Syllabus: Drama For Teachers

Course Objectives:

General

- To explore the field of Drama in Education and to understand how it is organized theoretically and methodologically.
- To learn how to use creative dramatics with children of various ages and to apply theatrical techniques to the teaching of different subjects and concepts.

Specifics

- To learn to work with fellow students in group exercises.
- To discuss/evaluate the work of others in a non-judgmental setting.
- To research the work of practitioners in the field of creative dramatics.
- To demonstrate a lesson in a particular subject area using the techniques you have learned.

Assignments

- Present a well-organized 30-45 minute lesson on a subject area we will explore during the semester, copies of which are to be distributed to each member of the class.
  - 25% of grade

- Submit a five page typed, double-spaced research paper, with footnotes and bibliography, analyzing the work of two theoretician/practitioners whose work in the subject area you have chosen helped you to create your lesson.
  - 25% of grade

- Final take-home exam, in which students will design part of a creative drama curriculum
  - 25% of grade

- Class participation in all activities
  - 25% of grade
Weekly Schedule

Week 1  Discovering the tools of creative drama, a process-centered, non-judgmental approach, through exercises in movement, rhythm, and mime.

Week 2  Vocal communication and character development through improvisation, role play; sensory awareness. Trust exercises help to create an atmosphere in which self-expression is encouraged.

Week 3  Exploration of puppets, props and masks and their freeing effect on the imagination; techniques of playmaking.

Week 4  Introduction to the methodology of ReActing to the Past, begun at Barnard College by Mark Carnes, which uses theatrical techniques to transport students back to volatile times throughout world history.

Week 5  Augusto Boal and the techniques of the Theatre of the Oppressed. Learning self-awareness and communication with others.

Week 6  Learning to bring to life existing poetry for adults and children; techniques for the creation of new poems.

Week 7  Using great works of art to stimulate the imagination; allowing students the freedom to express themselves through art.

Week 8  Exploring different styles of music in order to create characters, scenes, poetry, art and dance.

Week 9  Discovering a physical approach to the learning of language arts, science and math.

Week 10  Teaching tolerance. Exercises that help students fight bigotry and racism.

Week 11  Developing an understanding and appreciation of Shakespeare’s language, through sonnets and scenes.

Week 12  Story-telling; story-building. Learning to create our own stories through a series of exercises.

Week 13  Dramatization of folk tales from around the world. Only by “walking a mile in the moccasins” of the characters can we understand their culture.
Week 14  Sharing work with an audience. Exploring rehearsal techniques.
        Pick up the Take-Home Final Exam

Final Exam  Return the exam on the scheduled date. Each student leads a ten
           minute exercise on a different topic from the lesson you presented in class.

The course is being offered as Drama 397 (Drama for Teachers) this fall ((2006). It was
first offered in the Department of Drama, Theatre & Dance in the fall of 2003 under the name
Teaching Methods for Theatre (Drama 308). For several years I taught it to teachers on a
graduate level at Hofstra University and on the undergraduate level at Marymount Manhattan
College. It is useful for students of education, theatre majors, and anyone who wants to explore
his/her own creativity.

I am a certified New York State teacher, licensed in French and Speech, with an M.S. in
Education from Queens College, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Theatre. Upon receiving my B.A.
from QC, I taught French at Herricks High School for five years. I have also served as an Artist-
in Residence in the Great Neck Schools, the Nightingale-Bamford School, and taught and
directed Children’s Theatre at the Arena Players Performing Arts Institute on Long Island. This
past summer (‘06) I worked with high school students at Queens College as part of College Now.