

DEVELOPMENTAL DRAMA

(A 12-part series on the basics of Developmental Drama to help students, teachers, and institutions)

2 – The Foundation of Success: Coordination in Developmental Drama

Every captivating stage show is the result of a complex web of preparation, cooperation, and commitment. The amount of work required to create that magic was witnessed during the school's growth journey with Developmental Drama. It was the pinnacle of collaboration, inventiveness, and coordination, not just acting, when we celebrated our Silver Jubilee with a single play combining all sections of Class 8, with more than 250 students present onstage for this 30-minute performance.

What began as a presentation in small spaces evolved into a collective, holistic, and creative Developmental Drama coordination onstage. Each class brought a unique contribution and cooperation. Some were performers, while others worked backstage, in dance, chorus, direction, and production support. We had our first genuine taste of collaboration and what it takes to bring a big production to life, both offstage and onstage.

7 Levels of Co-ordination

The program identified seven levels of coordination crucial for success.

Level 1 – Management – An MoU between the School and the Drama Academy as per the Developmental Drama Policy document.

Level 2 – Coordinators – School and Program Co-ordinator shared objectives based on agreed timelines and class allocation.

Level 3 – Teachers – Allocation of Class Teacher and Support Teacher for each section and structuring the school timetable for effective outcomes.

Level 4 – Facilitators - Allocation based on the Developmental Drama syllabus, theme, and expected directorial outcomes.

Level 5 – Participants – All the students were involved in learning skills through leadership roles and sharing responsibilities.

Level 6 – Audience – Allocation of date, time, venue as per Developmental Drama guidelines for ten pre-shows. The parents were invited to serve as the audience and collaborators for the final show of the academic year, acknowledging their ongoing support.

Level 7 – Ambassadors – The support students helped the performance team, teachers, and coordinators to achieve set objectives.



Costumes, Lights, Groups – Coordination is an ongoing process in Developmental Drama

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Delegation: A Core Lesson

One of the first lessons we learnt was that delegation was necessary, not optional. Firstly, seven versions of the play, one for each section, were created. With the same base script, the directorial approach differed for each section, facilitated by the Vaz Dramatics Academy directorial team. St. Paul's school became a fertile ground for creativity thanks to the support of two teachers coordinating for each section: one class teacher and one support teacher. Time management, communication, and collaboration were taught through the delegation of tasks, including entries, exits, choreography, music, and lighting cues, and backstage management of properties and sets. All this started with classroom coordination.

Developmental Drama exercises to enhance coordination were consistently introduced to improve communication, increase confidence, and foster empathy. Through warm-ups, core dramatic exercises, and reflective sessions, we gained an understanding of the importance of maintaining a consistent rhythm and unambiguous flow throughout the process.

Hierarchy

The chain of command was established in the program with the Principal, Rev. Fr. James, silently leading from the front and attending every class performance to offer support and encouragement.

Starting with seven performances during the training week, coordinators and class teachers ensured that every class had 25 or more performances throughout the academic year. During this time, the coordinators and teachers gradually took on the role of decision-makers, guiding the Developmental Drama growth journey each year.

While Vaz Dramatics Academy initiated the creative journey, St. Paul's School fostered growth among its students, teachers, and the broader community.



Team Coordination and Theme Coordination are Content and Context for Developmental Drama

Cooperation

“Even though we don't have their precise words to share here, we can still clearly recall how enthusiastically and supportively our facilitators led us. Their cooperation with one another served as a model for us and aided in our teamwork,” says Harishree of Class 9, one of the students who benefited from the program.

We learned from this experience that Developmental Drama is more than just acting. It's about developing our ability to coordinate and

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maturely manage our responsibilities. It's about working together to create something significant. We came to understand that Developmental Drama is lived, not just played. It requires coordination from 'every class, every student, every teacher' to truly shine.

Mohit Pandey (Team Leader) with Harishree Karia, Shreya Manoj, Anidi Jain, Kartika Bhaila (Grade 9)

(St. Paul's School, Rajkot, in collaboration with Vaz Dramatics Academy, Bangalore, as part of Class IX – ICSE – Mass-Media Communication syllabus.)