by the pairs while the others continue working.

### Reflection:

The facilitator can ask about how the scene went. Possible questions are *how you felt; what you discovered when you got into that character/object; what it brought to you and if you realized anything.*

As the dynamics are going to take place in an educational environment, the facilitator should not open too much and lead the person to relate the situation to their life and find a connection with it – their biography. The context is not a therapeutic framework, and the facilitator may be or not a therapist, and not be able to accompany the participant if they touch any deep topic.

### e.2.5 Papers on the floor

<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Gestalt Theatre
<b>Topics:</b>	Character building & empathy
<b>Duration:</b>	Approximately 60 minutes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	6-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Blank A4 sheets of paper, thick felt-tip pen, background music.
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	To explore the emotional, cognitive, and bodily reactions of the participant to improvising various roles and/or performing certain tasks in an improvised way. To facilitate the participant's

	<p>awareness of the effects of improvisation on characters different from themselves. To learn to put themselves in the shoes of a theatrical character to become aware of their own psycho-emotional aspects.</p>
<p><b>Preparation:</b></p>	<p>On sheets of paper, the facilitator will write a circumstance, an emotion, a role or a personal quality. Examples: mother, politician, homeless, murderer, pregnant woman, broken, shameless, extrovert, introvert etc. Each of these should be written on a separate sheet of paper.</p> <p>Cushions are distributed around the room or classroom. The paper sheets are placed on each cushion, so that each cushion has its own paper and there are as many cushions as there are participants.</p>
<p><b>Step by step description:</b></p>	
<p>Participants are asked to enter the room and take some time to look at the cushions and what is on them.</p>	
<p>They are asked to walk to a cushion that has caught their attention and stand in front of it. If several people choose the same cushion, they can share it.</p>	
<p>Once everyone is in front of a cushion, they are asked to observe it, close their eyes, and let themselves be filled by the quality written on the cushion. When the music starts to play, they will have already put themselves into that character and they will be asked to start walking through the space with that quality already integrated.</p>	

The objective is for them to explore, move, interact with their eyes, talk to others, etc. but always from that quality, role or link they have.	
During the walk and the interaction, the facilitator will turn up the music a few times. This means each person should take their character to the limit of their desire, that is, to intensify what their character wants to do (see note 1).	
They are told to return to the cushion from which they came out. Once they return there, they are invited to close their eyes, to let themselves feel what is moving them and what is happening to them. They should also observe what it has to do with them, the fact of having taken that cushion, why that one and not another.	
<b>Reflection:</b>	
<i>How did you feel; why that cushion; what does your choice have to do with you; what did you discover about that character; how did you feel in the interaction with others; what was the cushion you liked the least and why?</i>	
<b>Note to facilitators:</b>	
It is important for the facilitator to warn that at some point in the exercise the volume intensity will be turned up and that this will mean that they should push the role to the limit. A good time for this is right at the beginning of step 3, when the participants start walking around the room.	

e.2.6 My animal self	
<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Gestalt Theatre
<b>Topics:</b>	Family roles, self-awareness & responsibility

<b>Duration:</b>	Approximately 60 minutes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	6-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Forest or jungle music to play in the background. Ambient lights with green, red, or blue filters to create more atmosphere. Flipchart. Cushions, sheets, blankets, mats.
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	To develop the spontaneity and creativity of the participant through spontaneous improvisations. To explore the characteristics of the participant at a psychological level through their projection in the creation and improvisation of the chosen animal. To promote awareness of the participant's own behavior patterns and values. To work on the creativity and emotional literacy of the participant.
<b>Preparation:</b>	The room should be clear and open. Cushions can be scattered around the room and a bed sheet or tarp is also useful for the activity. In the corners you can put lights with colored filters, and in the center, if possible, it should be darker, creating an atmosphere of mystery and not too much light.
<b>Step by step description:</b>	
<p>Warm up. A dynamic of body movement that helps the group to activate and connect with their bodies. Any dance or body movement activity is appropriate. It simply must be something that helps them to activate and expend energy in such a way that, aided by physical fatigue, they can lower their defenses and give themselves permission to get into the guided visualization that follows.</p>	



Relaxation. First, they are given relaxation and breathing exercises. They are asked to find a space in the room where they can lie down, if possible, with enough space for themselves, and without being in contact with another partner, and that they make themselves comfortable with the mats, blankets, etc. They are asked to relax their body from the lower part of the body upwards. First the feet, ankles, calves, knees, thighs, abdomen, chest, shoulders, neck, chin, arms, hands, cheeks, eyes. Always calmly, slowly and saying that these parts are getting more relaxed, are getting heavier, are noticing how they are merging with the ground, etc. in a way that facilitates relaxation.

