

**Talbot Senior National School  
Bawnogue  
Clondalkin, Dublin 22.**

**Whole School Plan for  
Drama**

# Policy on Drama for Talbot Senior National School

## ■ Introductory Statement and Rationale

### Introductory Statement

The staff of Talbot Senior National School formulated this plan to collate together the teaching of Drama throughout the whole school. A collaborative approach was adopted when writing this plan to ensure that all the staff share in a sense of ownership in the planning process and the finished plan. This ensures a consistent development of the Drama curriculum throughout the whole school.

### Rationale

Aspects of Drama have been taught in our school for many years through various methodologies and strategies. It has also been taught in an integrated way with other subjects such as Gaelge, English, History, SPHE, Art and Music. However, we wish to formalise our teaching of Drama and plan for it on a whole school basis to ensure compliance with DES guidelines.

## ■ Vision and Aims

### (a) *Vision*

\*We aim through this plan, drawn up in accordance with the drama curriculum, to set out our approach to the teaching and learning of drama. This plan will form the basis for teachers' long and short-term planning. It will also inform new or temporary teachers of the approaches and methodologies used in our school.

\*We are committed to fostering the strand and three strand units of the Drama curriculum appropriate to the needs and age level of the pupils

\*We envisage that when the children's differing abilities, intrinsic talents and varying learning styles are considered, Drama can facilitate learning in many areas of the curriculum.

### (b) **Aims:**

1. To enable the children to become Drama literate
2. To help the children express ideas, experiences and feelings through Drama
3. To foster sensitivity towards the enjoyment and appreciation of Drama.
4. 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
5. 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
6. To enable the child to co-operate and communicate with others in solving problems in the drama and through the drama
7. 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

We would hope that the children would have a balanced curriculum in all Strands and Strand Units of the Drama curriculum.

We hope to achieve this through an integrated approach including the elements of Drama outlined below.

**The Drama curriculum will be implemented as follows:**

#### (1) Through Strands & Strand Units

Teachers are familiar with the strands and strand units for the relevant class levels.

The Strand of Drama to *explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding* encompasses the three strand units of *Exploring and making the drama, Reflecting on the Drama and Co-operating and communicating in making the drama.*

#### (2) Through the elements of Drama

Using the elements of Drama Time, Belief, Role and Character, Action, Place, Tension, Significance and Genre the Strand and Strand units will be developed.

#### (3) Using a selection of Drama conventions

Conscience Alley, Teacher in Role, Child in Role, Forum Theatre, Role on the wall, Hot-seating, Mantle of the expert, maps/diagrams, Mime, Still image, Thought tracking, Over heard conversations. (*a description of each convention can be found at the back of this plan.*)

#### (4) Using a variety of stimuli to develop themes at each level

The class novel, aspects of the SESE curriculum, stories, poetry, pictures, photographs, religious festivals, cultural events e.g. Seachtain na Gaelge concerns/issues raised by the children.

#### (5) Thematic Approach

Where possible teachers will adopt a thematic approach to the teaching of Drama in line with curriculum guidelines.

#### (6) School Play

The school will endeavour to stage a musical production every two years

### 2. Approaches and Methodologies

The following approaches and methodologies are being implemented in our school:

- (1) Prerequisites for drama – *content, the fictional lens, the creation of a safe classroom environment*
- (2) Make believe play to process drama
- (3) The elements of drama - *Time, Belief, Role and Character, Action, Place, Tension, Significance and Genre*
- (4) The content of the Drama curriculum – *Strands, Strand Units*
- (5) Talk and discussion
- (6) Problem solving
- (7) Active learning
- (8) Collaborative learning
- (9) Skills through content
- (10) School play

### **3. Children with Different Needs**

In keeping with the ethos of our school, each individual is helped to develop to his/her potential. This will be achieved by teachers varying the level and pace to suit individual needs and to ensure learning and success for every child. The work assigned to the children will be carried out at an appropriate pace within a specific time range.

### **4. Linkage and Integration**

Linkage, within the drama curriculum, e.g. the strands and strand units to be thought through an integrated approach with elements and conventions of Drama, and integration with other curricular areas.

Drama is suitable to be integrated with Gaeilge, Music, Art, English, History and PE, SPHE, and Religion.

