
a tree is planted

IDEA PARIS 2013

PAPER PRESENTATION



1. 'A tree is planted'

2 .Introduction

My name is William Wall and I'm from Dublin, Ireland. For the past 4 years , I am a Drama Education Practitioner in Primary Education, mentoring Teachers in the classroom. Primary School in Ireland is for children aged 4 to 12years. I have my own website: www.drama.ie . As a member of the Association for Drama in Education in Ireland,A.D.E.I., I

was their webmaster & still & video photographer for the past 5 years.

3.Reimagining Education

Over my 37 years as a primary school teacher, I have been pursuing the goal of reimagining education.

Only 9 years ago I discovered, Drama Education. Drama Education is such an amazing art form that immediately engages and resonates with pupils of any age. These pupils will be living in an exponentially demanding future. Their future living will demand creativity, inovation and resilience.

The pupils of today and tomorrow need a reimagined education. Drama Education can lead the way together with the other Arts, in reimagining education.

4. D.I.W.I.: Drama Interwoven With Irish

I've been keen to find ways forward that speak to the classroom teacher. This is what led me last September to devise and develop my D.I.W.I. programme - Drama Interwoven With Irish. I initiated the programme with children aged 11 & 12 years.

5. Eileen Pennington

Firstly I drew on the expertese of Eileen Pennington. Eileen Pennington was a co-worker with Dorothy Heathcote, lesser know to the wider world but an equally experienced and equally gifted drama teacher and theatre practitioner. An Inspiration!

6. Joe Winston

Joe Winston, who is probably known to a great many of you, is an inspiration to see him in action. The Professor of Drama and Theatre Education at the University of Warwick, in the UK, has written numerous articles and books over the past 20 years.

7. Joe Winston's book

I'll refer to the book edited by Joe Winston: "Second Language Learning Through Drama - practical techniques and applications" and to his presentation at the IDIERI 7 conference held last year in the University of Limerick.

8. Cecily O'Neill

I had the honour and privilege to first meet with Cecily O'Neill when she walked into my classroom 9 years ago. She was, at the time, an observer on behalf of the Abbey Theatre's Outreach Programme.

I don't believe, that at a conference such as this, I need say anything further about the easily approachable, unassuming Cecily O'Neill who is at the same time one of the world's foremost authorities in the field of drama in education.

9. Cecily O'Neill & Shin-Mei Kao

It was her book: "Words Into Worlds: Learning a Second Language Through Process Drama" which she co-authored with Shin-Mei Kao that clarified many things for me.

10. Joseph Campbell

My myth and legend expert is none other than Joseph Campbell himself the world's foremost 20th. Century authority on myths and legends from around the world

11. The Hero with a Thousand Faces

and author of: "The Hero with a Thousand Faces" which introduced the concept of 'The Hero's Journey'.

12. The Hero's Journey

It was this concept of 'The Hero's Journey' that I've used over the past two years in my drama in the classroom work.

13. D.I.W.I. Drama Interwoven With Irish I

Before we have an in-depth look at Drama Interwoven With Irish let me first put my DIWI programme into context for you. Where did I find myself regarding Irish and Drama in the classroom when I started off the programme?

14. Irish in Context

First let's look at Irish in the context of the ordinary class in Ireland.

15. Irish Context Sources

I'll intermingle references from these three documents.

[The first is a Department of Education and Science report from 2002 actually, it wasn't published until 2006. It is a report compiled by the Department of Education Inspectorate entitled: "Irish in Primary Schools Long-Term National Trends in Achievement".

The second is a survey from 2007/08 entitled: "The Irish Language and the Irish People.

The third are extracts from the National Census of Ireland taken in 2011.]

16. Overwhelming Dependence

There is an overwhelming dependence of the Irish Language on the public school system. So if the teachers stopped teaching Irish in the schools in the morning, Irish as a living language would shrink a level where its very viability would be brought into question.

17. Irish Speakers

Your looking at the light blue, red and navy colours in the graph from Census 2011. It's people who speak Irish by age. The 'Y' axis on the left denotes age going upward. What does this graph tell us?

