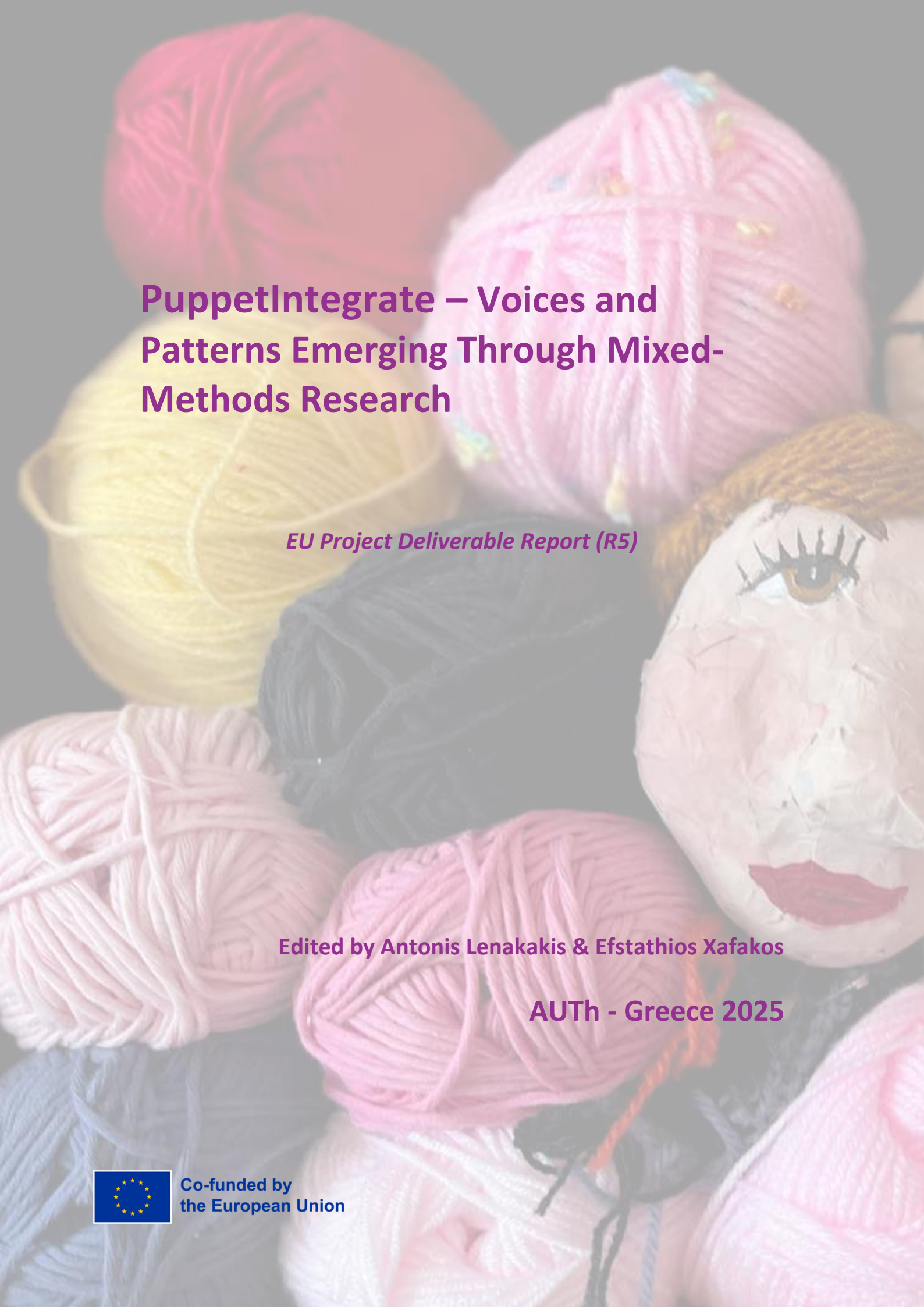


PuppetIntegrate – Voices and Patterns Emerging Through Mixed-Methods Research

EU Project Deliverable Report (R5)

Edited by Antonis Lenakakis & Efstathios Xafakos

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Summary Overall: The Collaborative Impact

The PuppetIntegrate programme was developed with a clear pedagogical vision, which is reflected in its core aims. The overarching aim of the programme was twofold: on the one hand, to promote students' holistic development by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional skills through puppetry; and on the other hand, to strengthen teachers' professional capacities. This included enriching their pedagogical repertoire, cultivating creative and reflective teaching practices, and fostering the development of key professional skills such as collaboration, communication, and inclusive instructional design. By simultaneously addressing student growth and teacher development, the programme sought to create a dynamic and supportive learning environment in which both learners and educators could evolve, innovate, and thrive.

In summary, the implementation of the PuppetIntegrate programme yielded positive outcomes on three interconnected levels. First**,** it supported students' holistic development by enhancing creativity, imagination, social-emotional skills, and overall engagement in learning. Second, it strengthened the teacher–student relationship, as the use of puppetry facilitated more meaningful communication, increased emotional connection, and created a supportive classroom climate that encouraged participation and inclusion. Third, the programme contributed substantially to teachers' professional growth, offering opportunities for collaboration with colleagues, reflection on practice, and the acquisition of new pedagogical competencies through the training they received. Together, these findings demonstrate that the programme not only enriched students' learning experiences but also fostered stronger interpersonal dynamics within the classroom and advanced teachers' professional development in a collaborative and creative framework.

Following the collection and analysis of implementation data from both the Polish and Greek partners, a comparative study of the outcomes was conducted to identify key convergences and divergences. The results unequivocally demonstrated that the paramount convergence was the shared commitment to the singular goal of elevating

puppetry's role in educational practice. This collective effort yielded mutual success in achieving holistic student development (enhancing creativity, social-emotional skills, and inclusion) and in promoting educators' professional enrichment (expanding pedagogical methods and fostering reflective practice) across both contexts. While a notable divergence emerged concerning reporting focus, this difference serves a complementary function, strengthening the project's overall impact assessment. The Greek summary provided summative affirmation of the achieved positive outcomes (e.g., holistic development and strengthened relationships), demonstrating the model's success on the human level. Conversely, the Polish report offered formative, critical insight by detailing persistent institutional and systemic barriers (e.g., lack of dedicated resources, time constraints, and training format preferences). These two perspectives are mutually reinforcing: the Greek data validates the project's achievements, and the Polish data clearly identifies how institutional support must be reformed to ensure the long-term sustainability and scalability of the successful pedagogical methods.

Introduction

The report is grounded in the PuppetIntegrate European programme, an 18-month initiative dedicated to the social inclusion of vulnerable groups through puppetry. Sixty-six and sixty-three Greek teachers participated in the research retrospectively. Their professional development involved a comprehensive training process that included experiential workshops, seminars, and the exchange of good practices. This training focused on integrating puppetry as a versatile, cross-curricular tool across all subjects, particularly Language and History, with an emphasis on addressing social issues like school violence and diversity.

The theoretical framework addresses the challenges of 21st-century education, such as competitive environments and the marginalisation of play. It advocates for art-based learning and puppetry as vital tools for teacher professional development, fostering creativity, self-confidence, and community. Puppetry is presented as a transformative art that enhances students' creativity, problem-solving skills, social development, and cooperation.

Utilising a mixed-methods approach, the research initially focused on analysing data gathered from the participating Greek school teachers (Part 1). Findings revealed that puppetry is a highly effective tool for differentiating learning and promoting inclusion, benefiting students with learning difficulties, those on the autism spectrum, and those with ADHD. Teachers exhibited high perceived self-efficacy, indicating that the programme successfully contributed to their professional growth by fostering creativity and empowering pedagogical practice. The subsequent sections of this report present the data collected from the Polish implementation (Part 2) and offer a comparative analysis of the results from both countries (Part 3), leading to a unified conclusion. The study concludes that the puppet's true "living power" is not in the

object, but in the educator's creativity, initiative, and motivation, underscoring the need for continuous professional development (Johnson & Johnson, 2017).

The PuppetIntegrate programme, a European initiative focused on integrating puppetry for social inclusion, followed a clear, structured roadmap to ensure effective implementation and evaluation over its duration. This roadmap outlines the key phases, from the initial research to the final dissemination of results.

Project Information

The PuppetIntegrate project (Agreement No: 2023-2-EL01-KA210-SCH-000171311) is an initiative financed by the European Union through the Erasmus+ programme. This effort leverages puppet theatre as a robust methodology to foster the social inclusion of vulnerable groups that are frequently marginalised within the educational environment. The project's core mission is to strengthen both teachers and students by offering specialised instruction in interactive puppetry and theatrical techniques. This training is designed to specifically support the cultural adjustment of children at high risk of social exclusion.

Main Objectives and Deliverables

The project focuses on several key areas and activities:

- Co-Creative Activities for Inclusive Learning: The project runs collaborative workshops in Greece and Poland utilising puppetry. The central focus is on empowering vulnerable children by giving them effective means for self-expression and actively promoting their social integration. This is achieved by directly confronting issues related to cultural adaptation and discrimination.
- Digital Training Programme: The initiative includes online courses developed to support children in Greece and Poland. These programmes provide training for educators, school staff, and activity coordinators (animators) on how to effectively use puppetry as a pedagogical instrument to cultivate an inclusive setting.

- Open-Access Online Resource Hub: A digital repository has been created to provide teachers and students with unrestricted access to valuable materials. This platform serves as a central hub for sharing experiences and disseminating proven best practices for the use of puppet theatre for integration.
- Outreach and Final Conference: The project executed a comprehensive dissemination strategy which concluded with a significant event and Conference to share its findings and impact.

PART I

PuppetIntegrate Project Implementation in Greece

PuppetIntegrate Project Implementation in Greece

E. Xafakos, A. Lenakakis, M. Koltsida,
M. Ioannidou, T. Papaioannou

1. Introduction

A total of 66 educators participated in the Puppet INTEGRATE programme. In the initial stage, designed to investigate baseline perceptions and current practices regarding puppetry, all participants completed the preliminary questionnaire. This survey aimed to explore trends in motivation, frequency of use, and overall attitudes toward incorporating puppetry into educational practice. A final questionnaire was administered following the project's implementation phase to measure impact and changes in practice. In the final collection round, 63 responses were received, resulting in a minor attrition of three participants. This slight difference (less than 5% of attrition) is standard and can be professionally justified within the context of a follow-up project. The project maintained a high response rate of 95.5% in the final survey, demonstrating strong engagement. The minor attrition of three participants is statistically negligible and aligns with expected logistical challenges inherent in large-scale educational research follow-ups.

2. Methodology

A mixed-method research design was employed (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the programme’s impact. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

Before the programme's implementation, participants completed a questionnaire to capture key baseline information. This included their motivations for participating in the project, the extent to which they already used puppetry in their teaching practice, and their perceived self-efficacy in employing puppetry as an educational tool. The

questionnaire also collected contextual data on classroom composition, including the number of students with learning difficulties, the presence of students from vulnerable groups, and the overall frequency with which teachers incorporated puppets into their lessons. An additional aim of this pre-implementation phase was to collect information to support the optimal design and adaptation of the programme, ensuring that its structure, content, and activities aligned effectively with the needs and characteristics of participating teachers and their students.

Following the programme's implementation, a second round of data collection was conducted to reassess teachers' perceived self-efficacy in using puppets, the frequency with which they employed puppets in their teaching practice, and their overall satisfaction with the programme. This post-implementation assessment allowed the research team to identify potential changes and developments compared to the initial baseline measurements. Teachers were also asked to reflect on how they experienced the programme, the extent to which it influenced their pedagogical approaches, and how it supported them in addressing their students' needs. In addition, the study examined the videos teachers produced during the project, focusing on the themes they selected and the pedagogical intentions that underpinned their creative choices. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were conducted after the programme, during which teachers responded to open-ended questions regarding their experiences, the challenges they encountered, and the perceived benefits for both themselves and their students. These qualitative insights enriched the evaluation by providing a deeper understanding of the programme's impact on classroom practices, teacher professional development, and student engagement.

Despite the initial planning, a discrepancy was observed in the final number of responses between the two administrations:

- The total number of participants in the pre-test was 66.
- The final number of valid responses in the post-test was 63.

The loss of three (3) responses in the post-test rendered a complete paired-samples analysis impossible for the entire dataset, as some pre-test records lacked a corresponding post-test for accurate matching.

Consequently, the comparative assessment was restricted to a general, aggregate comparison of the results. This approach permitted assessing the trend and the overall change in the sample's responses before and after the intervention (e.g., comparing the means or percentages of the two independent sets). However, it precluded concluding differences in individual performance or perceptions. This methodological adjustment was necessary to maintain the validity of the analysis, despite the limitations arising from the sample reduction.

1.1 Initial Questionnaire (N=66)

Prior to implementing the professional development programme on the use of puppetry in teaching practice, participants were asked to complete a structured questionnaire. The purpose of this questionnaire was to investigate their initial familiarity with puppetry, as well as their current or past use of puppets in their instructional work. In parallel, their perceived self-efficacy in using puppets and puppetry in educational settings was examined to capture the degree of confidence in their abilities before the intervention. This process enabled the formation of a preliminary profile of participants' experiences, attitudes, and practices, as well as the identification of potential motivations underlying their decision to participate in the programme.

The questionnaire included items addressing, among others: Previous engagement with the use of puppets and puppetry in instruction. Current integration of puppets and puppetry in everyday teaching practice. Subject areas or educational contexts in which they believed puppets and puppetry could be used. Age groups considered most suitable for puppetry. The frequency with which participants, either alone or together with their students, attended puppet theatre or theatre performances.

The collection of these data contributed to a systematic exploration of participants' initial level of experience and perceived self-efficacy, documenting their educational needs and expectations. In this way, the professional development programme could be more effectively aligned with participants' profiles and provide targeted support for the pedagogical use of puppets.

2.1.1 Sample

Table 1. Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	65	98.5%
Male	1	1.5%
Total	66	100%

Table 2. Age Group

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Over 51 years	26	39.39%
41-50 years	24	36.36%
31-40 years	15	22.73%
20-30 years	1	1.52%
Total	**66**	100.00%

Table 3. Specialty

Specialty Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Kindergarten Teacher	33	50.00%
Primary School Teacher	24	36.36%
English Language Teacher	4	6.06%
Visual Arts/Music Teacher	2	3.03%
Infant Care/Other Specialist	2	3.03%
Primary Teacher & Music Teacher	1	1.52%
TOTAL	66	100.00%

Table 4. Years of experience

Years of experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
21 years and over	28	42.42%
11-20 years	26	39.39%
6-10 years	9	13.64%
0-5 years	3	4.55%
Total	66	100.00%

2.1.2 Research Questions

- To what extent have participants taken part in previous training seminars on puppetry in education?
- To what extent have participants constructed puppets in collaboration with their students?
- To what extent have participants previously utilised puppets and/or puppetry in their teaching practice?
- To what extent do participants currently integrate puppets and/or puppetry into their everyday instructional practice?
- In which subject areas or educational contexts do participants believe puppets and puppetry could be effectively implemented?
- Which age groups do participants consider most appropriate for the application of puppetry in educational settings?
- How frequently do participants, either individually or together with their students, attend puppet theatre or other theatre performances?

2.2 Questionnaire after the implementation

To investigate teachers' experiences and perceptions following the programme's implementation, a mixed-methods research design was employed. A structured questionnaire was used, consisting of (a) closed-ended questions related to self-efficacy and (b) open-ended questions, which provided participants with the opportunity to describe their experiences in detail.

The open-ended responses were analysed through thematic analysis, following the stages of coding, categorisation, and identification of key themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process aimed to reveal the participants' underlying meanings, recurrent patterns, and pedagogical orientations. The qualitative analysis provided a deeper understanding of how teachers conceptualised inclusion, differentiation, and the role

of creative tools such as the puppet in supporting student engagement and communication.

Videos: The themes selected by the participating teachers during video creation were examined to highlight their pedagogical priorities and how the puppet was utilised in teaching practice.

Data triangulation: The data sources were integrated to achieve a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study.

The total number of N=63 teachers' responses was matched (initial with final questionnaire).

Specifically, as part of the evaluation process, participants were asked a series of open-ended questions designed to explore the impact of the PuppetIntegrate programme on their professional development, pedagogical skills, and overall experience. The questions included the following:

- Which aspects of the programme do you consider to have contributed most to your professional development?
- Which skills and knowledge do you believe you cultivated and developed through your participation in the PuppetIntegrate programme?
- To what extent did the programme you attended meet your professional needs? (What do you consider having been its main strengths?, Which elements did you find most engaging or inspiring?)
- What aspects of the programme did you find most challenging? (What recommendations would you make for this improvement?)
- How would you describe your overall experience of the programme?

