

THEA 1130: an Introduction to Creative Drama in the Elementary School

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Required Text

Nellie McCaslin. *Creative Drama in the Classroom and Beyond*. 8th Edition (Referred to in syllabus as McC)

Course Description

An introduction to current philosophies, principles, and techniques of theatre in the elementary school. Emphasis on development of the individual child through use of dramatic play, improvisation, and theatre games. Includes lecture/discussions, group facilitation, peer teaching, and practical performance work.

Course Objectives

- 1) To examine the principles and current practices in the conduct of theatre with children.
- 2) To understand the role of theatre as an art form in the education of children/adolescents.
- 3) To understand the teaching artist's role in the classroom of maintaining a supportive learning community.
- 4) To gain practical experience in facilitating theatre in the classroom.
- 5) To demonstrate effective use of theatre interventions in the elementary classroom by:
 - a. creating a lesson plan with appropriate motivational material and structured playable action
 - b. leading lessons and involving participants, and
 - c. evaluating lesson and participant learning

Assignments

Leading a Theatre Game #1 (sensitivity; trust)

In-class presentation

30

You will lead the class in a theatre game or exercise that has a particular focus (physical or vocal expression). Refer to McCaslin and/or library/internet resources.

Summary Paper

20

Provide a one-page description of procedures that one follows to complete the game.

Leading a Theatre Game #2 (expressive movement/vocal expression)

In-Class Presentation 30

same as above

Summary Paper 20

same as above

Reflective Essay: Why theatre in the elementary classroom? 50

Lesson Plan: Why people move

Lesson Plan 75

Working with a partner, create a workshop plan. The plan must cover 30 minutes of class time, be appropriate to the age level you plan to work with, and consist of a series of games, exercises, or literature that have a particular theatre focus, and that address the theme: Why people move. Finally, it must follow the format as specified by the instructor. The final copy of the workshop plan must be typed (double-spaced). Refer to syllabus for due date.

Checking in 50

Working with your partner, be prepared to provide an oral summary of your instructional unit in 10 minutes or less. Class members will have the opportunity to ask questions and may provide comments, feedback, or suggestions.

In-Class Presentation of Lesson 75

Come to class prepared and ready to lead class members in a creative drama session.

Final Reflections on Lesson Presentation 50

You will analyze your in-class presentation of your lesson plan. The aims are to: 1) assess the impact of your instructional techniques on student learning; and 2) reflect on how you could improve the lesson plan, facilitation, and student learning.

Attendance Policy

You are expected to attend each class for the entire period. You have the syllabus and will be expected to keep up even if you miss a class. Active class participation is important, and you need to be in class to participate.

Regular attendance is expected. **Starting with the 3rd absence (for whatever reason), your final point total will be reduced by 75 points. With the 4th absence, you will receive a failing grade.** If you desire a “make-up” assignment to retrieve points, you will need to discuss the matter with me. I must approve the substitution and the point value.

Three late arrivals (or “tardies”) will count as one absence. Leaving class early without prior notice will result in an “absence” for the class period. In sum, poor attendance and excessive tardiness will seriously affect your grade.

Grading Policy

Open discussion and deep involvement are essential. Your grade in class will depend on the following:

- 1) Active involvement in the daily classwork.
- 2) Competent, disciplined work in class and during labs.
- 3) Thorough preparation for class and presentations.
- 4) Successful completion of assignments as assigned, with physical and vocal expression, and detail appropriate to the class.
- 5) Thorough preparation for sessions conducted with children/adolescents in mind.
- 6) Regular, faithful attendance.
- 7) Reliable, collegial interactions with classmates.

A point system will be used to determine your final course grade and your individual assignment grades. The final semester grade will appear in letter form, according to the UNT grading system (*i.e.*, “A,” “B,” “C,” “D,” and “F”).

360-400 points for an “A”

320-369 points for a “B”

280-319 points for a “C”

240-279 points for a “D”

239 points or below results in an “F”

Assignments turned in “late” are reduced a full letter grade (**10% plus one point**). The in-class presentations cannot be made up. Paper assignments, such as game summaries and reflective

essay, may be reworked for a higher grade. (This courtesy applies only if the assignment was handed in on its original due date.) Make-up and extra-credit assignments are due **Wednesday, Oct. 8.**

ADA Statement

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at [940.565.4323](tel:940.565.4323).

Course Schedule

Week 1	W	Introduction to class, syllabus. Ice-breakers. Definition of Creative Drama
	F	McC, Ch. 1 – Creative Drama; Ch. 2 – Imagination; Ch. 3 – Play McC – Appendix A: National Standards in Education
Week 2	W	McC, Ch. 4 – Movement and Rhythm; Ch. 5 – Pantomime; Ch. 6 – Improvisation – Characters Speak and Move Intro to TEKS
	F	Due: Leading a Theatre Game #1 (building sensitivity/trust)
Week 3	W	McC, Ch. 8 – The Play Takes Shape; Ch. 9 – Dramatic Structure; McC, Ch. 14 – Creative Drama as a Teaching Tool
	F	Due: Leading a Theatre Game #2 (Vocal/Movement)

Week 4	W	McC, Ch. 7 – Puppetry; Ch. 11 – Poetry; Ch. 12 – Storytelling
	F	In-Class Theatrical Explorations
		Telling a “Me” Story (Dance/Movement)
		Bringing Poetry to Life (Creative Movement/Vocal Expression)
		Great Works of Art and the Imagination
		Work on Reflective Essay: Why theatre in the elementary classroom?
Week 5	W	McC, Ch. 15—Drama for Special Populations; Ch. 19—CD in Alternative Spaces; Ch. 20—The After-School Program; Ch. 21—The Final Word: Arts in a Multicultural Society
	F	Creating a Lesson Plan: Standards and Objectives; Due: Reflective Essay: Why Theatre in the Classroom?
Week 6	W	Creating a Lesson Plan: Procedures and Assessment; McC, Appendix C: Sample Drama Workshop
	F	Lesson Plan Development – Theme: Why people move
Week 7	W	Due: Lesson Plan Presentations
	F	Due: Lesson Plan Presentations
Week 8	W	Due: Lesson Plan Presentations
	F	Final Thoughts Due: “Final Reflections” Paper

