

AN EVALUATION OF 'ODDYSEA'

A PROJECT BY SENSORIUM THEATRE

Evaluation and report by DADAA Inc

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was prepared by community arts and cultural development (CACD) organisation DADAA Inc. DADAA is a national leader in the provision of programs that promote social inclusion for people with disability and/or mental health. The organisation has expertise in the research and evaluation of arts and health.

The report records the process and impacts from an evaluation of Sensorium Theatre's Oddysea project – a eight week residency that took place at Kenwick Education Support School from 27 July until September 20th. Oddysea involved four classes from Carson Street and Kenwick Education Support Schools.

The evaluation commenced in February 2013 and concluded in November 2013. The evaluation used a 'bounded case study' approach to document both the process of the residency and the development of the performance – two key components of the Oddysea project and the way in which Sensorium Theatre works.

Based on formative evaluation that had taken place as part of a previous Sensorium Theatre project during 2012, a framework containing six key 'dimensions of value' was established. From observations of the Oddysea residency by the DADAA evaluator – either in-person or from recording of the development sessions – data was gathered and analysed using this framework.

Process evaluation was conducted with information gathered by way of an artist feedback to document both the narrative and the performance development of Oddysea. In particular, the 'embedding' process used in the project to develop an individualised narrative and performance for the student audience can be seen to play an important role in the project's success.

Results from the 'dimensions of value' component of the evaluation demonstrated that Oddysea resulted in positive impacts in all six areas of value and, as such, the evaluation provides further evidence of the benefits for students with complex disability who participate in this method of sensory theatre.

A theory of change model, provided in the conclusion of this report, captures the process and impacts of the Oddysea evaluation.

ABOUT SENSORIUM THEATRE

Sensorium Theatre believe that all children can be transformed by exceptional creative experiences and that children with disability should be able to experience cultural opportunities crucial to their development.

Sensorium aims to create high-quality theatre that is accessible to young audiences with multiple disabilities by inviting them to touch, taste, smell, hear and see stories unfold around them within a sensory installation-style set.

Preparatory hands-on activities – where students become familiar with the story, characters, songs and storytelling methods that will be used in performance – are an important part of the this process. This takes place through a residency at a school.

Oddysea is the latest interactive residency and performance from Sensorium Theatre. During the residency, the performers, the environment and the characters are introduced and the children are led through a sensory discovery in the storytelling process.

hhThis process is known as ‘embedding’ and allows the performers meet the audience and learn abilities and communication style of each student, allowing them to deliver an individualised performance.

This method is derived from ‘dramaturgy’ – that is, the art of shaping a story into a form that can be acted, emphasising interaction and expression. Drama seen in this way is collaborative and moves the audience from being ‘spectators’ to ‘spect-actors’ as they begin to interact with and shape the performance (Runswick-Cole, K and Goodley, D, 2009, p. 19).

The Sensorium residency described in this report can be seen as a two-way dramaturgy between Sensorium performers and the school community that directly shapes the characters, narrative and installation that will be developed for the performance and new show, Oddysea.

There is limited evaluation of sensory theatre, particularly with children of all ages with disabilities. *An Evaluation of 'Something in the Air'?* (2009) provides documented evidence of special school residences and performances by Oily Cart, a theatre group based in the United Kingdom similar to Sensorium.

The report provides some examples of the embedding process during the residency (Runswick-Cole, K and Goodley, D, 2009):

‘The performers used sounds altering the tone and volume to meet the needs of individual children. This was particularly evident when the performers played their instruments altering tone and volume in response to the children’s reactions. Music was a very powerful, magical tool for setting the mood and communication’ (p. 28).

'The performers also learned the children's names through song...singing the children's names', which formed part of the final show (p. 30).

'Multi-sensory approaches were key to the success of residences and the performances. A range of touch, sights, sounds, tastes and smells meant that the performers were able to engage the diverse range of children they work with' (p. 30).

'Each of the performers...introduced themselves using props to support the children in learning their [character] names' (p. 32).