18. Irish Speakers close up

There is an implosion. And if you look to the red arrow to the left the implosion on Speaking Irish happens at the age of 18, when children are leaving second level school. Irish is compulsory in school from age 4 to 18 years.

19. The Irish People and Irish

The following figures speak for themselves. I'm going to bounce this ball now and you read it as it bounces!

20. [99% of the population learn Irish in school.

21. Yet only 41% can speak Irish.

22. 27% with conversational ability

23. With 20% speaking Irish occasionally

24. And 2% speak Irish daily, more so in rural and less so in urban areas.

25. The surprise bounce of 93% who wish to revive or preserve it. Leaving 7% who would prefer to discard it.]

26. Teachers and Irish

Let's move on and look at teachers and Irish.

27. They represent a very **important resource for Irish**.

28. Teachers, like other professionals, have **above average ability in Irish**.

29. More often than not teachers have **a personal commitment** to the language.

30. They have a **professional role** in teaching it.

31. The **classroom teacher is key** to the future of Irish.

32. However, **80% of teachers** derived satisfaction from teaching Irish in 1985.

Notice in the right hand corner the 25% decline rate.

33. **55%** did so in 2002

34. Extrapolated from that we could say for sure that **less than 50% of teachers** derive satisfaction from teaching Irish today.

35. Drama in Context

Let's now have a quick look at Drama in the context of the Irish classroom.

36. Drama Education is a **stand alone subject** in the Primary School since 1999.

And it's process drama as articulated and proclaimed by Cecily O'Neill in her book: "Drama Worlds - a framework for process drama"(1995) that is at the core of Drama Education in Ireland.

37. At **Post-Primary level Drama** forms part of English literature.

The emphasis here is more towards the traditional - Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP).

38. The children's view on drama.

The pupils might well summarize their view as follows: "We very much prefer Drama to Irish. We see Drama as fun, games, conversations and a modern way of learning. We love process drama."

39. [**Teachers and Drama** * 3secs.]

40. My Research

The average class teacher is reasonably confident to do drama with their own class. However, my research shows, that a curtailed range of strategies are employed and less than optimal time allocated to drama by the class teacher.

41. Need for C.P.D.

There is a clear need indicated for C.P.D. in Drama Education which is not readily available to the class teacher.

42. So much of what **Drama Education can do is missed** by teachers, Principals and D.E.S.

43. DIWI: Drama Interwoven With Irish 2

DIWI: Drama Interwoven With Irish is orientated towards basic interpersonal communicative skills.

DIWI is simply a programme of lessons that **wove Drama and Oral Irish together in a new and unique way.** But what makes it unique and work so well?

Well it's my DIWI 'Magic Box'! A 'Magic box'? Yes a 'Magic Box!

44. Marconi's Magic Box

Just like Marconi's 'magic box' which was patented for the wireless transmission of radio waves, my DIWI's Magic Box also contains nothing new. Marconi's 1896 invention simply put known objects such as batteries, wires and aerials together in a new configuration. There was nothing magic really about it.

45. DIWI's Magic Box

Similarly here in my Drama Interwoven With Irish programme I've put nothing new into the DIWI Magic Box **but my arrangement of the contents and my emphasis on certain elements is new and I believe this is what makes the difference.** It is what makes it work for the pupils in the Irish classroom.

My DIWI 'Magic Box' contains some **new elements** and some **known elements**.

46. The Magic Box

There's my DIWI's Magic Box with it's six elements within. Let's take a closer look.

47. The Weave

My arrangement as the name suggests, Drama Interwoven With Irish, is a weave between spoken Irish and Drama. It has grown organically and as an organic and living weave there is Drama, a dominant 'over' and a lesser stressed 'under', Oral Irish, *making the weave*.

48. Drama-in-action character

Drama takes the lead, the main character if you will, with Oral Irish being its costume or attire. Together giving a perspective of how the DIWI programme is perceived: 'A drama-in-action character'

49. Caint as Gaeilge

which apparently 'speaks in Irish' but if unsure will speak in English.

50. Speak in Irish once a week

From the perspective of each pupil this drama-in-action character gets to speak in Irish at least once in each lesson. The character's spoken Irish is not too good but he is improving each week!

