



Scoil Naisiúnta Rónáin Naofa Cluain Lua

St. Ronan's N.S., Clonloo, Boyle, Co. Sligo

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Drama Plan



Introduction:

This plan was formulated by the staff of St. Ronan's N.S. We will endeavour to deliver a broad-based and balanced programme. This document will serve as a source of information for teachers, parents, Board of Management and the Department of Education.

Rationale:

At St. Ronan's N.S. we believe drama allows our pupils to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas in a safe context, leading to a better understanding of the world. It provides for opportunities to reflect on the insights gained in the process. The drama curriculum contributes to developing the child's confidence.

Vision:

In our mission statement, we stress the importance of helping our pupils in achieving their potential. Drama can assist in the fulfilment of the child's cognitive and affective needs and in providing for his/her future personal, social and emotional development. Drama activities enable the child to make connections between the imaginative life and the real world, to organise and express ideas, feelings and experiences in dramatic form. Through the use of drama we aim to promote strong communication and social skills and help children deal with day to day experiences in a positive way.

Aims:

We endorse the aims of the Primary Curriculum for Drama.

The aims of the drama curriculum are

- 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 curriculum 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
- to form the criteria with which to evaluate the drama texts, written or performed, to which he/she is continually exposed.

Curriculum Planning:

The Drama Curriculum contains just one strand. This strand is concerned with using drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding. It includes three strand units. These are

- Exploring and making drama
- Reflecting on drama
- Cooperating and communication in making drama

The following is an overview of the curriculum content for drama.

Overview

Strand

Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding

Strand units

- Exploring and making drama
- Reflecting on drama
- Co-operating and communicating in making drama

Prerequisites for making drama

The approach to drama in the curriculum may be termed process drama. It involves children in a process of improvisation and exploration that leads to definable drama outcomes and learning outcomes. In order to make the process effective three prerequisites are necessary:

- Content
- The fictional lens
- Creating a safe environment

Elements of drama:

Drama is characterised by certain features that give it its unique power. These may be called the elements of drama. They are:

- Belief
- Role and character
- Action
- Place
- Time
- Tension
- Significance
- Genre

Drama classes will not dwell on the display element of drama but will emphasise the benefits to be gained from the process of exploring life through the creation of plot, theme, fiction and make-believe. Stimuli will include drama resource books, stories, photos, objects, issues from the S.P.H.E. curriculum and other subject areas e.g. History: aspects of life in the past, present, future; needs and concerns of other pupils.

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 the roles, a willingness to accept the fictional consequences of drama and a willingness to explore. Each year the teacher will agree the ground rules with the children to ensure the aforementioned conditions exist. These are:

- ❖ Listen to each other
- ❖ Take turns
- ❖ Don't make fun of others/Respect others.
- ❖ Be careful in your space

Children will be taught to understand that once the drama lesson is ended so too is the world of make believe that is created.

The main focus in our drama curriculum is process drama which will involve the pupils in such activities as

- Improvisation

- Entering into lives and situations
- Engaging with life issues and themes through drama
- Living through a story, making it up as they go along.
- Solving problems in the real and fictional worlds, co-operating with others and pooling ideas.

All of this will take place at a level suitable to the age of the child.

In the dramatic activity, the teacher has only to act as a facilitator pointing out possibilities of certain paths but leaving much of the responsibility for the exploration and its enjoyment to the child.

The following strategies may be used in drama:

- Drama games
- Still image/Freeze-frame/Montage
- Hot-seating
- Thought-tracking
- Sound-tracking
- Voices in the head: conscience alley
- Improvisation
- Defining the Space
- Mimed Narration
- Teacher In Role
- Children In Role
- Briefing
- Flashback/Flash-forward

Equality of participation and access:

Drama is for everybody. We are conscious that every child is different and possesses different levels of creativity, self-esteem and willingness to participate. Taking these elements into consideration we will endeavour to ensure that each individual can have full access to the experience of the elements of drama. Tasks and assignments will be given accordingly.

Children with different needs:

We feel that drama offers children with special needs an opportunity to participate as fully as possible in the work of the class, to learn in a team and to excel. Teachers will ensure that these children are not overlooked in group work and that they are encouraged to engage fully with the topic being covered. Other children will also learn from the special needs child and teachers will look for opportunities to point this out.

