

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This resource pack has been designed to link with three specific areas of the curriculum, SPHE, CSPE and English to coincide with curriculum planning and to offer active learning ideas that can be used to explore the idea of power structures, group dynamics and self and link with the play.

Other cross curricular links could be made with Art and Drama. Each activity begins with a grid structure outlining the areas specific to each curriculum subject. The subject is broken down into its basic structure. SPHE into Modules and Topics, CSPE is divided into Units and Concepts, and English is divided into modules and unit themes.

The top left hand corner of the grid will highlight if this is a whole group, small group, pairs or individual activity.

The top right hand corner of the grid will highlight the year groups the activity is appropriate for. Every effort has been made to make the resource pack as user friendly, accessible and curriculum linked as possible. However, the class teacher and the class can decide what activities best suit the group. The activities can be adapted and there are suggestions for how various activities could be used across the curriculum and within other aspects of the particular core subjects of this pack, namely, SPHE, CSPE and English.

Every activity has a learning objective and outcomes; these can be adapted to suit the teacher and the class group.

The materials and resources necessary for each activity are noted in the box below the grid.

There is a photocopiable section at the back of the resource pack which contains handouts and questions that can be used with the class during the activities. It is stated in the plan when these can be used.

Here is an example of the layout you will find across the resource pack:

Unit 2 and 3: Understanding and discussing Power Structures, Self and Group Dynamics

Active Learning – Group Poster Collage Activity:

Small groups activity

Year groups: 2 nd , 3 rd , TY
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SPHE: Belonging and Integrating Self Management	<i>Topic: Group work</i> Topic: What motivates me? Organising my time
CSPE: The Individual and Citizenship	<i>Concept: Human Dignity</i>
English: Personal, Social and Cultural Literacy	<i>Unit theme: Power - Responding to images</i> <i>Link: Media Studies – advertising, register – audience, power of the media, decision making.</i>

Learning Objective: To understand the idea of power through images and texts used in making a small group poster collage.
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Learning Outcomes: Students will develop an understanding of power in images and texts. Students will work together discussing how power is presented in images and texts. Students will develop an understanding of how posters, text and images are used to convey messages in advertising and the media.

Materials: Magazines, newspapers, comics, posters, A3 paper, markers, pens, colouring pencils, glue, sticky tape

Breakdown of the resource pack:

The resource pack contains four main units with activities in each unit focusing on particular areas. The activities encourage students to develop skills in comprehension, reflection, discussion, critical thinking, communication and developing themselves through active learning and participation.

Each of these units is comprised of a variety of active learning, drama and written activities to give students and teachers an opportunity to explore ideas in the play and the resource pack in different ways. The title page for each unit gives a breakdown of activities. The resource pack can be used with your planning and other resources across the curriculum. When trying the activities in the pack be aware of health and safety, if the space needs to be cleared, ensure that the space is safe prior to beginning the activity. Ground rules and a contract of learning are useful to set up with every class, especially in relation to SPHE, CSPE, English and Drama where various ideas will be discussed, ensure that there is a safe learning environment with sensitivity and respect for everyone's opinions and ideas. Ground rules and contracts of learning can be done in the earlier sessions with the group; these provide a good starting point for whole class learning and ownership of their work and ideas.

Unit 1: Understanding the Play and the Production

This unit begins with looking at the play using a mind map strategy, a useful resource for students to develop and which features in unit 2 and 3 of the pack. While the activities in this unit look at characters, characterization and are particularly suited to English and Drama, links are made with SPHE – group work and CSPE - Human Dignity.

Unit 2 and 3: Understanding and discussing power structures, Self and Group Dynamics

The activities outlined in this unit ask students to consider the concept of power, how power is used in groups, group dynamics and roles in a group, status, self-esteem, bullying, strategies to prevent bullying and ways to empower young people. These activities are linked with SPHE, CSPE, English, Art and Drama.

Unit 4: Useful information for Students, Teachers and Parents

This section contains useful websites, phone numbers and agencies that cater for young people, teachers and parents. There is also a Teaching and Learning resource section with useful websites for planning activities.