'[One of] the performers used a balloon in the story as a sun [and] asked a student how they could get the sun up in the air and they jumped up and batted the balloon in the air. This moment was 'a huge thing' for the student, 'a critical event', brought about by [their] participation in the unfolding sensory story' (p. 35).



EVALUATION APPROACH

The evaluation commenced in February 2013 by Disseminate, an evaluation and action research initiative run by community arts and cultural development organisation DADAA.

Key evaluation activities included:

- Becoming a member and attending the Sensorium Theatre Steering Committee meetings
- Completing a desk top literature review of the evaluation of similar projects
- Developing the evaluation approach and methodology
- Analysing formative evaluation documents
- Providing the information form to families of the students involved in the residency (See Appendix A)
- Developing and distributing artist feedback forms
- Meeting with teachers and therapists, to gather information about each student group and how to record observations
- Making observation notes both in-person and from video recordings of the development sessions
- Analysing blogs from one class
- Collecting and analysing data
- Writing the report and publishing results.

The process of the residency and the development of the performance was documented and shared as a case study. In a case study approach, 'evidence is gathered from a wide range of sources to build up a picture (Runswick-Cole, K and Goodley, D, 2009, p. 22).

The 'bounded case' evaluated is the Sensorium Theatre residency over a three-week period from 27 July to 16 August 2013 at Kenwick Education Support School to develop an in-depth understanding, description and analysis of what happened.

The timeline and full schedule can be found in Appendix B.

Formative Evaluation

Evaluation of the Sensorium Theatre projects in 2012 involved the completion of general feedback forms by three groups:

- The artists involved in the development sessions
- The teachers and education assistants with students and classes involved
- The audience present in the final performance.

In early, 2013, the Disseminate evaluator collated these formative evaluation documents. Anna Goodall, evaluation consultant, analysed this data in terms of the 'value created' for the children with complex disabilities who participated.

The results show six key 'dimensions of value', with assumptions and supporting data (See Appendix C). A summary of this information is provided in the table below.

DIMENSION OF VALUE	Assumptions / explanation	Examples of feedback
Enjoyment	Enjoyment, happiness, delight, enthusiasm	<i>Intense interest and delight. Happy, interactive children. An expected outcome is for young people to experience the fun of imaginary theatre and fun.</i>
Engagement	Engaged in activities (as a precursor to learning), openness to new experiences, demonstrate focus and concentration	<i>Even the students who rarely get involved, smiled...watched intently...enthusiastic. I was surprised to see many of the kids who normally wouldn't be able to sit still and pay attention for long at all, they were all engaged...</i>
Sensory stimulation / play	Experience sensory stimulation (as an important tool for learning) Imagination and play are crucial to children's personal development	<i>The drumming was especially great...as they could feel the vibrations... Visually engaging with auditory stimulation...students touch and feel...the props.</i>
Positive responses and behaviours	Inspire new/positive responses and behaviours Enhance communication	<i>The student was trying to lift her hand independently to her head to make the rooster comb every time words cockle doodle were said, which is a big effort for her...</i>
Independence / autonomy	Express preferences to shape experience, increase identity and control	<i>A well balanced [and] integrated learning experience that provides the students with the opportunity to experience and/or express their own individual creativity...</i>
Tailored experience	Experience is tailored to individual needs/preferences of each child which makes it more likely of engagement	<i>Very well planned; as the children were able participate regardless of disabilities. I really liked the way <u>all</u> the students were involved. Our students have a range of abilities and they were all catered for. They all got something out of it.</i>

OBSERVATION OF THE RESIDENCY

OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

All of the sessions occurred at Kenwick Education Support School during July and August 2013.

Six classes from Carson Street and Kenwick Education Support Schools were part of the Sensorium residency. This included:

- Up to 40 students in primary and high school attending a minimum of three of developmental sessions, that is, one 2-hour session.
- At least 6 teachers and 15 Education Assistants were involved the residency and assisting with the sessions, with some giving the performers feedback at weekly meetings.

The most common type of disability of the students involved is Autism Spectrum Disorder, followed by:

- Intellectual disability, such as Down Syndrome
- Attention deficit disorder
- Emotional wellbeing issues, such as anxiety
- Physical disability, such as cerebral palsy or global developmental delay
- Vision impairment
- Epilepsy.

