DUBLIN CIRCUS PROJECT

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The Dublin Circus Project

Dublin Circus Project (DCP) is a non profit, member-based organisation, founded in 2009 and working to bring the circus arts to life in Dublin and beyond. We achieve this through building awareness, increasing participation by all and by raising the skill levels of practitioners in Dublin.

Dublin Circus Project has a dedicated, volunteer management team voted in by our members, all of whom work to facilitate the training space and organise and manage the ongoing activities of Dublin Circus Project. Our members vary from full time circus performers, emerging circus artists to hobbyists engaging in a fun fitness alternative. We currently have 302 active members.

Dublin Circus Project runs a variety of youth circus training programmes for those aged 4 to 18 years old, from playschool right up through secondary school. We also work with community groups, home schools, summer schools, those who are at-risk and anyone else who would like to bring circus to the lives of young people.

In 2017, we worked with the following schools:
Greystone Home School Group; Swords Educate Together; Beaufort College; St Vincent Girls NS; Independent Theatre Workshop; Hide and Seek Childcare; Old Bawn Secondary School, St Kevin's Secondary School; Christ the King Boys NS; Saoirse Waldorf Dublin Steiner School; Bayside Playgroup; Harold Cross NS, Cabinteely Community School; Mount Temple Comprehensive and Our Lady's Terenure.

ISACS
Irish Street Arts Circus and Spectacle Network

EJC 2014

The Community Foundation for Ireland

Comhairle Cathrach Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

DUBLIN CITY ARTS OFFICE

the arts council an chomhairle ealaíon
funding circus
artscouncil.ie

Transition Year Unit Overview

Title of transition unit:

The Greatest Show in School

Areas of study:

Creativity (Circus) and Personal Achievements (Physical Conditioning & Performance)

Overview:

Over the course of the unit, the students will discover and learn about the Circus Arts and skills, improve their physical condition and acquire and develop specific social skills. Each class will have a social objective (such as resilience, teamwork or celebrating diversity) and a skill objective (such as hula hoop, juggling or stilt walking). In each class the facilitator will set the students a creative task which is to be performed for the rest of the group.
Over the course of the unit, students will be able to experiment with many circus skills and improve on their skills over time. They will be able to work individually and as a team towards a performance.

Related learning:

Students will discover the Circus Arts, the history of Circus and Circus and be introduced to the opportunities in that specific arts sector.
They will acquire and develop transferable social and professional skills such as teamwork, focus, resilience, diversity, curiosity, self-assessment, handling constructive feedback, celebrating achievements and perseverance. Some of the social kills benefits of Circus are: Improvements in problem solving, positive body image and contact, concentration, patience and self-confidence.
Students will develop their physical condition and abilities. Some of the expected benefits of Circus are: Improved hand and/or foot - eye coordination, reflexes, balance, fitness and flexibility.

Summary Outline:

I. Students will experiment with the following circus skills: object balancing, juggling, tight-wire, stilt walking, hula hoop, clown games, diabolo, tumbling and partner acrobatics.

II. Students will learn about and research the history of circus and compare modern and traditional circus.

III. Students will partake in physical conditioning exercises, and will devise, develop, learn and present a movement routine.

IV. Students will develop their ability to focus through low, medium and high focus tasks.

V. Students will engage in team work.

VI. Students will assess their learnings and the skills they acquired.

VII. Students will take direct responsibility in developing, rehearsing and presenting a performance at the end of the unit.

