

The Dream Train Thematic Unit



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Acknowledgements

CCEA wishes to acknowledge those staff of Glenwood Primary School and Mount St Michael's Primary School for providing the enclosed case studies and images of their school and pupils.

About this Thematic Unit

This Thematic Unit is linked to the Years 4/5 ICL *Journeys*.

In this thematic unit, children have the opportunity to recognise the pride that comes from having ideas and making them real.

The fantasy element aims to influence and develop the quality and uniqueness of children's innate curiosity and creativity.

They learn about:

- the innovative power of generating as many ideas and options as possible; and
- the possibilities that can be created from building and combining these ideas.

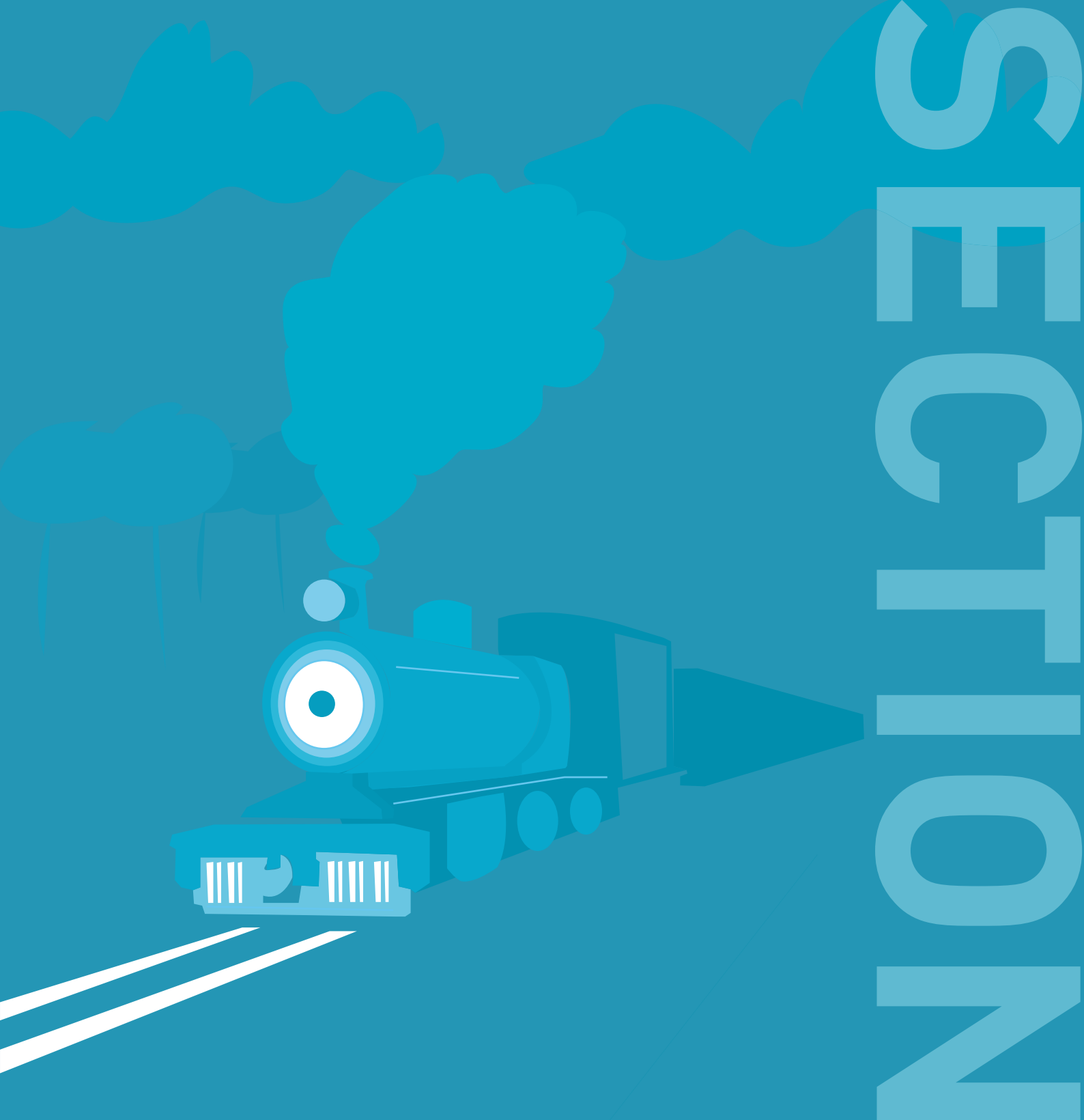
By adopting an enterprising approach, children develop the confidence to think beyond the boundaries of their everyday nature.

They take an active part in a journey that is:

- relevant and appropriate to their age and ability; and
- innovative, interactive and experiential.