The range of abilities of the students varied greatly:

- Some students are non-verbal and use communication aids, such as picture exchange communication system (PECS)
- Other students are able to communicate and are developing their expressive language skills
- Some students have challenging behaviours, such as difficulty focusing and maintaining attention
- Some students have limited movement and mobility, using wheelchairs and needing a hoist to transfer
- Some students have limited emotional resilience and need to develop their confidence and positive behaviour.

As stated by Chapman (2003), case studies generally attempt to place observations of engagement within the context of the environment and are concerned with the processes associated with engagement levels (p. 6).

To achieve this:

- Staff from both of the schools filmed 12 sessions with each of the classes from 27 July to 16 August 2013
- The evaluator also observed, in person, different groups of students during sessions on 13 and 15 August 2013
- Observation notes were made by the evaluator, in person or from the recording of the development sessions.

RESULTS

The observations recorded are provided as examples of individual and/or groups of student responses during the session.

Some students had to stay in their wheelchair during the sessions and others were hoisted to sit on a beanbag or lie on the floor, with support.

The observed examples are framed under five of the six dimensions of value or themes:

1. Enjoyment
2. Engagement
3. Sensory stimulation/play
4. Positive responses and behaviours
5. Independence/autonomy.



1. ENJOYMENT

Observed examples of student enjoyment, happiness, delight, enthusiasm or excitement

Smiling

Rocking

Squealing

Laughing

Delight in finding LED light pebble

Clapping and singing to introductory song

Rocking to music

Wriggling to song

Swaying to 'underwater' music

Spontaneous dancing with coral/wearing coral hat

Relaxing with eyes closed as draped with 'sand' and 'water' (silk and cotton sheet)

Laughing when assisted to tap the wave drum

Smiling when shell rattles bouncing on them in time to music

Lying, sitting or running under satin 'wave'

Lying still on the texture of the gold satin 'sand' sheet or fuzzy 'seaweed' cushions

Laughter and delight being tickled nibbled or stroked by sea creatures of different textures such as the orange (car mitt) fish or feather duster fish

Jumping up and down with excitement when crab character appears

Smiling, laughing at crab who 'snaps' at them

2. ENGAGEMENT

Observed examples of students being engaged, open to new experiences or demonstrating focus and concentration

Opening/closing eyes

Opening/closing mouth

Lifting head, turning head

Sitting more upright in wheelchair when introductory song begins

Following wave drum with eyes

Sitting or standing on the edges of the 'sea', watching artists and musicians

Reaching out to hold LED pebble light, looking at colours change

Lying near ukulele player and watching him play

Pointing at the props

Asking questions about the props, e.g. what's in the shell?

Copying arm action to make wave

Being tickled on soles of feet with seaweed and laughing

Turning and lifting head to focus on light/shadow contrast of shadow puppets

Making shadow puppets with torch and puppet

Following, watching and reaching for shadow puppets moving across canvas

Physically chasing shadow puppets

Anticipating, smiling at bubbles

Hugging textured seaweed cushions

Watching school of foam fish being moved by other students

Following coral and underwater creatures

3. SENSORY STIMULATION

Observed examples of students experiencing sensory stimulation, imagination and play

Assisted to move off beanbag onto 'beach' to stretch out and roll on gold satin 'sand'

Relaxing and calming lying on 'beach' and watching (and feeling wind from) blue 'wave' satin sheets

Lying on, hugging, holding onto the textured 'seaweed/coral' cushions

Feeling different textures and colours and other underwater creatures, e.g. knitted/crocheted coral, orange (car mitt) sea slug, feather duster squid or tinsel on jellyfish

Wearing coral as a hat

Rubbing coral on face

Playing with other new textures, e.g. tinsel on jellyfish, seagrass

Going over to tubs with 'seaweed' (real seaweed and shredded paper) and jellyfish (bubble wrap)

Watching musicians playing instruments and sitting closer to them and listening to music and changes such as new instruments, sounds, vibrations or rhythms – e.g. the sound of clarinet/flute as the deep sea, sitting next to the musician playing the clarinet, moving closer, putting hand on clarinet (to feel vibration), looking up into the end of the instrument, then putting ear to the opening (to listen to sound). This made the musician and the student laugh.

