

Collins, Fidelma, 2014, *Drama as a Subject in the Irish Primary School: Teachers' Perceptions and Implementation*

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

This study investigates teachers' perceptions of aspects of the implementation of drama as a subject in the 1999 Revised Primary School Curriculum in Irish schools. The study was carried out in four schools in the south-east of Ireland.

Chapter One sets the study in context. It provides a definition of drama, describes the schools in which teachers were surveyed and outlines the research questions.

In Chapter Two, literature relevant to the study is presented. This literature deals extensively with aspects of implementation of the drama curriculum in Irish primary schools, e.g., the pre-requisites for making drama, methodologies used in teaching drama, in-service, timetabling and evaluation. Drama and arts education in the Irish context are explored.

Chapter Three considers research methodology in general, outlines research methods available to educational researchers and identifies the survey as the most suitable method for the present research. Ethical issues are considered and the general plan of the study is sketched.

Chapter Four presents the findings and provides analysis. The research found, *inter alia*, that less than half of the respondents were happy with the drama curriculum;; that only three-tenths felt confident teaching drama; that the majority had received just two days in-service in the teaching of the drama; that there was a significant variation between the times allotted by respondents to the teaching of drama and that a narrow range of assessment tools was used by respondents. Large classes and pupils' lack of ability in oral language were identified as challenges in the teaching of drama.

Chapter Five presents conclusions, recommendations as to areas identified as warranting further research. Amongst the recommendations are that a whole-school approach be adopted in schools to drama teaching, that in-service be provided as a matter of urgency and that drama be used in special education settings. It is also recommended that curriculum overload and the issue of large classes be re-examined by the DES, as both of these issues impinge on the successful implementation of the drama curriculum.