Visualization. Once the relaxation is achieved, then the following visualization begins:

*We are going to invite you to take a trip with your imagination to a forest (put jungle sounds). The forest is lush and there is a lot of vegetation. Observe the vegetation and see some bushes that move. You keep watching them, you get closer and... (see note 1) an animal appears. What animal is it? The first animal you see is the animal you are going to become. Don't change it. Trust, because the animal you have seen, however strange it may be, is the animal you must work with today. Little by little imagine that your body becomes the body of that animal and that is taking shape, body, muscle, skeleton, with its skin, hair, feathers ... The animal begins to move a little bit on your own site. You are no longer human; you are that animal. You can no longer speak with words, but you can communicate. You can start thinking about the sound your animal makes. How it communicates, how it moves.*

From this moment a group improvisation begins in which everyone is an animal and each one will act from their animal and the title of this improvisation is: a day in nature. The improvisation will last until the facilitator makes a signal to indicate clearly that it is over.

Note 1: The surprise of the animal's appearance should be accompanied by the intonation of the facilitator's voice, to encourage them to continue and be in the visualization.

Tips for the facilitator: Look closely at the different roles the characters take on: what kind of animal they choose and how that animal behaves, how it interacts with the others. The facilitator can take notes of their observations, so that when the improvisation is over, they have material to help them work on. The approximate length of the improvisation should be at least 25-30 minutes. The improvisation takes place over the course of a day. The facilitator gives the context and explains that the improvisation starts early in the morning and as time goes by they give some indication of the passing of the hours, until the arrival of sunset, deep night, etc.

Indicate that the dynamic is over (with a bell or with the code you set to end the improvisation).

Interview. They are invited to form groups of three in which each of them, still in the animal role, will number themselves from one to three. Once numbers 2 and 3 in each group have been numbered, they will drop their animal roles and interview number 1, who is still in the animal role. *How is your life, how do you feel in your life as an animal, who do you live with, how do you feed yourself, what do you need in your life, what makes you happy, what are you afraid of, what are you worried about?* The three people in the trio go through this role of animal interviewee. Each time the interviewee changes, they are encouraged to reconnect with their animal and the other two ask them the same questions (see note 2).

Note 2: The questions are pre-prepared on the flip chart but are not visible until you get to step five.

Collection. A de-rolling is done, which consists of slowly taking off the animal in a symbolic way. The participants pretend to take off their skin and become human

again. There is a time for individual reflection so that they realize the animal it appeared in the visualization and what has happened in the improvisation, in the interview, or in any part of the dynamic.

### Reflection:

Share in the large group: *how did you feel, was there anything that stood out to you, what was the hardest, what was the easiest, and anything else you noticed and wanted to share.*

## e.2.7 The family

<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Gestalt Theatre
<b>Topics:</b>	Family roles, self-awareness & responsibility
<b>Duration:</b>	Approximately 60 minutes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	6-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Labels, markers, paper (one letter); Background music to set the mood; Chairs, some tables and kitchen utensils' props.
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	To become aware of the perception that the person has of their own role in their family of origin. To reflect on what aspects of the participant's role in their own family enhance or inhibit the assumption of their own or other people's responsibilities in their family nucleus. To help the participant to become aware of their