Tapping HAPI drum

Calming /rocking to music

Shining torches on sparkly 'water' (blue shimmer sheet)

Playing with sand and seashells in large clam, sorting shells, sifting sand

Making shadow puppets with torch and puppet (crab, jellyfish, sea slug)

Feeding jellyfish to turtle

Nodded 'yes' to wanting to hold and snuggle turtle

Following, holding, tapping LED light pebbles that change colours



4. POSITIVE RESPONSES AND BEHAVIOURS

Observed examples of new or positive responses and enhanced communication

Waving arms

Shaking hands

Moving fingers

Wriggling

Moving their head, arms or legs in time to the music in different positions (lying, sitting on floor, in beanbag or wheelchair and standing)

Moving to sit next to person they are singing about

Passing the ocean drum between each other

Tapping ocean drum during introductory song

Doing hand actions to introductory song

Waiting for their turn with wave drum, sharing the wave drum

Respond to their name during the introductory song, singing their name and others in the song

Shaking shell rattle in time to music

Clapping to introductory song

Taking hands out of ears to touch coral and tap ocean drum

Recognising characters e.g. crab 'snap, snap, snap' and turtle with lights

Exclamations, e.g. wow! and saying hello to the characters, e.g. do they bite?

Sharing and interacting with shadow puppets, e.g. hello jellyfish, and 'crabs talking with each other'

Putting coral hats on each other

Watching artist 'listen to shell' and then try it

5. INDEPENDENCE/AUTONOMY

Observed examples of students expressing preferences to shape their experience, increase identity and control

Wearing sea slug as a hat

Putting shell necklace around their neck and then on one of the artists

Climbing on clam, looking inside, taking things in and out of clam

Go over to the clam with water in it and stepping into it, feeling water with hands

Taking silver and blue ribbon and moving it with blue wave

Telling others to 'be quiet'

Identifying and responding to crab and turtle characters e.g. moving to be near, hold or touch the puppet

Intrigued by crab character, holding touching his claws, laughing when he 'snaps' and tickles them or saying 'snap!'

Responding to the song, e.g. 'go to sleep crab' or 'I'm sleeping walking'

Very involved with blowing own bubbles, chasing and popping bubbles or watching/following bubbles with eyes

Watching turtle swim, feeling, patting, squeezing or hugging turtle

Change colours of lights on back of turtle by pressing button on the back

Swimming with turtle e.g. carrying and waving foam schools of fish (on coat hangers) around the turtle so they swim

Moving up to crab when he appears, jumping around the crab, and then following him around ('loving on crab')

Waving coloured foam schools of fish (on coat hangers)

Suggesting new characters e.g. shark, electric eel and sea serpent

Suggesting new plot development – 'have an under water disco' or 'finding treasure – of smarties'

Did not want to leave at the end, e.g. 'more'



DOCUMENTING THE PROCESS OF THE RESIDENCY

During the residency, the artists get to learn the abilities and communication style of each student through an embedded, two-way learning process. This allows an individualised performance and is directly related to the sixth value of dimension, tailored experience, where the needs and preferences of each child are acknowledged.

The evaluator devised an artist feedback form to document this process and the development of the story, or narrative (See Appendix D).

Each of the artists completed the form after the 12 development sessions from 27 July to 16 August 2013.

The feedback form asked questions about:

1. Interacting with students – finding ‘sensory access points’ (SAPs)
 - *Successful/positive interaction/s with the student/s*
 - *Challenging interaction/s with the student/s*
 - *Describing the ways they interacted with one (or more) of the students*
 - *The most significant interaction that took place.*
2. Developing the narrative
 - *How the interactions/SAPs will shape or change the characters, narrative and/or installation?*

RESULTS

The results are presented in the three themes of story development and installation for each week of the residency.

Selected written quotes from the performers are used in this section to illustrate the identified SAPs and most significant interactions.