Participants were invited to respond using keywords, phrases, or short expressions to capture the essence of their experience. These questions were designed to provide qualitative insights into teachers' perceptions of the programme, its practical utility in the classroom, its impact on their professional growth, and areas for improvement.

2.2.1 Sample

Table 5. Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	61	96.8%
Male	2	3.2%
Total	63	100%

Table 6. Age

Age group	N	Percentage
Over 51 years	25	39.68%
31–40 years	20	31.75%
41–50 years	18	28.57%

Table 7. Specialization

Teaching Specialty	N	Percentage
Kindergarten Teacher	34	53.9%
Primary School Teacher	22	34.92%
English Language	2	3.17%
Theatre Studies	2	3.17%
Theology / Philology	1	1.59%
Art	1	1.59%
Music	1	1.59%

Table 8. Years of experience

Years of Experience	N	Percentage
21 years and over	**30**	**47.62%**
11–20 years	**20**	**31.75%**
6–10 years	**9**	**14.29%**
0–5 years	**4**	**6.35%**

Table 9. Number of students where I teach

Number of Students	N	Percentage
11–20 students	40	63.49%
21 or more students	17	26.98%
1–10 students	6	9.52%

Table 10. How many of the students who participated in the programme activities are/have (multiple answers allowed):

Thematic Category	N	Percentage
Learning difficulties	45	71.43%
Disabilities	13	20.63%
Roma students	15	23.81%
Refugee students	10	15.87%
Migrant background	9	14.29%
Behavioural issues	2	3.17%
None / no category	6	9.52%

The majority of students involved in the programme had learning difficulties (71%). Other frequently mentioned groups include Roma students (24%) and students with disabilities (21%). Refugees and students with migrant backgrounds appear in 15% of responses. Few students were reported with behavioural issues (3%) or no identified category (10%).

2.2.2 Research Questions

- Which structural and functional components of the art-based educational programme contribute to the enhancement of teachers' professional development? (qualitative dimension)
- Which skills and forms of knowledge do teachers perceive they have developed through their participation in this educational programme? (qualitative dimension)

3. Results

3.1 Questionnaire analysis

Below are presented the responses of the participants collected prior to the implementation of the programme

3.1.1 Analyses of Teachers' Responses Prior to Programme Implementation

Table 11. In which subject or in what context would I utilise the puppet and puppetry? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I. Core Subject Areas	**28**	37.33%
Language Arts/Literacy	16	21.33%
Arts/Drama	5	6.67%
Social Studies/History	5	6.67%
Mathematics	2	2.67%
II. Skill Development/SEL	**17**	22.67%
Skills Workshops/SEL	10	13.33%
Social Skills/Behaviour	7	9.33%
III. Interdisciplinary & Context	**30**	40.00%
Interdisciplinary/General Use	19	25.33%
Pedagogical Role	11	14.67%
Total Mentions	75	100.00%

The data shows that the primary utility of puppets is in the Interdisciplinary Context (40.00%), covering all subjects and serving various pedagogical roles. This is closely followed by application in Core Subject Areas (37.33%), with a strong emphasis on Language Arts/Literacy.

Table 12. In which age groups do I consider the use of puppets and puppetry most appropriate? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Educational Stage	Total Mentions	Percentage (%)
Preschool	42	49.41%
Primary School (Lower Grades)	37	43.53%
Primary School (Upper Grades)	16	18.82%
Secondary School (Lower)	5	5.88%
Secondary School (Upper)	3	3.53%
Total Mentions	85	100.00%

The practice is most commonly cited in Preschool (49.41%) and Lower Primary School (43.53%). The frequency drops significantly after the first three grades of Primary School, indicating the method is predominantly used in Early Childhood Education.

Table 13. I have constructed puppet(s) with my students in the past

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Never	30	44.78%
1-5 Times	26	39.39%
11 Times and Above	10	14.93%
Total	66	100.00%

The combined frequency of educators who have never constructed a puppet with their students or have done so infrequently (1-5 Times) accounts for a substantial 84.17% of all respondents. Conversely, only a minority (14.93%) report systematic or frequent engagement.

Table 14. I have utilised puppets and puppetry in my teaching in the past

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
11 Times and Above	23	34.85%
1-5 Times	20	30.30%
Never	16	24.24%
6-10 Times	7	10.61%
Total	66	100.00%

Note: In the tables*, the categories are presented in descending order, with the results arranged according to the percentage from highest to lowest*

Table 15. I use the puppet and puppetry in my teaching

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sometimes	28	42.42%
Often	14	21.21%
Quite a few times	12	18.18%
Not at all	9	13.64%
Always	3	4.55%
Total	66	100.00%

Table 16. Reasons for Non-Systematic Utilisation of Puppetry

I. General Utilisation (open-ended question)

Theme	Frequency (Count)	Percentage (%)
Active Use / Positive Stance	8	7.34%
Lack of Colleague Participation	1	0.92%
I do not want to	2	1.83%
Use Other Techniques/Media	1	0.92%

II. Barriers/ Reasons for Non-Use (open-ended question)

Theme	Frequency (Count)	Percentage (%)
Lack of Time	23	21.10%
Lack of Knowledge/Experience	23	21.10%
Feelings of Insecurity/Lack of Confidence	13	11.93%
Complexity of Construction	8	7.34%
Complexity of Use	5	4.59%
Do not know how it works	8	7.34%
Not Considered a Suitable Medium	1	0.92%
Cost of Materials/Purchasing	1	0.92%

The collected data reveals clear patterns regarding the factors that hinder educators from incorporating puppetry into their teaching. The analysis highlights that the primary obstacles are resource-related and confidence-based.

1. Dominance of Resource Scarcity and Knowledge Gaps

The two most frequently cited barriers, Lack of Time and Lack of Knowledge/Experience, share the highest frequency (23 counts) and identical percentage (21.10%). Resource constraints (time) and professional development deficits (knowledge/experience) are equally critical and intertwined challenges.

- Interpretation: Educators perceive the integration of puppetry as a high-cost investment concerning both time allocation (for preparation, scriptwriting, and performance) and skill acquisition (requiring formal training or extensive personal effort). Addressing these two top barriers simultaneously through

targeted, time-efficient professional development is essential for broader adoption.

2. The Role of Perceived Complexity and Confidence

A significant cluster of barriers relates to the method's complexity and the resulting lack of educator confidence, collectively accounting for over 31% of all cited reasons (Complexity + Insecurity + Knowledge/Function).

- Feelings of Insecurity/Lack of Confidence (11.93%): This high percentage indicates a psychological barrier. Educators may not only lack technical knowledge but also personal confidence to perform or manage the method effectively in front of students.
- Perceived Complexity and Functional Knowledge (19.27%) total for the Complexity of Construction, Use, and Do not Know how it works): These factors suggest that for a significant portion of educators, the practical aspects—from building the puppets to understanding the basic theatrical methodology—are seen as too difficult or inaccessible.

3. Conclusion: The Need for Targeted Training

The analysis demonstrates that the challenges to puppet integration are not primarily due to resistance to the medium's suitability (Not Considered Suitable Medium is only 0.92%). Instead, the data points to systemic issues: the need for accessible training and adequate time within the curriculum.

To increase the use of puppetry, interventions should focus on:

1. Providing high-quality, concise training to reduce the "Lack of Knowledge" and build "Confidence."
2. Offering ready-to-use resources or simple, time-saving construction and use techniques to mitigate the "Lack of Time" and "Complexity" barriers.

The design of this educational programme is directly informed by the survey results, which identified significant barriers preventing educators from utilising puppets and puppetry in their classrooms. Addressing these specific needs ensures the training provides tangible, relevant benefits to participants. In summary, the training programme on puppets and puppetry is expected to benefit participants by empowering them with the necessary pedagogical knowledge and technical skills. Transforming the perception of puppetry from a complex art form to an accessible, versatile teaching medium.

3.1.2 Analyses of Teachers' Responses After the Implementation of the Programme

Table 17. In which subject or in what context would I utilise the puppet and puppetry? (Multiple responses allowed)

Thematic Category / Subject Area	N	Percentage
Language/Greek	27	38.6%
History/Social Studies	12	17.1%
Mathematics	5	7.1%
Theatre/Puppetry	23	32.9%
Art/Visual Projects	3	4.3%
Music	2	2.9%
Skill Workshops	9	12.9%
Other/General Pedagogical use	8	11.4%

The numbers clearly demonstrate that educators experimented with creating puppet videos with their students across diverse subjects, successfully leveraging the puppet beyond conventional expectations.

Challenging the Stereotype of Puppetry: Although the Theatre / Puppetry category received a high percentage of use, it is worth noting that neither is the only nor the dominant area. The Language / Greek category holds the highest share, confirming the puppet's primary role as a powerful communication and narrative tool.

Unconventional Subject Integration (History/Social Studies): Crucially, the data shows that educators opened up the topic of History/Social Studies by utilising the puppet in this domain, achieving a notable number of mentions. The integration of puppetry into a knowledge-based subject like History is particularly significant, as it indicates a move towards experiential learning and away from rote memorisation, demonstrating that educators view the puppet as a vehicle for delivering complex topics.

Broad Cross-Curricular Application: Furthermore, the puppet was successfully incorporated into subjects where it is least expected, such as Mathematics and as a key element in Skill Workshops/Competence. Labs This wide dispersion of usage across cognitive and psycho-social domains signifies that the programme has successfully convinced educators that the puppet is a flexible, multi-grade, and multi-disciplinary pedagogical tool, effectively breaking the stereotype of it being solely reserved for early grades and the Drama classroom.

The data thus highlights a successful transition in pedagogical practice, with educators utilising puppet video creation as an innovative method to enhance engagement and comprehension in areas far beyond traditional artistic subjects.

Table 18. Frequency of Puppet Use

Frequency	N	Percentage (%)
Sometimes	26	41,3
Quite Often	20	31,7
Frequently	15	23,8
Always	2	3,2
TOTAL	63	100

Table 19. Differentiation 1 - Use of Puppetry in a Lesson/Subject

(Multiple responses allowed)

Aspect	Before	After	Notes
Total mentions	75	70	
Language	21.3%	38.6%	Increased emphasis; likely recoded broader "Language / Greek" category
Arts/Drama/Theatre	6.7%	32.9%	Dramatic increase: the "Theatre/Puppetry" category

			captures more detailed mentions
History/Social Studies	6.7%	17.1%	Higher proportion in updated coding
Mathematics	2.7%	7.1%	Slight increase; possibly more precise coding
Skill Development/SEL/Workshops	22.7%	12.9%	Decrease; perhaps some activities recoded under "Theatre" or "Other"
Other/General/Pedagogical role	14.7% (Pedagogical Role)	11.4%	Similar proportion, slightly lower
Interdisciplinary/Context	25.3%	N/A	In updated coding, distributed across "Other" and "Theatre/ Puppetry"

Theatre/Puppetry emerges as a dominant category (33%) in the updated analysis, whereas previously it was grouped under "Arts/Drama" at only 6.7%. This shows a more detailed thematic coding, emphasising puppetry and drama across lessons**.** Language/Greek frequency jumps significantly, reflecting a focus on literacy and general language activities. Skill Workshops/Competence Labs are lower in the new coding (12.9% vs 22.7%), suggesting that some activities were reassigned to other categories, such as Theatre or Other/General. Interdisciplinary/general use in the original table (25.3%) has been spread across multiple detailed categories in the new coding, which gives more nuanced insights. Mathematics, Art, and Music remain minor categories, but the percentages differ slightly due to the recoding approach.

Table 20. Differentiation 2 – Puppet use

Usage Frequency	**Frequency Before**	**Percent Before**	**Frequency After**	**Percent After)**	**Change in Frequency (After - Before)**	**Change in Per cent (After - Before)**
Never	10	15.2%	N/A (0)	0.0%	-10	-15.2%
Sometimes	26	39.4%	26	41.3%	0	+1.9%
Quite Often	13	19.7%	20	31.7%	+7	+12.0%
Frequently	14	21.2%	15	23.8%	+1	+2.6%
Always	3	4.5%	2	3.2%	-1	-1.3%
Total	66	100.0%	63	100.0%	-3	0.0%

After the intervention/period**,** no one reported "Not at all"**,** suggesting improved engagement. The use of activities remains mostly occasional or multiple times, with a

slight shift toward “Several times” and “Sometimes”. Consistent use (“Always”) remains rare.

Table 21. Differentiation 3 – Self-efficacy

Metric	Pre-Intervention	Post-Intervention	Change (Post - Pre)
(N)	66	63	-3
Mean	3.66	4.17	+0.5079
SD	0.92657	0.70072	-0.22585
Scale Range	1 (Min) to 5 (Max)	1 (Min) to 5 (Max)	

The data strongly suggest a significant enhancement of perceived Self-Efficacy following the educational programme. The mean score increased. This shift indicates that, at the aggregate level, participants reported much higher confidence in their ability to perform the skills taught by the programme.

3.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

While formal, one-on-one interviews were not conducted, the quantitative data collection was complemented by the inclusion of several open-ended questions within the final questionnaire. The responses to these questions were comprehensive and detailed, with the vast majority of participants providing extensive, well-structured narratives. As a result, the rich quality and depth of the educators' submissions yielded data comparable to that of structured qualitative interviews. This approach was intentionally utilised to gather in-depth perceptions and contextual understanding of the project's impact. The clarity and sufficiency of the answers enabled researchers to collect substantial qualitative information on the programme's overall outcomes and execution, effectively eliminating the need for separate, time-consuming interviews.

3.2.1 Research Findings – Thematic Analysis Overall (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Table 22.

Thematic Category	Key Contribution to	Key Developed	Key Strengths & Fascination	Key Difficulties & Suggestions

	Professional Development (P.D.)	Skills & Knowledge		
A. Puppet & Technique	Construction with simple materials; Kinesiology and non-verbal communication.	Technical knowledge of construction and expressive movement; Fine motor skills.	The ability for the puppet to "come alive"; The magic of transformation.	Difficulty adapting techniques to small children; Limited time for hands-on practice; Less focus on technical perfection.
B. Pedagogical Application	Using the puppet for cross-curricular teaching: a Tool for classroom management, inclusion, and differentiation.	Knowledge of the puppet's pedagogical value in emotional education, Conflict resolution, and Differentiated instruction strategies.	Puppets act as a safe mediator and bridge of communication; they activate children's participation and create a safe environment.	Need for more pedagogical focus (less technical); Require more specific action plans for introductory use; Difficulty with children's spontaneous expression through the puppet.
C. Collaboration & Dissemination	Peer-to-peer exchange of ideas (local & international); Clear feedback and instruction from coordinators.	Communication and Collaboration skills, Organisational skills, and Reflection and public presentation skills.	Frequent, enriching feedback meetings; Interaction with international colleagues; Sense of a professional community.	Linguistic barriers (English); Preference for in-person meetings; Suggestion for a dedicated online platform for material and collaboration.
D. Self-Development & Expression	Experiential learning: Active participation leads to self-assessment and enhanced self-confidence.	Creativity and Improvisation; Empathy; Expressiveness; Freedom in self-expression.	The joy, enthusiasm, and energy brought to the classroom; Feeling empowered as an educator; The experiential methodology.	Time constraints due to other work obligations; Fatigue from repetitive content; Technical issues with video recording/connectivity.

The thematic analysis of the PuppetIntegrate programme underscores its success as an experiential and creative professional development initiative. The core appeal was

the practical mastery of Puppet and Technique (A), particularly the ability to construct and manipulate the puppet to *bring it alive*. However, the most significant impact lies within Pedagogical Application (B) and Self-Development (D). Educators overwhelmingly valued the puppet as a potent, non-threatening "safe mediator" for inclusion, emotional education, and classroom management, which directly contributed to their personal and professional self-confidence. This evidence suggests the programme effectively equipped teachers with an innovative tool that promotes creative freedom and facilitates deeper, more meaningful communication with students (Lenakakis & Partsakoulaki, 2025; Remer & Tzuriel, 2015).

Despite the highly positive feedback, the programme faced structural challenges primarily related to Collaboration and Dissemination (C) and time management (D). Difficulties included the need for better support in adapting technical skills to the specific age group (preschool), the language barrier during international sessions, and general time pressure due to external obligations.