### **5. Assessment and Record Keeping**

Assessment in Drama is concerned with children's acquisition of knowledge and the balance of that with the development of the elements of Drama. Consequently a broad range of assessment tools and approaches are necessary. The following are among the assessment tools found useful –

Teacher Observation

Teacher designed tasks

Class Discussion

Work samples

Projects

School play

### **6. Equality of Participation and Access**

All children in our school participate in Drama and are given equal opportunities in class. Where required and feasible, language will be simplified and used to assist children whose first language is not English.

Physical layout of classroom should accommodate children with physical disabilities.

## **■ Organisational Planning**

### **7. Timetable**

Arts education (Music, Drama and Visual Arts) 3 hours per week.

Individual teachers will timetable drama as suits their class timetables.

### **8. Resources**

101+ Ideas for Drama – one per stream

Teachers have access to an Interactive whiteboard where they can access a wide range of resources online.

Each teacher can use the various stories/poetry in each stream as stimuli for Drama.

Different History topics can be used as a basis for Drama.

An example of how story and poetry can be used in Drama is attached to plan.

A list of useful websites for Drama can be found in the teachers section of the school website.

### **9. Health and Safety**

Teachers will at all times be mindful of the schools Health and Safety Policy. Children will be encouraged to safeguard their own well being by following classroom and out of class rules.

### **10. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting**

Annual planning by teachers covers all strands and strand units.

Each teacher plans monthly for drama on the standard drama planning sheet.

A standardised cuntas miosuil is used for drama each month and handed to the principal.

Teachers in their probationary year may be requested to plan differently by their inspector.

## **11. Staff Development**

Class groupings meet once monthly and may discuss drama if required.

Sharing of information and expertise etc is done at these meetings.

Courses on drama offered by the DWEC or other organisations are communicated to the staff.

## **12. Parental Involvement**

Assessment results are made available to parents at parent/teacher meetings and through summer reports.

In conjunction with school policy teachers are available by appointment to discuss any drama related concerns with parents.

The Drama Plan is available on the school website.

Once every two years there is school play/musical which all the children participate in. Parents are welcome to attend. The parents also help with backstage issues at the School Play such as make-up, costumes etc.

## **13. Community Links**

The school will attend plays in the local area where feasible.

The post holder will research different Drama groups (e.g. TEAM, Outreach etc.) to come to the school to further develop the children's understanding of Drama.

The post holder will look into groups of children going to see plays in theatres around Dublin.

Xilinx have provided funding for these groups/visits to theatres.

## **■ Success Criteria**

- That this plan will be used in the planning and teaching of drama in Talbot S.N.S.
- The principal will know from cuntais miosuila that procedures and approaches in this plan are being followed.
- Feedback from teachers, pupils, parents and inspectors.
- Every child will be working at their own level.
- Teacher evaluation and assessment.

## **■ Implementation**

### **(a) Roles and Responsibilities**

This plan will be implemented by all staff of Talbot S.N.S.

Review and development of this plan is co-ordinated by post holder.

### **(b) Timeframe**

The plan will be implemented in the academic year 2010 /2011

## **■ Review**

### **(a) Roles and Responsibilities**

This plan was undertaken in September 2010 following ongoing consultation with all staff.

It was coordinated by the post holder.

### **(b) Timeframe**

This plan was implemented in September 2010 and will be reviewed and updated by staff as needs arise. A formal review will take place in the 2012/2013 Academic year.

## **Ratification and Communication**

It will be available on the school website.

The plan was ratified by the BOM on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2010

It will be circulated to every teacher.

# **USEFUL DRAMA GAMES AND WARM-UP ACTIVITIES**

**Name of Game:** Popcorn

**Class Range:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Class

**Space Required:** Classroom or Hall

Everyone stands in a circle with a little space between each child.

Children randomly and unexpectedly jump up into the air. At some time in the jump they clap their hands. Since other players are also jumping and clapping their hands at the same time, the name 'Popcorn' seems appropriate. If two children clap their hands at the same time they are out of the circle. The game continues until there is just one person left.

**OR:** The children who are out of the circle can rejoin after a few minutes and the game can be continued until the teacher decides the game is at an end.

**Name of Game:** Digits

**Class Range:** 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Class (With adaptation)

**Space Required:** Hall or classroom/sitting at desks

The children get into a tight circle. The children look at the ground and close their eyes. Someone starts with a number one. Then someone else will shout out number two, someone else number three etc. No one knows who will shout out the next number but if two people call the number at the same time, the group must restart the exercise at one. The teacher can decide how high the children must go to e.g. perhaps to ten at first. This game can be done in reverse 10 – 1 and may be referred to as rocket launch.

