

Doolin NS

Whole School Development Plan for Drama

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Drama

■ Guiding Principles

The guiding principles which underpin the teaching and learning of Drama in our school are:

1. Drama is a subject
2. Drama is for all teachers and all children
3. Process Drama explores the real world through the fictional world

■ Introductory Statement and Rationale

(a) Introductory Statement: Following the in-service of 2006-2007, it was decided to commence the development of the school plan in Drama. The plan was reviewed by staff in 2022.

(b) Rationale: This plan is a record of our decisions regarding Drama. It reflects the Primary Curriculum, 1999. It is intended to guide teachers in their individual planning for Drama.

■ Vision and Aims

(a) Vision: Our school recognises that Drama education is part of a balanced curriculum which aims to develop the whole spectrum of the child's intelligence. We also seek to develop the child's aesthetic, intellectual, emotional, creative and cultural development through engagement in positive Drama experiences.

(b) Aims: We endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum for Drama

- To enable the child to become Drama literate
- To enable the child to create a permanent bridge between make-believe play and the art form of theatre
- To develop the child's ability to enter physically, emotionally and intellectually into the Drama world in order to promote questing, empowering and empathetic skills
- To enable the child to develop the social skills necessary to engage openly, honestly and playfully with others
- To enable the child to co-operate and communicate with others in solving problems in the Drama and through the Drama
- To enable the child to understand the structures and modes of Drama and how they create links between play, thought and life
- To enable the child to acquire this knowledge of Drama through the active exploration of themes drawn from life (past and present), whether they have their source in other curricular areas or in general areas relevant to the child's life
- To enable the child to begin the process of translating a knowledge of Drama into the active exploration of life themes from Drama literature, leading to the appreciation of world Drama culture.

■ Curriculum Planning

1. Strand and Strand Units

Drama has one strand at each class level – Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding.

The strand is divided into three strand units

- Exploring and Making Drama
- Reflecting on Drama
- Co-operating and Communicating in making Drama.

The objectives at each for each strand unit are detailed in the tables below.

Exploring and Making Drama

- | | |
|---|--|
| Junior and Senior Infants | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• develop the instinct for make-believe play into Drama• develop the ability to play in role as an integral part of the action• experience how the use of space and objects can help to create the reality of the make-believe world• experience how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present Dramatic action• develop awareness of how he/she, as part of a group, helps to maintain focus in the Dramatic action• develop awareness of tension in the Drama |
| 1 st & 2 nd classes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• use the ability to play at make-believe to enter fully into participation in Drama• use his/her emerging awareness of the differences in people in order to begin to develop an understanding of the relationship between role and character• experience how context is built and a Drama reality created through the use of space and objects• experience how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present Dramatic action• develop the ability to help maintain the focus in the Dramatic action• begin to see how tension adds to Drama the suspense that ensures the interest of the participants |
| 3 rd & 4 th classes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• enter into the fictional Dramatic context with the same spontaneity and freedom that he/she has earlier applied to make-believe play• understand the relationship between role and character and develop the ability to hold on to either role or character for as long as the Dramatic activity requires• discover how the use of space and objects can help in building the context and in signifying Dramatic themes• explore how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present Dramatic action• begin, as a member of a group, to include in Drama activity the elements of tension and suspense• begin the process of using script as a pre-text |
| 5 th & 6 th classes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• enter appropriately and with facility, whether watched or unwatched, into the fictional Dramatic context• extend playing in role and in character to include the ability to accept and maintain a brief that has been decided on by either the teacher, the group or himself/herself• discover how the use of space and objects helps in building the context and in signifying the Drama theme• explore how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present Dramatic action• become adept at implementing the 'playing rules' that maintain focus in Dramatic action• help to plan Dramatic activity to include the particular tension |

- and suspense appropriate to the theme being explored
- distinguish between various genres, such as comedy, tragedy, fantasy
- become comfortable with script and understand the basic processes by which script becomes action

Reflecting on Drama

Junior and Senior Infants

- develop the ability to reflect on the action as it progresses
- experience the relationship between story, theme and life experience

1st & 2nd classes

- share insights gained while experiencing the Drama
- use reflection on a particular Dramatic action to create possible alternative courses for the action
- experience, through Drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience
- share insights while experiencing the Drama or insights that arise out of the Drama

3rd & 4th classes

- use reflection on and evaluation of a particular Dramatic action to create possible alternative courses for the action
- learn, through Drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience
- use the sharing of insights arising out of Dramatic action to develop the ability to draw conclusions and to hypothesise about life and people