Before children begin inventing their imaginative journey, it is important that they explore a wide variety of real journeys. This thematic unit presents children with opportunities to develop some of the skills that meet the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum at Key Stage 2. The focus within this unit is outlined below:

Northern Ireland Curriculum Objective	To develop the young person as a contributor to the economy and environment.
Key Element	<i>Employability</i>
Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities	This thematic unit focuses on <i>Being Creative</i> . Children have opportunities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use their imagination for enjoyment; • listen to and share ideas and experiences; • generate, build and combine ideas; and • experience the unexpected, unusual and surprising.
Cross-Curricular Skills	Where appropriate, learning intentions that relate to the Cross-Curricular skills are signposted. These cross-curricular skills are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication (Comm) • Using Mathematics (UMaths) • Using ICT (UICT)
Connecting the Learning	This Thematic Unit provides teachers with the opportunities to connect learning across the following Areas of Learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The World Around Us;</i> • <i>The Arts; and</i> • <i>Language and Literacy.</i>
Aim	The aim of this thematic unit is to encourage children to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inspire creativity in their everyday learning; • develop an understanding of what it means to be enterprising; • develop an awareness of the stimulating power of imagination; and • present and communicate their work in a variety of ways showing some awareness of audience and purpose.



Why Are Journeys Made?

01

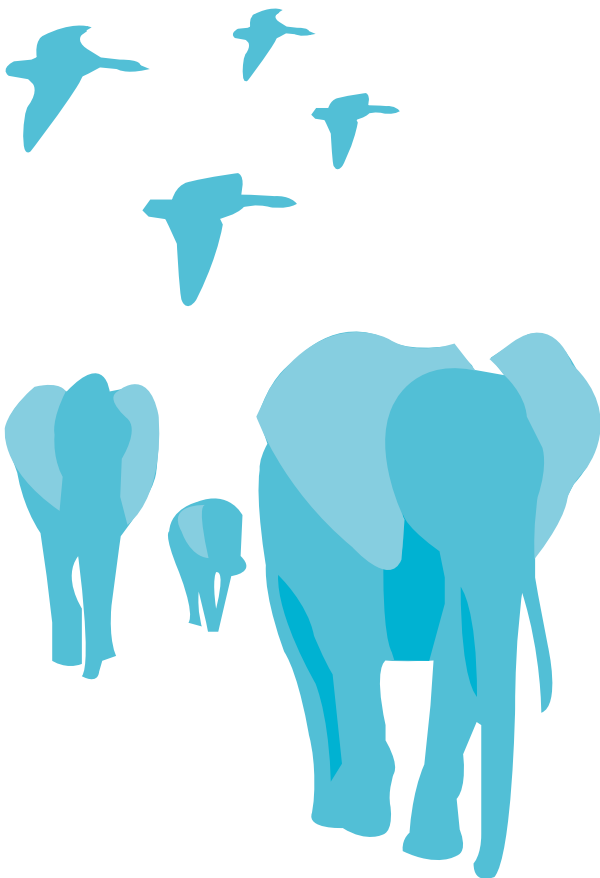
Activity One

Photofit

Suggested Learning Intention

Children will:

- know some of the reasons that people and animals make journeys.



Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

Display a number of photographs on the board. Include some photographs that are related to journeys. Invite the children to compare and contrast the images and to make comments. Ask them to consider the following questions:

See-Think-Wonder

- What do you see?
- What do you think about that?
- What does it make you wonder?

What makes you say that?

- What is going on here?
- What do you see that makes you say that?

Look and look again

- Look at the picture for at least 30 seconds. Let your eyes wander.
- List five words or phrases about the photograph.
- Look again and try to list five more words about the photograph.

Activity Two

On The Way To...

Suggested Learning Intentions

Children will:

- know some of the reasons that people and animals make journeys; and
- be able to sequence events and summarise ideas (Comm).

Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

Invite the children to talk about the different journeys they make everyday, for example:

- their journey to school;
- the journey to the park; and/or
- the journey to the shops.

Organise the class into pairs. Ask pairs to describe a familiar journey to their partner. Encourage them to talk about:

- their feelings;
- what they see;
- what they hear;
- what the smell;
- the people they meet;
- key landmarks that they pass; and
- how they make the journey (walk, take the bus or travel in a car).

Finally, invite the children to describe their partner's journey to the rest of the class.



Activity Three

Finding Out

Suggested Learning Intentions

Children will:

- know some of the reasons that people and animals make journeys;
- understand why it is important to structure and sequence their speech (Comm);
- consider the role of an audience (Comm); and
- understand the purpose of an activity (Comm).

Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

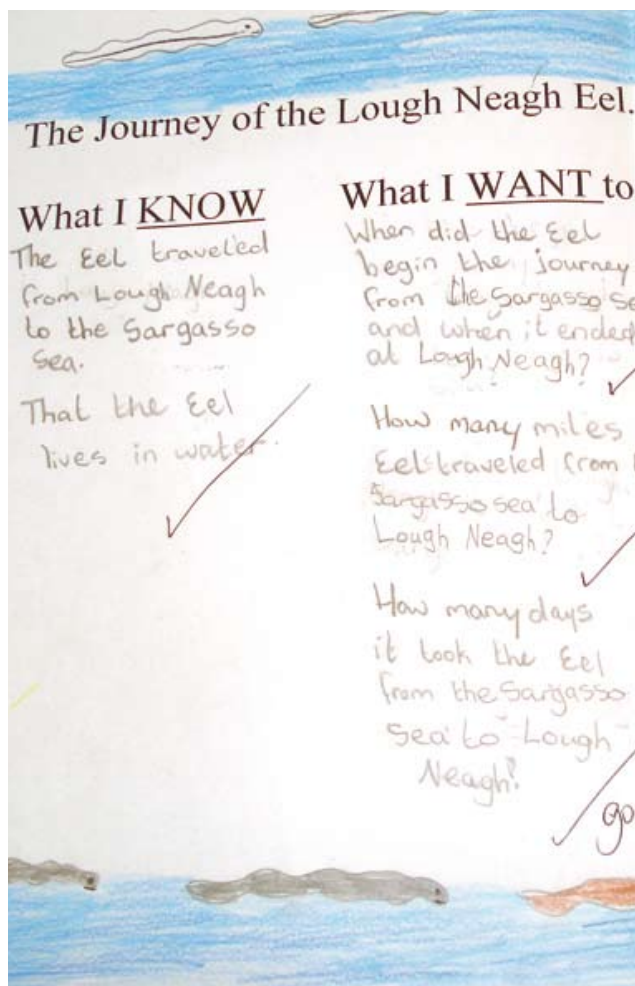
As a class, thought shower different types of journeys. Examples of journeys include:

- personal journeys;
- journeys made by other people;
- journeys made in the past;
- journeys made by animals; and
- journeys made as a result of natural disasters.

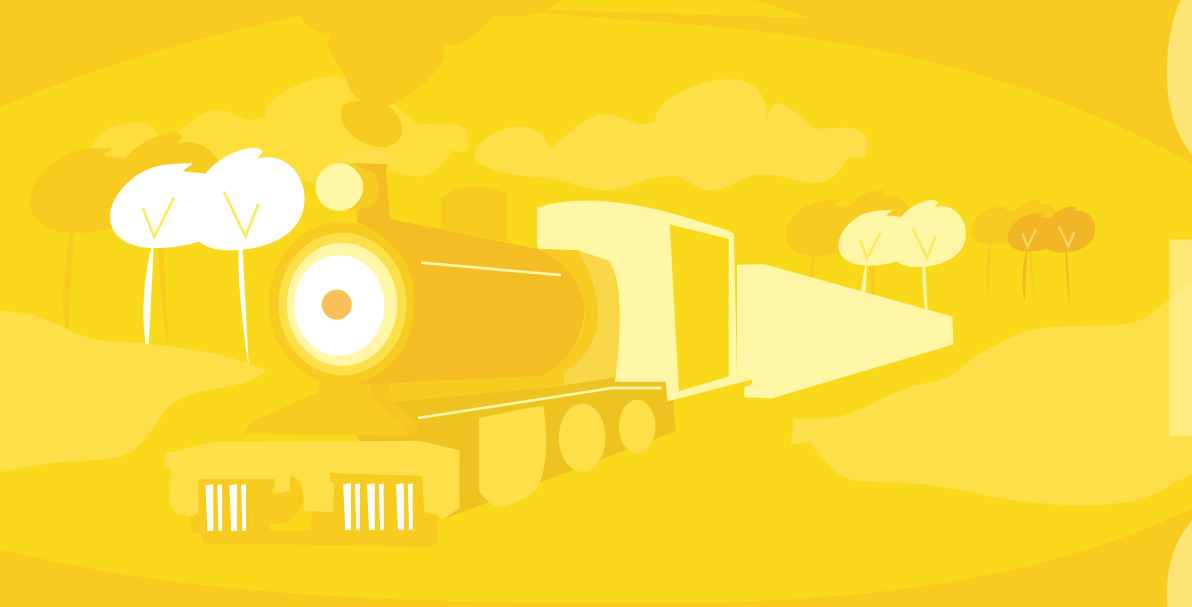
Record the children's answers on the board or onto a flip chart page. As a class, divide the journeys into four or five different categories. Divide the class into groups. Assign one type of journey to each group. Distribute a flip chart page to each group. Ask them to write their journey type at the top of the flip chart page.

Next, display a *Know, Want, Learned (KWL)* Grid on the board or on a flip chart. Ask each group to copy this onto their flip chart page. Discuss the KWL Grid with the class. Make sure that they know how to pose effective questions using a range of question words. Ask the children to work together to complete the first two columns of the KWL Grid. Next, them to choose the four most important questions from the *Want* column of the KWL Grid. Ask them to create a plan to find out the answers to their questions. Discuss the characteristics of successful group work when carrying out research and agree success criteria.

Give the groups time to carry out their research. Allow the children access to appropriate traditional and digital resources. Ask each group to present their findings in the form of a journeys collage. Invite them to use the *Two Stars and A Wish* methodology to evaluate their group work against the agreed success criteria. Finally, ask them to present their collage to the rest of the class. Display the collages in the classroom.



SECTION 02



In What Ways Can I
Describe A Journey?

Activity Four

Question Time

Suggested Learning Intention

Children will:

- experiment with different ways of thinking (TS&PC).



Why do you make the journey?

Do you make the journey alone?

How long does the journey take?

Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

Reflect on the learning that has taken place about journeys. Invite the children to suggest four general questions about journeys. Generic questions about journeys include:

- Why do you make the journey?
- Do you make the journey alone?
- How long does the journey take?
- What are your feelings about the journey?

Ask the children to get back into their journey groups (established in Activity 3). Ask each group to think about their journey type and to use their research findings to answer the four general questions.

Finally, ask each child to find a partner from a different group. Ask them to use the four general questions to carry out a question and answer session with their partner.

Activity Five

Act it Out

Suggested Learning Intention

Children will:

- understand how the senses stimulate and contribute to ideas (TS&PC);
- express thoughts, feelings, ideas and opinions (Comm).



Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

Organise the class into their journey groups. Ask each group to choose a significant moment from the journey they researched. Encourage them to discuss and agree how to represent the important moment in a freeze frame. Invite each group to present their freeze frame to the rest of the class. Ask individuals from each group to answer the following questions:

- What are you seeing on your journey?
- Where are you?
- How are you feeling? Why?
- What can you hear/smell /see?

Record the children's answers to the questions. Take photographs of each group in their freeze frame. Print off the photographs and add speech bubbles outlining the children's answers to the questions. Display this in the classroom.

Invite the children to write a poem about the journey their group researched. Use the following framework or create your own.

I am ... and I made a journey to...
On my journey I saw...
I touched...
I heard...
I smelt...
I felt...
I said...
I learned...



How Do Artists Use Colour,
Pattern and Style?

What Musical Elements do
Composers Use to Create Effect?

SECTION 03

Activity Six

Artistic Journeys

Suggested Learning Intention

Children will:

- understand how artists use a range of visual images to convey meaning and evoke a personal response.



Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

Display a painting that depicts a journey. Encourage the children to talk about what they see. Use the questions from Activity 1 to explore the painting further.

Ask the children to consider the following questions:

Colours

- Which colours are warm and which are cold?
- Do the colours express the moods or feelings of the artist?
- How do the colours make you feel and why?

Imagery

- What images does the picture represent?
- What does it make you think of?

Patterns

- Are there any patterns?
- Which patterns do you like and why?

Style

- Does the artist have an unusual style?
- How does he differ from other artists?

Next, invite the class to look at a range of artists' work. You can find many examples in our *Visualise* art resource. Organise the class into groups. Ask them to choose four prints and to discuss the colours, imagery, patterns and style, using the questions above.

Invite the children to take digital photographs of their local area. Next, ask each child to represent this photograph in the style and medium of their choice.

Activity Seven

Musical Journeys

Suggested Learning Intentions

Children will:

- understand how music can depict aspects of a story, picture or scene; and
- know and understand some musical terms.

Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

As a class, listen to music that depicts a journey. Examples include:

- *The Little Train of Caipira* (from *Bachianas Brasileiras*), Hector Villaa-Lobos;
- *Night Mail* soundtrack, Benjamin Britten;
- *Pacific 321*, Arthur Honegger;
- *Chattanooga Choo Choo*, Warren Henry arranged by Glenn Miller;
- *The Runaway Train*, Carson and Massey;
- *The Flight of the Bumble Bee*, Nikolai Rimsky Korsakov; and/or
- *Vltava*, Bedrich Smetana .

Divide the class into groups. Allocate an extract of music to each group. Ask them to listen to the music and answer the following questions:

- **Tempo**
 - Is the music fast or slow?
 - Does fast music make it more exciting?
- **Pitch**
 - Are the notes high or low?
 - What effect do you think this has?

- **Melody/Rhythm**
 - Is the melody or the rhythm more important in this piece of music?
 - Why do you think this is?
- **Texture**
 - Are there a lot of instruments playing at once or just a few?
 - Can you identify any of the instruments?
- **Dynamics**
 - Is the music more exciting when the dynamics are loud or when they are soft?
- **Timbre**
 - Identify one instrument that is playing.
 - How does it help to create the effect of a journey?

Ask each group to interpret the music. Explain to the children that the interpretation of the music is the story, picture or scene that the music creates in their head. Discuss and agree how groups can present their interpretation of the music, for example through drawing, painting or creating a collage. Invite each group to present their interpretation of the music to the rest of the class.

Ask the class to get back into their journey groups. Invite them to create a musical composition for their journeys.

Activity Eight

In My Dreams

Suggested Learning Intention

Children will:

- make new connections between ideas and information (TS&PC);
- follow the main points of discussions and make contributions which show understanding (Comm).
- ask questions about what they hear (Comm).

Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

As a class, thought shower fantasy journeys. Encourage the children to think about fantasy journeys they have read about or watched on television. Refer them to the following stories and characters to help them get started:

- *The Magic Train Ride* by Sally Crabtree;
- *The Dream Balloon* by John Mole;
- *Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz*;
- *Harry Potter*; and/or
- *Mowgli* in *The Jungle Book*.

Choose one or two pictures from these books or television productions to use with the class. Display the pictures using an electronic whiteboard or digital projector. Ask the children to consider the following questions:

- Who do you think is in the picture?
- What do you think they are doing?
- Why is this character doing what they are doing?
- How often do you think...?
- How do you think they are feeling and why?
- What do you think will happen next?

Divide the class into groups. Distribute a picture from the books or television productions to each group. Ask them to consider the questions above and to agree on a group response to each question. Encourage them to think of more questions about their picture and to try and answer them. Invite them to share their questions and answers with the rest of the class. Encourage the children to share their thoughts with each other and to comment on other groups' work.

Explain to the children that they are going to:

- create their own imaginary journey on *The Dream Train*; and
- organise an event to take a chosen audience on their journey.

Then, set up an Enterprise Planning Board in the classroom. To do this, dedicate an area of the room to the Enterprise Planning Board. This should be somewhere that the children can record their thoughts and ideas as they plan their event. Invite them to contribute to the board at various times. Use the language of enterprise to structure the process:

Ideas – What ideas do we have? What might our ideas look like? How might we make our ideas real?

Research – Who will our audience be? How do we know if they will come to our event?

Planning – What do we want to present at our event? What problems do we think there might be? How will we know if our audience likes our ideas?