51. Weave summary

The weave of a 'drama-in-action character' who 'speaks some Irish' in every lesson is a key element. But there are other key elements in the configuration of *DIWI's Magic Box*.

52. Playfulness

Playfulness element #2 in DIWI's Magic Box. A key element in developing this interwoven dynamic approach was the energizing potential of playfulness a path indicated to me by Joe Winston in his IDIERI 7 Conference presentation of last year.

53. Guy Cook

when he made reference to Guy Cook's: "Language Play, Language Learning" In this article Cook argues:

54. Guy Cook quote 1

"a good deal of authentic or natural language is playful, in the sense of being focused upon form and fiction rather than on meaning and reality."

55. Guy Cook quote 2

Cook summarizes his argument by stating: "What is needed for the beginning of the twenty-first century is a recognition of the complexity of language learning: that it is sometimes play and sometimes for real, sometimes form-focused and sometimes meaning-focused, sometimes fiction and sometimes fact."

56. Playful Communication

Reading Guy Cook's article gave the DIWI programme its starting focal point: playful communication.

57. Joe

Let's put playful communication into action now. You are **now going to learn 3 lines of an Irish tongue twister**. It's just for a bit of fun and being playful. Are you ready?

This is Joe. Say Hi Joe.

58. Bean Joe

So this is Bean Joe or Joe's wife. Say Hi Bean Joe. Now I'll begin. Repeat after me each line of the tongue twister and see if you can go to the first 3 lines. Repeat after me.

58 -60. The tongue twister.

Bhí Bean ag Joe. Etc.

61. Playful communication 2

I hope you enjoyed that playful communication while learning your first words in Irish!

62. Physicalization

Physicalization element #3 in DIWI's Magic Box. This particular element I re-discovered along the way. Physicalization simply put is getting the pupils up out of their seats and 'doing' drama. Drama has always been about doing. What I re-discovered is that physicalization is even more than the doing, its the feeling in your bones and with your body the musicality of the target language, Irish in this case.

63. Slubar, Slabar, Slubar

that you may not even understand but often you enjoy the sounds physically first.

One small example will suffice here. Using a book of traditional Irish verse, I picked a poem: "Slubar, Slabar, Slubar", an Irish version of: "Pussy in the well."

The lesson was initiated by an exploration of the title words **slubar, slabar, slubar** and the sense of wetness, dampness, or walking through muddy water they conveyed. Next, how that sense could be exaggerated by adding in a soundscape of water dripping down as if from some height above. Through this combination of words and mini-soundscape the children created an atmosphere of being down in the well.

It was this initial exploration and bringing 'down in the well' to life that gave the pupils, from the first moments, an ownership of the fun and a grasp of the spirit of the whole poem.

64. Dance

Physicalization is closely aligned with the principles of movement in creative dance: body, spacial and dynamic awareness.

65. & 66. Theatre

These coupled with theatrical mime and gesture give us a full range of possibilities when it comes to physicalization.

67. Physicalization

We not only express language with our bodies through gesture and mime but we learn language through our bodies through movement traces and associations.

[By movement traces I mean when, for the first time, you do some movement your mind lays down a trace. Then you do the same movement a second time your brain now strengthens that original trace and it can now be recalled. When you then add language to a particular movement your brain associates that language with that particular movement.]

68. Two prerequisites & objectives

For Drama in the classroom these two elements are linked together as both prerequisites and strangely enough as objectives also.

69. Dialogue 1

Dialogue element #4 in DIWI's Magic Box. Dialogue is a prerequisite and a key part of any drama work. Dialogue at its simplest is having a conversation; speaking clearly and actively listening.

Active listening is an ability that most adults have but many children do not have it naturally. It's a skill that must be learned, practiced and supported by the teacher.

Children appreciate when true dialogue is present in the class, i.e. speaker & listener are roughly evenly matched as in any conversation. Dialogue is a vital element for any interactive and participatory form of pedagogy such as drama.

