

Teaching matters

Articles and opinions on primary teaching, with tips and ideas for the classroom

Congratulations to FÍS film project winners

The ninth FÍS Film Festival took place at the Helix in DCU in November. Pupils, teachers and parents attended from each of the 24 shortlisted schools and a wonderful time was had by all. Our congratulations to all of the winners for a wonderful celebration of creativity and for all of the hard work that goes into making these wonderful films.

A special word of congratulations to the winners of this year's Aileen McKeogh award, St Colman's NS, Derrinabroc, Ballaghaderreen, Co Mayo, with the film *Schooldays Over*, a vivid and moving portrayal of school life in bygone days, as experienced by local man, Tom Finn (94), who also stars in the film. We were delighted to welcome Tom and his family to the Helix for the awards ceremony, and of course the pupils of St Colman's NS, along with their principal, Dermot Dillon.

A special mention also to Little Angels Special School, who came all the way from Donegal, to accept their award for their film *The Little Lamb*. Details of all the winners, including their films, are available on the FÍS Film Project website.

So, what is FÍS?

FÍS is a film project for primary schools that explores film as a medium of expression and introduces children to aspects of the film-making process, while also supporting the aims and objectives of the primary school curriculum.

FÍS and learning

FÍS enables children to learn about the techniques involved in telling a story through film, including: planning, scripting, storyboarding, cameras, lighting, audio, music, set design, post production editing, costume and of course acting. Throughout the process, children also develop skills in communicating, working in a team, taking responsibility, collaborating with others, making decisions and problem solving.

From a curricular perspective, FÍS is a fantastic way to mediate a particular curricular strand/strand unit, while integrating a



Children from St Colman's NS, Ballaghaderreen, Co Mayo, accept their award for the film Schooldays Over.

variety of subject areas. Whether it is through a re-enactment of an historical event (integrating SESE, drama, literacy, music, visual arts to name but a few) or through the conveying of a social message on the theme of bullying (integrating SPHE as well as many of the above areas), the FÍS methodology provides a rich, engaging (and fun!) learning experience for pupils.

FÍS film format

Films must be five minutes or less in duration. Some of the popular formats from previous entrants include:

- ✦ Historical re-enactments.
- ✦ Local history documentaries.
- ✦ Animation (using clay, lego and other materials).
- ✦ Mysteries and thrillers.
- ✦ SPHE themed productions.
- ✦ Irish legends.
- ✦ Documentaries (current affairs, travel, sport).
- ✦ Reality TV.
- ✦ Comedies.
- ✦ Cuirfear fáilte ar leith roimh scannáin as Gaeilge.

Participating without entering

The Film Festival is a great celebration for the lucky finalists. However, FÍS is rooted in the process rather than the product, with the objective of promoting the use of film to support teaching and learning in the primary classroom. It is possible to participate without ever entering the competition and some schools have done this in

previous years. If you are in any doubt about entering, why not try it out with your class and, when you and your pupils become more confident, consider entering. The deadline for entry is the end of June in any school year, so there's no need to commit before then!

Support for teachers

There are a number of supports available to teachers wishing to engage in the process.

To find out more about the actual process, read Anne Moriarty's *A Teacher's Diary* on the FÍS Film Project website www.fisfilmproject.ie which outlines her path to producing a FÍS film with her pupils.

Consider doing the FÍS Interactive Online Course. This is a self-paced course that outlines all the skills and activities involved in making a film with the emphasis being on the children being the creators.

Approach your local education centre and ask if any support groups are taking place in your locality. Support groups can be arranged (funded by PDST Technology in Education) if sufficient numbers apply. If you know of other teachers in your school who are interested in getting involved, a whole school training session can be organised. A minimum of 10 teachers is required.

More information

The FÍS Film Project is run by the National Film School at the Institute of Art, Design and Technology and PDST Technology in Education (formerly NCTE). Log on to www.fisfilmproject.ie for more information on all of the above.

PDST Technology in Education website www.pdsttechnologyineducation.ie
Go n-éirí libh!

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FÍS Film Project

Introducing film into the primary classroom