Roles – What needs to be done? Who can do what? What jobs and I responsible for?

Advertising – How will we let people know? What are the important elements of advertising? How can we influence people to come to the event?

Ask the children if they have ever made a train journey. Invite those children who have made a train journey to describe it. Encourage them to respond to the following questions:

- What was it like?
- Where did they go?
- Who were they with?

The children can find out what train journeys are like by:

- making a short train journey;
- watching an extract from Polar Express;
- watching a scene from a Harry Potter movie that shows the magic night bus or Hogwarts Express train;
- viewing archived video footage of trains; or
- visiting the Ulster Transport Museum or a Steam Railway Museum.

Invite someone from the Northern Ireland Railways (NIR) to come and talk to the class. Ask them to describe the people who make train journeys happen and their different roles for example, ticket sales clerk, conductor, train driver and/or signal controller.

Read From a Railway Carriage by R.L Stevenson to the whole class. Explore the use of similes in the poem. Ask pupils to draw the images that can be seen from the carriage.

Organise the class into small groups. Distribute a range of musical instruments to each group. Ask them to create a soundtrack for the poem. Remind the children to think about the style, mood and pace of the poem.





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What Is happening In
the Picture?

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04

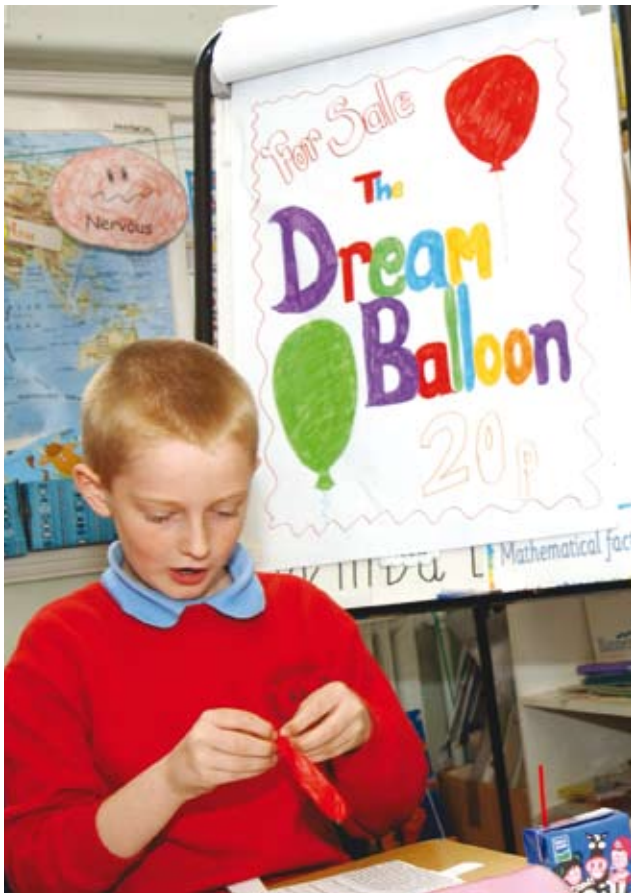
Activity Nine

If Dreams Came True

Suggested Learning Intentions

Children will:

- make their ideas real by experimenting with different designs, actions and outcomes (TS&PC).
- use ICT to create and develop ideas (UICT).



Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

Ask the children if they know what a dream catcher is. Display some pictures of a dream catcher on the electronic whiteboard. You can access pictures online at www.dream-catchers.org. Point out the various feathers and beads that are used to create the dream catcher. Alternatively, bring a real dream catcher into the classroom and pass it around the children.

Explain to the class that:

- dream catchers originate from Native American mythology;
- they were hung over a person's bed to catch bad dreams;
- the bad dreams were caught in the dream catcher's web;
- the sun then destroyed the bad dreams; and
- good dreams filtered down the feathers to the person sleeping below.

Read and share some of the stories and legends on the dream catchers web site. Invite the children to design and make dream catchers to sell or give out to the audience at their event.

Use *Circle Time* to discuss what is meant by dreams, including daydreams and dreams we have when we are asleep. Take time to share everyone's experiences. Agree that the *Dream Train* is about positive dreams.

Alternatively, ask the children to design and make dream boxes or dream balloons that could be released at an official dream balloon launch.

Visualisation

Play dream-like music in the background. Ask the children to imagine they have been at their dream place. Encourage them to mime filling their hot water bottles and getting into their sleeping bags. If possible, use real sleeping bags, blankets, teddy bears and/or empty hot water bottles as props. Tell the children to close their eyes and imagine they are in a deep sleep.

Next, slowly talk through the following script. Pause as you ask questions to allow the children to visualise their dreams.

Visualisation script

Your dream begins... You are going to catch a train – not an ordinary train but a magical dream train! You are waiting for the dream train to arrive at the station. Where are you when you see the train?

Look around you. The dream train is the most magnificent train you have ever seen. What does the train look like? What do you notice most about the dream train? Are there other people getting on board the dream train? What do they look like?

You slowly step onboard the dream train. This is the moment where you can go to the place of your dreams. You are very excited. You can feel your heart beating.

You cannot believe your eyes when you walk into the carriage of the dream train. You stop and take a deep breath to try to take it all in. You walk slowly to your seat. You reach out to touch the fabric on your seat. It looks so comfortable. What is the pattern on the seat? What else do you notice about the carriage?