5th & 6th classes

- reflect on a particular Dramatic action in order to create possible alternative courses for the action that will reflect more closely the life patterns and issues being examined
- learn, through Drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience
- use the sharing of insights arising out of Dramatic action to develop the ability to draw conclusions and to hypothesise about life and people

Co-Operating and Communicating in Making Drama

Junior and Senior Infants

- develop the ability, out of role, to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama
- develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama

1st & 2nd classes

- develop, out of role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama
- develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama
- develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small-group or whole-class scenes as the Drama text is being made
- re-enact for others in the group a scene that has been made in simultaneous small-group work

3rd & 4th classes

- develop, out of role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama
- develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and to communicate

5th & 6th classes

- with others in helping to shape the Drama
- develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small-group or whole-class scenes as the Drama text is being made
- enact spontaneously for others in the group a scene from the Drama, or share with the rest of the class a scene that has already been made in simultaneous small-group work
- develop, out of role, the ability to co-operate and to communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama
- develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama
- develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small-group or whole-class scenes as the Drama text is being made
- enact spontaneously for others in the group a scene from the Drama, or share with the rest of the class a scene that has already been made in simultaneous small-group work

The school recognises that the strand units and the content objectives for Drama are interlinked.

2. Approaches and Methodologies

Belief is central to all Drama and should be characterised by a willingness to believe in the Drama itself, sincerity in playing roles and characters, a willingness to accept the fictional consequences of Drama and a willingness to explore. Teachers will focus on the building of belief when beginning a new Drama activity.

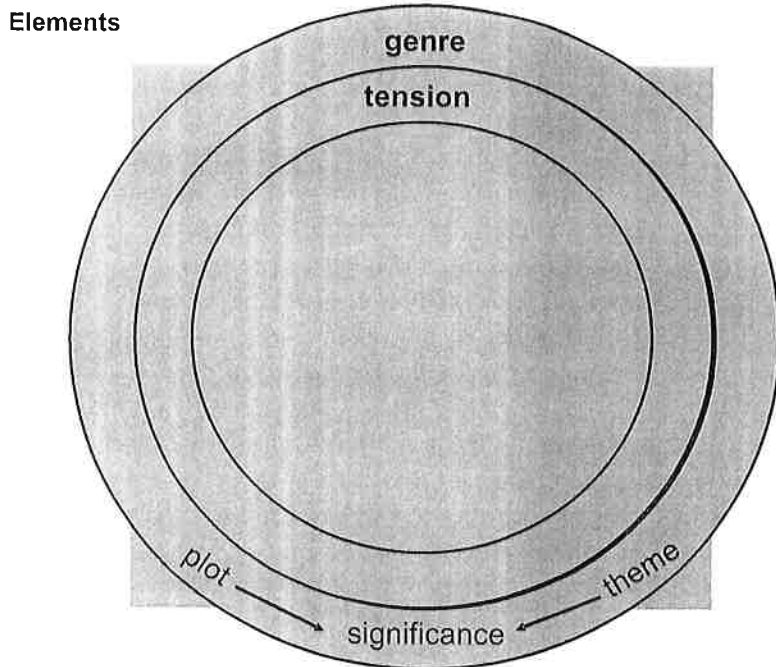
The strand ‘Drama to explore feeling, knowledge and ideas leading to understanding’ will be important for teachers in this school in informing the content that they choose for Drama activities.

Content for Drama will come from life experience. It will be from something that the children have experienced, something that they have read, something that emerged in another subject area, a worry or concern that the teacher might have or something generally that the teacher wants them to explore.

Teachers will carefully select a fictional lens for their chosen content. A character or story will be selected that the children will easily believe in, whose context will allow for the realisation of the content to be explored.

Various stimuli will be used in our school as starting points for the creation of a Drama. These are in keeping with the Drama activities 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; pp. 66-91 in the Teacher Guidelines. The suggested uses of these stimuli are outlined in appendix 1 at the back of this document.

Elements are used organically through the Drama. Belief will be built as roles/characters develop. Action, place and time will be developed as the Drama is framed in its fictional lens. The element of tension is the one which teachers will have to think about. Tension will often have to be injected e.g. by adding a mysterious character / secret / surprise / problem / tension of time or urgency / limitations of space / temptation of a dare or a challenge / tension of inappropriate behaviour.