- **What is the contribution of the PuppetIntegrate programme to teachers' professional development?**

The analysis of participating teachers' responses highlights a complex and multidimensional framework of needs and preferences for their professional development, extending beyond the simple acquisition of knowledge. The findings emphasise the critical importance of four key pillars that contributed to strengthening the competencies and professional growth of the participating teachers:

- Cultivation of Creativity and Imagination
- Pedagogical Empowerment through Support and Interaction
- Development of Interpersonal, Social, and Practical Skills
- The Role of Blended Learning and Learning Ecosystems

- **Which structural and functional components of the arts-based educational programme contribute to the enhancement of teachers' professional development?**

1) Practical Implementation and Experiential Learning

"The programme contributed substantially to my professional development, primarily through experiential learning." (P11)

"Through practical application, I acquired tools that enhance students' participation and imagination, while simultaneously developing greater confidence in my pedagogical role." (P7)

"By engaging in experiential activities and analysing good practices, I was able to enrich my pedagogical methods." (P26)

2) Guidance and Support from the Organisers

"The support provided by the programme coordinators for every difficulty and question that arose, the excellent collaboration, and the exciting and appropriately organised content." (P18)

"The organisers' expertise in puppetry." (P24)

"The excellent and well-structured guidance provided by the facilitator, her knowledge and communication with us, as well as her comments, which each time were insightful and fairly demanding." (P6)

"The process of informing the entire educational community about the programme's steps, along with the provision of precise information and instructions that enabled us to feel capable of accomplishing this task, combined with the additional support offered by the programme, introduced us all to a process of inquiry and discovery, as well as great joy and enthusiasm for creation." (P2)

- **Which skills and forms of knowledge do teachers perceive they have developed through their participation in this educational programme?**

1) Development and Enhancement of Creativity and Imagination

“The puppetry programme significantly contributed to my professional development, as it helped me cultivate creative skills, enhance expressiveness, and strengthen my ability to animate and engage students in the classroom.” (P7)

“I cultivated skills of creativity, animation, expressiveness, as well as bodily movement.” (P11)

2) Interaction

“The guidance provided by the research team and the interaction with colleagues.” (P12)

“Through interaction with other teachers, participation in experiential activities, and analysis of good practices, I was able to enrich my pedagogical methods and adopt more effective teaching strategies.” (P25)

3) Interpersonal and Social Skills

- “Communication skills with colleagues.” (P1)
- “Through my participation in the PuppetIntegrate programme, I developed communication, collaboration, and creative expression skills through the art of puppetry.” (P 7)
- “Skills: Communication, collaboration.” (P 20)
- “I discovered new dimensions in my communication and collaboration with colleagues.” (P 21)
- “Communication, collaboration, patience.” (P 23)

4) Technical and Practical Knowledge

- “Skills in manipulating the puppet and expressing through it.” (P 24)

- "Skills and knowledge across all areas, particularly in the construction and use of the puppet as an integral part of the learning proces." (P 18)
- "Cognitive skills related to the use of the puppet, performance techniques, and knowledge of animation methods." (P 16)
- "I developed knowledge and skills regarding puppet construction and optimal use in everyday activities." (P 13)
- "Knowledge of puppet construction, correct movement techniques, and its effective utilisation in the classroom to add value." (P 3)

5) Pedagogical Empowerment

- "…I developed knowledge regarding the interdisciplinary approach to learning, the educator's facilitative role, and the use of the puppet as a pedagogical tool that enhances participatory and experiential learning in the classroom." (P 7)
- "I also developed knowledge concerning the construction and use of the puppet as a pedagogical tool, strengthening my ability to create and manage richer and more experiential learning environments." (P 11)
- "I enhanced my classroom management skills by utilising the puppet as a tool for conflict resolution and the promotion of positive attitudes and behaviours. Additionally, I broadened my understanding of the pedagogical use of puppetry as a medium for expression, social learning, and emotional Education." (P 24)

3.2.2 Video analysis

During the programme, participating schoolteachers prepared a video deliverable that showcased the use of puppetry in their classroom practice, often featuring their students. The choice of themes for these videos provides valuable insight into where educators prioritise the application of puppetry as a pedagogical tool. The teachers collectively selected a variety of topics that align strongly with modern educational

goals, focusing on inclusive, social, and emotional issues rather than purely academic subjects.

The preferred topics for the puppet videos fell primarily into the following categories:

- School Violence (Bullying): Addressing conflicts, aggression, and establishing safe boundaries within the school environment.
- Diversity and Acceptance: Promoting appreciation for differences in background, ability, and personality.
- Friendship and Cooperation: Focusing on developing positive peer relationships, teamwork, and mutual support.
- Creating a Pleasant and Safe School Environment: Topics related to overall well-being, emotional security, and fostering a welcoming atmosphere.

The themes chosen by the educators reveal a strategic understanding of puppetry's greatest strengths. These topics are highly relevant for two interconnected pedagogical frameworks:

- Skills and Competencies Development: The selected issues directly address essential non-cognitive skills (soft skills) that students need in contemporary schools, such as emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, empathy, and social competence. Puppetry allows for safe, symbolic discussion of complex interpersonal issues that might be difficult to address directly.
- Inclusive Education Framework: The emphasis on diversity, friendship, and school violence places the use of puppetry firmly within the framework of inclusive education. Educators choose puppetry in these areas because it is an excellent differentiated learning tool for promoting social integration (Kröger & Nupponen, 2019), particularly for students who are marginalised or have special educational needs (as confirmed by the Greek study findings).

In essence, the video analysis confirms that teachers primarily utilise puppetry not as a tool for teaching core curriculum subjects, but as a powerful, non-threatening medium for tackling critical social, emotional, and inclusion challenges.

3.2.3 Data Integration

The integration of the data indicates that the puppet is not merely a "fun" tool for early grades, but a multifunctional pedagogical medium that can be adapted to various cognitive subjects and social issues.

At the same time, it reveals teachers' ability to creatively incorporate any tool into their teaching practice, with the puppet serving as a catalyst for inclusion, the cultivation of values, and the development of skills on both sides.

Table 23. Data integration

Category	Finding / Metric	Pre-Intervention (Before)	Post-Intervention (After)	Change / Significance
I. Quantitative Results (Self-Efficacy)				
Self-Efficacy Mean Score	Average score on a 5-point scale.	3.66	4.17	**Significant Increase 0.51**, indicating higher confidence.
II. Qualitative Results (Thematic Analysis)				
Primary Usage Domain	Most common subject application (Frequency %)	Language (38.6%)	Theatre/Puppetry (32.9%)	Shift to Language, confirming the puppet as a narrative and communication tool.
Stereotype Challenge	Usage in unexpected, content-heavy subjects.	Low/Absent	History/Social Studies (17.1%)	Successful Diversification, breaking the stereotype of

				exclusive use in Drama/Early Ed.
Key P.D. Gain	Thematic focus on the primary benefit (P.D. = Professional Development).	N/A	Experiential Learning & Creative Expression	Increased P.D. through hands-on construction and animation techniques.
Key Pedagogical Role	Most valued function in the classroom.	N/A	"Safe Mediator" / Bridge of Communication	Enhanced SEL (Social-Emotional Learning) outcomes; tool for inclusion and conflict resolution.
Programme Strength	Most valued structural element.	N/A	Collaboration & Feedback Loops	Strongest points were the interaction with colleagues and the clear guidance from the research team.

The PuppetIntegrate programme successfully served as a powerful tool for professional empowerment and pedagogical innovation. Quantitatively, it achieved a marked and consistent increase in teacher Self-Efficacy, validating its direct impact on confidence. Qualitatively, it expanded educators' repertoires, successfully shifting the use of the puppet from a peripheral arts-and-crafts activity to a core, multidisciplinary pedagogical method used extensively in Language Arts and, critically, integrated into knowledge-based subjects like History. The most significant takeaway is the recognition of the puppet as a "safe mediator," transforming the learning environment into a space that supports communication, emotional expression, and inclusive practice.

4. Conclusions

Research conducted following the PuppetIntegrate programme shows that puppets and puppetry are dynamic pedagogical tools that bring life to the classroom. Greek schoolteachers report using them frequently or quite often, particularly with young

children—preschool and early primary—where imagination and participatory learning have a greater impact.

Puppets are integrated into interdisciplinary work across subjects such as language, history, drama education, and skills development, while simultaneously supporting students with diverse needs, including learning difficulties, ADHD, and neurodiversity. Moreover, their use promotes collaboration, social interaction, and emotional growth.

The findings highlight the need for continuous professional development to strengthen teachers' pedagogical skills and creativity. Opportunities for experiential learning, hands-on practice, and exchange of good practices are essential for enabling teachers to integrate tools such as puppets into their teaching.

At the same time, puppet use must consider both internal and external motivational factors, as teacher engagement and willingness to experiment appear to increase the effectiveness of related activities.

Finally, the report indicates the need to challenge the stereotype that puppets are suitable only for younger students. Experience from older classes shows that—with appropriate pedagogical design, teachers can creatively integrate puppets into any subject or age group, making them a flexible, interdisciplinary, and student-centred tool.

In other words, the puppet is not merely an object; it is a living force that inspires creativity, participation, and learning, transforming every activity into a journey of discovery within the school environment.

The phrase *"the living force of the puppet"* carries an allegorical meaning: the puppet is not simply a tool but symbolises the potential for learning, creativity, and engagement in the school context. However, the analysis suggests that the real "living force" does not reside in the object itself, but rather in the educator, who—through pedagogical initiative, creativity, and motivation—transforms the tool into an instrument of meaningful and inspiring teaching.

In conclusion, the PuppetIntegrate programme successfully served as a powerful tool for professional empowerment and pedagogical innovation. Quantitatively, it achieved a marked and consistent increase in teacher Self-Efficacy, validating its direct impact on confidence. Qualitatively, it expanded educators' repertoires, successfully shifting the use of the puppet from a peripheral arts-and-crafts activity to a core, multidisciplinary pedagogical method used extensively in Language Arts and, critically, integrated into knowledge-based subjects like History. The most significant takeaway is recognising the puppet as a "safe mediator," transforming the learning environment into a space that supports communication, emotional expression, and inclusive practice.

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PART II

PuppetIntegrate Project Implementation in Poland

PuppetIntegrate Project Implementation in Poland

M. Marciniak, L. Myszka-Strychalska, K. Forecka-Waśko, B. Kanclerz,
M. Kasprzak, P. Peret-Drążewska, A. Rybińska

1. Introduction

Eleven educational institutions from Poland participated in the PuppetIntegrate educational project. These included: District Day Care Facility for the Disabled in Kościan, Olga Sławska-Lipczyńska High School in Poznań, "Cogito" Primary School in Poznań, Primary School No. 11 named after Gen. D. Chłapowski in Poznań, Primary School named after T. Kościuszko in Lubicz Górny, Primary School No. 83 "Łejery" named after Emilia Waśniowska in Poznań, Piątkowska Social School named after Dr. W. Błeńska in Poznań, Primary School No. 3 named after Adam Mickiewicz in Szamotuły, School Complex named after Maria Konopnicka in Kościan, High School Complex named after the Krzyz Region in Krzyż Wielkopolski, and Primary School named after Adam Wodziczka in Rogalinek. Each educational institution participating in the project had a coordinator from the Faculties of Educational Studies at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, who oversaw the implementation of tasks by teachers and students at each stage. The coordinator's responsibilities included answering teachers' questions, motivating them, and providing information on where to find the necessary instructional materials for improvisation. Furthermore, all participating teachers received ongoing information about training sessions and assignments via email.

The educational institution was represented by 49 teachers (subject teachers, pedagogues, therapists, speech therapists, psychologists) and 212 students aged 8-14 (with the majority being 9-10 years old). The data comes from documents related to participation in the project completed by teachers and consents from students' parents to participate in the project. It's worth noting that this is a very satisfying

number, as the project's objectives called for 35 students from Poland to participate. During the project meetings, 93 improvisation exercises were created, along with 73 photos submitted by teachers and 33 final improvisations (over 10 more than expected!).

2. Methodology

The report presents the results of the survey conducted within “Puppet INTEGRATE” project. The survey was designed by members of Aristotle University in Thessaloniki. The full description of research goals, research questions, research method, procedure and tools (with instructions) was already described.

All tools used in the survey were translated with back-translation procedure from English version into Polish. Afterwards it was distributed to all participants (teachers) of Polish part of the project while respecting ethical rules of volunteering & anonymity.

The report analyses the data from 3 parts of the survey:

1) **initial questionnaire** - a survey using the CAWI method (online questionnaire) conducted among Polish teachers from September to December 2024; N=34;
2) **final questionnaire** - a survey using the CAWI method (online questionnaire) conducted among Polish teachers from June to July 2025; N=30;
3) **interviews** – survey with usage of interview questionnaire conducted among Polish teachers in June and July 2025; N=8.

The total number of N=24 teachers responses were matched (initial with final questionnaire). There were more participants who participated in both parts of survey, but 24 were identified with the self-created code.

3. Report data from initial questionnaire

Participants' demographic characteristics

Gender

The questionnaire was completed mainly by women (N=32; 94%) and only 2 men (6%).

Age

Respondents ranged in age. Most were aged 41-50 (N=11; 32%), followed by those aged 51 or over (N=9; 26%). Eight educators were aged 31-40 (24%). The youngest group included six participants (18%).

Professional status

Project participants were asked about their professional status (e.g., classroom teacher, preschool teacher, drama teacher). More than half of the respondents identified their professional status as "teacher" (N=18; 53%). They identified themselves as working in a school or indicated the type of school, e.g., primary school. Sometimes, they indicated the subject they taught. Subjects listed included mathematics, drama, music education, and after-school club activities. The next largest categories were early childhood education teachers (N=5; 15%) and therapists (N=5; 15%). The latter included individuals who identified themselves as therapists, occupational therapists, and teachers providing psychological and pedagogical support, e.g., school counsellors. Four teachers (12%) co-organised the educational process. Two teachers (5%) reported teaching more than one type of activity. It was a German language teacher who was also a special pedagogue and a Polish language teacher who also worked as a therapist.

Higher qualifications

Thirty individuals (88%) had a master's degree, constituting the vast majority of those completing the questionnaire. Two individuals (6%) had completed bachelor's degrees, and two (6%) had completed doctoral studies.

Teaching experience

The collected questionnaire data indicates that the majority of project participants had over 21 years of professional experience (N=11; 32%). The second category consisted of educators with between 11 and 20 years of professional experience (N=10; 29%). Eight teachers had been working for 6 to 10 years (24%), while five (15%) had the shortest experience (between 0 and 5 years).

Workplace location

The respondents who completed the questionnaire worked primarily in large towns with populations exceeding 3,000 (N=23; 68%). The second largest category consisted of educators employed in educational institutions located in medium-sized towns with populations ranging from 1,000 to 3,000 (N=9; 26%). Only two respondents declared that they worked in small towns with populations up to 1,000 (6%).

Similarly, most of the teachers completing the questionnaire worked in an urban type school (N=29; 85%), while only 5 worked in schools located in rural areas (15%).

Students' age group in teaching

Among the educators who completed the questionnaire, the majority were those working in grades IV-VI and VII-VIII of primary school (second stage of primary school) (N=22; 65%). Slightly fewer, i.e. 21 people (62%) teach children in grades I-III of primary school (early school education). 6 educators (18%) declared working with adults, 4 (12%) with preschool children, 3 (9%) with secondary school youth, and 6 (18%) among adults.[1]

[1] The sum of percentages exceeds 100 because most teachers declared that they work with people representing more than one age group.

Number of students in the class

The majority of teachers completing the questionnaire work in large class groups of 21 or more students (N=18; 53%). The second largest category consisted of teachers working in groups of 11 to 20 students (N=11; 32%). Only five teachers work in groups of 1 to 10 students (15%).

Attending a seminar on puppetry in education

The majority of teachers who completed the questionnaire (N=29; 85%) reported having attended a seminar on puppetry in education. Only five (15%) had not.

Usage of the puppets and puppetry in teaching & education BEFORE project

Puppet-related activities

Referring to the issue of attending puppet-related activities, teachers frequency they take puppetry related activities [1 = Never, 2 = "1-2 times a year", 3 = "3 times or more"].