	<p>responsibility as a member of their family tree.</p> <p>To analyze what role the participant has in their family and if they need or would like to make any changes in this regard.</p>
<b>Preparation:</b>	<p>All these materials are placed in a place in the room so that they are available to the participants when the improvisation begins.</p> <p>Labels with different roles of a family written (father, mother, mother's brother, mother's older sister, grandmother, dog, canary, etc.)</p>
<b>Step by step description:</b>	
<p>The facilitator asks a question for the group to reflect on: <i>what your role in your family of origin is</i> (for example: the one who is always in charge of the celebrations, the passive one who is never available to do anything with them, the one who pacifies the conflicts, etc.).</p> <p>Then participants are told that they are going to do a group improvisation in which a maximum of 10 people is going to work. They are going to choose the role they are going to play (father, mother, son, brother-in-law, etc.). Each person says the character they have chosen and puts on a label with the role. From the moment they put the label on, they go on stage to play the role, start to move, and act as the character would. Once they are all on stage, they must organize the family tree in such a way that the links between them are clearly visible and it is clear how the family is constituted at a hierarchical level. They are invited to walk around the space just feeling, without having to show how they feel the links they have with each of these people: who they feel closer to, who they trust more, who they distrust, who they feel at ease with, etc. As in any family, not everyone has the same relationship with everyone. Allow time for them to continue to walk and incarnate themselves in those roles.</p>	

The conflict is that the family house that belongs to the great-grandmother has received an expropriation order because a highway is going to pass where the house is. The family has difficulties in agreeing on how they are going to divide the money, what account number or accounts they will provide, as some will want to sell the house, others will not, others will think it is fairer to receive more, and so on. And all this must be done with great haste, as the application for compensation expires in 10 minutes or else, they will lose the right to receive the aid, as well as the house. In this scene they must be in conflict, they cannot agree.

*"You are the López-Gómez family, your late great-grandmother has passed away and has left you a family home in the French Pyrenees. Unfortunately, the State is planning to build a motorway that will pass through this area, for which it is offering you a compensation of one million euros. You must get organized quickly, as there are only 10 minutes left before the deadline and you will have to decide on an account number to pay into, after which time you will lose all right to the compensation, and you will lose your property".*

Each character who receives their label with their identity, automatically enters the scene being the character in question and starts to elaborate it and feel it in their body, walking like the character, talking like it, looking at the world from their needs' point of view, longings and/or fears, etc.

Once all the characters are on stage, the facilitator says "action" and lets the improvisation run for 20-30 minutes or so and if you want, you can add tension to the scene by whispering things in the characters' ears. This will help make it more dynamic and active. For example, you can tell the grandmother to fake a heart attack, you can tell the father of the family to make a solemn declaration to the family that he is coming out of the closet because he has a lover, the mother can say that she is going to live in Mexico because she has discovered that her vocation is to become a bullfighter, etc. These are indications that will help to

reactivate interest in the conflict, but only if the facilitator senses that the dynamic is waning and there is no spark in the scene.

The objective is to observe the strategies and behaviors that each character has as a different way to facilitate awareness of how people move in life, what marks their behavior, how we express what we need and what we should (or should not) change in ourselves

When the improvisation stops, tell them: *observe and realize what you have avoided with the character you have taken*. For example: responsibility, being able to have more fun if you have overworked yourself with the character you chose, and so on. Then the facilitator says: we're going to do the improvisation again, but you'll have to change character with another person and choose another character that allows you to go through or experience what you've avoided. The readjustment and the exchange of character roles is done in such a way that now each person has a character that, at least in a certain way, allows them to go through what they avoided (see note 1).

Note 1: The facilitator should choose the new role based on the information they have about the participant and what they have observed in the dynamic. It should allow the participant to continue working in the line of facing what is not so known to him.

The improvisation is done again. This time it is shorter (about 15 minutes at most). The improvisation is stopped to move on to reflection.

### **Reflection:**

*How did you feel in the second character; what happened when you got into that character; what difference did you notice in relation to the previous one; what does this have to do with your life and with you.*

### e.2.8 Possible actions against bullying

<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Gestalt Theatre
<b>Topics:</b>	Empathy & personal boundaries
<b>Duration:</b>	Approximately 60 minutes.
<b>Number of participants:</b>	6-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	None.
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	<p>To promote awareness of the phenomenon of bullying. To develop young people's empathy with the protagonists of a bullying situation. To develop young people's ability to identify when a bullying situation occurs and what needs to be done in that case.</p> <p>To understand what might lead one person to bully another in the school context. To raise awareness among the public, as well as to give a voice to those students who may feel bullied in the school environment or who may be exposed to bullying. To promote a greater consolidation of dramatic expression through this type of theatrical improvisation.</p>
<b>Preparation:</b>	<p>Instruct those who are going to perform bullying scenes so that they have it clear about what kind of situation they are going to improvise. It is necessary that they prepare themselves before the activity with the necessary elements and costumes to give the feeling of the school context and the situation of violence they are going to reproduce.</p>

**Step by step description:**

Theatrical representation of approximately 5 minutes in which a story of bullying is told. The scene should be frozen in the moment of maximum violence (bully raises his hand to the bullied). See note 1.