The discussion at the end of this section describes how these interactions shape the final environment, characters and narrative of the individualised performance.

WEEK 1 – BEACH

Creating the beach environment – SAND

Positive interaction	Challenging interaction
<p><i>Some of the boy liked playing with the sandpaper blocks.</i></p> <p><i>[Student] pouring sand onto tambourine...exploring the sand.</i></p> <p><i>The texture of sand was very activating.</i></p> <p><i>Sand play. Made a special sand cake with shells.</i></p> <p><i>Sifting dry sand rhythmically...hypnotically, calmed [the student] considerably.</i></p>	<p><i>Finding a way to connect to [the student] oversensitive to sand.</i></p> <p><i>Some children [want] to put sand in their mouths.</i></p> <p><i>The student] was very averse to touching the sand. Didn't like the sensation so I focused on other tactile experiences, like seaweed, the sea grass cushion.</i></p>
Most significant interaction	
<p><i>Managed to put a swathe of gold satin into [the student's] hand and slowly thread it through for her to feel the 'silky sand'. She enjoyed this so I ran it across her cheek gently. She seemed to enjoy the whole sensory experience.</i></p> <p><i>[The student] was lifted out her chair to experience the satin sheets...she was very receptive to having her hands run over then foam and then to roll her [to lie] on a big cushion 'which we progressed to a 'sliding sand dune', which she enjoyed immensely.</i></p> <p><i>I offered [the student] some sand in my hand and she began to brush it off...but she liked the feeling. I ended up placing a tub of sand in front of her and she played for some time. This was significant because she had not really engaged prior to this and I learned after that she <u>never</u> plays with sand!</i></p>	

Creating the beach environment – SHELLS

Positive interaction	Challenging interaction
<i>[The student]...hopped into the shell sand pit and started digging [and] searching for shells and handing them to me.</i>	<i>Handling the exploration with the shells...got a little out of hand. Throwing shells was getting dangerous.</i>
Most significant interaction	
<i>I used the vibrations of the shell rattle against [the student's] seat as a way to approach him slowly. He briefly held them and participated in the tinkling of the shell rattles.</i> <i>[The student] put a shell necklace on me.</i>	

Creating the beach environment – OCEAN

Positive interaction	Challenging interaction
<i>Hiding under the satin sheets.</i> <i>Draping satin over the children.</i> <i>Being drawn to the ground made me look upwards (as the kids do) [and] I was able to see the wave drum down from below...and observe the shadows of the balls rolling inside. This was quite mesmerising for me [and] the kids.</i>	<i>Had a good interaction [with student] with wave drum, but then he got overloaded and [ran] away...</i>
Most significant interaction	
<i>Floating the sheet/wave over [the student] when he was laying down. It really relaxed him from a lot of excitement.</i>	



Welcome Song

Positive interaction	Challenging interaction
<p><i>Singing intro song, in circle, adding children's names.</i></p> <p><i>Sang the names of all of the children towards the end of the session... worked really well.</i></p> <p><i>Nice to bring hand movements into [welcome] 'Oddy-sea' song.</i></p>	
Most significant interaction	
<p><i>Singing the welcome sing. Some of the students started joining in with actions.</i></p> <p><i>Intro song – very successful.</i></p>	

Introducing the Crab character

Positive interaction	Challenging interaction
<p><i>[The student] loved being tickled by the crab.</i></p> <p><i>Crab got to model finding things. [The student] got very excited to go and find flotsam and jetsam to bring back to Crab's collecting tray.</i></p> <p><i>The children engaged with crab, really responded to the puppet.</i></p> <p><i>Beach combing with crab. [The student]</i></p>	<p><i>[The student] pulling eyes off the puppet and getting violent with the crab.</i></p>

<i>was keen to show me the feather she'd found and discuss [and compare] what we found on the beach.</i>	
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Most significant interaction

<i>Came up with impromptu rhyme for crab puppet to tickle [the student] because she enjoyed being tickled.</i>
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<i>Development of crab rhyme – 'tickle tickle snap'. It established playfulness fro crab's character. An opportunity to be tactile and 'tap on tickle' children's bodies in a non-invasive way.</i>