Table PL_1. Puppetry related activities according to teachers BEFORE the Project (N = 34)

I attend…:	**1** **N (%)**	**2** **N (%)**	**3** **N (%)**
puppet shows with my students	21 61.8%	10 29.4%	3 8.8%
theatre performances with my students.	8 23.5%	21 61.8%	5 14.7%
puppet shows myself.	20 58.8%	11 32.4%	3 8.8%
art and cultural events myself (e.g. theatre performances, art exhibitions, music concerts).	0	11 32.4%	23 67.6%

It is noticeable that over half of teachers do not attend theatre performances with their students (N=21; 62%). About one-third of them (N=10; 30%) do so one or two times a year. Similarly, teachers' individual participation in theatre performances is similar, with over half of them (N=20; 58.8%) never participating. However, most of them (N=21; 62%) prepare theatre performances with their students one or two times a year. Furthermore, attending cultural events such as theatre performances, art exhibitions, and music concerts dominates among teachers' individual activities, as most of them (N=23; 68%) do so three or more times a year.

Table PL_2. Puppetry usage in previous teaching by teachers BEFORE the Project (N = 34)

Before the educational programme Puppet INTEGRATE…	1 N (%)	2 N (%)	3 N (%)	4 N (%)
I have previously created puppets with my students.	25 73.5%	6 17.6%	0	3 8.8%
I have used puppets and puppetry in my teaching in the past.	21 61.8%	9 26.5%	1 2.9%	3 8.8%

Referring to the issues, teachers indicated frequency they take puppetry related activities [1 = Never, 2 = “1-5 times”, 3 = “6-10 times”, 4 = “11 times or more”].

The responses of the majority of teachers completing the questionnaire (N=25; 74%) suggested that prior to participating in the PuppetIntegrate project, they had never created puppets with their students. Similarly, the vast majority of teachers (N=21; 62%) had never used puppets or puppetry in their teaching.

Teachers were also asked if they use puppets and puppetry in their teaching. At the time of completing the survey, the dominant tendency among teachers was to use puppets "sometimes" in their work (N=23; 68%). Five teachers declared that they did so "not at all" (15%), while only four teachers used puppets "often" (12%) and two "several times" (6%).

The context or lesson for using puppets and puppetry

When asked about the context or lesson in which respondents would use puppets and puppetry, the responses were highly diverse, classified into five different categories. It is worth noting that 13 (38%) shared more than one inspiration for using puppets in education. Most teachers who completed the questionnaire indicated they would be willing to **use them during classes related to their subject** (N=14; 41%). The subjects they mentioned included: Polish language, English language, technology, history, education for the Polish diaspora, integrated classes conducted as part of early childhood education, and after-school club activities. Ideas for using puppets and puppetry in Polish language classes are reflected in the following statements: "presenting a fragment of a text" (PL_PRE23), "intersemiotic translation of prose or poetry" (PL_PRE22), and "staging of readings" (PL_PRE33). One of the statements referred to using the learned method to conduct dialogues during English lessons (PL_PRE25), while another one mentioned using it during early school education classes in areas related to the implementation of "Polish, natural, musical and social content" (PL_PRE10).

The second most frequently mentioned category was the use of puppets in the area of **students' socio-emotional development** (N=12; 35%). This dimension yielded the most diverse ideas regarding the use of puppetry in educational work. This is evidenced by the following statements from respondents: "talking about emotions during student conflicts" (PL_PRE7), "in the context of conflict resolution. For example, to act out a scene in which puppets represent feuding students" (PL_PRE17), "as an exercise in showing one's own emotions in scenes staged and arranged by the teacher" (PL_PRE18), and "expressing emotions, solving problems" (PL_PRE25). These ideas concerned the use of puppets in situations of student conflict and difficult situations, reflecting experienced emotional states, and activities that integrate the class team.

The next category identified by respondents was related to **art, theatre, and students' spiritual development**. Nine respondents (26%) responded to this category. They perceived puppetry as a "tool for improvisation; ready" (PL_PRE11), a way to

implement music education, creativity, and artistic activities, with ethical, artistic, and visual content.

The next area of puppet use recommended by eight educators (24%) who completed the questionnaire related to **educational activities**. Specific ideas for using puppetry during these activities included "class conference" (PL_PRE6) and "preventive measures" (PL_PRE34).

The final category indicated by respondents was "**therapeutic activities**." Seven respondents (21%) commented on this category. This category included statements from educators completing the questionnaire regarding therapeutic and rehabilitation activities aimed at students with diverse educational needs, for example, due to disabilities.

Relevant age groups

Before participating in the *Puppet INTEGRATE* project, teachers' perceptions regarding the suitability of puppetry for different student age groups revealed a clear preference for younger learners (table PL_3).

Table PL_3. Students' age groups considered suitable for puppetry use BEFORE the Project (N = 34)

In which age groups do I believe the use of puppets and puppetry is most suitable?	No N (%)	Yes N (%)
Preschool education	16 (47.1%)	18 (52.9%)
Grades I, II, III (Primary school)	3 (8.8%)	31 (91.2%)
Grades IV, V, VI (Primary school)	9 (26.5%)	25 (73.5%)
Grades VII, VIII (Primary school)	26 (76.5%)	8 (23.5%)
Secondary education	27 (79.4%)	7 (20.6%)
Adults	28 (82.4%)	6 (17.6%)

The overwhelming majority of teachers (N=31; 91%) identified early primary school students (grades I–III) as the most appropriate recipients of puppetry-based activities. Grades IV–VI were also considered suitable by a substantial proportion (N=25; 73%),

while slightly more than half of the respondents (N=18; 53%) believed that preschool-aged children could benefit from puppetry. In contrast, teachers were markedly less confident about the applicability of puppetry for older students: only 23% considered it suitable for grades VII–VIII, 21% for secondary education, and N=6, 18% for adult learners. These findings indicate that, prior to the educational programme, teachers primarily associated puppetry with early and middle primary education, suggesting that its perceived value and effectiveness were strongly linked to younger age groups, whereas its potential for older students and adults was largely underestimated.

Teachers' perceptions of puppetry's influence on students and classroom dynamics BEFORE the Project

Referring issues of perception of puppetry influence and believes about puppet usage participants expressed the degree to which they agree with specific statements [1 = Disagree, 2 = Slightly Disagree, 3 = Neither disagree nor agree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree]

Before participation in the *Puppet INTEGRATE* project, teachers generally expressed highly positive perceptions regarding the potential of puppets as a teaching tool across a range of educational contexts (table PL_4).

Table PL_4. Teachers' perceptions of using puppets as a teaching tool in selected contexts BEFORE the Project (N = 34)

Using puppets as a teaching tool…	1 N (%)	2 N (%)	3 N (%)	4 N (%)	5 N (%)	Mean (1-5)	SD
…enhances students' imagination	-	-	3 8.8%	7 20.6%	24 70.6%	4.62	0.652
…encourages students to be more creative	-	-	2 5.9%	9 26.5%	23 67.6%	4.62	0.604
…enhances students' oral language skills	1 2.9%	3 8.8%	3 8.8%	10 29.4%	17 50.0%	4.15	1.105
…enhances students' writing skills	2 5.9%	7 20.6%	16 47.1 %	3 8.8%	6 17.6%	3.12	1.122

…helps students embrace and accept differences	-	-	4 11.8 %	10 29.4%	20 58.8%	4.47	0.706
…contributes to developing students' social skills	-	-	2 5.9%	5 14.7%	27 79.4%	4.74	0.567
…contributes to developing students' communication skills	-	-	4 11.8 %	4 11.8%	26 76.5%	4.65	0.691
…brings joy and enjoyment to students	-	-	4 11.8 %	11 32.4%	19 55.9%	4.44	0.705
…enhances the classroom atmosphere	-	-	4 11.8 %	11 32.4%	19 55.9%	4.44	0.705
… improves relationships among students	-	-	4 11.8 %	15 44.1%	15 44.1%	4.32	0.684

Before participation in the PuppetIntegrate project, teachers generally expressed highly positive perceptions regarding the potential of puppets as a teaching tool across a range of educational contexts. The majority of respondents believed that using puppets could significantly enhance students' imagination and creativity, with 71% (N=24) and 68% (N=23) agreeing or strongly agreeing, respectively, and mean scores of 4.62 for both items. Similarly, teachers recognized the value of puppetry in fostering social and communication skills: 79% (N=27) considered it effective for developing social skills (mean = 4.74), and 76% considered it effective for developing communication skills (mean = 4.65).

Teachers also perceived puppetry as beneficial in promoting inclusive attitudes, with 59% (N=20) agreeing that it helps students embrace and accept differences (mean = 4.47). Positive effects on classroom climate and student enjoyment were also noted, with 56% (N=19) agreeing that puppetry enhances classroom atmosphere and brings joy to students (mean = 4.44 for both). Additionally, half of the respondents (N=17; 50%) viewed puppetry as supportive of oral language development (mean = 4.15), though perceptions of its impact on writing skills were more moderate, with only 18% strongly agreeing and a lower mean score of 3.12, indicating that teachers were less confident about puppetry's role in improving students' writing.

Overall, these findings suggest that, prior to the PuppetIntegrate project, teachers predominantly associated puppetry with fostering creativity, imagination, social interaction, communication, and positive classroom dynamics, while its potential impact on academic skills such as writing was considered less pronounced. The data indicate a broadly favourable attitude toward integrating puppetry into teaching, highlighting its perceived value in engaging students and supporting their holistic development in the classroom.

Table PL_5. Teachers' beliefs about the use of puppets as a teaching tool BEFORE the Project (N = 34)

I believe…	1 N (%)	2 N (%)	3 N (%)	4 N (%)	5 N (%)	Mean (1-5)	SD
…it is essential to create puppets for puppetry with my students	-	-	9 26.5 %	5 14.7 %	20 58.8 %	4.32	0.878
…it is essential to engage my students in puppetry	-	-	6 17.6 %	6 17.6 %	22 64.7 %	4.47	0.788
…that attending puppet shows with my students is vital	-	-	8 23.5 %	9 26.5 %	17 50.0 %	4.26	0.828

Before participating in the PuppetIntegrate project, teachers generally expressed strong beliefs regarding the importance of incorporating puppetry into their teaching practices. A majority of respondents considered it essential to actively create puppets with their students, with 59% (N=20) agreeing and a mean score of 4.32, indicating a strong recognition of hands-on engagement as a core component of puppetry-based learning. Teachers placed even greater emphasis on engaging students in puppetry activities more broadly, with 65% (N=22) agreeing that such engagement is essential (mean = 4.47), reflecting the perceived value of active student participation in puppet-related tasks. Attending puppet shows with students was also regarded as important, though slightly less so, with 50% (N=17) agreement and a mean score of 4.26,

suggesting that teachers acknowledge the educational benefits of observing puppetry in addition to creating and performing it.

Overall, these results indicate that prior to the project, teachers viewed puppetry as a valuable pedagogical tool that relies on both active creation and participation, while also recognizing the role of experiential observation in enriching students' learning experiences. The findings highlight a strong pre-existing belief in the educational potential of puppetry across multiple forms of engagement.

Teachers' perceived abilities and attitudes toward using puppets BEFORE the PuppetIntegrate Project

Referring to issues of their abilities and attitudes toward using puppets, teachers expressed the degree to which they agree with specific statements [1 = Disagree, 2 = Slightly Disagree, 3 = Neither disagree nor agree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree]

Table PL_6. Teachers' perception of their abilities and skills in puppetry BEFORE the Project (N = 34)

Teachers statements	1 N (%)	2 N (%)	3 N (%)	4 N (%)	5 N (%)	Mean (1-5)	SD
I feel confident in making puppets with my students	-	3 8.8%	10 29.4 %	13 38.2 %	8 23.5 %	3.76	0.923
I can engage my students in puppetry activities where they actively participate in the game	-	2 5.9%	11 32.4 %	9 26.5 %	12 35.3 %	3.91	0.965
I am sufficiently skilled in creating and using puppets in teaching	-	5 14.7%	10 29.4 %	13 38.2 %	6 17.6 %	3.59	0.957
I feel effective at integrating puppets into my lessons	-	6 17.6%	13 38.2 %	13 38.2 %	2 5.9%	3.32	0.843

I always discover better and more effective ways to use puppets in my teaching	-	7 20.6%	10 29.4 %	13 38.2 %	4 11.8 %	3.41	0.95 7
I can motivate and encourage my students during puppet-related activities	-	5 14.7%	10 29.4 %	8 23.5 %	11 32.4 %	3.74	1.08 2

Before the PuppetIntegrate project, teachers reported moderate confidence in their abilities and skills in using puppets for teaching. The majority felt confident in creating puppets with students (N=8; 23% Agreed, N=13; 38% Slightly Agreed, mean = 3.76) and in engaging students in participatory puppetry activities (N=12; 35% Agreed, N=9; 26% Slightly Agreed, mean = 3.91). Perceptions of overall skill in creating and using puppets (N=6; 18% Agree, N=13; 38% Slightly Agree, mean = 3.59) and effectiveness in integrating puppets into lessons (N=2; 6% Agree, N=13; 38% Slightly Agree, mean = 3.32) were slightly lower. Teachers also reported moderate confidence in motivating students during puppet activities (N=11; 32% Agreed, N=8; 24% Slightly Agreed, mean = 3.74) and in discovering more effective ways to use puppets (N=4; 12% Agreed, N=13; 38% Slightly Agreed, mean = 3.41). Overall, prior to the project, teachers perceived themselves as reasonably capable in puppet-based teaching, with the greatest confidence in hands-on engagement and student participation.

Project's participants were also asked about their attitudes about incorporating puppetry in education (Table PL_7).

Table PL_7. Teachers' attitudes and statements about incorporating puppets in their didactic work BEFORE the Project (N = 34)

Teachers' statements	1 N (%)	2 N (%)	3 N (%)	4 N (%)	5 N (%)	Mean (1-5)	SD
I like to incorporate activities that involve using puppets in my teaching	-	2 5.9%	10 29.4%	10 29.4%	12 35.3%	3.94	0.952
I find that teaching using puppets is an enjoyable task	-	-	5 14.7%	11 32.4%	18 52.9%	4.38	0.739
I use puppets because they positively affect the cultivation and development of students' abilities and skills	-	-	5 14.7%	16 47.1%	13 38.2%	4.24	0.699

I use puppets because they improve students' performance	1 2.9%	2 5.9%	15 44.1%	7 20.6%	9 26.5%	3.62	1.045
I use puppets because they align with my values	-	2 5.9%	10 29.4%	8 23.5%	14 41.2%	4.00	0.985
I use puppets to be an effective teacher	-	2 5.9%	10 29.4%	9 26.5%	13 38.2%	3.97	0.969

Referring to these issues, teachers expressed the degree to which they agree with specific statements [1 = Disagree, 2 = Slightly Disagree, 3 = Neither disagree nor agree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree]

The results indicate that teachers generally evaluate the use of puppets in education positively. The vast majority agree with the statement that “teaching with puppets is an enjoyable task.” The impact of puppets on the development of students’ skills and abilities is also rated highly.

Opinions regarding whether puppets improve academic performance are slightly less positive, though still favourable (M = 3.62; SD = 1.045). This suggests a greater diversity of views – some teachers perceive a clear effect, while others remain more sceptical about this relationship.

In terms of motivation and values, teachers emphasise that they use puppets because they consider them a tool that supports the educational process and helps them be more effective educators.

In summary: teachers are decidedly positive about using puppets in their teaching practice. They view them as an attractive method, consistent with their values, and beneficial for student development. The only notable doubts concern whether puppets directly contribute to improved academic achievement.

School as a place of puppetry implementation - perception BEFORE the Project

We were interested about teachers’ opinions about their school as a place of employment and environment offering opportunities to work with puppetry: creating a teaching and training space to support work with puppetry techniques with students

(Table PL_8). The teachers' questions took into account the following variables: opportunities to develop and implement their puppetry workshop (Table PL_6), their motivation and intention to participate in the training (Table PL_7), the reasons why teachers do not use puppetry in their work with students, indicating the causes of difficulties and their limitations in this area (Table PL_8).

Table PL_8. Perception of school as environment to introduce usage of puppets and puppetry in teaching BEFORE the Project (N = 34)

At the school where I work…	1 N (%)	2 N (%)	3 N (%)	4 N (%)	5 N (%)	Mean (1-5)	SD
there is a strong emphasis on the systematic use of puppetry in teaching practices.	12 35.3%	10 29.4%	8 23.5%	4 11.8%	-	2.12	1.038
the systematic information of teachers on the use of puppetry in teaching is promoted	9 26.5%	5 14.7%	13 38.2%	6 17.6%	1 2.9%	2.56	1.160
there has been in-school training on using puppetry effectively in teaching.	14 41.2%	7 20.6%	6 17.6%	3 8.8%	4 11.8 %	2.29	1.404

Referring to these issues, teachers expressed the degree to which they agree with specific statements [1 = Disagree, 2 = Slightly Disagree, 3 = Neither disagree nor agree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree]

Analysis of teachers responses (Table PL-6) leads to conclusion that school doesn't create an environment with a strong emphasis for use puppetry in teaching. The majority of responses disagree with this statement. It is worth underline that according to responses it is rare that school is an organiser of puppetry training, but still 4 teachers claim that such an workshop took place in their school. It is worth mentioning that many teachers from the same institutions were among the respondents, so the number of responses does not indicate the number of schools. Teachers also addressed the issue of promotion by their institution the use of puppetry in their teaching. The majority of teachers neither agree or disagree with this statement, 9 teachers disagreed and only 1 responses was positive to the

statement. Data analysis indicates that it might be said that schools are not active in the areas of information, organisation and support for teachers in the use of puppetry. The next question is presented in Table PL_7. It concerns teachers' motivation and their expectations of changes associated with participation in professional puppetry training.

