



Castleplunkett NS

Whole School Plan Drama

■ Title; Whole School Plan for Drama

■ Introductory Statement and Rationale

(a) Introductory Statement

This plan was developed by the school staff of Castleplunkett N.S during the 2020/2021 academic year. This plan will form the basis of each teacher's long and short term planning in Drama and so will influence teaching and learning in individual classrooms.

It will also inform new or temporary teachers of our approaches and methodologies in this subject area.

(b) Rationale

We recognise that Drama is an integral part of the Arts Education of our pupils. In our school, Drama involves every aspect of the child's personality: spiritual, moral, emotional, intellectual and physical. We concur with the curriculum statement that drama provides a unique gateway to learning and affords a dimension of knowledge that is otherwise inaccessible.

This plan is drawn up in response to the 1999 Primary School Curriculum, to conform to the principles outlined in this curriculum and to review our practices in light of these principles.

As a whole school plan, it guides the organised teaching and learning of Drama.

■ Vision and Aims

(a) Vision

We believe that the true importance in drama lies in the nature of the learning experience it affords the child. We envisage that through the imaginative engagement of the child's intellectual, emotional and physical capacities he/she can be brought to new perceptions and new understanding.

(b) Aims

We endorse the aims of the Drama curriculum as outlined in the Drama Curriculum P. 8:

- to enable the child to explore, clarify and express ideas, feelings and experiences through a range of arts activities
- to provide for aesthetic experiences and to develop aesthetic awareness in the visual arts, in music, in drama, in dance and in literature
- to develop the child's awareness of, sensitivity to and enjoyment of visual, aural, tactile and spatial environments

- to enable the child to develop natural abilities and potential to acquire techniques, and to practise the skills necessary for creative expression and for joyful participation in different art forms
- to enable the child to see and to solve problems creatively through imaginative thinking and so encourage individuality and enterprise
- to value the child's confidence and self-esteem through valuing self-expression
- to foster a sense of excellence in and appreciation of the arts in local, regional, national and global contexts, both past and present
- to foster a critical appreciation of the arts for personal fulfilment and enjoyment.

■ Curriculum Planning

1. Strands and Strand Units

Each teacher is familiar with the strand and strand units, content objectives for his/her class level and indeed for each other's class levels. This is to ensure a coherent programme throughout the school.

The strand and all strand units must be covered each year as must all content objectives.

The sole strand of the drama Curriculum is 'Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding'.

Planning

Each teacher will identify an overall body of content for drama for the year. Some of the sources should include

- Drama from the pupil's everyday experience
- Aistear
- Particular issues that the teacher may wish to explore through Drama
- Aspects of lives from the past that will arouse the pupil's curiosity
- The needs concerns and preoccupations of the pupils
- Content and issues from other curriculum areas. Drama should be integral to the SPHE lesson and education programmes. Walk Tall/RSE/Stay Safe

We will allow for a considerable amount of flexibility as the drama content may be modified to take account of curriculum progression, current events and the needs and preoccupations of the pupils.

Prerequisites for Drama

The process of Drama in the school is effective if the following exist

- Content (see appendix for content list)
- The fictional lens
- A safe environment

We are aware of these and aim to ensure they are present in our lessons.

Strand Unit: Exploring and making drama

	<u>Junior and Senior Infants</u>	<u>First and Second Classes</u>	<u>Third and Fourth Classes</u>	<u>Fifth and Sixth Classes</u>
<u>Belief</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>develop the instinct for make-believe play into drama</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>use the ability to play at make-believe to enter fully into participation in drama</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>enter into the fictional dramatic context with the same spontaneity and freedom that he/she has earlier applied to make-believe play</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>enter appropriately and with facility, whether watched or unwatched, into the fictional dramatic context</u>
<u>Role and Character</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>develop the ability to play in role as an integral part of the action</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>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</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>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</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>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</u>
<u>Place</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>experience how the use of space and objects can help to create the reality of the make-believe world</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>experience how context is built and a drama reality created through the use of space and objects</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>discover how the use of space and objects can help in building the context and in signifying dramatic themes</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>discover how the use of space and objects helps in building the context and in signifying the drama theme</u>
<u>Time</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>experience how the fictional past and the desired fictional future</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>experience how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>explore how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>explore how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present</u>