Breakdown of the Unit

Course Details

- Group size: 20 persons max.
- Class Length: Double Period / Week
- Course Length: 10 or 12 weeks
- Contact Time: 15 to 18 hours
- Independent Research Time: 2 hours
- Independent Practice Time: 6 Hours

Week 1	**Getting to know each other ¦ Object Balancing** In this class we will have a strong focus on finding out more about each other, our likes and dislikes and what the group's perception of circus is. This section of the class will also have elements of physical conditioning integrated into the games. A group contract will be created. The group will be introduced to object balancing as it is a very accessible skill which students can achieve success with quickly. A low focus creative task will be set for the group and a closing ritual will be established.
Week 2	**Working Together ¦ Juggling** There will be a number of warm-up games which are designed to create this culture in the group. These games are followed by the physical conditioning section of the class; this will be formatted as a movement exercise, a routine to be learned by the group over the course of the term. The skill to be taught in this class is juggling. A creative task will be set for the group in pairs who will be be spotlighted for a short high focus activity.
Week 3	**Concentration and Focus ¦ Tight-wire and Stilt Walking** The skill objective for the class is balance; tight-wire and stilt walking. Games will focus on the social objective. The physical conditioning movement exercise will be repeated and the participants will learn the basics of tight-wire walking and hand held stilt walking. The creative exercise in this class will involve creating two groups who must design an obstacle course for the other group. The groups will then be timed in their completion of their course.

Breakdown of the Unit

Week 4	**Learning Resilience ¦ Diabolo and Hula Hoop** Analysing failure and repetition, the skill objective for this class is hula-hoop and diabolo. As before, the class will begin with games with focus on the social objective, the movement exercise will follow and then the group will be split into two, half learning diabolo and the other half learning hula hoop. The groups will then be paired off and the pairs will have to teach their partner the skill they were taught. The pair will then be asked to create a short routine using both props.
Week 5	**Celebrating Diversity ¦ Tumbling and Acrobatic Techniques** The skill objective for this class is tumbling and partner acrobatics. This class will begin with games which focus on the social objective, followed by the movement exercise. The group will then learn basic tumbling moves, this will then be followed by the group creating some shapes with their bodies before being taught some basic partner acrobatic moves. The class will conclude with a pyramid involving the entire group.
Week 6	**Encouraging Curiosity ¦ History of Circus and Clown Games** The space will be transformed to bring to mind elements of traditional circuses. This workshop will engage the participants in discovering facts and becoming characters in a circus in the early 1900's. Clown games will be integrated into this workshop and an opportunity will be given to participants to choose a circus skills they have learned and give them a chance to play and discover it in their own way.
Week 7	**Self-Assessing and Self Confidence ¦ Circus Skills** This class will serve to remind of the skills so far. Time will be spent to review the previous term and to talk about the expectations for the next term. The subject of the final performance will be raised here and a short discussion will take place, participants will be asked to think about a skill they would like to concentrate on. A new moment routine will be introduced. A circuit will be laid out for participant to refresh the skills they have learned so far.
Week 8	**Practice and Resilience ¦ Movement Routine and Advanced Juggling** The class will begin with some games, the movement routine will be repeated followed by a more in-depth juggling class, building towards juggling three objects solo. The group will practice the skill they are concentrating on and they will be asked to present a short number at the end of the class.

Breakdown of the Unit

Week 9	**Practice and Resilience ¦ Movement Routine and Stilt Walking** The class will begin with games followed by the movement routine, the participants will then be put into pairs to learn stilt walking. There will be free play at the end of the class and the facilitators will make suggestions as to what participants may wish to work on together and present at the end of the class.
Week 10 (10-wks)	**Celebrating Achievements ¦ Movement Routine** The group's favourite games will be played and facilitators will use exercises which recall funny or memorable moments in the previous classes. Participants will be invited to show any number or tricks they have developed and learnt. The class will conclude with the group doing both movement routines together.
Week 10 (12-wks)	**Perseverance ¦ Partner Tumbling and Acrobatic Techniques** The class will begin with games followed by the movement routine, students will develop their tumbling and partner acrobatic technique. Facilitators will summarize the feedback received the previous weeks. The groups will modify their numbers and present them at the end of the class.
Week 11	**Handling Constructive Feedback ¦ Rehearsal** The class will begin with focusing games followed by a discussion about the performance. The rest of the class will consist of rehearsing numbers, receiving feedback from the facilitators and classmates. There will be a run through of the running order at the end of the class.
Week 12	**Celebrating Achievements ¦ Performance** The class will begin with a talk about the performance, followed by rehearsals, and costume and make-up. The performance will take place at the end of the class. The group will have the choice as to whether they will perform for each other or invite a wider audience to this performance.