Table PL_9. Teachers motivations and intentions toward puppetry training BEFORE the Project (N = 34)

I intend to…	1 N (%)	2 N (%)	3 N (%)	4 N (%)	5 N (%)	Mean (1-5)	SD
participate in a professional development programme to enhance my teaching through puppet use.	-	4 11.8%	7 20.6%	12 35.3%	11 32.4 %	3.88	1.00 8
implement new teaching and assessment techniques using puppets.	-	3 8.8%	9 26.5%	6 17.6%	16 47.1	4.03	1.05 8
modify my teaching by incorporating puppets and puppetry into my classroom.	-	4 11.8%	5 14.7%	8 23.5%	17 50.0 %	4.12	1.06 6

Teachers' motivations and assumptions are evident in their responses regarding the reasons for participating in the professional development programme. Teachers strongly indicate their desire to implement new teaching techniques (Agree= 16) and modify existing ones (Agree 17) in their work with students. They also indicate that their goal is not to improve teaching per se (Disagree=12), but to change the forms of working with students and assessing their work. It can therefore be concluded that the aim of teachers is to enrich their professional skills and introduce qualitative changes during lessons.

Teachers also responded on question about reasons for not using puppetry in their teaching and artistic work at school. Teachers outlined numerous objections and difficulties, pointing organisational and mostly personal limitations, enumerated in Table PL_8.

Table PL_10. Reasons for not using the puppets and puppetry (N = 34)

If you do not use puppetry systematically, please choose from the reasons below what suits your case…	No N (%)	Yes N (%)
It is complicated to use	34 (100%)	0
It is complicated to create	34 (100%)	0
I am unsure of its function	32 (94.1%)	2 (5.9%)
I lack confidence in using it	19 (55.9%)	15 (44. %)
I do not consider it an appropriate tool	34 (100%)	0
I do not have the time	21 (61.8%)	13 (38.2%)
I lack sufficient knowledge and relevant experience	20 (58.8%)	14 (41.2%)
I do not want to use it	34 (100%)	0
Other reasons	32	2

Among the reasons for not using puppets so far, teachers point out that they do not have difficulties in creating and using them, which is the response of all respondents (N=34). Some teachers pointed as a reason a lack of knowledge about their use (N=14) and a lack of confidence in this area of theatre work (N=15). Some of them also point to time constraints in their work (N=13), but it should be underlined that 21 teachers didn't address the time difficulties. It is worth mentioning that each respondent could indicate more than one answer. It should be noted that, based on the teachers' responses, it is difficult to identify a single area that has so far clearly prevented the use of puppetry in their work. Certainly, these were not technical difficulties, lack of believe in it as appropriate tool.

4. Report data from final questionnaire

Participants' demographic characteristics

Gender

The questionnaire was completed mainly by women (N=28; 93%) and only 2 men (7%).

Age

The largest category of people completing the questionnaire were those aged between 41 and 50 (N=11; 37%). There were nine educators aged 31–40 (30%). There were slightly fewer individuals aged 51 and older (N=8; 27%). The smallest group was the youngest educators, aged between 20 and 30, with two individuals (6%).

Professional status

Among respondents the majority were teachers (N=19; 63%). Some of them specified the school they worked at, e.g., primary school, or provided the subject they taught. The activities they listed included drama classes, music education, Polish language, and English. The survey also included three early childhood education teachers (10%), three therapists (10%), and three teachers conducting more than one type of activity (10%) (e.g., an art and ethics teacher, a Polish language teacher and a specialist in oligophrenopedagogy, and an after-school teacher leading an art and drama club), as well as two teachers co-organising the educational process (7%).

Higher qualifications

Among the respondents, the largest representation were those with higher education degrees (N=26; 87%). There were 2 teachers with bachelor's degrees (6.5%), as well as those with doctoral degrees (N=2; 6.5%).

Teaching experience

The majority of those completing the questionnaire had extensive professional experience, ranging from 11 to 20 years (N=12; 40%). A significant group of representatives had 21 or more years of professional experience (N=9; 30%). Six teachers (20%) had professional experience between 6 and 10 years, and three (10%) had experience between 0 and 5 years.

The area of working

The vast majority of those completing the questionnaire work in educational institutions located in large towns with over 3,000 inhabitants (N= 22; 73%). Seven

people (23%) worked in medium-sized towns with 1,000 to 3,000 inhabitants. Only one person (3%) reported working in a small town with up to 1,000 inhabitants.

Most respondents work in an urban type school (N=27; 90%). Three respondents (10%) indicated working in a rural school.

Students' age group in teaching

The vast majority of teachers indicated that they work with students from more than one age group (N=26; 87%). The largest group of teachers worked with students in grades 4-5 and 7-8 of primary school (stage II of Polish primary school) (N=20; 67%). The next largest category consisted of teachers working with children in grades 1-3 of primary school (early childhood education) (N=13; 43%). Four teachers (13%) indicated working with adults, three (10%) with preschool children, and only one (3%) in secondary schools.

Number of students in the class

The majority of respondents were teachers teaching in classes of 21 or more students (N=14; 47%). Eleven teachers (37%) indicated working in groups of 1 to 10 students, while five (17%) indicated working in groups of 11 to 20 students.

Project beneficiaries (students)

The majority of teachers who completed the survey used the puppetry method within the project while working with students with disabilities (N=14; 47%). Eight of them (27%) reported using it with students with migration experience, and the same number with those with learning disabilities. Seven teachers (23%) worked with refugee students, while only two (6%) had experience with Roma students. Seven teachers (23%) reported working with students who did not fall into any of the other groups.

Teachers were asked to provide details of the number of students representing the specific groups (e.g. Roma students, learning disabilities). According to the declarations of those completing the questionnaire, a total of 240 students

participated in the project. In reality, there were 212 (the number of parents who consented to their children's participation in the project). The discrepancy between the declarations and the actual number of students most likely stems from the fact that some teachers worked with the same students.

Polish students without any disabilities comprised the largest group (N=80; 33%). The next largest categories were: students with disabilities (intellectual, sensory, motor, and nervous system disorders) (N=77; 32%), war refugee students (N=39; 16%), students with learning disabilities (N=17; 7%), students from migrant families (but not refugees) (N=15; 6%), students on the autism spectrum (N=4; 2%), students with ADHD (N=3; 1.5%); students with sensory disorders (N=2; 1%); students with developmental dyslexia (N=2; 1%), and students with behavioural disorders (N=1; 0.5%).

Usage of the puppets and puppetry in teaching & education AFTER project

Puppet-related activities

Participants were asked about the frequency of using puppets and puppetry in their teaching after completing the PuppetIntegrate project (Table PL_11). The majority (12 educators) responded that they did so sometimes (40%), 8 (27%) – a few times, and 6 (20%) frequently. Only 4 (13%) declared that they never used the method they had learned. Referring to these issues, teachers frequency they take puppetry related activities [1 = Never, 2 = “1-2 times a year”, 3 = “3 times or more”].

Table PL_11. Puppetry related activities according to teachers AFTER the project (N=30)

After the educational programme Puppet INTEGRATE, I attend…	1 N (%)	2 N (%)	3 N (%)
puppet shows with my students	8 26.7%	22 73.3%	-
theatre performances with my students	5 16.7%	18 60%	7 23.3%
myself puppet shows (as spectator)	10 33.3%	14 46.7%	6 20.0%

attend art and cultural events (e.g. theatre performances, art exhibitions, music concerts)	2 6.7%	10 33.3%	18 60.0%

In general, it can be said that the dominant form of activity among teachers is independent participation in art and cultural events (e.g., theatre performances, art exhibitions, music concerts), as indicated by the declarations of 18 respondents (60%). Most teachers participate with their students (as spectators) 1-2 times a year in puppet shows (N=22; 73%) and in theatre events (N=18; 60%). The same applies to preparing their own puppet shows, which they also mostly perform 1-2 times a year (N=16; 47%). It should be noted that in this type of activity, a significant category comprises one-third of respondents (33%) who never prepare theatre performances with their students.

Table PL_12. Puppetry usage in previous teaching by teachers AFTER the project (N = 30)

Before the educational programme Puppet INTEGRATE…	1 N (%)	2 N (%)	3 N (%)	4 N (%)
I have previously created puppets with my students.	19 63.3%	6 20.0%	3 10.0%	2 6.7%
I have used puppets and puppetry in my teaching in the past.	18 60.0%	6 20.0%	3 10.0%	3 10.0%

Referring to these issues, teachers indicated how frequently they take part in puppetry-related activities [1 = Never, 2 = “1-5 times”, 3 = “6-10 times”, 4= “11 times or more”].

The collected data indicate (Table PL_12) that prior to the PuppetIntegrate project, most teachers (N=19; 63%) had no experience performing puppetry with their students, with one in five respondents (20%) having done so between one and five times. The same was true for using puppets and puppetry in their teaching, as most teachers were unfamiliar with this method (N=18; 60%).

The responses of the teachers who completed the questionnaire about their plans related to the frequency of using puppets after the project completion suggest that

half of them (N=15; 50%) intend to do it several times, and one in four (N=8; 27%) often, which proves that the puppetry method has gained recognition in their eyes.

The provided responses indicate that most of them never (N=14; 47%) or only 1-2 times a year attend puppet shows themselves. Only two (7%) attend three or more times a year.

The context or lesson for using puppets and puppetry

When asked about the context or lesson they **would use puppets** and puppetry, teachers provided varied responses, with nine (30%) indicating they saw their use in more than one area. Respondents' responses were classified into six categories. The most frequently selected category was "**activities with the teacher**," which was referenced by 14 (47%) respondents, nearly half of those completing the questionnaire. Suggested activities in this area included "role-playing" (PL_POST11) and "workshop activities" (PL_POST18, PL_POST28).

The second most frequently mentioned category was **students' socio-emotional development** (N=8; 27%). Respondents included, among others, the following statements: "a lesson about emotions, difficulties in social interactions" (PL_POST5), "integrating the class group to develop the ability to express emotions" (PL_POST13), "personal and social functioning, mainly expressing feelings, working through interpersonal problems" (PL_POST15), and "tolerance, multiculturalism" (PL_POST30). Their authors emphasised the use of puppets in developing students' ability to recognize and name emotions, group integration, and sensitization to accepting differences, self-discovery, and resolving difficulties in social interactions.

The area related to **art, theatre, and spiritual development** was created based on seven statements made by teachers completing the questionnaire (23%). It was further defined by their statements regarding the use of puppetry in implementing ethical content during classes with students, recording rehearsals, musical and theatre performances, and creative activities.

The fourth most frequently mentioned area was related to the **subject taught by teachers**. Six responses (20%) related to the following subjects were included: Polish

language, English language, integrated classes in younger grades, and technology. Ideas for using puppetry in these subjects included "working with reading, fairy tales, legends" (PL_POST4), "in younger grades, e.g., for reading books" (PL_POST9), and "for linguistic communication – dialogues" (PL_POST11).

The fifth dimension, designated "**therapeutic**," encompassed all respondents' suggestions for using puppets during rehabilitation, therapeutic, and art therapy sessions. Five respondents (17%) responded. Only one respondent (3%) did not share **any ideas** for using puppetry in their work, responding "I don't know." This did not allow for any reference to any of the previously mentioned categories and contributed to the creation of a separate category.

Regarding the responses provided by respondents to the question: "In what context or during what lesson **could** you use puppets or puppetry?", five categories were identified, based on those from the previous question. It is worth noting that, as in the previous question, some respondents indicated more than one idea (N=13; 43%). The most statements referred to the areas of "**activities with the teacher**" and those related to "**art, theatre, and spiritual development**." Thirteen responses (43%) were assigned to each of these categories. Respondents' ideas related to the possible use of puppets in the area of "activities with the teacher" included the following: "emotional intelligence" (PL_POST6), "assistance in acting out/resolving a conflict or problem" (PL_POST21), "teamwork and conflict resolution" (PL_POST26), and "stress relief" (PL_POST27). These primarily concerned content related to interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships. In turn, within the area related to "art, theatre and spiritual development", artistic, plastic and theatre workshops, ethical content, role-playing, developing one's own interests and creativity, classes in an art therapy studio, making puppets and a drama club were indicated.

The second most frequently mentioned area was **students' social and emotional development**, with 11 responses (37%). Possible uses for puppets included: "developing social skills" (PL_POST7), "talking about emotions" (PL_POST19), "presenting some dangerous situations" (PL_POST20), "coping with emotions" (PL_POST21), and "relaxation" (PL_POST29). These were primarily related to ways of

developing certain skills needed by students in social situations and managing emotions.

Eight statements (27%) fell under the "**therapeutic**" category. As in the previous question, they referred to rehabilitation, therapeutic, and bibliotherapeutic activities, primarily aimed at students with diverse and special educational and behavioural needs. The fewest statements (N=5; 17%) fell under the category of "**subject-specific activities**," meaning lessons conducted by teachers participating in the project. The suggested subjects included Polish and English.

Relevant age groups

After participating in the PuppetIntegrate project, teachers' perceptions regarding the suitability of puppetry for different student age groups still confirmed a common preference for younger learners (table PL_13).

Table PL_13. Teachers' perceptions of the age groups of students for whom the use of puppets and puppetry is most suitable AFTER the Project (N = 30)

In which age groups do I believe the use of puppets and puppetry is most suitable?	No N (%)	Yes N (%)
Preschool education	18 (60.0%)	12 (40.0%)
Grades I, II, III (Primary school)	5 (16.7%)	25 (83.3%)
Grades IV, V, VI (Primary school)	11 (36.7%)	19 (63.3%)
Grades VII, VIII (Primary school)	11 (36.7%)	19 (63.3%)
Secondary education	27 (90.0%)	3 (10.0%)
Adults	25 (83.3%)	5 (16.7%)

Most respondents agreed that the use of puppetry and puppets is most appropriate for students in grades 1-3 (early school education) (N=25; 83%) and for students in grades 4-6 and 7-8 (N=19; 63%) at the second stage of primary school. Twelve teachers (40%) indicated that preschool education is the best time for this purpose. Only three teachers (10%) stated that the puppet technique can be used with secondary school students, and five teachers (17%) indicated that it can be used with adults.

Teachers' perceptions of puppetry's influence on students and classroom dynamics AFTER the project

Teachers' views on the influence of puppetry on learning, social interaction, and classroom atmosphere remain positive and stable after participation in the Project (Table PL_14)

Table PL_14. Teachers' perceptions of using puppets as a teaching tool in selected contexts AFTER the Project (N = 30)

Using puppets as a teaching tool…	1 N (%)	2 N (%)	3 N (%)	4 N (%)	5 N (%)	Mean (1-5)	SD
…enhances students' imagination	-	-	1 3.3%	8 26.7%	21 70.0%	4.67	0.547
…encourages students to be more creative	-	-	-	5 16.7%	25 83.3%	4.83	0.379
…enhances students' oral language skills	-	2 6.7%	6 20.0%	11 36.7%	11 36.7%	4.03	0.928
…enhances students' writing skills	3 10.0%	5 16.7%	15 50.0%	4 13.3%	3 10.0%	2.97	1.066
…helps students embrace and accept differences	-	-	2 6.7%	8 26.7%	20 66.7%	4.60	0.621
…contributes to developing students' social skills	-	-	1 3.3%	8 26.7%	21 70.0%	4.67	0.547
…contributes to developing students' communication skills	-	-	3 10.0%	7 23.3%	20 66.7%	4.57	0.679
…brings joy and enjoyment to students	-	-	1 3.3%	7 23.3%	22 73.3%	4.70	0.535
…enhances the classroom atmosphere	-	-	-	12 40.0%	18 60.0%	4.60	0.498
… improves relationships among students	-	-	2 6.7%	14 46.7%	14 46.7%	4.40	0.621

Referring to these issues, teachers expressed the degree to which they agree with specific statements [1 = Disagree, 2 = Slightly Disagree, 3 = Neither disagree nor agree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree]

Most teachers positively assessed the use of puppets as a teaching tool after the PuppetIntegrate project. The strongest agreement was expressed regarding the enhancement of imagination (N=21; 70%), creativity (N=25; 83%), and joy (N=22; 73%). Additionally, there was agreement on improving social and communication skills

(approximately 67–70%, N=20-21) and enhancing the classroom atmosphere (N=18; 60%). Teachers were more divided on their impact on oral language skills (approximately N=22; 73% agreement) and, especially, on writing skills, where opinions were mixed, with only around a quarter agreeing. Overall, puppetry was perceived as highly beneficial for fostering creativity, social interaction, and a positive classroom climate, while its effect on writing was considered less evident.