	<u>influence the present dramatic action</u>	<u>dramatic action</u>	<u>present dramatic action</u>	<u>dramatic action.</u>
<u>Action</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>develop awareness of how he/she, as part of a group, helps to maintain focus in the dramatic action</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>develop the ability to help maintain the focus in the dramatic action</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>become aware of the rules that help maintain focus in the dramatic action</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>become adept at implementing the ‘playing rules’ that maintain focus in dramatic action</u>
<u>Tension</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>develop awareness of tension in the drama</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>begin to see how tension adds to drama the suspense that ensures the interest of the participants</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>begin, as a member of a group, to include in drama activity the elements of tension and suspense</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>help to plan dramatic activity to include the particular tension and suspense appropriate to the theme being explored</u>
<u>Genre</u>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>distinguish between various genres, such as comedy, tragedy, fantasy</u>
<u>Use of Script</u>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>begin the process of using script as a pre-text</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>become comfortable with script and continue to use script as pre-text for Drama</u>

Strand Unit: Reflecting on drama

	<u>Junior and Senior Infants</u>	<u>First and Second Classes</u>	<u>Third and Fourth Classes</u>	<u>Fifth and Sixth Classes</u>
<u>Significance</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>develop the ability to reflect on the action as it progresses</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>use reflection on a particular dramatic action to create possible alternative courses for the action</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>use reflection on and evaluation of a particular dramatic action to create possible alternative courses for the action</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>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</u>
<u>Significance</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>experience the</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>experience, through</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>learn, through</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>learn, through</u>

	<u>relationship between story, theme and life experience</u>	<u>drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience</u>	<u>drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience</u>	<u>drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience</u>
<u>Significance</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>share insights gained while experiencing the drama</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>share insights while experiencing the drama or insights that arise out of the drama</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>use the sharing of insights arising out of dramatic action to develop the ability to draw conclusions and to hypothesise about life and people</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>use the sharing of insights arising out of dramatic action to develop the ability to draw conclusions and to hypothesise about life and people</u>

Strand unit: Co-operating and communicating in making drama

	<u>Junior and Senior Infants</u>	<u>First and Second Classes</u>	<u>Third and Fourth Classes</u>	<u>Fifth and Sixth Classes</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>develop the ability, out of role, to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>develop, out of role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>develop, out of role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>develop, out of role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and to communicate with others in helping to shape the drama</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama</u>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small-group or whole-class scenes as the drama text is being made</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small-group or whole-class scenes as the drama text is being made</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small-group or whole-class scenes as the drama text is being made</u>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>re-enact for others in the group a scene that has been made in simultaneous small-group work</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>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</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>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</u>

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.

We will use the methodologies and approaches as outlined in the Drama Curriculum Teacher guidelines pg. 36 – 101.

All classes will develop and sustain the conditions of the Drama Contract but in Castleplunkett NS the emphasis of Drama will be on improvisation.

- **Selection of Content**

See section 1 ‘Strands & Strand Units’

- **The Fictional Lens**

There should be flexibility in the choice of content for all teachers. There should also be flexibility in the lesson itself to allow the teacher pick up on the children’s development of the Drama and to ‘run with it’.

Junior Classes – Content is mediated through Aistear themes, stories of animals, toys, fathers, mothers, simple journeys, bus stops, safe encounters from the real world.

Fantasy and fairy tale are added once the pupils are not afraid of this content.

Middle Classes upwards – Add factual stories from history or current news

Senior Classes – use of existing fiction such as stories, poems, play-scripts or videos can be used as pre-texts.

Teachers of senior classes should remain conscious of the central emphasis on story-making and not merely the acting out of existing stories.

- **Approaching a Drama Activity**

All Drama activities will have a varied starting point.

Pupils will be afforded the opportunity to engage in a Drama activity unwatched, thus providing a safe environment for the pupil.

Teachers should develop ‘points of departure’ from original fiction by ‘framing’ the action for the pupil.

Pupils can be ‘given a brief’ to help extend the fiction.

- **Strategies**

Strategies are a means of deepening the Drama but should not be confused with real active Drama itself.

We will use, as appropriate, the strategies as outlined in Drama Curriculum Guidelines (pg 97 – 98)

These include

- Drama Games
- Still Image and montage
- Hot Seating
- Thought-Tracking
- Sound-Tracking
- Voices in the Head
- Etc (see appendix for further strategies)

3. Children with Different Needs

It is important that all children experience a rounded arts education. Drama plays a pivotal role in this education and so we will do our best to ensure that every child will have opportunities to engage in learning activities appropriate to their abilities. Drama is particularly relevant to children with special needs because of its nature and the unique learning experience it has to offer.