Note 1: this activity does not have a described scene as the realities between centers in different countries can be very variable and the facilitator who develops the activity will have the necessary tools to generate a story that adjusts to the reality of the center.

The facilitator intervenes to ask the audience at what point in the story something different could happen to steer the story towards a more positive ending. It is then that the audience begins to feel part of the story. The suggestions are improvised on the spot by those who propose them.

Example: someone proposes that the victim rebels in some way, and in that case, the person who was playing the victim leaves the scene and the person who proposes enters, to reactivate the scene and see what would happen if what they propose happened.

The audience is divided into small groups to discuss some of the situations of violence or bullying they are aware of or may be facing in their schools.

The final part of the activity includes the development of a coexistence contract for schools, drawn up with the help of information from teachers and students. This agreement must be approved and signed by each one of the students.

**Reflection:**



To the students: *how did you feel, is there anything that stood out to you, what was the hardest, what was the easiest, and anything else you noticed and would like to share.*

To the public: *What do you feel when you see these scenes? What do you think about what you have witnessed? Do you think that this is a one-off event or that this is something common? What can someone who finds themselves in this situation of harassment do? Where can they turn for help? What would you do if you were the victim?*

**Note to facilitators:**

It is advisable to do this activity before the one called: "Bullying at school" that goes deeper into the life of the characters.

**e.2.9 Bullying at school**

<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Gestalt Theatre
<b>Topics:</b>	Empathy & responsibility
<b>Duration:</b>	60 minutes (or more depending on how long you want to extend the discussion).
<b>Number of participants:</b>	6-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Props of a school scene (backpacks, ball, snacks, etc.). Other elements that the characters in a bullying scene may have with them.

<p><b>Learning objectives:</b></p>	<p>To promote awareness of the phenomenon of bullying. To develop young people's empathy with the protagonists of a bullying situation. To learn to recognize bullying as well as the measures that can be taken when it is detected at school, in families, and with victims and aggressors. To help young bullies see their actions in a theatrical mirror. To encourage young people who are victims of bullying to connect with greater self-confidence and that they can generate changes and materialize them.</p>
<p><b>Preparation:</b></p> <p>This activity will require prior preparation with two volunteers from the group.</p> <p>PREPARATION OF THE VOLUNTEERS: Talk to the two volunteers from the group of participants who are willing to play the role of actors or actresses in the exercise. Explain that one will play the role of the bully and the other the victim. They will have to do a short improvisation in which they will recreate a situation of bullying, for example, a situation where the bully stops the victim in the school corridor and starts to scold the person being bullied to give the bully their snack or to give them their notes, to take their mobile phone, etc. The victim starts to resist (the facilitator gives some guidelines according to the experience with bullying in the school where the facilitator is working, so that the students can get into the dynamics, and it is reliable with the school reality).</p> <p>They are instructed and told that this aggressiveness has to turn little by little into something more violent until there will come a moment in which the harasser reaches the most violent action, which is to raise his hand as if to attack the victim, but just at that moment they have to freeze.</p>	

The next part of the preparation is to tell actors that there is going to be a moment when they are going to be asked to sit in a chair facing the audience, a part that can be named "the hot seat". At that moment there's a theatrical license in that they, even though they are sitting together, imagine that they don't hear what each other is saying about the other. In this hot seat phase,

the actors will have to answer the questions asked by the people in the audience. These questions must be based on three different levels: social level, friendship level and intimacy level.

First level: social. The facilitator filters out irrelevant questions that do not fit the objectives of the activity, preventing them from being answered if they do not think it is appropriate. These are questions aimed at understanding why some actions in these bullying situations happen: why one is a victim, why the other is a bully and why they do what they do. The other students ask questions as if they were people in the street, who are not their friends, who don't know each other. Observe what happens, how they respond in a level of such low intimacy.

