



COURSE DESCRIPTION

Art as Therapy: Emotional and Social Development in Schools

“Art as therapy” is Edith Kramer’s term, and it puts the healing in the making itself rather than in an adult decoding what a drawing means. That distinction is the part a teacher can honestly do, and the whole week is built on it.

DURATION 5 days · 25 hours	LANGUAGE English (B1+)	GROUP SIZE Max 20 participants
DAILY SCHEDULE 09:30–15:00 Monday to Friday, with a break for lunch	AUDIENCE All school levels No specific prerequisites — open to all teachers and school staff.	CERTIFICATE Attendance + Europass Mobility
COURSE CENTRES Antalya · İstanbul · İzmir · Mersin · Budapest · Bremen · Rome Dates and cities of the scheduled sessions are listed on the course page.		

01 Overview

Most teachers already reach for paper and paint when a class is going through something difficult. This week keeps the benefit in the making itself, not in an adult deciding what a drawing means, and shows you clearly where a teacher’s part ends.

- **Monday** — you learn where the line between a teacher’s art session and a therapist’s work sits, and draft the first line of your referral route.
- **Tuesday** — you work pencil, paint and clay yourself and practise helping a child without taking the work over.
- **Wednesday** — you run structured drawing, mask-making, collage and guided storytelling, then write two sessions ready to use.
- **Thursday** — you plan how the group runs, from its size and boundaries to consent and what to do if a child discloses something, and build an observation sheet.
- **Friday** — you present your sequence in small groups, check it against shared questions, and revise it before taking it home.

You go home with an eight-session sequence for one named group in your own school, an observation sheet that records what a child did rather than what it supposedly meant, and two referral lines: your school’s safeguarding route (its child-protection procedure) and the therapy route in your own country. No art background and no drawing ability are needed.

02 Course description

Most teachers already use art for emotional reasons. A difficult week, a bereavement, a class that has stopped speaking to one another — and out come the paper and the paints. The activity is rarely the problem. What tends to follow it is: an adult looking at a child's picture and deciding what it says about them. That step is not something this course teaches you to do, and reading a drawing that way is where a well-meant art lesson can do real harm.

The line between the two was drawn early and it still holds. Edith Kramer named her approach **art as therapy**: the healing sits in the making, in what happens between a child and a material. She set it against Margaret Naumburg's **art psychotherapy**, where the image is a route into an interpretation and the work belongs to a clinician. Only one side of that line is available to a teacher, and it happens to be the productive one. Kramer described five ways children use art materials — from first exploring what a material physically does, through discharge and copied stereotype, to what she called formed expression. She described the adult's part as a **third hand**: the least intrusive help that still leaves the piece belonging to the child. Those five ways and that one gesture are the working equipment of this week.

The school evidence is a pilot trial by Zoe Moula, Joanne Powell and Vicky Karkou at Edge Hill University. Sixty-two children aged seven to ten in four primary schools worked in small groups with registered therapists, an hour a week for eight weeks. Sleep and teacher-rated difficulties improved; the wellbeing gains were consistent but, in a sample this size, not statistically significant.

Afterwards the children were interviewed one by one, and what they said is the more useful half. They named self-expression, a safe space, stress relief, empowerment and coping as what helped. They were just as clear about what did not: too little time, a group that never became a group, and too many of them in it. Their own figure was no more than six, and several said eight weeks felt short — worth knowing before you fix the length of your own sequence.

Larger reviews since then cover clinical populations rather than ordinary classrooms. This week works from the school study for a different reason: it is the one where the children were asked.

By Friday each participant has an eight-session sequence written for one named group in their own school. It is built from formats run and taken apart during the week, at a length you set — the research group found eight weeks short, so ten sessions is worth considering where the timetable allows it. It comes with an observation sheet that records what a child did rather than what it supposedly meant, and two referral lines: your school's own safeguarding route for anything a child discloses, and who takes over in their own country's therapy system when a sequence is no longer the right answer.

03 Learning outcomes

- 01 Run art-based sessions in which the therapeutic work is in the making, and explain to a colleague or a parent why that is the claim you are making and not a larger one.
- 02 Recognise the five ways children use art materials — exploring the material, discharge, copied stereotype, picture-in-place-of-words, and formed expression — and respond differently to each.
- 03 Intervene as a "third hand": help a child reach the piece they were trying to make without taking the work over.
- 04 Design an eight-session sequence — or ten, where the timetable allows — for a named group in your own school, structured against what the children in the research said helped.
- 05 State where your own competence ends, and name both referral routes — safeguarding and therapy — in your own country's system.