- Teachers will use a mixture of whole-class teaching and group work, with different groups set tasks of various complexities.
- Teachers will be conscious of any physical and/or emotional restrictions that may inhibit the pupil from partaking in the drama experience.
- Children may be able to explore and deal with questions of choice and conflict by distancing themselves in the fictional context.
- Drama will contribute to every child’s self esteem and allow each child, including those with special needs, scope for self expression and self realisation.

All teachers will familiarise themselves with the Guidelines for Children with General Learning Disabilities (NCCA) in this regard

4. Linkage and Integration

Drama can be linked and integrated with all the other curricular areas but the content for Drama is life experience itself.

Even when content from another curricular area becomes the content for Drama we will be aware that the basic principle is that the resultant activity will retain the integrity of the Drama itself.

Drama may also be used as a starting point in itself when presenting content from another curricular area, where the objectives are primarily drawn from other curricular areas, i.e. Drama is used as a methodology.

Summary

In Castleplunkett NS, we are mindful of the need to preserve Drama as a curricular subject as distinct to Drama as a curricular methodology.

5. Assessment and Record Keeping

As in all subject areas, assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning of Drama.

We as a staff have a common understanding of its purpose and the ways in which the progress of children in Drama will be assessed, documented and reported.

Assessment in Drama in our school will fulfil the following roles :

- **A diagnostic role** – to identify areas of difficulty in the child’s development of Drama skills in order to respond to the needs of the child. (see appendix for incomplete list of drama skills)
- **A summative role-** to establish the outcomes of learning after completing a unit of drama.
- **An evaluative role** – to assist teachers in assessing their own practice, methodologies, approaches and resources.

We recognise that assessment techniques used in Drama must seek to assess progress in

- a) Children’s ability to develop and use drama skills
- b) Children’s development of attitudes, self esteem and self realisation.

c) Children's comprehension, empathetic and analytical skills.

The assessment tools we will use will range from the informal means to the more structured approaches.

Methods we will use are;

- Teacher observation of the children's development in Drama
- Drama in the SALF.
- Teacher designed tasks and tests at the end of units of work.
- Self Assessment – pupils in older classes can be given the Drama Checklists to discuss their drama in this context.
- Work samples e.g. writing, art-work and other examples of children's response to, reflection on and extension of their drama experience.
- ICT – digital photographs, video images, web sites. (Teachers will be cognisant that parental consent may not have been granted for the use of digital imaging.)

These records will inform the teacher of the progress of the child; the effectiveness of teaching methodologies employed and will also inform future planning.

The assessment records will form the basis for reporting and discussing the child's progress with parents. This information will be relayed at Parent Teacher Meetings and in annual school reports.

6. Equality of Participation and Access

- Equal opportunity will be given to every child to experience all strands
- All children will have equal opportunities to participate in drama lessons and activities.
- Provision for children with physical difficulties will be made so that they can access the drama curriculum.
- If we have children whose first language is not English, they will be supported in accessing the drama curriculum also.

■ Organisational Planning

7. Timetable

In keeping with the recommendations in the Primary School Curriculum Introduction (page 70) a minimum of 2 ½ hours per week is devoted to Arts Education in infant classes and a minimum of three hours per week for classes 1st to 6th.

One hour of this time will be spent on Drama in Senior Classes, 45 minutes in Junior classes

* On occasion, time will be blocked as appropriate. This might occur when working on an integrated project.

Teachers may use discretionary curriculum time for Drama as appropriate.

8. Resources

We will develop a Drama Box which will contain various costumes and props which will be of use during lessons. We recognise that costumes and props should only be used sparingly, when it is agreed by the children that it adds to the Drama.

We will compile and make use of various recommended Drama Resource Books with Drama Games. We recognise that the greatest resource of all is that of the pupil's own life experience.

9. Health and Safety

We have a Health and Safety policy in place in our school which covers safety concerning various aspects of classroom organisation. As per school policy, teachers will consult with the Principal/Deputy Principal whenever it is proposed to engage in any work outside the school grounds.

