

Magic

Making magic can take many forms within a workshop and lighting and sound effects are probably the creator's best allies. Whether creating a magical environment, introducing magical beings or doing magic 'tricks', always remember that some participants may have hearing or sight impairments, so a range of multisensory resources should be employed to enable access for all participants, either through sound, textures or visuals.

Magical Environments

Aim to engender surprise and wonder. Lighting is very important for setting the scene, whether a magical underwater world teeming with strange and beautiful creatures, lit blue/green with flowing organza reflecting the light, or a woodland glade, hung with fairy lights.

Projections are also useful for creating landscapes or introducing dynamic elements to the background - a herd of galloping horsemen, or a ballroom full of dancers for example. The sound effects that go with these kinds of projections enhance the experience for those who cannot see them.

Characters

Magical characters add to the mystery, whether they be puppets or role playing artists. They can introduce hidden 'magical' props or resources, reinforcing a certain theme or activity, or appear and disappear like magic themselves.

Pay particular attention to the introduction of such characters - they may be heard before they are seen perhaps to build suspense. They should be well lit to focus attention, the 'million candle torches' are good for this as they are light and portable so can move with the character from participant to participant or around the space.

The character may introduce magic spells or lead participants on a specific journey. Masks and costume are key to keeping actor's identity hidden, but don't make them too scary!

Props & Resources

Lots of interesting 'magical' items can be found in the shops but can also be cheaply made i.e. a plastic bottle or paper bag with coloured LED lights inside can be just as engaging and magical as disco spinners, electrical orbs and dream torches.

Planting a seed and watching a tree grow is still a wonder of nature. This is easily achieved using brown cloth for the trunk, topped with green leaves, which can be pulled up using a pulley at a distance to where the event takes place. Magic!

In order to include taste in the multisensory magic kit, try using food colouring to turn clear water/lemonade into coloured drinks. A few drops of colour in the bottom of the glass will change the water like magic when poured on top.

A one way mirror is great for making objects and people appear and disappear (see Mirrors).

UV

UV lighting is magical in itself; watching costumes and set turn bright white or glow in the dark is fascinating. UV paint can be used to enhance costumes. UV scarves, streamers, soft rubbery toys, armbands, waistcoats, facepaints - all kinds of things that respond to UV light can now be sourced easily and cheaply.

Shadows

Shadow work is another way of creating magical effects. For small objects to appear so large on a screen is a wonder to behold and it is surprising how many participants get the connection.

Music & SFX

Sound effects can be used in many ways - to compliment the theme, with vocals/sounds/music appearing from nowhere like magic or in a more focused way. For example when someone is using a microphone. Adding reverb and

echo enhances the sound of the voice and gives the participant time to realise it is them making the sounds. It also gives options for call and response and encourages increased vocalisation.

Hiding a small speaker in a suitcase, box or bag and sending a voice or sound through it produces multiple ways of creating magical effects.

The theremin is a magical instrument, producing sounds in response to your movement in the air around it. If you have access to one of these, you can create your own magic.

An example activity:

Create a witches coven:

- Lighting could be spooky green and purple
 - Hang bunches of herbs and roots around the space like a witch's den
 - Hang a cauldron (perhaps an upside down tump) on a tripod over a fire
 - Fill baskets with rubbery insects, amphibians, snakes, spiders, mandrake roots, herbs.
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- Use SFX like thunder and lightning to create an atmosphere. Play a recording of the witch chanting to set the scene.
 - Encourage participants to watch the witch for a while until they become comfortable and brave in the space.
 - The witch could be talking to herself, dropping things, and losing things, as she makes spells in her cauldron. If she is funny, clients are less likely to be fearful.
 - Gradually participants will want to meet her and help with her magic.
 - Explore all her ingredients, feel the textures - wiggly worms, writhing snakes, scurrying insects, giant spider, see how each creature moves differently.
 - Smell and touch all the different herbs and tree roots.
 - Bring something to the pot and throw it in and stir it up.
 - Encourage clients to chant a simple spell, the magic begins....
 - A 'ghost' appears - this is easily achieved using a puppet who becomes lit at this moment.
 - Using a microphone he could initiate interaction with participants by calling them by name.....spooky!

Links

Lights (Prop)

Character (Activities)

Workshops - Macbeth, Sword in the Stone, Blue

Videos

Macbeth Pot put pot

Light in bag

J playing theremin

Puppet weaving

Double, double