

Process Drama and the Elements of Theatre - the links

All genres of theatre are grounded in performance and are unified by the same common elements of theatre. This of course, includes process drama. In this genre, performance to an external audience is absent but performance to the internal audience is essential as the participants in the drama make meaning for themselves.

When using the planning principles of process drama, we need to firmly understand that they embrace the elements of theatre and realise that by adhering to the principles, we will be ensuring that a theatrical structure is present. This is important because the better the drama, the better the learning.

So, what follows is a diagrammatic representation of how they fit together.

Planning Principle		Theatre Element	
Theme/ learning area	The area of human experience with which we wish the pupils to engage	Focus	The particular aspect of the human condition under examination in the drama
Context	The fictional circumstances in which the learning area will be explored	Metaphor	The dramatic context stands for the real life human experience to be explored
Roles	The fictional people the children (and teacher) are going to be in the drama	Role	The characters in the play
Frame	The tension-giver – empowers communication and protects into experience	Tension	The element which charges the drama through the friction between protagonist and antagonist agencies
Sign	Artefacts, sounds, images etc. that bring significance to the drama	Symbol	The use of items which have meaning above their utilitarian function
Strategies	Different performance forms which are used to create the drama	Time, space, contrast	Elements which are juxtaposed to create meaning