During Drama lessons, teachers will be aware of the safety implications of any work to be undertaken. Suitable instructions will be given to the pupils regarding staying safe during Drama lessons.

10. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

Teachers will consult this Whole School Plan and the curriculum documents for Drama when they are drawing up their long and short term plans.

Teachers will include all the strands and strand units over 1 year and will select all objectives within the strand units each year.

Where it is meaningful and suitable Drama will be taught in a thematic way to integrate with the other curricular subjects. i.e Aistear

Each teacher will have a long-term plan for the year. Individual teachers will then take these yearly outlines and tailor them to the needs of their own classes in their short-term planning.

Cúntais Míósúil will assist in recording work covered, in evaluating progress in Drama and in informing future teaching.

11. Staff Development

- All teachers will be responsible for keeping resource materials up to date and will arrange for opportunities for resources to be assessed for purchase and for new approaches to be piloted in the school.
- Access to PDST and other external training.
- The culture in our school is one that encourages the sharing of experience and good practice.

12. Parental Involvement

Parents have an important role to play by discussing their child's drama experiences with them. This gives the parent a valuable role in facilitating the children's drama experiences with them.

Parents can also assist with the compilation of Drama props and costumes.

Parents will be made aware of the contribution that Drama makes to their child's learning and development.

13. Community Links

The school will on occasion arrange for actors and/or a touring acting company to visit the school.

The children can experience drama in the community by visiting the local theatre "Roscommon Arts Centre" to view productions.

The children will take part in Scór na nóg and Scór na bpáiste each year.

■ Success Criteria

We shall review this whole school plan in the future under the following headings:

- How individual teacher preparation, planning and teaching reflects this plan.
- How methodologies listed in this whole school plan are working in the classroom
- Resources
- Progression in the use and understanding of Drama skills

Means of assessing the outcomes of the plan will include

- Revisiting the aims of this plan as a staff
- Teacher / Parent feedback
- Children's feedback
- Inspectors reports / suggestions
- Results of class assessment

■ Implementation

(a) Roles and Responsibilities

The plan will be supported, developed and implemented by all staff members.

The staff members will have responsibility for the following:

- Audit and recommendation of Drama resources –
- Purchase of resources –
- Leading the development of new methodologies identified –
- Liaising with community organisations and relevant agencies –

(b) Timeframe

This Whole School Plan will be effective from the beginning of the school year 2020/2021

■ Review



It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the Drama curriculum. We aim to review this plan when necessary.

■ Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at a BOM meeting in November 2020

Chairperson

Date

Principal/Secretary

Date

Appendix

- **Drama Glance Cards**
- **Strategies**
- **Methods of Reflection**

Drama Glance Card – Fifth and Sixth Class

Strand: Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding.

Strand Unit: Exploring and Making Drama

The child should be enabled to

- enter appropriately and with facility, whether watched or unwatched, into the fictional dramatic context (*belief*)
- 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 (*place*)
- discover how the use of space and objects helps in building the context and in signifying the drama theme (*place*)
- explore how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present dramatic action (*time*)
- 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 (*tension*)
- become comfortable with script and understand the basic processes by which script becomes action
- distinguish between various genres, such as comedy, tragedy, fantasy (*genre*)

Strand Unit: Reflecting on Drama

The child should be enabled to

- 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 (*action, significance*)
- learn, through drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience (*significance*)
- use the sharing of insights arising out of dramatic action to develop the ability to draw conclusions and to hypothesise about life and people (*significance*)

Strand Unit: Co-operating and communicating through Drama

The child should be enabled to

- 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

Drama Glance Card – Junior and Senior Infants

Strand: Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding.

Strand Unit: Exploring and Making Drama

The child should be enabled to

- develop the instinct for make-believe play into drama (*belief*)
- develop the ability to play in role as an integral part of the action (*role/character*)
- experience how the use of space and objects can help to create the reality of the make-believe world (*place*)
- experience how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present dramatic action (*time*)
- develop awareness of how he/she, as part of a group, helps to maintain focus in the dramatic action (*action*)
- develop awareness of tension in the drama (*tension*)

Strand Unit: Reflecting on Drama

The child should be enabled to

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

share insights gained while experiencing the drama (*significance*)

Strand Unit: Co-operating and communicating through Drama

The child should be enabled to

- 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

Drama Glance Card – First and Second Class

Strand: Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding.