The engine starts with a powerful chug. This is it – the journey is starting! The dream train slowly pulls away from the station. You dream that you can control how fast you want the dream train to travel... and it works! Whoah! The feeling is amazing.

You look outside the carriage window to take all the landscapes in. What do you see out the window? You start to imagine the place of your dreams. When the train goes through the tunnel you will be there so you need to imagine where you want to go. Who will be there? How colourful will it be? What can you do in your dream place? Why do you want to go there?

The tunnel is approaching. You can see it up ahead. You start to feel nervous and excited at the same time. Whoosh! The train is in the tunnel. It is very dark. Can you see anything? How do you feel? You close your eyes with excitement. When you open your eyes and look out the window, you have arrived!

It is amazing, just as you had dreamed. The train slows down and then stops. You step off the train you feel the air on your face. You look around, trying to take it all in.

Take a long pause and allow the children time to visualise their dreams.

Bring the visualisation to an end. Tell the children, in a whisper, to open their eyes. Ask them how they feel. Invite them to share their experiences with each other. Ask the children what they remember most about their journeys.

Invite the children to illustrate what they imagined on their dream train journey. Encourage them to reconsider the following:

- **Activity 6 Learning Intention**
Understand how artists use a range of visual imagery to convey meaning and evoke a personal response;
and
- **Section 3 Key question**
How do artists use colour, pattern and style?

Allow the children to choose which medium they want to use to illustrate their dream train journey (drawing, painting, collage, print making or mixed media).

Section 04 What Is Happening In The Picture?

Distribute a template of a carriage window to each child. Ask them to illustrate images from their dream train journey on the template. When the children have finished, collect all the illustrations. Display these dream train illustrations in the classroom. Ask the class to reflect on the dream train illustrations. Encourage them to talk about how they feel when they look at the work of other children. Invite them to create and decorate the train engine and carriages.

Ask the children to use ICT to describe their individual journeys to support the image they have created. Spend time discussing what the success criteria would be, for example:

- provide a setting to describe the journey;
- describe the events of the journey in chronological order and comment on the events using descriptive language; and
- conclude with a description which provides an opinion about the journey.



The Big Event



What Did I Learn From
The Enterprise Experience?

05

Activity Ten

Step On-Board

Suggested Learning Intentions

Children will:

- recognise some of the experiences that influence ideas; and
- understand the process of enterprise.



Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

Re-cap on the powerful nature of visualisation and imagination. Display the following quote by Walt Disney: *'All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them.'*

Inform the children that many famous people have used sleep/dreams to get inspiration for ideas. Examples include Thomas Edison, inventor of the light bulb and Robert Louis Stevenson, author of *Treasure Island*.

Remind the children that the purpose of creating the dream train is to share their fantasy with an invited audience at an event. Refer to your Enterprise Planning Board to share ideas generated throughout the topic.

Give the children time to plan for the event. Invite them to thought shower ideas for a name for the event, for example *The Dream Train's Maiden Journey*, or *Welcome Aboard the Journey of your Dreams*. Agree on a name.

As a class, decide on a suitable date and venue. Next, agree what needs to be done to plan for the event, for example:

- set out a programme of activities from the ideas generated on the Enterprise Planning Board;
- create posters to advertise the event;
- design invitations with RSVPs;
- produce magical tickets to allow the audience to step onboard *The Dream Train*;
- use the artwork and written descriptions to share the journey with the audience; and/or
- play their musical accompaniments for the journey.

Organise the class into groups to plan for the event. Ask the children to assign group roles. Give them time to plan and organise the event. Encourage each group to use checklists to ensure that the children are fulfilling the duties of their roles and that responsibilities are being carried out on time.

Consider ways of capturing the event, for example, using a digital camera or video. Invite some children to take on the role of a reporter and to interview audience members to find out if the event was successful.

At the event, illustrate the learning journey that has taken place throughout the thematic unit. Give the audience a dream catcher to take home with them.

After the event, discuss the experience as a whole class. Use the recordings and personal experiences to reflect on its success. Ask the children to write a review of the event for the school newsletter or local newspaper or publish on the school intranet or website.



Resources

List of Suggested Resources

Suggested Books:

Cyrus, Kurt. *Slow Train to Oxmoor*
Farrar Straus & Giroux (1998)
ISBN: 978-0374370473

Lewis, Kim. *The Last Train*
Walker Books Ltd (1994)
ISBN: 978-0744547481

Mole, J. *My Dream Balloon*
Longman (1999)
ISBN: 978-0582337251

McAllister, A. *Daniel's Train*
Hutchinson Children's Books Ltd. (1995)
ISBN: 978-0091765736

Van Allsburg, C. *Polar Express*
Andersen Press Ltd. (2005)
ISBN: 978-0862641436

Definition of Terms

(Comm) Communication

(UMaths) Using Mathematics

(UICT) Using ICT

(TS&PC) Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

ICLs (Ideas for Connecting Learning)

Appendix 1

Glenwood Primary School

Case Study

School Profile

School	Glenwood Primary School, Belfast
Type of School	Urban School (457 pupils)
Linked to ICL	Journeys
Northern Ireland Curriculum Objective	To develop the young person as a contributor to the economy
Key Element	<i>Employability</i>

Planning

This thematic unit is linked to the *Journeys* ICL. Our objectives were to:

- inspire the children to be creative through using their imagination; and
- to use the stimulus of a journey to produce a successful event.