Table PL_15. Teachers' beliefs about the use of puppets as a teaching tool AFTER the Project (N = 30)

I believe…	1 N (%)	2 N (%)	3 N (%)	4 N (%)	5 N (%)	Mean (1-5)	SD
…it is essential to create puppets for puppetry with my students	1 3.3%	1 3.3%	6 20.0 %	5 16.7 %	17 56.7 %	4.20	1.095
…it is essential to engage my students in puppetry	1 3.3%	3 10.0%	2 6.7%	8 26.7 %	16 53.3 %	4.17	1.147
…that attending puppet shows with my students is vital	1 3.3%	2 6.7%	2 6.7%	9 30.0 %	16 53.3 %	4.23	1.073

Referring to these issues, teachers expressed the degree to which they agree with specific statements [1 = Disagree, 2 = Slightly Disagree, 3 = Neither disagree nor agree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree]

The majority of teachers expressed strong beliefs in the educational value of puppetry. Over half agreed that creating puppets with students (N=17; 57%), engaging them in puppetry (N=16; 53%), and attending puppet shows together (N=16; 53%) are essential, with mean scores slightly above 4 on a 5-point scale. While a small minority disagreed, overall responses indicate that teachers see active participation in puppetry as an important and beneficial part of the learning process.

Teachers' perceived abilities and attitudes toward using puppets

AFTER the PuppetIntegrate Project

Referring to issues of their abilities and attitudes toward using puppets, teachers expressed the degree to which they agree with specific statements (Table 16).

Table PL_16. Teachers' perception of their abilities and skills in puppetry AFTER the Project (N = 30)

Teachers' statements	1 N (%)	2 N (%)	3 N (%)	4 N (%)	5 N (%)	Mean (1-5)	SD
I feel confident in making puppets with my students.	2 6.7%	2 6.7%	1 3.3%	6 20.0 %	19 63.3 %	4.27	1.230
I can engage my students in puppetry activities where they actively participate in the game.	1 3.3%	2 6.7%	4 13.3 %	11 36.7 %	12 40.0 %	4.03	1.066
I am sufficiently skilled in creating and using puppets in teaching.	1 3.3%	2 6.7%	7 23.3 %	10 33.3 %	10 33.3 %	3.87	1.074
I feel effective at integrating puppets into my lessons.	1 3.3%	3 10.0%	5 16.7 %	10 33.3 %	11 36.7 %	3.90	1.125
I always discover better and more effective ways to use puppets in my teaching.	1 3.3%	2 6.7%	7 23.3 %	8 26.7 %	12 40.0 %	3.93	1.112
I can motivate and encourage my students during puppet-related activities.	1 3.3%	1 3.3%	3 10.0 %	15 50.0 %	10 33.3 %	4.07	0.944

Referring to these issues, teachers expressed the degree to which they agree with specific statements [1 = Disagree, 2 = Slightly Disagree, 3 = Neither disagree nor agree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree]

Teachers generally reported strong confidence in their abilities and held positive attitudes toward using puppets in teaching. The majority felt confident in creating puppets with their students, with 63% agreeing and a mean score of 4.27. Many also believed they could effectively engage students in participatory puppetry activities

(N=12; 40% “Agree,” mean = 4.03). Teachers were moderately confident in their overall skills for creating and using puppets (N=10; 33% “Agree,” mean = 3.87) and in integrating puppets into lessons (N=11; 37% “Agree,” mean = 3.90), suggesting room for further development. They also reported discovering increasingly effective ways to use puppets in teaching (N=12; 40% “Agree,” mean = 3.93) and expressed confidence in their ability to motivate and encourage students during puppet activities (N=15; 50% “Agree,” mean = 4.07). Overall, the results indicate that teachers perceive themselves as capable of incorporating puppetry into their teaching and recognize its potential to actively engage and inspire students, while acknowledging some areas where further skill development may enhance their effectiveness.

Project’s participants were also asked about their attitudes about incorporating puppetry in education (Table PL_17).

Table PL_17. Teachers’ attitudes and statements about incorporating puppets in their didactic work AFTER the Project (N = 30)

Teachers’ statements	1 N (%)	2 N (%)	3 N (%)	4 N (%)	5 N (%)	Mean (1-5)	SD
I like to incorporate activities that involve using puppets in my teaching.	1 3.3%	2 6.7%	4 13.3 %	11 36.7 %	12 40.0 %	4.03	1.066
I find that teaching using puppets is an enjoyable task.	1 3.3%	1 3.3%	2 6.7%	8 26.7 %	18 60.0 %	4.37	0.999
I use puppets because they positively affect the cultivation and development of students' abilities and skills	1 3.3%	3 10.0%	2 6.7%	7 23.3 %	17 56.7 %	4.20	1.157
I use puppets because they improve students' performance.	2 6.7%	1 3.3%	4 13.3 %	12 40.0 %	11 36.7 %	3.97	1.129
I use puppets because they align with my values.	1 3.3%	1 3.3%	4 13.3 %	9 30.0 %	15 50.0 %	4.20	1.031
I use puppets to be an effective teacher.	1 3.3%	2 6.7%	6 20.0 %	7 23.3 %	14 46.7 %	4.03	1.129

Referring to these issues, teachers expressed the degree to which they agree with specific statements [1 = Disagree, 2 = Slightly Disagree, 3 = Neither disagree nor agree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree]

The results presented in the table indicate that teachers' attitudes toward the use of puppets are decidedly positive – most respondents agree with the statements regarding the attractiveness of this method (mean responses range from 4.0 to 4.4 on a 1–5 scale). The highest-rated statement was: "Teaching with puppets is an enjoyable task" (M = 4.37; SD = 0.999). This result confirms that teachers particularly value the emotional and practical comfort of working with puppets.

The impact of puppets on the development of students' abilities and skills was also rated highly, which highlights their importance in supporting educational competencies. The most diverse opinions, however, concerned the effect of puppets on students' academic performance – although the mean score remains positive (M = 3.97), the highest variability was observed (SD = 1.129). This may suggest that while some teachers clearly recognize this effect, others remain more skeptical.

According to respondents, another particularly important factor was consistency with personal values – teachers declare that using puppets in their teaching practice aligns with their value system. Additionally, the impact of puppets on teacher effectiveness as well as the overall willingness to include them in lessons was evaluated positively.

In summary: teachers are convinced that puppets make the teaching process more enjoyable, support student development, and remain consistent with educators' professional values. The only significant doubts concern the direct impact of puppets on improving academic performance.

School as a place of puppetry implementation

- perception AFTER the Project

The teachers' questions took into account the following variables: the opportunities their school create to get know, develop and implement puppetry workshop (Table PL_18), their motivation and intention after participating in the training (Table PL_19).

Table PL_18. Perception of school as environment to introduce usage of puppets and puppetry in teaching AFTER the Project (N = 30)

At the school where I work…	1 N (%)	2 N (%)	3 N (%)	4 N (%)	5 N (%)	Mean (1-5)	SD
there is a strong emphasis on the systematic use of puppetry in teaching practices.	8 26.7%	12 40.0%	7 23.3 %	3 10.0%	-	2.17	0.950
the systematic information of teachers on the use of puppetry in teaching is promoted.	5 16.7%	12 40.0%	9 30.0 %	2 6.7%	2 6.7%	2.47	1.074
there has been in-school training on using puppetry effectively in teaching.	14 46.7%	7 23.3%	4 13.3 %	2 6.7%	3 10.0 %	2.10	1.348
there is relevant puppetry equipment	13 43.3%	9 30.0%	5 16.7 %	1 3.3%	2 6.7%	2.00	1.174

Referring to these issues, teachers expressed the degree to which they agree with specific statements [1 = Disagree, 2 = Slightly Disagree, 3 = Neither disagree nor agree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree].

Analysis of teachers responses about perception of school as environment to introduce usage of puppets and puppetry in teaching (Table PL_18) leads to conclusion that school doesn't create an environment with a strong emphasis for use puppetry in teaching. The majority of responses disagree with the statement "At the school where I work there is a strong emphasis on the systematic use of puppetry in teaching practices". The majority of teachers underlined that they don't receive information

about using puppetry in teaching. It is worth underlining that according to responses it is rare that school is an organiser of puppetry training, but still 3 teachers claim that such a workshop took place in their school. It is worth mentioning that many teachers from the same institutions were among the respondents, so the number of responses does not indicate the number of schools. One of the questions about Puppetry equipment in school didn't appear in a pre-test of the project. The data from teacher responses after taking part in the project might be summed up with conclusion that in schools there is a lack of relevant puppetry equipment.

Teachers participating in the project were asked about their future plans to incorporate puppetry into their teaching plans and their potential willingness to continue their education in this field. Their answers are presented in the Table PL_19. Teachers' future plan, motivation and intention after participating in the project.

Table PL_19. Teachers motivations and intentions toward puppetry training AFTER the Project (N = 30)

After the educational programme Puppet INTEGRATE I intend to…	1 N (%)	2 N (%)	3 N (%)	4 N (%)	5 N (%)	Mean (1-5)	SD
participate in a professional development programme to enhance my teaching through puppet use	2 6.7%	5 16.7%	6 20.0 %	10 33.3%	7 23.3 %	3.50	1.22 5
implement new teaching and assessment techniques using puppets.	1 3.3%	4 13.3%	6 20.0 %	14 46.7%	5 16.7 %	3.6	1.03 7
modify my teaching by incorporating puppets and puppetry into my classroom	2 6.7%	3 10.0%	2 6.7%	13 43.3%	10. 33.3 %	3.87	1.19 6

Referring to these issues, teachers expressed the degree to which they agree with specific statements [1 = Disagree, 2 = Slightly Disagree, 3 = Neither disagree nor agree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree].

Most teachers declare their willingness to continue their professional development in the field of puppetry. Only 7 people definitely or rather do not see their development in this area. Of the 30 teachers surveyed, 5 are unlikely to incorporate new techniques

into their teaching, while the majority (19 teachers) declare their willingness to continue working with the new teaching and artistic tool. Six teachers are undecided. Out of N=30 teachers, 23 declare that they will try to modify their teaching methods by incorporating puppets, while 5 are unlikely to do so. In summary, it can be noted that many teachers in the field of further education, and the majority in the field of teaching, wish to continue using puppetry techniques in their teaching work.

Participants overall experience with this project

In the open questions project participants described their overall experience with this project. The vast majority of those who completed the survey described their experiences with the project positively (N=26; 87%). Some individuals commented on the self-development opportunities that participation in this project provided. Here's a sample statement that illustrates this:

> "The project forced me to approach teaching topics creatively—I had to create scenarios, improvise, and simultaneously achieve educational goals. This greatly developed my creativity and flexibility as a teacher." (PL_POST7)

Other responses from respondents highlighted the expansion of their work skills and the resources they developed or acquired thanks to it in the form of certain skills for working with students:

> “Working with the project gave me another new tool (method) for working with children in their integration and solving educational problems (especially emotional ones).” (PL_POST4)

> “I am glad to have taken part in the project, it has inspired me to expand my work skills.” (PL_POST11)

> “A very interesting experience, learning about a project I had never seen before, working with puppets, with great potential for use.” (PL_POST15)

> "Innovations in education, developing artistic skills, new ways of solving educational problems, learning to cooperate in a group, ways of integrating a peer group, ways of diagnosing students' problems that they do not verbalize on a daily basis." (PL_POST18)

In other positive comments about the project, participants expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to participate. They emphasised that they found puppetry in education to be innovative, unconventional, yet simple and applicable to a variety of educational settings. They also included statements that addressed a broader educational context than just pedagogical work, namely, changing the way we perceive the educational process. The following statements are worth mentioning:

> "A positive experience that made me aware of many aspects of working with people with disabilities." (PL_POST16)

> "An inspiring experience that broadens our perspective on the role of school." (PL_POST23)

Only three people (10%) had mixed feelings about the project, and only one person shared a negative opinion (3%). Among the statements reflecting "mixed" feelings, there was a comment about a certain expectation of one of the participating teachers, which was not met. This can therefore be used as a guide for improving similar projects in the future. This is evidenced by the statement: "I regret that the children were not shown all the films; they were waiting for it. There was no exchange of experiences between children from other schools" (PL_POST9). The remaining two opinions within this area referred to certain individual difficulties in meeting the project's objectives, such as a lack of time for frequent use of the puppet theatre method during classes with students, or expressing one's own emotions through gestures. The statement "unfortunately, this technique is not for me" (PL_POST3), which was classified as negative, referred to the respondent's opinion of the method learned, not the project itself or its implementation.

Project's contribution to professional development

The answer for the question „Which elements of the project do you think contributed most to your professional development? [where professional development was understood as a continuous learning process in which teachers acquire professional knowledge and skills, as well as personal qualities.", the most of the teachers underlined learning new skills and methods (9 responses), they emphasised acquiring

new techniques, methods, or gaining a fresh perspective on existing practices as the most valuable part of the project. Examples for those claims:

"Learning the method of working with puppets and the possibilities it offers in working with children." (PL_POST27)

"Learning new active techniques at work." (PL_POST28)

"New skills acquired in working with new techniques." (PL_POST12)

"Development of information about puppetry techniques." (PL_POST22)

"Filming and editing." PL_POST8

"The idea/reminder that puppets can be used in work is reason enough to participate in the project." (PL_POST17)

Therefore it might be said, that the project successfully offered educational content that filled gaps in knowledge or refreshed forgotten skills, adding tangible value to participants' professional toolkits.

Also they highlighted the **collaborative** nature of the project—sharing experiences, teamwork, and connecting with other educators—as being professionally enriching. We can find such expressions as:

"Ability to create in a group, exchange experiences." (PL_POST11)

"Opportunity to connect with other teachers." (PL_POST16)

"Joint preparation of puppets, scripts and performances." (PL_POST4)

To sum up it might be said, that the project fostered a community of practice, enabling professional exchange and mutual support. This reflects the importance of peer learning in teacher development.

Also the teachers highlighted the importance of **Puppet making skills** specifically as a significant professional development component, because Hands-on creative work with puppets gave participants concrete skills they could apply directly in their teaching or therapy settings. The verbal expressions of those feelings were:

"Learning how to make puppets and how to express emotions with them." (PL_POST13)

"Skills related to puppet making and building an educational and upbringing process based on working with puppets." (PL_POST15)

Also the participants underlined the **therapeutic and emotional values** (3 responses) of the project, which helped them connect emotionally with children, especially those facing challenges. According to the answers they might be used for strengthening the emotional safety and interpersonal bonds between teachers and students.

Examples:

"The puppet made it easier for me to connect with children, especially those who were shy or withdrawn." (PL_POST26)

"The role of puppets in the therapeutic process." (PL_POST19)

Skills and knowledge maintained within Project

The answers for the question : What skills and knowledge do you think you have maintained or developed through your participation in the Puppet INTEGRATE project? we can mostly categorizes in 4 main skills: **creativity and expression, therapeutic and emotional support, puppet making and performing techniques, theatre techniques.**

Many participants reported that the project boosted their **creativity and their ability to express emotions,** both personally and in the classroom. PuppetIntegrate successfully supported participants in rediscovering or enhancing their creative potential, especially through non-verbal expression—valuable in educational and therapeutic contexts.