Aims & Learning Outcomes

Aim 1: Introduction to Circus Arts

To provide students with an opportunity to discover and learn about a variety of circus disciplines, giving them a taste for each and allowing them the space to be creative with the skills taught to them.

Participants will also be introduced to the history of circus and the culture of circus groups.

Aim 2: Working Together & Celebrating Diversity

To help students to recognise, through participation, the value of personal involvement in a group activity.

To help students embrace their uniqueness, their strengths and weaknesses.

To create an atmosphere of support and community among the participants.

Aim 3: Physical Abilities

To support students with an opportunity to improve their physical condition and abilities.

To help students present their work and perform in front of an audience.

Learning Outcomes

- On completion of the TU, the student should be able to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the Circus Arts sector, its origins, development and opportunities.
- On completion of the TU, the student should be able to perform at a basic level in the following circus skills: Object balancing, Juggling, Tight-wire, Stilt walking, Hula hoop, Clown games, Diabolo, and Tumbling and Acrobatic moves.
- On completion of the TU, the student should be able to handle and process constructive feedback. The student should also be able to self-assess and plan accordingly.
- On completion of the TU, the student should be able to demonstrate his/her ability to work in a team and explain the benefits of diversity and a cohesive team environment.
- On completion of the TU, the student should be able to explain what can be learnt from failure and the benefits of resilience.

Key Skills

Key Skills	**As Evidenced**
Information Processing	Participants will learn and create movement routines and complex tasks through transforming visual and audio information into physical movements. Participants will learn about the history of circus in an experiential manner.
Critical and Creative thinking	Participants will learn circus skills and develop a number to perform. Through Creative tasks participants will become familiar with decision-making and compromise. Participants will discover their personal preference in relation to circus skills and work creatively.
Communication	Participants will develop social skills through experiencing and discussing the importance of diversity, the importance of learning from failures supporting their peers. Participants will have the opportunity to work with a variety of their classmates in activities which require trust and cooperation.
Working with others	Participants will develop their bond with the other participants in the group, this will be developed with an atmosphere of support and collaboration. Participants will experience a positive group environment with a person centred approach adopted by facilitators.
Being personally effective	Participants will learn through personal practice that they can focus, motivate and push themselves towards an end goal. Resilience will be fostered through the analysis of failures and an appreciation of mistakes will be reinforced. Participants will learn through experiencing that each person has strengths in different skills. Improved motor skills will also develop the participants relationship with their body.

Assessment, Evaluation & Resources

Teaching approaches

Our teaching approaches are as follow:

- Activity-based learning, with different circus skills being worked on during each class;
- Group work and pair work, as well as individual work/;
- Discussion, during which we will be making cross curricular links in appropriate areas of learning;

Assessment approaches

Our main assessment approach will be ongoing and formative, where the facilitators will provide students with focused feedback during the course of the unit, on both the social and circus skills being worked on.

Students will also self assess using a checklist during group discussions. This will also involve peer-assessment when working in pairs.

Evaluation

Feedback will be sought from the participants on a continuous basis during the classes using game based activities, as well as in a more formal verbal session at the end of class five and at the end of class ten in a written format.

Feedback will also be sought from the schools staff a the end of each term in paper format and causally at the start/end of each class in conversation.

Resources

Resources will be provided to students on an ongoing basis throughout the programme and depending on their requirements.

Students will be encouraged to research circus and circus history and pointers will be given to them as to where to direct their research.

All the necessary equipment will be provided to the students.

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