The drama experience in general and the activities in the strand unit “Co-operating and communicating in making drama” provide learning opportunities that are crucial to children with special needs. In can, in particular, contribute to the child’s language development in extending vocabulary and expressive ability. The physical dimension of drama will also assist non-verbal expression. In developing the child’s concepts of drama, elements such as place and time, spatial awareness and more accurate perceptions of time relationships are cultivated. Furthermore, the story base of process drama will help to develop the child’s ability to understand and express the sequential nature of events and the importance of focusing on different aspects of a drama activity will foster powers of concentration.

Because drama is a co-operative activity, it provides a valuable experience in turn-taking and in working with others in order to achieve particular goals. One of the essential learning benefits of drama is that it provides the opportunity to deal with questions of choice and conflict by distancing them in the fictional context, thus helping to provide a safe environment in which to explore them. Above all, because it gives such scope for self-expression and self-realisation, the contribution drama can make to the child’s self-esteem is incalculable.

Linkage and integration:

All three strands in drama are normally covered in each lesson and are so closely linked as to be difficult to be taught as separate units. Opportunities for integration will be provided for where possible in the drama programme. Sample areas for integration include:

- Gaeilge – ag déanamh agallaimh agus drámaí beaga bunaithe ar na téamaí sa Ghaeilge.
- English – Use of oral language, stories, poems etc
- History – characters from history, certain time periods etc
- Music – express feelings created by music in a dramatic way etc
- Religion – participation in Nativity Play
- Art – Use of pictures as stimulus for drama, represent drama work in art.
- SPHE – encourage team work, co-operation, empathy, respect for others etc
- Aistear – Role Play Area changed monthly.

Assessment and Record-Keeping:

Assessment in drama is concerned with monitoring the development of the children’s drama skills and the success with which they learn through an engagement with the three strand units of the curriculum. Areas for assessment include:

- The child’s ability to engage with the task in hand.
- The child’s attitude and enjoyment of the subject.
- The child’s ability to work in a group/with a partner/alone.

- The child's ability to describe his own process.
- The child's ability to self-evaluate.

Most assessment is through teacher observation. It may also be done through teacher-designed tasks and tests and gathering work samples. A video recording of the children's work may be occasionally made.

Organisational Planning:

Timetable:

Infant classes will have a minimum of 50 minutes of Drama per week while 1st – 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 choose to block times for Drama at particular times of the year e.g. Christmas Nativity Play. In addition to this, drama is integrated into the curriculum in English, Gaeilge, History, S.P.H.E. etc.

Drama takes place in the classrooms or outdoors.

Resources:

Resources already in use in the school include:

- Drama curriculum and teacher guidelines
- Chatterbox
- Ideas for Drama
- 100+ Ideas for Drama
- Online Resources

Health & Safety:

The safety and well being of the children in our care is, and always, of paramount importance. The nature of the Drama Curriculum is such that there is a lot of movement and care will be taken to ensure that the area being used for drama is as free from furniture and other obstructions as possible. No child may attempt anything in drama which might pose a threat to his/her own health or that of anyone else.

Staff Development:

Teachers work closely together and share their talents and strengths generously with each other. Teachers have access to reference books, resource materials, equipment and websites dealing with Drama. Drama will be on the agenda at some staff meetings per year. This will allow for review of the policy and also give an opportunity for members of staff to share ideas that are working for them. Teachers will be informed about upcoming courses in education centres and other bodies providing professional development through the staffroom notice board.

Parental involvement:

Our school always welcomes parental involvement and we have been very lucky because so many parents have been willing to share their gifts and talents with us. They have helped with drama lessons, making costumes, preparing a venue, amplification, etc.

Community links:

Children take part in a Christmas Concert every year and these concerts have always been well supported by the local community. We try to visit the Hawkswell Theatre, Sligo or the T.F Theatre, Castlebar every couple of years e.g. the Barnstorm Theatre Production of "The Bus" which explored bullying.

Success Criteria:

The success of this policy will be measured using the following criteria:

- During their time in the school, it is expected that children will experience a broad and balanced drama programme.
- Participation in and evidence of enjoyment of, the drama programme.

Roles and Responsibility:

The responsibility for implementing the plan lies with the principal and the class teacher.

Ratification and Communication:

A copy of this plan is available for inspection in the school. This plan will be reviewed by the Board of Management in three years' time or earlier if necessary and was ratified by the B.O.M. on the _____.

Signed: _____.