This thematic unit encourages children to listen to each other and to share ideas. It also teaches them how to plan a successful event through recording their ideas on an *enterprise planning board*. The *enterprise planning board* was vital to our success.

We created activities based on the suggested topics but expanded them to cover all curriculum areas.

Starting Points

We started by asking the children to think about journeys that they had been on. As a class, we reflected on a recent journey we had taken to the theatre. The children used ICT to create personal passports to record all the places in the world they had visited.

We also asked the children to get relatives and friends from different towns or countries to send postcards to the school.

We focused on developing the children's imagination through using a variety of media. We encouraged the children to think about characters in books that went on magical journeys. As a class, we looked at the journeys that take place in the following books:

- *The Wizard of Oz*;
- *Peter Pan*;
- *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*;
- *Tom's Midnight Garden*; and
- *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*.

The children discovered that all the characters in these books had a magical item that helped them go on their journey. This helped them to use their imagination to compose their own amazing journeys stories.

We then asked the children to think about going on a journey and what they would take with them. This activity helped them to think about their needs and wants. It provided many opportunities for discussion and group work. We also encouraged the children to think about life as a journey and imagine what their lives would look like as they grew older.

We looked at the story of *Little Red Riding Hood*. The children thought about the logical steps that she had to go through before she went on her journey. They drew maps and wrote storyboard sequences for an animation project. They each managed to rewrite the traditional tale and illustrate it in a book form.

Glenwood Primary School

Case Study continued

Development

The main focus of this thematic unit was to encourage the children to plan and carry out a successful event. The children decided to organise a theatre style event with an audience made up of the rest of the school and their parents.

From the outset we used an *Enterprise Board*. This helped the children to identify roles and responsibilities to organise the event. Each child was allocated a role to organise the performance for example set designer, fundraiser or marketer. This allowed every child to gain a sense of responsibility and self-worth. The marketing and advertising team performed so well that we had the local press attend our press conference.

We spent time reading various stories about dreams and the adventures people can have in their dreams. The film *Polar Express* inspired the children. Everyone liked the idea of the train to represent a journey and the children created the dramatic performance around a train journey.

The children decided to create props to make the school hall look more like a theatre. They built a box office and created tickets and posters. The fundraising team decided to ask parents for a small donation for the Children's Hospice.

In the performance, the children retold their *Dream Train* journey. They used song, choral speaking and acting. The audience were taken on a journey to ancient Egypt, the stadium of light, outer space, the Albert Hall, Africa, the transport museum and into school.

The audience were very impressed with the performance. It was very obvious that the children had learned a lot during the Dream Train thematic unit. The children were very proud when they presented a cheque for over one hundred pounds to the Children's Hospice.

Evaluation

Teachers

This was the third time that we piloted CCEA materials for Primary 5. The enterprise approach gave the children more responsibility for their learning. The *Planning Board* kept them focused on where their learning was going. The response from parents and other teachers was extremely positive.

The highlight of the thematic unit was when a child with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) stood on the stage and spoke proudly in front of a large audience. This child is usually very shy. His parents couldn't believe that he was speaking in public and in front of a large audience.

Children

The children loved taking part in this thematic unit. In particular, they enjoyed adopting a role to plan the performance, as this made them feel important. The highlight for children was presenting the cheque to the Children's Hospice. This gave them a real sense of achievement.

The children learned how to present their work, work collaboratively, be enterprising and make connections.

Parental Involvement

Parents completed questionnaires to evaluate what they thought the children had learned at the end of the project. It was surprising that many of them said that they had learned something from their child's learning experience.

The parents were very proud of the hard work the children had put into creating the final performance. One commented, "My child has gained many new skills in helping to organise the Dream Train". Another said, "These skills have given my child confidence."

Appendix 2

Mount St Michael's Primary School Case Study

School Profile

School	Mount St Michael's Primary School, Randalstown
Type of School	Rural town School (350 pupils)
Linked to ICL	Journeys
Northern Ireland Curriculum Objective	To develop the young person as a contributor to the economy
Key Element	<i>Employability</i>

Planning

In our initial planning, we drew a broad outline of all the learning intentions against the Areas of Learning. We tried to include as many Areas of Learning as possible, in meaningful and purposeful contexts. We also decided to a focus on Literacy.

We used the suggested activities as a basis for the teaching and learning. However, we adapted some of the activities to focus on the local area.

We carried out further planning meetings every two weeks. This allowed us to identify specific learning intentions and agree on the success criteria.

The children used an *Enterprise Planning Board* to plan their work. This proved a very successful way of including them in the planning process. We were able to record their interesting and vital ideas. This process added to the success of the thematic unit.

Starting Points

To help the children write about an imaginary journey, we began by considering real journeys that people make. We organized the class into groups and asked them to reflect on how and why journeys are made. Each group recorded their answers and shared their ideas with the rest of the class.

We also encouraged the children to think about a range of journeys. This produced many interesting and well-considered responses from the children.

As a class, we explored the issue of needs and wants. We looked at all the things we think we need to make a journey and then investigated what is actually needed for survival.

How and Why Creatures Travel

We read and discussed the book *The Whale Journey*. This enabled the children to think about other creatures that make journeys.