How the elements might look -

Belief	How can the child be encouraged to enter into the drama with full belief? <i>Evident in the child's trust in and ease with make-believe play</i>
Role and Character	How will the child move from role playing to entering into character? <i>Taking on the characteristics, attributes and thought process of another person</i>
Action	What is happening in the drama? <i>Action in drama comes from the interaction between characters and situations in which they find themselves in the drama</i>
Place	Where is the action taking place? How is real place and space used to represent this?
Time	When is the action taking place? <i>The fictional past and fictional future will have a bearing on the drama</i>
Tension	How will tension drive forward the action of the drama? <i>The characters will be faced with choices, desires and uncertainties. Such tension causes characters to make decisions and moves the drama forward</i>
Significance	What is the relevance of the drama to the child's life? In what way can the child relate to the drama?
Genre (Fifth and Sixth Classes only)	Is the drama naturalistic, absurd, tragic, comic or fantasy? <i>Genre is the style of the drama</i>

In this school we recognise the usefulness of Drama strategies. Below is a table showing some suitable strategies for the class level. This is not an exhaustive list, rather a suggestion. Teachers have the freedom to introduce other strategies that they might find useful for their own particular class or for a particular dramatic context.

Class Level	Suggested Strategies
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Junior & Senior Infants	Defining the Space, Still Images, Teacher in Role, Mimed Narration, Whole Group improvisation, Hot seating, Visualisation.
1 st & 2 nd Classes	Defining the Space, Mimed Narration, Teacher in Role, Whole Group Improvisation, Still Images, Thought Tracking, Paired Improvisation, Improvisation in threes, Hot seating, Visualisation
3 rd & 4 th Classes	Defining the Space, Teacher in Role, Mimed Narration, Still Images, Thought Tracking, Improvisation in Pairs, Briefing, Conscience Alley, Hotseating, Visualisation Whole Group Improvisation, Small Group Improvisation, Ritual, Flashback/flashforward
5 th & 6 th Classes	Defining the Space, Teacher in Role, Mimed Narration, Visualisation, Still Images, Thought Tracking, Improvisation in Pairs, Briefing, Conscience Alley, Whole Group Improvisation, Small Group Improvisation, Hot seating, Ritual, Flashback/flashforward,

An explanation of each strategy follows here –

Still Image

Groups use their bodies to create an image of a moment(s) in the drama e.g. the moment the bears see Goldilocks asleep in the bed. Older groups may depict a more complex or abstract idea ('winning', 'fear'). Similarly an individual can act as a sculptor to another student or group.

Thought-Tracking

This technique involves the teacher freezing the action and tapping her hand on the shoulder of some student (or students) in the still image or drama. This student-in-role then reveals publicly her private thoughts/reactions at that specific moment e.g. one of Christopher Columbus' sailors thoughts when they finally sight land.

Mime

The class mime action as the teacher describes what a character or occupation or as she narrates a story. Older students may develop more abstract mime sequences.

Narration

The teacher can narrate in or out of the lesson text. Narration has many uses. These include: providing a link or commentary between drama moments; creating an atmosphere; initiating a drama; moving the action on; create tension. Similarly the participants might report back in story form, providing narrative to accompany or bridge action - 'We came to the river and saw that the bridge had been destroyed, so we....'

Hot-Seating

This involves students questioning a character (teacher-in-role or student-in-role). The students who are questioning the character may be working as themselves or in role as journalists. Hot-seating can be used to start a drama or improvisation may be frozen at any point so that in-role characters are released to answer questions, often formally seated facing their questioners.

Caption-Making and Headlines

This strategy can be used at any point of action. Individuals or groups are asked to give a title or caption or newspaper headlines/slogans to a piece of drama. They summarize their own scene or another group's scene in When used with still images several headlines can be given to the same still image in order to highlight points of view and bias.

Conscience Alley

A character who has a difficult decision to reach, walks down a corridor of people who, one after another from either side, give conflicting advice about a given situation. This can be done in role by other characters in the lesson and by voices in the character's head played by other members of the group. It is possible to develop this convention by allowing the character to engage in conversation with the voices and thus challenge the advice being offered.

Defining Space...

Available furniture, objects, clothing are used to represent the 'ship', 'castle', 'bears' house' where the drama is happening. They may also represent the physical scale of someone (Daddy Bear) or something (the beanstalk) in the drama. Also they may be used to fix the position or proximity of rooms, houses, places where events have taken place.

Soundtracking...