<i>Crab came out much earlier provided more focus.</i>
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WEEK 2 – OCEAN

Sounds of the beach and ocean

Positive interaction	Challenging interaction
<p><i>Vibration and rhythm were the two most active SAPs I utilised.</i></p> <p><i>Getting [the student] to put his hand on the side of the HAPI drum while he banging it to feel the vibration.</i></p> <p><i>A lot of hands on 'playing' or feeling the vibration with [the student], which she responded to really well.</i></p>	<p><i>Sometimes (understandably) kids want to play the instrument, which can make it challenging to play.</i></p> <p><i>Less organised sounds were disturbing for her.</i></p> <p><i>Need to find of sound scape for initial sand play.</i></p>
Most significant interaction	
<p><i>I used the HAPI drum as an access point in with [the student]. He was disengaging...and the drum really brought him back in...the vibrations seemed to add something.</i></p> <p><i>Value of repetition. Used a slowed down version of the song at the end as a wrap up/calm down song. Found a way to wrap up the show in a neat little bundle.</i></p>	

Introducing the turtle character

Positive interaction	Challenging interaction
<p><i>Brought the turtle up very close to meet [the student] so she could see it and touch it.</i></p> <p><i>Meeting turtle up close [the student] reaching put and patting, stroking his shell.</i></p> <p><i>Let [the student] press the buttons on turtles' back to change colours.</i></p> <p><i>[Another student] watched turtle eating seagrass.</i></p> <p><i>[The student] found some bubble wrap jellyfish for turtle to eat.</i></p>	
Most significant interaction	
<p><i>The turtle pretending to eat jellyfish worked well [as it was] imitated.</i></p> <p><i>Introduce the...turtle song. It helps fill out turtle's character.</i></p>	

The underwater creatures

Positive interaction	Challenging interaction
<p><i>Using the underwater fish props [puppets]. I was using a glow torch – jellyfish type prop. It worked well with [two students] who have...vision [impairment] when I used it up close.</i></p> <p><i>I used a car mitt sea slug...at first he didn't want it, then I rolled it down the sand dune next to him repeatedly and [eventually] over his feet – which he happily allowed.</i></p> <p><i>Fun moment of engaging when [the student] had his hand inside fluffy orange mitt and he started swimming chasing the fish.</i></p> <p><i>Puppeteering giant sea snake with [a student] mimicking a family with a baby snake.</i></p>	
Most significant interaction	
<p><i>The student needed much more puppet/object animation up around his chest and over his head. I tracked his eye movements and then found the perfect zone...and his engagement increased even more.</i></p> <p><i>We combined quite a bit of the performance with sensory play/exploration.</i></p> <p><i>Reacting to the jellyfish, especially the giant jellyfish.</i></p>	



WEEK 3 – REEF

Playing on the reef

Positive interaction	Challenging interaction
<p><i>'Crab and turtle swan deeper and deeper until they found a reef'.</i></p> <p><i>The kids were super-receptive and eager to join [crab and turtle] on their journey.</i></p> <p><i>All of the students responded at some point to the sound/musical element. Playing guitar an ukulele especially, I was able to focus on students, individually, sing names...</i></p> <p><i>I sang a welcome song to each student individually. It seemed very well received, lots of smiles.</i></p>	
Most significant interaction	
<p><i>The most notable sensory access point was singing the song 'playing on the reef' using the children's <u>names</u>. The use of individual names really brought children's focus back...</i></p>	

Shadow puppet success!