We invited the children to formulate questions about why different creatures make journeys. The children later used these questions to research the journey of the Lough Neagh Eel to and from breeding waters in the Sargasso Sea. We encouraged them to evaluate the relevance of questions and how much valuable information they could generate about the Lough Neagh Eel. When the children had completed their research, we organized them into groups. We asked each group to create an eye-catching display to describe and explain the eel's journey to Lough Neagh.

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Journeys in the Past

We wanted the children to research how journeys were made in the past. As a class, we investigated evidence in the local area to find out how people travelled years ago. The children adopted the role of detectives and pieced together evidence from the past. They were able to prove that a railway had once existed. They presented their findings on an evidence board.

Emotional Journeys

We wanted the children to consider what emotions are connected with journeys. We invited them to dress up in holiday clothes. This evoked great excitement. The children posed in their holiday clothes and had their photographs taken, both individually and in groups. They wrote words to describe how they felt in the photos and built these into smiles to describe their emotions. Their work was very creative and descriptive.

Dreams

We explained to the class that dreams are something we should all have, they are goals and aspirations. The children considered quotes about dreams and picked their favourite. They decorated *Dream Boxes* and put their chosen quote inside. They wrote about their hopes for the future and presented their work to their parents. The children's work was imaginative and very creative.

On the day of the Dream Train visualization, we asked the children to wear pyjamas into class. We also invited them to bring pillows and cuddly toys. We encouraged them to lie on the floor in a comfortable position, as if they were going to sleep. We then invited the children to board the *Dream Train* and take a magical journey into their imagination. The children were allowed to visit whatever magical place they wanted.

The stories children produced about the *Dream Train* were amazing. The children visited a wide variety of exotic places, including colour land and chocolate heaven. They showed great ingenuity in relating their stories. Their work demonstrated a very good awareness of purpose and audience. The children created a colourful display depicting all the imaginary places visited.

Development

The thematic unit suggested that children be given the opportunity to organise an event to help them understand the enterprise approach. We organised an Enterprise Planning Board to help the children decide what form this event should take.

Children contributed ideas about what the event should be and how they would organise it. After discussing all their ideas, they decided to base their event on one of the places visited during the *Dream Train* journeys. The children agreed that Garden World would be of interest to a broad spectrum of people. The class also agreed that the event should be used as a fundraising opportunity for a charity the school was sponsoring. They finally agreed to hold a plant sale.

The class identified three areas they needed to focus on to plan the event:

- Planning;
- Advertising; and
- Finance.

They set up a committee to oversee each of these areas. They assigned roles of Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary. A Treasurer was also elected in the Finance Committee. The children showed responsibility and took their roles very seriously.

The Planning Committee had responsibility for the general running of the event. The Advertising

Committee made tickets and posters for the event. They also made any titles or headings needed for the stalls and for the refreshment areas. The Finance Team had responsibility for generating as much money for the charity as possible.

The children wanted their parents to see all the work they had completed for the *Dream Train* and created a *Whistle Stop Tour* of their displays. They explained elements of their work and shared it with their parents. The children displayed a very obvious sense of pride in their work.

On the day of the plant sale, the children welcomed their parents in the school hall. They introduced their work by singing a rap they had written about boarding the *Dream Train*. Parents were taken on the *Whistle Stop Tour* in groups. The children gained a lot of confidence from taking parents on the tour. After the *Whistle Stop Tour*, parents returned to the hall for the plant sale. The children held a raffle and served refreshments in the buffet car of the *Dream Train*.

Parents were very impressed that their children had played such an active and purposeful role in organising such a successful event.

Evaluation

Teachers

This was the first time we had piloted CCEA materials. The *Dream Train* theme gave a purposeful and meaning context for collaborative work. The thematic unit provided many opportunities for the children to take responsibility for their learning. It also allowed us to promote many of the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities especially *Being Creative* and *Managing Information*.

The activities suggested within the thematic unit, even when adapted, were mostly skills based. They encouraged all children to develop their self-esteem and self-worth and deepen their understanding.

It was particularly satisfying to see a child, who is an elective mute, speak to groups of parents. Another highlight was the reaction of former teachers who could not believe how confident all the children were.

Children

The children enjoyed all elements of the *Dream Train*. They learned how to:

- be creative;
- work collaboratively;
- demonstrate enterprising qualities; and
- display their work and present it in a variety of ways to an audience.

The children showed great initiative and maturity throughout the thematic unit. The children completed evaluation sheets after they completed the thematic unit. Many children mentioned that they felt more confident and would be able to apply the skills they had developed.

The children were very proud of their achievements and loved having the opportunity to share their successes with their peers and the other teachers in the school. They have since been able to apply the skills they learned in new situations and make connections in new work back to *The Dream Train*.

Parental Involvement

Every child was represented by parents, grandparents and family members at the plant sale event. The response from parents was extremely positive. They all talked about how much their children had grown in confidence through their experiences in this thematic unit.

Many parents commented on how much they personally had learned from various elements of the project. They were grateful for the opportunity to come into school to view the children's work.

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One parent sponsored the plant sale event by donating £100. He later commented that it was money well spent as he felt it was a sound investment in his child's future. He said that the delight was evident on the children's faces as they showed their work to their parents. He said that as an employer he had seen evidence of many practical characteristics on display. He was particularly impressed by the creativity of the children and by their ability to generate ideas. He also commented on how they were able to transmit their enthusiasm to others.

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Rewarding Learning