Examples:

"Stimulating creativity, belief in one's own abilities, joy from the results achieved, effective problem solving for children." (PL_POST1)

"Expressing emotions without words, through gestures and facial expressions." (PL_POST6)

The educators emphasised as well the **therapeutic dimension** of puppetry—using puppets to manage emotions, reduce conflict, and support their students' emotional wellbeing. 5 responses point directly to those values, which shows that the project empowered educators to use puppetry as a tool for emotional literacy and mental health, especially in sensitive or inclusive settings. Examples:

"Using puppets not only in performances but also to defuse difficult emotions, conflicts and tensions." (PL_POST23)

"How to talk about feelings, solve problems between students that they are ashamed to talk about." (PL_POST28)

"I have developed the ability to use theatrical puppets in the therapeutic process with students with intellectual disabilities." (PL_POST19)

Participants acknowledged also gaining hands-on technical knowledge about **puppet creation, animation, and usage**. These skills are essential foundations for integrating puppetry into teaching or therapy, and indicate that the project delivered practical, transferable methods. Some of the answers underline only getting to know new techniques, some 2 of them develop the therapeutic idea. Example:

"The technical side of puppet making, what to look out for when making films." (PL_POST10)

It is worth underlining that teachers linked the puppet animation with theatre and performance, 3 from the respondents focused on their improved abilities to produce and direct puppet performances.Examples:

"Preparation of a puppet show project in everyday teaching." (PL_POST20)

"Creation of puppet shows." (PL_POST22)

A few responses touched on topics like trust, interdisciplinary teaching, or were too general to classify under one category. Examples:

"That you have to trust children, trust their wisdom." (PL_POST7)

"The theatre puppet allowed me to combine content from the fields of language, emotions, art and social education." (PL_POST26)

Teachers expectations toward the Project and reality

Teachers opinion on the programme are presented also in their responses for the question „Did the programme you participated in meet your expectations? What were its strengths? What did you like most about it?". After analysis we can say that the majority (13 responses) underline the **met their expectations**, they also appreciate the collaboration and **exchange of knowledge and experiences** between the

participants (7 responses) as well ability to **develop creativity and expression** (2 responses).

The majority of respondents (13 responses) confirmed that the programme met or even exceeded their expectations. Many described it as well-organised, effective, and personally or professionally enriching. We can conclude that the programme delivered on its promises and was appreciated for both its content and execution. This reflects strong overall satisfaction.

> *"Yes, it was important to learn how to make puppets, and it was also important to exchange experiences with other participants."* (PL_POST29)
>
> *"Yes, it is a simple and easy-to-use technique."* (PL_POST22)
>
> *"It met expectations, contact with coordinators, theatre puppet techniques inspired the creation of new activities. I liked the films using puppets the most."* (PL_POST14)

A significant number of responses (7) highlighted peer interaction, teamwork, and knowledge exchange as key strengths. Participants greatly valued the opportunity to learn from one another, which fostered professional community and mutual inspiration. Examples:

> *"Yes, teamwork, exchange of experiences."* (PL_POST6)
>
> *"Openness to new activities at school, learning about the specifics of work in other schools and institutions."* (PL_POST27)

Some answers (2) pointed to enhanced self-expression and creativity, both for participants and their students. We might say that the project nurtured artistic confidence and expressiveness, making it not only practical but emotionally fulfilling. Participants highlighted the positive response and involvement of students, particularly their joy and creativity during puppet activities (2). Examples of expression and creative development:

> *"Working and playing with children while creating puppets, integrating children, and seeing their joy in creating performances is the most important thing for me!"* (PL_POST4)

Very interesting contribution we can observe in comments about **international and institutional learning and personal exchange.** A few respondents (2) appreciated learning about how puppetry is used in other countries and institutions as well as international leadership and its inspiring role. Examples:

> "A very interesting programme. The strengths were the in-depth learning of teaching and assessment techniques using theatre puppets. It was an interesting experience to see how other project participants work with puppets in their institutions. The creativity and commitment of the participants. *"It was an interesting experience to see how other project participants work with puppets in their institutions."* (PL_POST28)
>
> *"I liked the energy of the leader... she made me believe in the possibility of using puppets in ways other than just in a performance."* (PL_POST14)

Possible improvements of the project-related activities

Educators also shared their difficulties during the realization on the project by answering the question: „What was the most difficult thing for you? What would you suggest to improve the project?" We can enumerate main difficulties: **Puppet animation and manipulation, online meetings organisation, working with improvisation and expression and technical difficulties.**

Many participants (7) found the technical aspects of **puppet use—such as animation, manipulation**, or physical handling—challenging, both for themselves and their students. Examples:

> *"Difficult – improvisation ideas, first attempts, holding and moving the puppet."* (PL_POST1)
>
> *"Showing emotions, skilful puppet movement."* (PL_POST3)
>
> *"The most difficult part was bringing the puppet to life – manipulating it, getting into character."* (PL_POST19)

The format and frequency of **online meetings** were a common concern (7 responses) They were seen as too long, repetitive, tiring, or clashing with school schedules. Examples:

"The online meetings were tiring and too long… I was distracted by constant technical problems and the long translation process." (PL_POST18)

"Fewer online meetings, more live meetings." (PL_POST12)

Teachers (3 responses) suggested that face-to-face meeting were better solution and met their expectation by claiming:

"More face-to-face meetings." (PL_POST5)

Also participants found **improvisation particularly difficult**—both in terms of coming up with ideas and expressing emotions through puppets. Examples:

"Improvisation" (PL_POST5)

"Showing emotions, skilful puppet movement" (PL_POST3)

A part of those were also technical difficulties, which included such issues as: recording, editing, or internet access hindered participation and classroom implementation. Examples:

"Technical difficulties." (PL_POST14)

"Recording improvisations." (PL_POST2)

"The online meetings were tiring… constant technical problems…" (PL_POST24)

It's worth to underline, that some of participants haven't seen any difficulties and reported no significant challenges. Examples:

"Nothing." (PL_POST7)

"There were no such things." (PL_POST23)

Also some of them underline the lack of cross-school or International Interaction (2 responses). There was a desire for more direct interaction between schools and countries, especially between students. Examples:

"No direct contact with teachers and students from Greece." (PL_POST22)

"In my project, my students lacked contact with students from other schools, especially from Greece. I think it is important for the children to have one joint online meeting so that they can see each other. This gives them a real sense of being part of a larger whole, which is important from their perspective" (PL_POST15)

Teachers rated very highly the structure and organisation of the project as well as its content (Table PL_20). Over 80% of participants rated its structure and organisation with 4 or 5 on the 5-point scale. The rating of the content of the project was even higher - over 93% of participants rated it with 4 or 5 on the 5-point scale.

Table PL_20. Teachers overall rating of the Project (N = 30)

For the research team's feedback, please rate…	1 N (%)	2 N (%)	3 N (%)	4 N (%)	5 N (%)
…the structure and organisation of this programme	-	-	6 20.0%	7 23.3%	17 56.7%
…the content of this programme	-	-	2 6.7%	8 26.7%	20 66.7%

The analyses of Polish teachers experiences revealed a high level of satisfaction and impact of the participation in project on teachers taking part in it.

5. Report data from interviews

Demographic data of the respondents

In the qualitative study – interviews – data was gathered from eight project participants. The interviewees were:

- PL_I1 - a teacher teaching adults,
- PL_I2 - an early years teacher,
- PL_I3 - a teacher teaching grades four to eight in a primary school in a medium-sized town,
- PL_I4 - an after-school club teacher,
- PL_I5 - a co-organising teacher,
- PL_I6 - an extracurricular activities teacher,
- PL_I7 - an extracurricular activities teacher,
- PL_I8 - a teacher teaching grades four to eight in a primary school in a large town.

Seven female teachers and one male teacher took part in the study. Most of the teachers participating in the study were people with over ten years of experience from large towns. The teachers participating in the study held a master's degree. The teachers surveyed usually work in classes with more than 21 students. The teacher working with adults taught classes of up to 10 students.

Reflection at the end of the project – organisation and content

The project was implemented during the 2024/2025 school year. The teachers pointed out that the amount of time was sufficient to cover the content, and the classes were held once a month. PL_I3 and PL_I4 pointed out that the hybrid form of the classes was appropriate for this training. PL_I8 declared that 'the face-to-face meeting was definitely better'. A teacher teaching grades four to eight in a primary school in a medium-sized town (PL_I3) pointed out that: 'The online meetings lasted too long, all the substantive issues could have been covered in one lesson, the training was prolonged a little too much, and nothing much came of it.'

All respondents spoke very positively about the content of the classroom training and subsequent online meetings, both in terms of the substantive issues covered and the atmosphere during the training:

> 'During the face-to-face meeting, theoretical and practical knowledge and the basic principles of the technique were discussed. The training was encouraging and inspiring. The online course programme was appropriate and sufficient.' (PL_I1);

> 'During the training in September, we were familiarised with the project objectives and the schedule of meetings. During the online training, the content was tailored to the project tasks.' (PL_I2);

> 'We prepared puppets and animations. The first training session turned out to be fantastic; the face-to-face meetings are much more practical and specific. During the online classes, we improved our puppet skills, vocalisation, workshop activities and the use of puppets in everyday teaching activities.' (PL_I3);

"The content provided at the first meeting was sufficient to start working. We were shown the stages of puppet construction, animations, ways of acting out scenes, and problem solving using puppets. This content proved to be very useful. During the online training, the content was expanded with specific tips as reflections after watching the videos – this was valuable as it allowed us to work more effectively. The tips on what to avoid when recording videos were also valuable." (PL_I4);

'We learned practical skills for making puppets and gained knowledge about what these puppets are used for. We met the organisers and learned about the project's goals. During the online classes, we perfected puppetry techniques, ways of expressing emotions through these techniques, and learned creative ideas for implementing the project.' (PL_I5);

'The content conveyed during the classroom training was clear and understandable. The information was presented in a legible manner. During the online classes, the content was conveyed in a concrete way, which helped to monitor, correct and improve the activities with the puppet, but the meetings were long and tiring.' (PL_I6);

'During the first meeting, we worked on and with the puppet – a practical meeting that allowed us to understand the technique of creating and animating a puppet. The next online classes were about working with the puppet – I got practical tips to help me work with the group.' (PL_I7);

"During the first training session, I learned a lot. The content was conveyed clearly and precisely in a pleasant atmosphere that encouraged cooperation. However, during the online classes, the large number of participants involved in the project meant that the same issues were discussed repeatedly. If the group had been divided into smaller teams, it would have been easier to follow the progress of the work of individual schools. Due to language and equipment barriers, I gained little from the online meetings." (PL_I8).

All respondents noted that the handbook was a useful tool in conducting workshops with students. Teachers used the tool and were familiar with its content. As the co-organising teacher (PL_I5) pointed out: 'The content of the handbook and the scenarios were clear and well-written. I used the handbook while working on the project, and it inspired me to take action.'

The teachers rated their cooperation with trainers, especially Emmanouella Kapokaki representing Prasin Aloga, very highly. They noted her excellent communication skills and extensive knowledge (PL_I8, PL_I1, PL_I2). As PL_I4 points out: 'Communication and cooperation were very good. A lot of guidance was provided. Emmanouella discussed each recording in great detail, which helped in further work with the puppets. It was possible to share one's observations and always receive an answer when something was unclear.' Similarly, the participants unanimously rated their cooperation with the coordinators as very good.

With regard to the content of the project, the summary statements are noteworthy and can be analysed and used when organising further activities of this type. Participants pointed out the excessive number of online meetings (PL_I3 and PL_I8), adding that face-to-face meetings would be more valuable.

The summary made by PL_I8 is also important: ''We were unable to show our pupils the films made by other participants. Not all pupils wanted to take part in the project, but those who did had fun making the puppets. We will use the knowledge and skills acquired during the project in our school in the future. We will familiarise the teaching staff with the project and I am sure that other teachers will use our experience in their work."

In summary, the contribution of the trainer and coordinators was greatly appreciated, but respondents pointed out that classroom training was more effective and useful, and that online training was not rated highly by participants.

Reflections at the end of the project concerning STUDENTS

- from the perspective of teachers

Team integration

All teachers working on the project noted that the classes helped to integrate the class, even those pupils who had not been integrated before, who had difficulties and were shy. The children reacted enthusiastically during the project activities. The teacher working with adults (PL_I1) paid particular attention to the integration with the therapists of disabled people participating in the project.

A teacher from a large town who teaches young people from fourth to eighth grade noted that she got to know her students better (PL_I8): "Working on the project helped me get to know my students better, their strengths and weaknesses, which we can work on in the future. I was very pleasantly surprised by the creativity of some of the students. My previously more formal relationships with the students preparing the films have warmed up. Observing the relationships between the students solving the project tasks was an important source of knowledge about peer relationships for me."

Expression with puppets

Teachers paid particular attention to the children's expression and engagement, but a teacher working with adults with disabilities emphasised that:

> 'The participants had difficulty expressing themselves due to their disabilities. They also had difficulty expressing their emotions.' (PL_I1);

Others, however, emphasised that:

> 'Their ability to express themselves improved, and the children were engaged in playing with the puppets.' (PL_I2);

> 'The pupils needed help, especially when working with pupils with disabilities. Expression is one of the most difficult areas of activity.' (PL_I3);

> "The pupils had difficulties because we were working with a fairly young age group (grades 1-3), and we often had to show them how to express emotions

and what movements to make. The pupils had problems with expression. They found it difficult to bring the puppet to life, animate it and move it. They wanted to use words and engage in dialogue, not just make sounds." (PL_I4);

'The pupils expressed their emotions very expressively and signalled all their needs. The level of emotional expression definitely improved through the use of puppetry techniques. A great project.' (PL_I5);

'In my groups, understanding what the project was about happened extremely quickly, and the children had no difficulty expressing their emotions, although they focused (on their own) not on the character's internal struggles but on the cooperation between the imaginary characters.' (PL_I6);

"Puppets make it easier to express emotions (separating emotions from oneself and transferring them to the puppet) and to show certain actions that we as humans are unable to express, such as flying a kite or imagining flying in our minds when we are bored. Puppet animation is technically difficult, especially for young children. It can be difficult to transfer emotions to a puppet." (PL_I7);

'Some students had to overcome their embarrassment about presenting their emotions through puppets. Coping with this emotion was a success for them.' (PL_I8).

These statements clearly indicate that where there was a problem with expression, both children and adults were able to experience expressing themselves, signalling their emotions and needs, and thus practise these skills, which seems extremely valuable during adolescence.

Engagement in puppet theatre classes and communication

Teachers of children and young people highly value their students' involvement in the project. However, as the co-organising teacher (PL_I4) points out, 'Initially, the students were very involved, but over time their involvement decreased. After a few months, the students resisted, did not want to use the tool, and were bored.' A teacher working with adults with disabilities (PL_I1) pointed out the difficulties and

added that: ‘the participants had a low level of commitment and motivation (lack of understanding of the project's purpose)’.

Teachers similarly assessed communication and cooperation between students and teachers, with the most common descriptions being ‘committed to work and eager to work’ (PL_I2, PL_I3, PL_I4, PL_I5). PL_I8 also pointed out that ‘participation in the project warmed my relationship with some students and allowed us to spend time together in an informal setting.’

A teacher working with adults with disabilities (PL_I1) also noted ‘limited communication and understanding related to disability’ in this regard.”

Classroom dynamics (e.g. level of familiarity, coping with difficult situations, peer exclusion)

The teachers' conclusions regarding exclusion and coping with difficult situations were particularly interesting and informative.

‘The pupils were from the same class, so communication was good. Emotional competence was developed.’ (PL_I3);

"The puppets improved coping with difficult situations. Students on the spectrum worked simultaneously with students of normal intellectual ability on solutions to difficulties and conflicts. They were not excluded; the puppets made it easier for them to express themselves. There was no visible exclusion during the work. The pupils were able to work together and cooperate." (PL_I4);

‘The project saw increased engagement among pupils with difficulties.’ (PL_I5);

‘My groups are close-knit and cooperative, and there are no problems with exclusion. The role-plays were helpful in dealing with difficult situations.’ (PL_I6);

‘As in every class, there are different divisions, likes and dislikes. During the work, there were difficulties with some participants having excess energy, but we tried to clarify misunderstandings on an ongoing basis so that the difficulties did not escalate.’ (PL_I7);

‘At the beginning of the project, there was a problem of exclusion of people with difficulties in the class. By the end of the project, the situation had improved.’ (PL_I8).

A teacher working with adults with disabilities in particular encountered great difficulties in energising the group. As the teacher surveyed (PL_I1) points out, ‘withdrawal, lack of openness and passivity’ were the main problems affecting the group of people with disabilities. ”

Limitations in usage of puppets

Students' understanding of concepts

Students' understanding of concepts (e.g. understanding abstract concepts, metaphors, literature and art) was one of important theme mentioned by the teachers. The same was for difficulties and limitations of students in classes with theatre puppets (e.g. lack of skills, motor skills)

Teachers of younger children (grades I-III) pointed out that the messages were understood by the pupils, but there was a problem with understanding abstract concepts.