70. Dialogue 2

My focus on dialogue as being significant comes from the legendary Augusto Boal:

“We believe that the whole relationship between humans should be dialogue in nature. We should have the moment in which we listen to the other and the moment in which we speak”.

[interview on 'Democracy Now' http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HOgv9IqQyjc&feature=player_embedded#!]

71. Ensemble 1

Ensemble element # 5 in DIWI's Magic Box. The essence of ensemble to me is focused energy within the group. Whether working in pairs or in groups the essence of ensemble in the classroom is good communication combined with co-operation where all the pupils are given an equal say in the drama process. It's all the participants pulling together to make sure their play actually happens. And it's the spirit of ensemble that focuses the class on good group work that is key to good classroom drama.

72. Ensemble 2

Here Cecily O'Neill and Shin-Mei Kao set out their objectives for process drama in the second language classroom. Note in particular the fourth and somewhat unexpected last objective.

“The objectives of process drama in the second language classroom are to increase fluency and confidence of the students' speech, to create authentic communication contexts, and to generate new classroom relationships” (Page 15@13%)

What's a little unexpected in 'to generate new classroom relationships' is that it seems not to be immediately connected to the acquisition of language. But language and drama only occur within relationships. Neither is sustained on their own. To me then it is a valid objective, to generate new classroom relationships, in the second language classroom.

73. 2 guiding objectives

I had two guiding objectives when choosing what the next lesson in the programme might be, one language and one drama.

74. Language objective

The key language objective was to engage the pupils in creative communication contexts.

75. Drama objective

The key drama objective was to challenge the pupils through exploration of images, roles, ideas and situations in a manner that would resonate with the pupils' present day lives.

76. The Sculptured Tree I

[Sculptured tree element #6 in DIWI's Magic Box](#). Sculptured tree is my analogy of how my DIWI programme developed and the resulting branches that emerged.

77. A

My A branch was playing with Irish words and verses from traditional Irish poems and songs.

78. B

The B branch emerged from Eileen Pennington's recommendation to use just two still images in pairs, early on with those new to drama.

79. C

The C branch centered on the use of simple and familiar stories, usually fairytales, that all the children easily recognized and the use of simply structured Irish sentences.

80. D

The D branch of the DIWI programme centered on the children learning how to use everyday questioning in Irish as part of dialogue. They playfully read, and wrote their own 'scripts' in the situations such as in the newsagents, the clothes shop or the cafe.

81. E

The E branch was a process dramas, one scary drama - translated from an Andy Kempe workshop another based on a child's story book in Irish about a guard dog, called Bóna.

82. F

The F branch the pupils made their own hand puppets from light card to have a conversation in Irish.

83. G

The G branch development came by way of the children making up their own drama from inspirational pictures.

[These pictures were obtained from the internet from the storybird.com website. A site that has produced art-inspired images from artists for purpose of story writing & storytelling.]

The underlying drama development followed a simplified version of the “Hero’s Journey” by Joseph Campbell. The ‘hero’s journey’ was the scaffolding upon which their plots developed.

84.H

The H branch of the DIWI programme used pre-scripted Irish dramas in a playful manner. The thinking here was that the pupils would ‘take on roles with attitude’ and speak Irish at a level they were comfortable with.

85. The Sculptured Tree 2

Sculptured tree, was an array of approaches used to weave both Irish and Drama together.

[No matter which branch of my sculptured tree I reflect on now each approach resonated with all the pupils and each could be further developed and expanded both in terms of Drama Education and in terms of Oral Irish.]

86. The Magic Box 2

And the DIWI’s Magic Box with its six elements: the weave, playfulness, physicalization, dialogue, ensemble and the sculptured tree.

87. Bóna

I have a personal preference for one process drama called: ‘Bóna’ - the guard dog - as I was challenged and succeeded in creating 2D animations as a drama props in some of the episodes.

88.D.I.W.I. In Action

The majority of the pupils were confident in giving Oral Irish a go and I am positive that the initial target that each pupil would speak at least once in Irish during each lesson was achieved.

Let’s have a look at 30 seconds of D.I.W.I. In Action.

89. A tree is planted

Go raibh míle maith agaibh. Many many thanks to you all. Merci beaucoup.