Photocopiable section:

Various activities throughout the resource pack can be photocopied to use with the group. These are available within the pack and in the photocopiable section of the pack.

Bibliography:

All of the resources, books and websites are referenced in the bibliography for teachers, students and parents to use for research or interest.

Synopsis – *The Shape of a Girl*

The Shape of a Girl by Joan McLeod tells the story of Braide, a fifteen year old girl who recounts her memories and flashbacks of herself and her friends to her absent brother, Trevor.

Braidie is woken by the sound of her mother yelling, “Braidie -I have had IT”, (Mac Leod, 21). She speaks to her absent brother Trevor who is now living up the country. Braidie describes her relationship with her mother and how the sound of her mother’s voice, reminds her of the day Trevor said when their mother died she would come back as an ear wig. Braidie remembers their childhood days of watching the summer camp of the “blind people” (Mac Leod, 22), visually impaired across the water and the bell that sounded during their day. Braidie misses her brother and throughout the play discloses to him how she feels about herself and what has happened over the past few years.

Braidie has decided not to attend school for the last few weeks. Instead she watches a television show called, “MOST DANGEROUS AND AWFUL MOMENTS EVER” (Mac Leod, 25). Braidie has started to read a female poet called Stevie Smith and is reminded of a line of her poetry, “This thing about waving not drowning” (Mac Leod, 25). Braidie has become obsessed by news of a group of girls whom are accused of murdering a fourteen year old girl their own age. The images of the girls in newspapers, magazines and on the television remind Braidie of herself and her own group of friends. Braidie considers that she her group could be like those girls. The news story Braidie is obsessed with in the play is loosely based on the real life tragedy of Reena Virk, a young fourteen year old girl who was killed by a group of girls and a boy her own age in 1997.

Braidie has flashbacks throughout the play of memories from her childhood and of more recent memories. When she remembers some memories she asks her brother questions. Braidie talks about her first memories of Sofie. Braidie recalls how Sofie, Amber, Adrienne and her all played together and then how one day it all changed. The day Adrienne decided that they would have a penalty day. “And then one day, one normal un-special day Adrienne comes to school and announces that it’s penalty day. We don’t know what penalty day is. Adrienne explains that on penalty day one girl is chosen and everyone is mean to that one girl for the whole day. *Why?* Adrienne doesn’t know. It’s just a part of school...I don’t know why it was Sofie. It just was.”(Mac Leod, 30 -31)

The play works in flashbacks, Braidie discusses how the fourteen year old girl was attacked, that it started with butting out a cigarette on her forehead. She talks about how girls treat each other.

“When I look at her picture, when I look at the picture of the dead girl in the paper, part of me gets it. And I hate that I do; I hate to be even partly composed of that sort of information. But right now, if you put me in a room filled with girls, girls my age that I’ve never seen before in my life – I could divide them all up. I could decide who goes where and just where I fit in without anyone even opening their mouth.” (Mac Leod, 34)

Braidie takes on the role of Adrienne in the play. Braidie talks about how she warned Sofie not to go on a field trip when they were twelve and discusses the role of the bystanders, the observers who watch other people being assaulted and assaulting but do nothing and

questions why they are never prosecuted. How much of a role does the observer have in all of this?

Briadie recalls how Adrienne smacked Sofie's head on a rock on the beach and chased her, how Briadie watched but how Trevor hit Adrienne with a smooth black rock from his catapult that stalled her and helped Sofie to escape.

She remembers trying to be the same, laughing in unison with her friends, fighting with her mother. Braidie reads detailed accounts of how the girl was murdered in November 1997.

And in the final Sofie attack by Adrienne in the bathroom, Braidie watched while Sofie called to her for help. Braidie is sickened by her own and Adrienne's actions and sees Adrienne now in a different light.

"And she's gone. The friend I loved is gone.
All that's left is the shape of a girl." (Mac Leod, 56)

Braidie decides to talk to Annie, her old pre-school teacher with whom she confides in. Annie says she will support Braidie when she tells the principal. The play ends with Braidie as an eight year old in her innocent youth as, "perfect - girls" (Mac Leod, 60) with dreams and possibilities.