04 Methodology

Making Before Meaning	Every format is practised as a maker first. You work the material yourself before asking a child to, because the response you can give depends on knowing what that material does in the hand.
A Line You Can Defend	The week is organised around what a teacher may do and what belongs to a qualified therapist, so that every activity you take home sits on the safe side of it and you can say why.
Observation Instead of Interpretation	You practise recording what a child did with the material, in what order, and what they said about it — a record a colleague or a professional can actually use — rather than deciding what an image means.

05 Daily programme

Day 1

Where the Line Is

- **Icebreaker:** “One Thing I Made” — in pairs, describe one thing you made recently (a meal, a repair, a drawing) using only what you did, no feelings; your partner reflects back only what they heard you do
- **Two traditions behind one phrase:** Kramer’s art as therapy against Naumburg’s art psychotherapy — what each one claims, and why only one of them is available to a teacher
- **What the school evidence actually found:** the Edge Hill pilot trial — 62 children aged seven to ten, four primary schools, one arts therapy per school, groups of eight, an hour a week for eight weeks, delivered by registered therapists — and which of its results reached significance and which did not
- **One pilot against the wider picture:** what systematic reviews of art therapy with children now report, what “the quality of evidence varied” means in practice, and what all of it does and does not license a teacher to claim
- Why interpreting a child’s drawing is not a skill this course teaches: what the research on figure-drawing interpretation found, and what a drawing can and cannot tell you
- **Working session:** each participant opens the European Federation of Art Therapy’s country entry for their own country, records the national association and what it says about recognition, names their school’s safeguarding lead as the first line for a disclosure, and drafts the first line of the therapy referral route

Day 2

What the Material Does

- **Warm-up:** “Creative Connections” — ten minutes with an unfamiliar material, no brief and no talking, then comparing what the material did to each person
- **Kramer’s first two ways of working:** exploring what a material physically does — scribbling, smearing, pushing it around — and the point at which it tips into discharge: spilling, pounding, destroying. Telling them apart in a real room, and why the response differs
- **Materials rotation in three stations:** pencil, paint and clay — three media commonly used in this kind of work — what each one invites, what each one shuts down, and which children each one tends to lose
- **The third hand:** Kramer’s name for the adult’s help, practised in pairs and in both roles — finding the smallest intervention that still leaves the work the child’s

- **The generated image:** what happens to this whole argument when a picture is produced instead of made, and how to answer a class with image generators on their phones
 - **Output:** your own materials list for one group — what to stock, what it costs, and what to keep away from whom
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Day 3

From Copying to Something of Their Own

- **Kramer's remaining three:** art in the service of defence — the traced outline, the copied cartoon, the same safe drawing every time; the picture that stands in for what cannot be said aloud; and formed expression, art in the full sense
 - Why a table of near-identical work is usually a verdict on the task rather than on the children
 - Four structured formats run in full and then taken apart: structured drawing, mask-making, collage, and a guided storytelling sequence — what each asks of a child, and which of Kramer's five it tends to produce
 - **Adapting the age:** this research was done with seven- to ten-year-olds. What changes with younger children, what changes with adolescents, and which formats stop working
 - **Output:** two sessions written to a shared template, ready to run
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Day 4

Running the Group

- **What the children in the study said helped:** engagement with the arts and self-expression, a safe space, stress relief, empowerment, and coping — the five themes from their own interviews
 - **And what did not:** too little time, a group that never became a group, and too few sessions with too many children in them. Their number was no more than six
 - **Building the group specification from that:** size, number of sessions, the opening and closing ritual, the boundaries said out loud, and telling the group each week how many sessions are left; and what you do, the same day, if a child tells you something — your school's safeguarding lead, recorded without interpretation
 - **Consent, storage and display:** whose work it is, who may see it, what goes on the wall and what does not, and what happens to all of it when the sequence ends
 - **Observation practice:** building a record sheet — what the child did with the material, in what order, and what they said about it — and using it on the work this group made on Days 2 and 3
 - **Writing time:** the remaining six sessions of your eight-session sequence, on the Day 3 template and the group specification above — so that Friday is for reading and revising the plan, not for writing it
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Day 5

Eight Weeks in Your School

- **Endings first:** some children were upset when the sessions stopped, and one said she cried. How to close a sequence so it lands as a completion rather than as one more thing taken away, and what the last session has to contain
- Each participant's eight-session sequence is presented and read in small groups, so that every plan is actually read rather than heard

- **Critique against four questions:** is the group small enough, are both referral routes (safeguarding and therapy) written down, is there a session in here that only a therapist should run, and does the plan still use Kramer's five ways and the third hand rather than reading meaning into the work
- **Revision time:** participants amend their sequence and their referral lines before taking them home
- Course evaluation and reflection on learning
- Certification ceremony

PLEASE NOTE

Sessions run from 09:30 to 15:00, Monday to Friday, with a break for lunch. Timings can shift a little to suit the venue and the group.