Sound may be used in different ways in a drama; narration can be devised to accompany some mime; animal sounds, human sounds, environmental sounds can be devised to accompany a moment of action. Voices or instruments are used to create a mood.

Living Picture

The teacher asks the group to bring their improvisation alive for a few moments. She does not necessarily add tension by briefing some students. The living picture, however, may develop into an improvisation – the difference being that 'living picture' has no particular tension in it whereas the improvisation usually features some tension.

Briefing

Before a whole group improvisation, the teacher takes aside an individual or a number of individuals, and gives him/them a set of instructions that create tension. This will drive the drama forward. The teacher may choose to give another set of further conflicting instructions to a different individual/individuals. As the children develop their drama skills, they will begin to offer their own briefs. Briefing is a key strategy in creating **tension** in drama. The teacher can build tension by suggesting any of the following – 'You have a secret...'; 'Something strange and mysterious has happened', 'You are planning a surprise', 'You are in a hurry', 'You are all crowded together', 'You have an unusual object' or through a challenge.

Small-Group Play-Making

Small group and whole group improvisation constitute the heart of the drama curriculum. The children make up the story as they go along. This story usually explores a character(s) in a dilemma. Small groups plan, prepare, sequence and present their improvisations to show their understanding of that moment in the drama. Briefing (see above) helps to drive the improvisation forward. The teacher can greatly enhance the drama by adopting a role herself.

Flashback Flashforward

The children select and depict a moment through such strategies as still image, mime and narration or improvisation. They can then move backwards and forwards in time creating other such moments in time in the drama. This enables the children to reflect on the characters and their dilemmas.

Ritual

Ritual in Drama is a stylized activity that shows a special occasion or some daily routine that shows that a character is part of a community. Some rituals in drama include: a meal, saying goodbye, the night before a battle, praying.

Teacher-in-Role

The teacher takes on a role in the drama. This allows her to do a number of things. She can manage the learning opportunities within the drama by adopting a suitable role in order to excite interest, control the action, invite involvement, provoke tension, challenge superficial thinking, create choices and ambiguity, develop the narrative, create possibilities for the group to interact in role.

Some steps in going into Teacher-in-role

1. Agree on a hat or object to show that you, the teacher are in role
2. Ask the children to watch carefully and see what they can find out about the character.
3. Go into role for less than a minute or so, adopting a pose
4. Come out of role by taking off your hat. Ask the children what they found out.
5. Possible hot-seating of the character (teacher-in-role) by the teacher

Extra information about Teacher-in-role

The teacher can take different types of roles:

1. Authority...the person in ultimate charge, with responsibility
2. Devil's advocate...the person who argues the alternative viewpoint
3. Reporter ... person requiring information
4. Victim...person requiring help
5. Absentee...person who arrives late and needs to be filled in on certain information

The safe environment is important for effective drama work to take place. In our school each class may develop a drama contract. To build confidence and further embed the safe environment, classes will play appropriate warm up games to develop various drama skills necessary for their drama work. Discussion about the contract and the safe environment may be included where appropriate both before and after the drama activity.

We see reflection as being of vital importance to the drama process. We will strive to ensure that reflection takes place at the appropriate points in the drama experience. We will also strive for a balance of methods of reflection using discussion, writing, visual arts, speaking, listening, doing and questioning. A list of drama reflection methods is to be found in the appendix .

3. Children with Different Needs

It is the policy of our school that all children in mainstream classes or in special classes will participate in Drama activities. Drama activities will be differentiated in order to meet the needs of the children in a particular class. This will be done by careful grouping of children, consciousness by the teacher of children's abilities when giving briefs and by providing opportunities for different methods of reflection.

4. Linkage and Integration

Linkage is inherent to the Drama process. All activities in Drama will include exploring and making Drama, reflecting on Drama and co-operating and communicating in making Drama.

Teachers are encouraged to integrate Drama with other subjects in a way that complements curriculum aims and objectives in both subjects. Integration is encouraged where it is natural and where children's learning can be maximised.

5. Assessment and Record Keeping

We recognised the importance of assessment and record keeping in the delivery of The Drama

Curriculum. Much assessment will focus on the children's learning and how best to inform subsequent planning and teaching. Teachers will observe which areas children are achieving in and which areas need further development.

Teachers should approach assessment in Drama by referring to the Curriculum Statement p 43-44 and examine children's engagement in terms of the three strand units i.e.