Strand Unit: Exploring and Making Drama

The child should be enabled to

- use the ability to play at make-believe to enter fully into participation in drama (*belief*)
- 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 (*role and character*)
- experience how context is built and a drama reality created through the use of space and objects (*place*)
- experience how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present dramatic action (*time*)
- develop the ability to help maintain the focus in the dramatic action (*belief/time/action/tension*)
- begin to see how tension adds to drama the suspense that ensures the interest of the participants (*tension*)

Strand Unit: Reflecting on Drama

The child should be enabled to

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

Strand Unit: Co-operating and communicating through Drama

The child should be enabled to

- 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

Drama Glance Card – Third and Fourth Class

Strand: Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding.

Strand Unit: Exploring and Making Drama

The child should be enabled to

- enter into the fictional dramatic context with the same spontaneity and freedom that he/she has earlier applied to make-believe play (*belief*)
- 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 (*role and character*)
- discover how the use of space and objects can help in building the context and in signifying dramatic themes (*place*)
- explore how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present dramatic action (*time*)
- become aware of the rules that help maintain focus in the dramatic action (*belief/time/action/tension*)
- begin, as a member of a group, to include in drama activity the elements of tension and suspense (*tension*)

begin the process of using script as a pre-text

Strand Unit: Reflecting on Drama

The child should be enabled to

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

Strand Unit: Co-operating and communicating through Drama

The child should be enabled to

- 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 with others in helping to shape the drama
- develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other
- 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

Basic Drama Strategies for Primary Schools

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' sailor's 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 as in-role characters are released to answer questions often formally seated facing 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 is 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

Suggested strategies for various class bands

Junior and Senior Infants: defining the space, still images, teacher-in-role, mimed narration, whole group improvisation, paired improvisation, hotseating.

First and Second Class: defining the space, still images, thought-tracking, teacher-in-role, mimed narration, briefing, small group and whole group improvisation, paired improvisation, briefing.

Third and Fourth Class: defining the space, still images, thought-tracking, teacher-in-role, mime and narration, briefing, small group and whole group improvisation, paired improvisation, ritual, flashback flashforward, hotseating.

Fifth and Sixth Class: defining the space, still images, thought-tracking, teacher-in-role, mimed narration, briefing, small group and whole group improvisation, paired improvisation, ritual, flashback flashforward, hotseating.

Reflection objectives and matching questions for the teacher

Sample of Teacher's Questions which develop prediction

“What might happen next?”
“How might this affect...?”
“What are the consequences for... ?”
“Can you suggest a different way...?”
“What if... ? ” “Supposing... ?”
“I wonder if ..”
“Can you imagine the next scene... ?”

Strand Unit Objective: *"reflect on a particular dramatic action in order to create possible, courses for the action that will reflect more closely the life patterns and issues being examined"*

Sample of Teacher's Questions which develop a link between story, theme and life experience

“ Did you like the drama? Why?’
“What did you find out about.. (e.g. a character or a way of life)?”
‘What might the other people in the village be saying about....?’
“What is the message of this drama?”
“Does this remind you of anything you have read in a book or seen in a film or television?”
“What crossed your mind as you watched this drama moment?”
“Could this moment happen again? Explain”
“What advice would you give...?”
“What might be your worries as you watch this scene?”
“Is their life then like our lives now?”

Strand Unit Objective: *"learn, through drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience"*

Sample of Teacher's Questions to develop hypothesis... to draw conclusions

“I wonder what motivated him to ...?”
“Put a caption on that scene”
“I wonder what this drama tells us about life and people?”
“Should have fought ...?”
“What advice would you give now?”
“Why is this an important drama? What is at stake?”

Strand Unit Objective: *"use the sharing of insights arising out of dramatic action to develop the ability to draw conclusions and to hypothesise about life and people"*

Reflection on Drama

Some pointers

- Reflection can happen during or at the end of the lesson.
- The child stands back from the action and thinks a little more deeply about the characters they have met, the lives they lead and the message of the drama
- The teacher should challenge easy answers
- A balance between individual, group and whole class discussion.
- A balance between reflection through the visual arts, listening, speaking, doing, writing and questioning
- Can be enhanced by use of fabric, music, objects, and dimmed lights
- Imagine what might happen in the future – make choices and consider consequences

Note: A large copy of the following Methods of Reflection diagram will be handed to you