Positive interaction	Challenging interaction
<p><i>Shadow puppetry up close.</i></p> <p><i>Taking pieces of coral and shadow puppets to [the student].</i></p> <p><i>Show puppetry! Playing with torches and puppets for children worked very well. [A student] was delighted when she made crab appear on the ceiling...!</i></p>	<p><i>When we were trying to make shadow puppets on the hoop screen for [two students] I felt uncomfortable that I didn't understand they hold the light [so they] could see.</i></p> <p><i>Had a hard time physically holding the hoop screen, torch and puppets in a position that [the student] could see...</i></p>
Most significant interaction	
<p><i>[A student] was very engaged in the shadow puppetry. He was surprised he could make his little fish much larger, so we called it a 'whale', which he loved and made it 'eat' my show puppet. Lots of language/dialogue between us.</i></p>	

Coral creatures

Positive interaction	Challenging interaction
<p><i>Revealing the coral in the clam with [students] was a pleasure.</i></p> <p><i>Coral works well as hats. [Two students] wore coral hats and animated them with us. Many children enjoyed touching/feeling coral while using their own torches to look at them.</i></p> <p><i>Lots of one on one feeling and animating coral playing with torches.</i></p> <p><i>The student] was mostly lying flat on the floor through out [the session]. She seemed to respond well to the light sources. I brought the light pebble right up close and 'animated' my hand in front of it like a sea creature. She enjoyed the play of dark against light and mimicked my hand movements...</i></p>	<p><i>[One student] wanting to have all of the torches...collecting them all...</i></p> <p><i>[Three students] wanted to touch the LED light pebble.</i></p>
Most significant interaction	
<p><i>Puppeteering the coral with [one student] within his comfort zone...feeling for where his personal/physical boundaries were...and getting more eye contact and recognition.</i></p> <p><i>Some beautiful moments with coral and torches by children.</i></p>	



Underwater disco

Positive interaction	Challenging interaction
<p><i>[Two students] both responded to the rhythm [of the music] – rocking and dancing.</i></p> <p><i>Inviting [a student] to dance with the light pebble.</i></p> <p><i>Asked the kids: ‘What should happen now?’</i> <i>[A student] said ‘we should have an underwater disco’.</i></p>	<p><i>Moving from a highly mobile and interactive class to a much more passive and less mobile class was challenging.</i></p>
Most significant interaction	
<p><i>Kids were up dancing with the underwater disco.</i></p>	

DEVELOPING THE PERFORMANCE

The sensory access points and most significant interactions described helped to shape the characters, story and installation of the performance.

The successful elements of the development sessions are summarised below using selected written quotes from the performers. There are also select quotes from one class's feedback, written after the sessions.

This demonstrates how during the development sessions the key elements of the narrative and performance were decided and ended up in the Working Script (See Appendix E).

Creating the sensory environment of sand, shells, ocean and reef

Artist feedback

As some of the kids were tentative in their exploration of the 'sand' environment (satin sheets), I started to 'pour' it onto them – cascading the sheets in their laps and they loved the slipperiness of the satin.

Drum song was very effective...with movement of the [satin] sheets.

The student] was sifting sand...I just pointed out there were 2 tiny shells 'treasure' left behind that must have been hidden and she got so excited that really found the treasure.

The kids seemed to naturally follow of the characters going on a journey deeper to the coral reef.

Student feedback

My favourite part was the feel of the waves on me. I liked jumping over the waves.

I liked the waves. I liked the journey going under the water.

I felt like I was actually at the beach.

Crab as the central character with turtle as his friend

Artist feedback

The crab song was a winner! Will be used in the show. Crab's a goer!

Key puppet character works really well. Affirmation of crab's role in story.

The consolidation of crab and turtle being friends and journeying deeper together.

The children remember crab as someone who likes to help. This really supports the idea that crab comes to help turtle...modelling friendship.

Had not planned on bringing crab into this session, but did so when he was requested. Felt it signified that crab was associated with this environment [and] also allowed for interaction of 'friendship' between turtle and crab swimming together.

Clear that once introduced, it [is] important for crab to keep coming back throughout the story.

The crab song brought lightened/changed the energy and focus. A good shift in direction, added fun and humour.

Student feedback

I liked the click of Mr Crab's claws.

I felt excited because I liked the crab.

The crab was a little bit nice, but a little bit scary.

Meeting the turtle was really cute. Next time I want to find more things

I really, really, really loved going to sleep with the turtle.

Using student names in songs

Artist feedback

Greeting songs at the beginning and farewell songs (individualised to the students) will become a regular where possible. It's personalised bookends for...otherworldly Oddysea experience...it extends the experience of the show.