- Exploring and making Drama – the extent to which the child enters into a role or a character and develops it in the context of the action
- Reflecting on Drama – the extent to which they use reflection to create alternative courses for the action or the quality of the insights they gain from the Drama experience
- Co-operating and communicating in making Drama – the child's ability to contribute to the shaping of the Drama, both individually and in group in-role and out-of-role discussion about the Drama as the action takes place

Teacher observation will be central to all assessment in Drama. Other forms of assessment may include basic teacher-designed tests and tasks, projects, photographs and digital recordings of children's work where appropriate.

Progress will be recorded and communicated in teachers' Cúntas Míosúil, end of year report and at parent teacher meetings.

6. Equality of Participation and Access

Equal opportunities will be given to all children regardless of gender, ethnic background, socio-economic status across all strands and activities.

■ Organisational Planning

7. Timetable

Infant class will have a minimum of 50 minutes of Drama per week while 1st to 6th classes will have a minimum of one hour per week of Drama. This time allocation may be broken down at the discretion of the individual teacher. Teachers may also choose to block times for Drama at particular times of the year. Timetables will all record the time allocation for Drama/Arts

There is discretionary time available each week (Infants: one hour, First to Sixth Classes: two hours) that teachers can occasionally use to support The Drama Curriculum.

Teachers should ensure that pupils attending supplementary teaching are included for as much of the Drama programme as possible.

8. Resources and ICT

This includes drama books, basic props, suitable stimuli (music, poetry, stories, visual images, newspaper captions etc.)

Teachers are encouraged to use other adults who may be available to them such as a parent or a teacher who is working with the class to facilitate the delivery of the curriculum where appropriate.

Teachers are encouraged to teach their Drama lessons in their own classrooms and to carefully timetable for maximised use of the cleared space. Drama may also be taught in the school hall. (if available).

9. Health and Safety

As with all curricular areas work, the Drama Curriculum will maintain due care to our schools Health and Safety Policy.

Care and attention will be given to the following:

- Hidden dangers if children are moving around the classroom
- Storage facilities

- Ventilation of the classrooms
- Amount of space for children to sit or stand when engaged in Drama work
- Particular care will be needed when children are setting up the Drama space.
- Appropriate volume levels when using audio equipment or when engaged in a very loud activity.

10. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

Each teacher will be given a copy of this school plan and will be encouraged to refer to it when doing their own long term and short term planning. Teachers teaching the same level are encouraged to plan together

The elements of Drama should be carefully considered in the short term planning of Drama.

As mentioned in the integration section teachers in the school may approach much of their teaching thematically and are encouraged to do so with Drama also. Some of the themes that we as a school have chosen as possibilities are

- Halloween
- Autumn
- Winter
- Christmas
- Spring
- Summer
- Pirates
- The Sea
- Food
- A journey

The Cúntas Miosuil is an important indicator and record of work carried out in Drama. Teachers will record their work in Drama for a particular month under two headings namely Content Covered and Strategies Used. (e.g. Conflict resolution - Hairdresser and Customer scenario. Still images. Paired Improvisations, Thought-tracking, Hotseating, Teacher in role, children in collective role, Thought tunnel.)

11. Staff Development

Teachers have access to reference books, resource materials, equipment and websites dealing with Drama. We will continue to add to this in the coming years.

Teachers will be informed about upcoming courses in the education centres and other bodies providing professional development through the staffroom notice board.

12. Parental Involvement

Where appropriate, parents may be involved in Drama within the classroom. If a parent has particular expertise they may be invited in to be part of the classroom process in Drama. Parents may be invited to open classroom presentations of improvisations or other work created in small group settings.

13. Community Links

The local community, actors, theatre professionals living locally, local arts centres and education officers, theatre, local Drama events and national support structures will all be considered as

valuable resources as support for The Drama Curriculum.

■ Success Criteria

These will include-

- *Teachers' preparation based on this plan*
- *Procedures outlined in this plan consistently followed*
- *Parental feedback*
- *Children's feedback*
- *Inspectors' suggestions/reports*

■ Review

Each teacher and the staff as a group will evaluate the progress in Drama by referring back to our set of stated objectives as stated in this plan. A short session at staff meeting will be allocated to this work.

(a) Timeframe

The content of this whole school plan for Drama will be reviewed as required.

■ Ratification and Communication

This school plan for Drama has been ratified by the Board of Management of Doolin NS.

Ratified on: 19/5/22. (Date)

Signed: Chairperson BOM: 

It will be reviewed periodically.

Appendix 1 : Suggested uses of Drama stimuli

Appendix 2: Some methods of Reflection