The facilitator must tell the actors that when they move to the friendship level, they will have to remove something (an accessory, for example, a scarf, a pair of glasses, a cap...) Removing an element helps to identify that they are in the next level. The symbolism of the action is done through removing, not adding, as the idea is to go deeper into each of the levels of interaction between the audience and the characters.

Second level: friendship. It is assumed at this stage that the questionnaires might be friends with these characters and know them a little, so the actors can become more engaged in their answers and the audience can find out slightly more important or intimate information.

### **Step by step description:**

The scene of improvisation of the harassment situation is performed and it is paralyzed when the harasser raises his hand to attack the other – the moment of greater violence.

Before entering the hot seat, the "forum theatre" is opened. At this moment the participants can approach each of the characters, who are frozen in movement. They are invited to put their hand on the character's shoulder and say what they think the character is feeling (first level). They can be asked what they think the character is thinking (second level), for example: I'm scared, I feel powerful, I'm going to punish this fool (this must be said in the first person, as if it were the character's own experience in the present moment).

Hot seat: once the characters are seated, the facilitator explains that these characters are in different rooms, even though they are sitting next to each other, and that they cannot hear each other. Now the audience can ask any questions they need to ask, warning them that there are the three levels of interaction that the actors have been previously informed about. From the social level it would be very risky to ask some questions, for example: Does your father hit you? because the people who are acting are not going to answer because, if there is no link, and they do not know each other, it is not a question that fits the social level. The character could even say: if I don't know you at all, who are you to ask me that (see note 1).

Note 1: As the dynamics have been explained to the volunteers beforehand, they should already know when to answer questions or not. However, the facilitator has to be attentive to help the actors or cut off inappropriate questions asked by the audience.

### **Reflection:**

*How did you feel about the improvisation? How did you feel about the response given by the protagonists? Would you have done it differently? What do you think about this situation? Do you think it's common? Is it exceptional? Do you know of*

*any cases in your center? Have you ever played either of these two roles? Have you been an observer? What do you think can be done in case this happens or what will happen to you?*

In the role of the victim: *what can a person who is being bullied do?*

In the role of the bully: *What's the point of picking on someone or making their life miserable?*

### **Note to facilitators:**

While the improvisations are taking place, the facilitator can interrupt the process by approaching the protagonists and asking them how they feel in the situation they are improvising. The aim of this is to help them become aware of and connect with the body and the emotion the characters are in.

You can also ask them what they are thinking, if they realize what their strategy is for dealing with the conflict, if they are familiar with what they are doing and finally you could also suggest that they try a different strategy by doing something they wouldn't do in real life. On stage they can give themselves that permission that in real life they can't afford, because it doesn't change our biography and it doesn't do them any harm.

### **e.2.10 The sculptors**

<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Gestalt Theatre
<b>Topics:</b>	Self-image and identity
<b>Duration:</b>	Approximately 60 minutes.
<b>Number of participants:</b>	6-30 participants

<b>Materials:</b>	Instrumental background music that is as neutral as possible. Camera or mobile phone with camera.
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	To facilitate awareness of those patterns of behavior that we have in our daily lives as a way to generate changes that we feel necessary in our way of being. Generate reflection and constructive criticism on personal change. To develop creativity and spontaneity.
<b>Preparation:</b>	The facilitator informs the group that they have to divide themselves into pairs. Once in the pair one is "person A" and the other "person B". Then the facilitator explains the participants must think about what character they are, what character they will show to the world, if they were a character in the theatre of life. It does not refer to what others see in them, but to what they show to others. For example, they can show that they are intelligent, capable, resolute, or perhaps that they are a person who has bad luck, that everything goes wrong for them, that complains, that is a victim, and so on.
<b>Step by step description:</b>	
In each of the pairs, person A tells person B what the character they are showing to the world looks like, and then the other way around. First, person B will model A as if their body were clay. Person A keeps a neutral body while B modifies it, creating the character they told him about: moving their joints, the sculptor is the one who moves the body of their partner, the sculpted one (in this case A) relaxes and lets their partner do it. Once B has managed to create the	

figure, they will call the facilitator to take a photograph of that character that the person shows to the world. Then person B is modeled, and the process is repeated.