Course activities and content may vary depending on participants' needs and the trainer leading the session; any changes are at the trainer's discretion. If there is a specific topic you would like included, please let us know — content-related requests must reach us at least 3 weeks before the course start date so we can confirm them in time.

06 Materials

- Moula, Powell and Karkou's pilot trial and the companion paper reporting the children's own accounts of it — both published open access, and worked with directly on Day 1 and Day 4
- Versitano and colleagues' 2025 systematic review of art therapy with children and adolescents (Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry) — read alongside the school pilot on Day 1, as the wider picture a single study cannot give
- Kramer's five ways of using art materials, used as the observation framework from Day 2 onwards and turned into a record sheet on Day 4
- The European Federation of Art Therapy's country entry for your own country — the basis of the referral route you write
- Pencil, paint and clay, and the mask, collage and storytelling materials used in the room across the week

07 How to prepare

- Have one small group in mind before you arrive — ideally six children or fewer, drawn from a class you teach or support, with their age. Every plan you write during the week is for that group, and the generic plan is the one that never gets used.
- Bring a laptop or a phone with internet access. On Day 1 you look up how art therapy is regulated in your own country and which professional association exists there; that entry becomes the referral line in your plan.
- Please do not bring pupils' artwork or case details. Everything you observe and practise on during the week is work this group makes in the room, which keeps the children you teach out of it entirely.
- No art background is needed and no drawing ability. Working with the materials yourself is part of the method, not a test of it.

08 After the course

- Participants will receive their Certificate of Attendance and the co-signed Europass Mobility document.
- Participants will complete a general course evaluation and event survey.

- Participants will receive course materials, videos, photos, and PDF documents in both digital and print formats.
- Follow-up support: self-evaluation materials are provided. Depending on the group, an email group may be set up so that participants can keep exchanging ideas.

09 Why this is Erasmus+ eligible

Among the objectives of Key Action 1 mobility in school education, the Erasmus+ Programme Guide lists “supporting professional development of teachers, school leaders and other school staff” (Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2026, Part B – Key Action 1, Mobility for pupils and staff in school education, Objectives of the action, p. 103). The Guide’s school-education priority “Promoting wellbeing at school” — set out for cooperation partnerships under Key Action 2, and a useful reference for the aim — covers “promotion of well-being (both in terms of mental and physical health) for learners and teachers” and “cooperation with the wider community, in particular with health and welfare professionals as well as parents” (Part B – Key Action 2, Partnerships for cooperation, Sector specific priorities, school education, p. 230). This week gives school staff a bounded, non-clinical way to use art-making for pupils’ emotional and social wellbeing: participants leave with an eight-session sequence for one named group in their own school, an observation sheet that records what a child did rather than interpreting it, and two referral lines — the school’s safeguarding route and the therapy route in their own country — so that the teacher’s part stays on the teacher’s side of the line and hands over to health professionals where it should.

10 What the course fee covers

INCLUDED IN THE COURSE FEE

- 25 hours of training and course materials
- Certificate of Attendance + Europass support
- On-site local support throughout the week

ARRANGED SEPARATELY BY THE PARTICIPANT

- Travel to the host city — invitation letter on request
- Accommodation — we share recommended options
- Travel & health insurance

ISSUED BY

Erasmus Mobility Academy

OID E10304561

Cumhuriyet Mah. 1637 Sk. Yaşar Şahin Apt. No:3/2
Yenişehir/MERSİN

info@erasmusmobilityacademy.com

+90 530 319 40 65

COURSE PAGE

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ABOUT ERASMUS MOBILITY ACADEMY

Erasmus Mobility Academy (OID: E10304561) is an Erasmus+ training provider offering professional development courses for educators, school staff and youth workers across Europe. Our courses are designed for international mobility — open to participants travelling from a country other than the host country — and support schools in building lasting institutional capacity. We provide structured learning, logistical guidance and certification with Europass.