**The “State of Play” in Senior Primary Classrooms – Symbolic Play as a Tool for Developing Language & Literacy**

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This workshop will unearth definitions and types of playful pedagogy for senior primary classrooms (3rd – 6th classes). Participants will engage in activities that stem from symbolic play. According to Friedrich Froebel (1896), *‘play is the highest expression of human development in childhood for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child's soul’*. While play-based learning has been successfully implemented in junior primary classrooms in Ireland through *Aistear* (NCCA, 2009), this framework falls short of implementation in senior primary classrooms. While teachers indicate a preference for traditional learning and teaching styles instead of their integrated play-based curriculum (Gray & Ryan, 2016), several researchers propose strong arguments in favour of playful pedagogy (Barnett, 2007; Hamilton & Wood, 2020; Šimůnková, 2018). This workshop is both timely and unique, in its responsiveness to the integrated Primary Language Curriculum (DES, 2019) and resulting playfully pedagogical activities for senior primary classrooms, where a dearth of research exists to illustrate such an approach in the Irish context. This workshop strives to offer simple, practical and realisable activities to enact playful pedagogy for the benefit of senior primary school pupils (age 9 to 12 years). As such, this workshop will challenge participants to rethink approaches to literacy and language instruction.