Getting the children's names into each musical riff is a very useful way to get them 'back' into the context of the show. Helps to resituate them back into the story after free form/experimentation.

Creating sounds and rhythm of the waves, swimming underwater and playing on the reef

Artist feedback

The sense of rhythm that waves and ocean can give the whole piece is helpful to the whole performance team. [It] helped unite us. Beginning to achieve the tone we set out to explore in this show.

The rhythm of the tide/waves/ocean going to and fro really set a pace and unites everyone under the water. Soundscape is taking shape.

The music (HAPI drum and clarinet) underwater sequence under the silks very much inspired the 'oddities' swimming through – free play and balletic. Felt like we gave a sense of the underwater world being full of life and wonder.

Because I'm playing [the balaflon] from above I might continue the snorkel narrative and be a snorkeler.

Student feedback

I liked the drum. It sounds like waves. It was really exciting

I liked the song...I liked the dance.

Underwater sea creatures

Artist feedback

Reacting to the jellyfish, especially the giant jellyfish.

All of the [under] water 'oddities' has a very sensory element. Made me realise that there was fun to be had just allowing the space to encounter these creatures.

Ending the story with an underwater disco

Artist feedback

We picked up [a student's] of an underwater disco. It's in the show!

Potential ending! Party - underwater disco.

The entire team picked up on this and it became a funky underwater party with everybody dancing.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

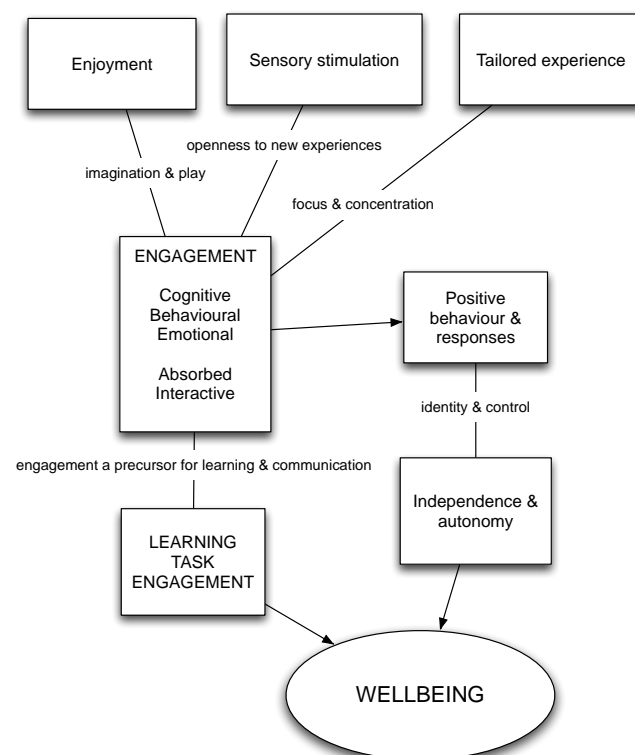
This case study of the three-week Sensorium Theatre residency at Kenwick Education Support School demonstrates:

- The embedded process of developing an individualised narrative and performance for the student audience and
- Further evidence of the benefits for students with complex disability who participate in this method of sensory theatre.

This is illustrated in the theory of change model for Sensorium Theatre developed by the evaluator.

The model builds on different types of engagement for students that is connected to learning and wellbeing and present in current arts and education literature. Namely:

- Learning task engagement, that focuses on more subtle cognitive, behavioural and affective indicators of student engagement (Chapman, E, 2003).
- Absorbed and interactive engagement (Young & Power, 2008 p. 14).
- Student wellbeing, in relation to the five ways to wellbeing, including: connecting, being active, taking notice, learning and giving (NEF, 2008).



Other potential areas to explore further may include the:

- Strategies used to gradually progress or “immerse” the student into the physical environment and installation
- School staff experience, their input into the embedding process by identifying the sensory access points and tailoring the experience for the student audience.
- Changes to the school culture as a result of being involved in the residency.



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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Information Form

Appendix B: Schedule

Appendix C: Dimensions of Value

Appendix D: Artist Feedback Form

Appendix E: Working Script