The participants are going to take that figure to an animated, exaggerated character. The idea is to create an exaggerated version of the self that each one shows to the world. They are asked to find a space in the room and to reproduce the figure, statue, character that their partner had created as the person that they show to the world. Instrumental music is played, and they are told that when the music starts, they will begin to move the figure, turning it little by little into a figure that has life, that has a voice, that has movement, that has a specific way of walking, etc. They should always start from the basis that was the figure that they have been given and that is the character that they themselves told that they show to the world. Little by little they are invited to add more and more exaggeration. Then the group is invited to interact with each other and do an improvisation as a way of presenting themselves.

This phase serves to consolidate the character created, which is an exaggerated version of the character that the person shows to the world.

They are asked to stand in a circle and one by one, come to the center and introduce themselves from the character they have created.

Individually they are asked to find a place in the room and take the initial sculpture of the character they are showing to the world. Once they have the figure, they must think about what the opposite character would be to the one they are showing. Individually they are going to adopt the position of the antagonist character.

Once participants have the figure created, they must bring it to life. Repeat step two again but with the antagonist step.

**Reflection:**

A circle is made to reflect a little on how the dynamic has been: *How have they felt? What do they think about their antagonist figure? What do they realize about them?*

### e.2.11 Improvisation from the antagonist character (The activity Sculptor is necessary before this one)

<b>Methodological framework:</b>	Gestalt Theatre
<b>Topics:</b>	Gestalt polarities & identity
<b>Duration:</b>	Approximately 60 minutes.
<b>Number of participants:</b>	6-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Quick Impro Phrases ( <sup>1</sup> These are short, provocative sentences that contain the minimum information necessary to create an improvised GTT scene. For example: <i>Mum says it's my turn to take the car today; I'm not going to leave my clothes with you anymore, you've torn them</i> , etc. These can be developed by the participants themselves for each other, or by the facilitator.)
<b>Learning objectives:</b>	<p>To develop creativity and spontaneity.</p> <p>To develop the ability to make decisions in a conflictive situation. To develop the participant's conflict management skills.</p> <p>To develop empathy in assertive communication. To develop active listening skills. To develop awareness of oneself and</p>



	one's own psychological functioning mechanisms and behavioral patterns.
<b>Preparation:</b>	<p>As they should have already done the activity of the sculptors, start from the fact that the participants already know which is the meaning of the figure that they show to the world, and which is the antagonist. They will have to recover what these two figures were like as they are going to use them in the activity. It is necessary to make it clear to recover and remember the two figures as they are going to have to use them in this activity.</p> <p>It is necessary that the "Quick impro" phrases are ready because they will have to use them to do the improvisation exercise. They can be warned that this is an exercise in which they are going to practice improvisation in pairs.</p> <p>As was done in a previous activity, the facilitator can choose to have the pairs working all at the same time, pair by pair or dividing the group in half.</p>
<b>Step by step description:</b>	
<p>The group is asked to get into pairs. Each member of the pair is assigned either number 1 or 2. The facilitator tells the number 2's that they will be neutral waiting for the work proposal that number 1 brings them. The facilitator calls all the number 1's together and, being careful not to let the others hear, will tell them in their ear which phrase they will have to say: that is the phrase with which they will start the conflict. Once everyone has their phrase, they return to their partner.</p>	

At the facilitator's signal, everyone will start the improvisation by saying the phrase they have received that starts the conflict.

The facilitator allows time for them to get into and develop the conflict of the character they show to the world, and then at a certain point stop, leaves the scene in suspense and asks them to get back into the antagonist character. To do this, the dynamic is stopped for a second, they are given the instruction to get into the antagonist character, relying on the body sculpture to feel what they explored before, but they will not have to keep it when the scene resumes, but they will take the attitude from an energetic level. The conflict continues from that new attitude, that is, from the opposite character.