**OR:** Use the alphabet or "Word at a Time" story for senior classes.

**Name of Game:** Group Stop

**Class Range:** 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Class

**Space Required:** Classroom/Large space

The children move around the room. One child, any child freezes into a pose. That pose is held. As soon as one child notices that someone has frozen they must freeze too. Eventually the entire group must freeze. Once everyone in the group has frozen the game begins again.

This can be developed by making the children make noises as they move around. Then the group must be silent as well as still.

**Name of Game:** Reactions

**Class Range:** 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> classes

*Space Required: Classroom/desks*

The children are spectators at a football match. Decide what teams are playing. You ask for the children to mime reactions as the match proceeds. The teacher (or one of the Children) call the action of the match e.g. "We've scored, they've scored; we've got a goal but the ref says it's offside; penalty for them; one of our players has been fouled; the ball's gone into the crowd and they won't give it back...." This can be moved on from mime to include still images.

**Name of Game:** Hello

**Class Range:** 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>

*Space Required: Classroom or Hall*

The children move around the room. The teacher asks them to greet each other by shaking hands and introducing themselves, then to move onto the next person. This continues for a while. Then give the greeting an element. For example "greet each other like you are long lost friends".

The teacher can continue to add elements like "greet each other like you are afraid of each other, like the other person has a monkey on their shoulder etc". the greetings can be developed by moving away from English to gibberish. The development of the game means that this game can be used over a few lessons, getting children to use more and more ideas and elements. This game could also be used 'as Gaeilge'.

**OR:** If you are worried about children being left out use the 'Paul Jones' idea of two concentric circles facing each other. The Inner Circle Moves One To The Right At The Teacher's Signal And The Children Greet Each Other.

**Name of Game:** Freeze!

**Class Range:** 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes.

**Space Required:** Classroom/hall.

The children gather in groups of three. A pair of children start to improvise a scene. (the teacher can give ideas to the groups if necessary). The child not in a pair stands apart and observes the improvisation. When he/she shouts freeze, one of the characters must freeze and that child who shouted freeze replaces the frozen character, continuing the improvisation. The child who was frozen then stands apart from the drama and may shout freeze at any time.

**Name of Game:** Sit, Stand, Kneel, Lie down.

**Class Range:** 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes

**Space Required:** Classroom/hall.

The children gather in groups of four. At no time can any child be in the same position i.e. one lies down, one sits, one stands up and one kneels. The children then improvise a scene moving position all the time remembering that they must make sure to be in different positions. If the children are reluctant to move the teacher could use a signal of some sort.

- A full selection of games can be found in 100 + ideas for Drama (Available in school)

### Third and Fourth Classes

#### **Strand units to be covered in third and fourth classes.**

##### **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 in making 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.

# Using story as a pretext for drama in Third and Fourth Classes.

**Example:** Children of Lir

## **Key Moments:**

- Life before the death of Eve the Children's Mother
- Aoife becomes jealous of the children.
- Aoife casts a spell on the four children banishing them to 900 years on the lakes
- The swans' journey from Lade Derravaragh to the Sea of Moyle
- The transformation of the swans.

## **Teacher in Role:**

- The teacher could take on the role of Lir after his wife's death.
- The teacher could take on the role of Aoife as she becomes more and more jealous
- The teacher could take on the role of one of the children talking about their life as a swan.

**Mimed Narration:** The teacher could narrate a storm on one of the lakes as the children mime the swans' actions. The teacher could narrate the swans' journey from lake Derravaragh to the Sea of Moyle

**Still Images:** Pick a key moment from the story and get the children in groups to create a still image of that moment.

**Thought Tracking:** Using the still image that the children have created, the teacher places his/her hand on the child's shoulder. The child then vocalises a thought of their character at that moment in time.

**Improvisation in Pairs/Briefing:** In pairs get the children to take on the roles of Aoife and Lir. The children that are Lir are given the brief that they are to try and convince Aoife to reverse the spell. They must give her reasons. The children that are Aoife are given the brief that they don't really want to reverse the spell.

Other suitable stories as pretext for drama.

Fionn Mac Cumhail, Setanta, St. Patrick, Brendan the Navigator, Brian Boru, Eisint Fionn and the grant from Scotland.