As the teacher of extracurricular activities in grades I-III (PL_I7) said, "the project activities overlap with the theatre programme. Working with puppets gives us another tool to search for new ways of expressing ourselves and certain meanings. It is a very valuable tool. Especially nowadays, when most fairy tales and films present certain meanings very literally and creators often leave no room for imagination, the activities we carried out during the project are very valuable.

And an early years teacher (PL_I2) said, ‘The children carried out tasks according to their abilities.’

The after-school club teacher (PL_I5) also pointed out that understanding of the concepts increased over time: ‘Initially, it was completely new to the pupils, but over time, theatre expressed through puppets they had made themselves became an inspiration.’

The co-organising teacher (PL_I4) also referred to this: 'Difficulties in understanding abstract concepts and metaphors due to the type of disability - autism spectrum.'

The problem of understanding abstract concepts was also highlighted among older students. PL_I3 emphasised that 'it is more difficult to present abstract concepts to children; they are happy to work with familiar behaviours and patterns.'

As with group dynamics, the greatest problem with students' understanding of concepts occurred in the group of adult participants with disabilities (PL_I1).

Motor skills, attention & group work

It is also worth noting the difficulties and limitations of students in class that were pointed out by teachers:

'problems with fine motor skills, lack of understanding of abstract concepts, pace of learning new methods, not understanding instructions.' (PL_I1);

"the children had the most difficulty learning to move the puppets. " (PL_I2);

'lack of motor skills, fear, shame, lesson time frames, and the greatest difficulties arose during puppet manipulation and vocalisation.' (PL_I3):

"Muscle tension in some students, problems with coming up with a script, lack of acceptance that the puppets cannot be dressed and painted. Other problems also arose: difficulties in moving the puppets, bringing them to life using theatre techniques; pupils were initially embarrassed to play roles; the desire to paint facial features – giving them human characteristics; difficulties in pupils developing the script on their own – they need to be guided towards solutions." (PL_I4);

'Students with fine motor skills problems made significant progress in this area.' (PL_I5);

'In only one case did a child have difficulty building a puppet – graphomotor or hand muscle development problems. However, the children found it difficult to move the puppet in a theatrical manner.' (PL_I6);

"Difficulties with fine motor skills, difficulties concentrating on an object, difficulties releasing emotions and energy during object animation." (PL_I7);

'Making puppets in a group of 30 was a big challenge for the pupils and the teachers.' (PL_I8).

Almost all teachers noted problems with pupils' fine motor skills when making puppets, but importantly, working on the project helped to improve these skills.

Joyfulness & satisfaction

The teachers' final comments about the pupils are particularly important in the project and its evaluation. The teachers noted the pupils' joy, satisfaction and enthusiasm:

"The pupils who persevered until the end of the project showed satisfaction and enthusiasm. They played with the puppets during breaks, acted out scenes and made clothes. Playing together integrated the group." (PL_I8)

'It was great! The children were happy, they bonded with their puppets, they wanted to take them home to continue playing with them and creating new improvisations.' (PL_I4)

'Laughter therapy' (PL_I1)

'Great fun, full of positive energy' (PL_I3)

'A project that is very helpful in working with children, full of positive reactions, emotional expression, enthusiasm, new insights and engagement.' (PL_I5)

The respondents also noted the innovative nature of the activities:

'The impact of the puppetry technique used was sensational – new experiences and skills implemented in the form of play and the development of creative thinking.' (PL_I5)

'It was an innovative experience for them' (PL_I3)

'The integration of the group and the opportunity to participate in an innovative project is a plus' (PL_I3)

However, the teachers recognised the positives and the need to work in smaller groups:

'Next time, I would decide to work in a smaller group' (PL_I8)

'The students worked well together. This project worked much better in a smaller group (3-4 people). A valuable aspect of this project was that the students could express their emotions through the puppets, which at first surprised them because they were not supposed to say anything.' (PL_I4)

Challenges and positive aspects of the project

Strengths – benefits for the institution

Among the benefits mentioned, teachers most often pointed to group integration (PL_I2, PL_I3, PL_I4, PL_I5, PL_I8)

The respondents also pointed to the skills acquired:

'Developing a new skill of expressing hidden emotions' (PL_I5)

'Learning to express emotions through gestures and movements of puppets' (PL_I4)

Weaknesses – what hindered the implementation of the project at the institution

When analysing the weaknesses, i.e. issues related to what hindered the implementation of the project and the use of theatre puppets at school, it is worth noting that all teachers mentioned time (terms such as lack of time, lesson restrictions and bells, time limits were used).

A teacher of grades IV-VIII draws attention to the size of the groups: 'Very large groups, which made it impossible to work with students individually' (PL_I8).

A teacher of adults with disabilities considered the limitations of the participants to be the most significant obstacle: 'cognitive limitations, multiple disabilities, and motor, communication and mental barriers, as well as a lack of understanding of the project.'

Others also pointed out the students' abilities:

‘Problems with acquiring the skills to move the puppet correctly’ (PL_I5).

‘Poor motor skills of children’ (PL_I6).

Opportunities & risks

Teachers pointed to the multitude of ways in which the project could be used in their future teaching work.

‘For improvised, relaxed, free therapeutic work, without rigid frameworks and patterns, and during performances at artistic reviews.’ (PL_I1);

‘during lessons and all extracurricular activities, performances for parents and socio-therapeutic classes’ (PL_I2);

‘can be used to help express emotions (among teenagers who are aware of their emotional reactions)’ (PL_I3);

‘The project can be used in individual and group classes with students with specific educational needs as a tool for work, developing communication, shaping concentration, coordination and problem solving.’ (PL_I4);

‘Shows for small groups of students, short performances.’ (PL_I5);

‘I think there are many ways and possibilities to use puppets in education, especially in the humanities and in form lessons.’ (PL_I6);

‘Opening up new spaces for expressing oneself and one's ideas.’ (PL_I7);

‘Integration, expressing needs, verbalising problems.’ (PL_I8).

In the context of risk analysis, most teachers do not see any situations in the school environment that could hinder the implementation of work with puppets.

The teachers surveyed gave a positive assessment of their motivation and intention to use art-based practices after participating in the programme. Two teachers, PL_I1 and PL_I8, expressed negative opinions on this subject.

At the end of the interview, the teachers emphasised that they would use the puppetry method in their work with students:

'In the future, I plan to use this method in my work with students on the spectrum and to train teachers to also use this tool in their work, depending on their needs.' (PL_I4)

'I will try to use theatre puppets more often in my work with children.' (PL_I2)

'I will definitely use puppets in my work with children.' (PL_I6)

'I will definitely return to the simple and pure form of puppet theatre.' (PL_I7)

Even despite the difficulties that arise, teachers declare that they will use the method they have learned: 'The process was difficult, the results were satisfactory, future activities will involve the use of selected elements of puppetry in working with adults with severe and profound disabilities.' (PL_I1)

At the end, there were also evaluations summarising the entire project:

'A sensational project, very well prepared and conducted.' (PL_I5)

'The project was certainly interesting, offering various opportunities and ideas for work. Thank you! It was fantastic!' (PL_I4)

The multitude of issues discussed during the interview highlighted the benefits for both the children, young people and adults participating in the project and for the teachers implementing it.

6. Conclusions

The PuppetIntegrate project was implemented in 11 educational institutions across Poland, involving 49 teachers and over 200 students. The main goal was to use puppetry techniques as an educational and therapeutic tool. The implementation of the project in Poland demonstrated that puppetry can be a powerful and versatile tool in inclusive education, especially when working with children and youth from marginalised, disadvantaged, and diverse backgrounds. The Polish implementation of the project revealed several key insights and outcomes:

Strengthening teacher competence

Teachers significantly improved their practical skills in puppet creation, animation, and integration into lesson plans. Confidence in using puppets increased, particularly in engaging students in participatory and expressive activities. Teachers also reported discovering new, more effective ways to use puppets, indicating a shift toward innovation in their pedagogical approach. Their motivation for further professional development in this area increased.

Positive shift in educational attitudes and everyday practices

Puppetry was increasingly seen not just as an artistic tool, but as a method for emotional expression, conflict resolution, and group integration. Teachers began to incorporate puppets into a wider range of subjects and contexts, including language classes, art therapy, and socio-emotional learning. The process of puppet-making was valued more than the final product, emphasising creativity, individualization, and emotional safety. According to teachers' experiences they began using puppets more frequently, particularly in activities focused on emotional development, group integration, and conflict resolution. In the end, puppetry was perceived as an effective tool for fostering creativity, communication, and a positive classroom atmosphere. The project brought positive effects at the personal (individual) and institutional level.

Impact on students' development & inclusion

According to teachers' perception, students who participated in classes conducted by teachers trained in puppetry usage showed increased creativity, emotional expression, and engagement, especially those with disabilities, refugee backgrounds, or learning difficulties. Puppetry helped reduce peer exclusion and fostered cooperation, empathy, and mutual understanding. Teachers observed improved classroom dynamics, stronger relationships, and more inclusive group behaviour.

The project showed that the implementation of puppetry may serve as an integration tool, especially for the younger groups of pupils.

Institutional & systemic challenges

Despite the project's success, schools were generally not fully prepared to support puppetry-based education. There was a lack of equipment, training opportunities, and institutional emphasis on creative methods. Teachers identified time constraints, large class sizes, and limited resources as barriers to the regular implementation of puppetry in their daily practice. Online training sessions were perceived as a bit too long and less effective than in-person workshops, suggesting a need for more hands-on, practical formats.

High satisfaction & professional growth

The majority of teachers rated the project's structure and content very highly, with over 93% giving top scores. Participants appreciated the opportunity to collaborate, exchange experiences, and learn from international partners. The project contributed to teachers' professional development by enhancing their creativity, emotional literacy, and ability to work with diverse student needs.

Future actions & sustainability

Most teachers expressed a strong intention to continue using puppetry in their teaching and to further develop their skills in this area. There is potential for puppetry to become a sustainable part of inclusive education, especially if supported by institutional resources and ongoing training. Teachers emphasised the need for smaller group formats, more cross-school and international interaction, and better integration of puppetry into school curricula.

PART III

Cross-National Perspectives on Puppetry in Education: Insights from the PuppetIntegrate Project in Greece and Poland

Cross-National Perspectives on Puppetry in Education: Insights from the PuppetIntegrate Project in Greece and Poland

A. Lenakakis, E. Xafakos, and M. Koltsida

Convergences (Poland-Greece)

The analysis of the implementation reports reveals a strong consensus between the Polish experience and the overarching Greek summary regarding the project's pedagogical effectiveness, methodological coherence, and its impact on key stakeholders. These convergences confirm the project's success in meeting its core objectives.

1. Mutual Affirmation of programme-related Goals

There is a fundamental convergence on the project's dual-pronged objective:

- Holistic Student Development: Both texts emphasise the promotion of students' overall development, encompassing cognitive, social, and emotional domains. The Greek summary explicitly cites "holistic development," while the Polish report details gain in creativity, emotional expression, and engagement among participating students (Lenakakis & Partsakoulaki, 2025; Iuga & Turda, 2022).
- Professional Empowerment: The reports agree that a core aim was the professional development of educators. This included expanding their pedagogical repertoire, fostering reflective practices, and improving essential professional skills like collaboration and communication (Møller-Skau & Lindstøl, 2022; Zakaria et al., 2019).

2. Consistent Positive Impact on Student Outcomes

The findings demonstrate consistent and positive effects on the student population, particularly regarding social and emotional learning:

- Enhanced Social-Emotional Skills: Both implementations yielded improvements in students' social-emotional capacities. The Polish data noted increased empathy, cooperation, and mutual understanding, directly correlating with the Greek summary's focus on enhancing social-emotional skills (Karaolis, 2020; Luen, 2021).
- Support for Inclusion: The most critical convergence is the recognition of puppetry as a highly effective integration tool. The Polish report noted a reduction in peer exclusion and increased engagement from students with marginalised or disadvantaged backgrounds, supporting the Greek claim of fostering a supportive, inclusive classroom climate that encourages participation (Beauregard et al., 2024; Dakroub, 2020).
- Stimulated Creativity: Both documents confirm that the use of puppetry successfully stimulated imagination and creativity among the pupils.

3. Strengthening of Pedagogical Competence and Practice

The reports confirm a successful investment in the participating educators:

- Acquisition of New Skills: Teachers in both contexts successfully acquired new pedagogical competencies. The Polish report specified improvements in practical skills (puppet creation and animation), directly reinforcing the Greek objective of enriching the pedagogical repertoire (Lenakakis et al., 2022; Remer & Tzuriel, 2015).
- Shift in Classroom Dynamics: The use of puppetry was consistently linked to a strengthening of the teacher-student relationship. Both summaries observed

a more supportive classroom environment and facilitated meaningful communication, a prerequisite for effective learning and inclusion (Aminimanesh et al., 2019; Guihot-Balcombe, 2024).

- Methodological Efficacy: Both parties reached the consensus that puppetry transcended its artistic application, serving as a versatile methodology for emotional development, group integration, and conflict resolution within the educational setting (Kröger & Nupponen, 2019; To et al., 2010).

In conclusion, the convergences across the diverse implementation settings affirms the Puppet INTEGRATE model as a validated framework for achieving social inclusion and holistic development through creative pedagogical tools (Karaolis & Little, 2021).

Focus Area	Polish Implementation Findings	Greek Implementation Findings
Student Impact	Increased creativity, emotional expression, and engagement (especially for vulnerable groups). Fostered cooperation, empathy, and mutual understanding.	Supported students' holistic development by enhancing creativity, imagination, and social-emotional skills.
Teacher Development	Significant improvement in practical skills (creation, animation, integration) and confidence. Increased motivation for professional development.	Strengthened professional capacities: enriched pedagogical repertoire, cultivated creative and reflective teaching practices, and fostered collaboration/communication.
Classroom Dynamics	Improved classroom dynamics, stronger relationships, and more inclusive group behaviour. Reduced peer exclusion.	Strengthened the teacher–student relationship, facilitated meaningful communication, increased emotional connection, and created a supportive classroom climate that encouraged inclusion.
Tool Perception	Puppetry was regarded as a powerful, versatile tool for inclusive education, emotional expression, conflict resolution, and group integration.	Puppetry served to create a dynamic and supportive learning environment where both learners and educators could thrive.

Divergences

Aspect	Polish Implementation Report	Greek Implementation Report
Scale & Scope	Specific figures: 11 institutions, 49 teachers, 200+ students involved.	Presented as the overarching aim and general summary of the programme's results.
Pedagogical Shift	Detailed shift from puppetry as an artistic tool to a method for emotional expression and conflict resolution. Emphasised the process of puppet-making over the final product.	Focus on the holistic development of students and fostering inclusive instructional design among teachers.
Therapeutic & Inclusion Focus	Explicitly targeted children from marginalised, disadvantaged, and diverse backgrounds (refugee, disability), emphasising puppetry as a therapeutic tool.	General focus on enhancing social-emotional skills and creating a supportive, inclusive environment.
Challenges & Barriers	Detailed report on systemic issues: Lack of equipment, training opportunities, time constraints, large class sizes, and resources. Found online training less effective than in-person workshops.	No specific challenges or barriers were mentioned; the tone was focused purely on positive outcomes and successful implementation.
Teacher Satisfaction	Provided concrete data: Over 93% of teachers gave top scores for the project's structure and content.	The professional growth mentioned was substantial but without specific satisfaction metrics.

The Polish report provides a highly detailed, reflective, and quantitative account of the project's impact, clearly outlining what worked (teacher competence, student inclusion) and what needs improvement (institutional support, training format). The Greek summary, by contrast, offers a succinct, high-level affirmation of the project's success, confirming its achievements across the three key interconnected levels: student development, teacher-student relationships, and teacher professional growth. Both texts agree that puppetry is a potent tool for inclusive, social-emotional learning and professional enrichment (Møller-Skau & Lindstøl, 2022).

The collaboration between Poland and Greece culminates in a powerful affirmation of the significant role of puppetry in contemporary education. This partnership unequivocally highlights the multifaceted benefits derived from integrating the puppet systematically and diversely into pedagogical practice. The findings

demonstrate that this synergistic effort yielded positive outcomes across numerous levels—from enhancing the holistic development of students and strengthening teacher efficacy to fostering an inclusive classroom climate. Ultimately, this international project successfully establishes the critical importance of the puppet as a powerful, versatile tool for addressing both academic and, crucially, social and emotional challenges within the educational context (Guihot-Balcombe, 2024; Luen, 2024).

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