Go back to the participants and ask them to reflect on: *what has changed? How do you feel now? How did the strategy change?*

The facilitator will say: *continue from the opposite character and seek to take it to the limit of your desire – as exaggerated as possible. After you have reached that limit, look for the end of the scene.*

### **Reflection:**

*How did you feel? What strategies did you use? What do you think you can learn from the antagonist character? And the most important question: What from the antagonist character would be useful to you in your daily life?*

## **e.2.12 Superheroes**

**Methodological framework:**

Gestalt Theatre

**Topics:**

Creativity & assertiveness

**Duration:**

Approximately 60 minutes.

<b>Number of participants:</b>	6-30 participants
<b>Materials:</b>	Superhero letters/photos. Neutral music. Personal notebook.
<b>Learning objectives</b>	<p>To develop creativity and spontaneity.</p> <p>To develop the ability to make decisions in a conflictive situation. To develop the participant's conflict management skills.</p> <p>To develop empathy in assertive communication. To develop active listening skills. To develop awareness of oneself and one's own psychological functioning mechanisms and behavioral patterns.</p>
<b>Preparation</b>	<p>The facilitator looks for and prepares cards with a fictional character, hero/heroine, as many as there are people in the group at least. These cards must consist of the name of the superhero/heroine and the image of the heroic character.</p> <p>The cards are spread out in the space, on the floor.</p> <p>Participants are warned that this is a job in which they are going to create a character.</p>
<b>Step by step description:</b>	
<p>Group members are invited to look at the cards while neutral music plays in the background and to choose one. They sit down with the card – wherever they want – and their notebook. When everyone has a card and is seated, they are asked to write down what powers the character will have. The questions the facilitator asks them are:</p> <p><i>What powers does the character have?</i></p>	

*What is the dream/desire that you have inside you, that which inspires you?*

*What is the character's vulnerable point?*

*Is there anything that scares you?*

Now it's time to start bringing the character to life. Again, you can play neutral (or heroic) music that invites movement and interaction, so that they get into the role. You can tell them to imagine how they walk, how they look at others, how they feel. Participants can include a phrase that this character might say.

Now you must forget about the character for a moment. Get into pairs and each pair will think of a Quick-Impro phrase to give to another pair. They will also say which member of the pair is the one who says the phrase (see note 1). Again, all pairs can work again simultaneously or as the facilitator wishes. The facilitator helps them to connect with their emotions: *how do you feel, do you notice tension in any area, take your hand there, let the area speak*, etc. The questions refer to the person, not to the superhero character.

Note 3: This exercise could be done in two complete rounds where the first round is a warm-up and each scene runs for no more than three minutes, as a quick way to see what conflicts the group participants are proposing. Then a second, more in-depth round can be done where, having become more familiar with the methodology, they can be ready to develop their creativity further.

Ask them to stop the scene: *Close your eyes and integrate the superhero you were*. They go back into it by making a statue that represents it and at the facilitator's signal students continue the conflict they were having. They should solve and end the conflict as the superhero/heroine.

The final part of the activity includes the development of a coexistence contract for schools, drawn up with the help of information from teachers and students. This agreement must be approved and signed by each one of the students.

**Reflection:**

*How did you feel? What struck them about the character they created?*

Questions about improvisation: *what happened before you became the superhero/heroine? What happened when you solved it as the hero/heroine? What did you realize?*

## 7. Summary of the project

This project started in spring 2022. In June 2022, we all met in Brno (CZ) for the first time in person. We had already set up many materials online, and we knew our goals and target group.

In autumn 2022, we met again near Sabaudia (IT) and shared the approaches in which each organization is mainly experienced. We also wrote part of the article and manual, continuing with more specific ideas about what we want to share in workshops for secondary school teachers and workers.

In spring 2023, we met again and soon started to run the workshops promised in each country to invite teachers to experience the Edu-Gestalt approach and ask them for feedback on the written Manual of Activities. Therefore, the texts were getting a sharp frame and were ready to be used in the final international training in August 2023 (SPA). Teachers and your workers from Italy, the Czech Republic, and Spain met here to experience together one working week and gain practically the approach.

Autumn 2023 and spring 2024 saw the finalization of the texts, the presentation of materials, keeping the public updated with the newsletters, and getting all the materials ready to fly to the world.

Thank you for co-creating this project by sharing the Edu-Gestalt principles in schools and other youth places around you.

## 8. Organized by



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