## Using Poetry as a pretext for Drama in Third and Fourth Classes.

### *Possible Strategies*

- Choose a poem that the children have done in English and reflect on the poem and bring it in an issue based direction.
- Use the characters in the poem as a starting point. Use some of the strategies outlined in “Jack and the Beanstalk” to develop it.
- Take a key moment from the poem and improvise a drama from that.

Questions to help the teacher to enter into drama using poetry as a stimulus.

Who?

What?

When?

Where?

## **Example of Poem Suitable for Third and Fourth Classes**

### *MESSY ROOM*

Whosoever room this is should be ashamed!  
His underwear is hanging on the lamp.  
His raincoat is there in the overstuffed chair,  
And the chair is becoming quite mucky and damp.  
His workbook is wedged in the window,  
His sweater's been thrown on the floor.  
His scarf and one ski are beneath the TV,  
And his pants have been carelessly hung on the door.  
His books are all jammed in the closet,  
His vest has been left in the hall.  
A lizard named Ed is asleep in his bed,  
And his smelly old sock has been stuck to the wall.  
Whosoever room this is should be ashamed!  
Donald or Robert or Willie or –  
Huh? You say it's mine? Oh dear,  
I *knew* it looked familiar!

Shel Silverstein

## **FIFTH AND SIXTH CLASSES**

### **Strand units to be covered in Fifth and Sixth Classes.**

#### **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 in Making 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.

### **Using Story as a Pre-text for Drama in Fifth and Sixth Classes.**

#### **Example: Oisín and Tír na nÓg**

##### **Key moments:**

- Life for Oisín with Na Fianna
- Niamh Cinn Óir's Journey
- Life in Tír na nÓg
- Oisín gets homesick
- Oisín when he returns to Ireland and shows his strength
- Life for Niamh after Oisín has gone

##### **Teacher in Role:**

- The teacher could take on the role of Fionn talking about Oisín and why he shouldn't go with Niamh.
- The teacher could take on the role of Oisín thinking about home.
- The teacher could take on the role of Niamh after Oisín has been gone for some time.

**Still Images:** Divide the children into groups of approximately 5. Get them to select a key moment from their story and to represent this using still images. Get them to create three and then show the sequence of these to the rest of the class.

**Thought Tracking:** Using the still image that the children have created, the teacher places their hand on the child's shoulder. The child then vocalises a thought of their character at that moment in time.

**Character Profile:** This strategy could be used after the teacher has been in role as any of the characters. The children create a written profile of the character. They should include details like name, address, eye colour, hair colour, favourite things in a similar way to an identity card.

**Writing in Role:** Get the children to write a diary entry for a character of their choice.

##### **Improvisation in Pairs/Briefing:**

- In pairs get the children to take on the roles of Oisín and Fionn. They improvise the discussion about leaving for Tír na nÓg.
- In pairs get the children to take on the roles of two friends of Oisín or Niamh

# Using Poetry as a Pretext for Drama in fifth and Sixth Classes

## *Possible Strategies*

- Choose a poem that the children have done in English and reflect on the poem and bring it in a issue based direction.
- Use the characters in the poem as a starting point. Use some of the strategies outlined in “Jack and the Beanstalk to develop it.
- Take a key moment from the poem and improvise a drama from that.

Questions to help the teacher to enter into drama using poetry as a stimulus.

Who?

What?

When?

Where?

## **Example of Poems suitable for Fifth and Sixth Classes.**

### Lord Ulin's Daughter

A Chieftain to the Highlands bound  
Cries, 'Boatman, do not tarry!  
And I'll give thee a silver pound  
To row us o'er the ferry!'

'Now who be ye, would cross Lochgyle,  
This dark and stormy water?'  
'O I'm the chief of Ulva's isle,  
white  
And this, Lord Ulin's daughter.

'And fast before her father's men  
Three days we've fled together,  
For should he find us in the glen,  
face  
My blood would stain the heather.

'His horsemen hard behind us ride  
Should they our steps discover,  
Then who will cheer my bonny bride,  
When they have slain her lover?

Out spoke the hardy Highland wight,  
'I'll go, my chief, I', ready:  
It is not for you your silver bright,  
But for your winsome lady:-

'And by my word! The bonny bride  
In danger shall not tarry;  
So though the waves are raging  
I'll row you o'er the ferry.'

By this the storm grew loud apace,  
The water-wraith was shrieking;  
And in the scowl of Heaven each  
Grew dark as they were speaking

But still as wilder blew the wind,  
And as the night grew drearer,  
Adown the glen rode armed men  
Their trampling sounded nearer.