

Workshop 3
Combined Art & Drama Project
Workshop leaders: Eleanor Jones; Maggie Byrne, Ireland

Aim: To combine both art and drama in a meaningful, worthwhile process leading to an end project that illustrates the potential of the integration of the two disciplines - art and drama within the prison context

Embarking on a journey which will embrace the diverse skills and resources of two individual teachers in their specialist areas of art and drama, while bearing in mind the particular and unique environment of the Medical Care Unit at Mountjoy Prison.
Profile of Prison Environment

Physical space / environment here is quite restricted and confined. With limited space, and mobility. Added to this is the inability of certain groups to mix freely, high tension is an obvious factor.

99% approx of prisoners in this unit are drug addicted. and 1% are on protection.

There are three categories here:

1. Long term drug users (HIV) who are on methadone and other drugs that treat HIV but can also cause many side-effects ie. depression, lethargy, vomiting etc. These men often unwell and motivation and self esteem is very low .
2. Prisoners who are on methadone maintenance but who wish to de-tox . Therefore this group, apart from withdrawal symptoms and quite motivated and enthusiastic to take part in school activities.
3. Drug-free prisoners who have successfully come off drugs and are embracing a more positive lifestyle.

In this project we aim to include all the above categories of prisoners. To do this we have devised three separate parts or modules which will be completed over a period of 8 weeks.

Why a multi-discipline project?

Unlike other more academic subjects , both art and drama lend themselves to group work and team teaching. In order to engage the largest number of men in a creative process we intend to follow the following programme:

1. Introduction of Puppet Project to students.
2. Questionnaire- what are puppets?
3. Collage – themes and characters
4. Visiting puppeteer , to motivate / stimulate ideas.
5. Practical workshop 1st stage-. methods and character forming. More hands on "making" will continue as require
6. Role play using puppets.
7. Improvisation- developing story- line.
8. Scripting and story telling.
9. Finalisation Stage and props.
10. Recording sound-overs and voices

Music will be an important element in the final performance. Chosen tracks both sung and played by the men will be recorded as well as music taped from original sound tracks .

Conference

In this workshop we will outline the project we have carried out over the last three months in the special Medical unit in the largest prison in Ireland, namely the Art/Drama Puppet production. We will deliver a profile of the students who participated and describe the diversity and special needs of the group, difficulties etc... It is important to stress the need for a holistic approach in this interdisciplinary project in achieving the best possible outcome.

The workshop will begin with a brief contextualisation of the project with a focus on the process involved.. We will involve the delegates in an interactive way making and using Shadow Puppets . The function of this ancient Eastern art-form has always been to educate and amuse by portraying good in a struggle against evil with of course good always triumphant. In using a hands-on demonstration and allowing people to fully participate we can illustrate the effectiveness of combining art/drama in a prison education setting.

