

WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
Woodring College of Education
presents...

Reader's Theatre in the Classroom

Education 320 – 4 credits - Spring 2007

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Course Description:

This course will offer students practical instruction in the art of Reader's Theatre and how it can be used to enliven learning in the K-12 classroom. The course will teach why Reader's Theatre can be so beneficial to children's learning (literature appreciation, confidence in oral expression, and teamwork) while allowing for the inclusion of students of varying academic and physical capabilities. We will discuss appropriate materials for different age levels and students will have a hands-on opportunity to learn how to adapt fiction and nonfiction into script form. In this process, students are encouraged to explore multicultural literature as they make selections for script writing.

The study of Reader's Theatre, therefore, endeavors to prepare...

“thoughtful, knowledgeable, and effective educators for a diverse society”

Course Goals:

1. Students will gain an appreciation for how fiction and nonfiction can be adapted to Reader's Theatre form for use in the classroom setting.
2. Students will gain an understanding of both visual and oral communication techniques and how they are effectively utilized in the Reader's Theatre setting to bring literature “to life”.
3. Students will learn the many benefits of involving children in the performance of literature: oral skill; improved listening habits; creative writing; teamwork; increased vocabulary; improved attention span; and creative development; etc.
4. Students will recognize that effectively using Reader's Theatre in the classroom will meet the state's Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs).
5. Students will learn the critical differences between Reader's Theatre and conventional stage theatre: adaptable scripts; multiple genres of literature employed; minimal costuming and props needed; accessibility to special needs students; lack of memorization; etc.

Instructional Methods:

Lecture, discussion, practical activities, and oral evaluation following performances. Small groups will prepare scripts for performance both in class and community setting.

Course Prerequisite:

There is no required prerequisite for this course. However, a background in children's and multicultural literature is recommended, e.g. ELED 405 or Eng. 441.

Evaluation Procedures:

Book Report: There is no required text for this class, however there are a number of books and journal articles on Reader's Theatre that are well worth reading. In place of textbook reading each student is expected to read a minimum of 200 pages from these materials. Your reading will include discussions of Reader's Theatre technique, definition, and application, as well as the reading of published scripts. You are expected to review information and scripts from at least 5 different sources. Your evaluation and analysis of these readings will be written up in a 4-6 page report.

Development of Scripts: (Performed scripts and Scriptfile)

Each student will find materials to develop into two types of Reader's Theatre:

1. **Adapted scripts:** each student will find selections of fiction or non-fiction and develop this literature into reader's theatre scripts for classroom use. The scripts must be developed for a defined age group and an explanation of what is to be learned and how this material is useful for the specified age group must be included. Character parts must be noted and length of lines and overall script must be appropriate for the age group for whom the script is written. A copy of the original literature may be requested in order to see how the text has been adapted to a Reader's Theatre script. Scripts must be typed in appropriate size font, single spaced (double between lines of script) and will be 2-5 pages in length depending upon the age of the readers.

You will develop scripts for three or four of the following groups:

Emergent readers:	K-1st grade
Intermediate readers:	2 nd -3 rd grade
Competent readers:	4 th -5 th grade
Middle School:	6 th -8 th grade
High School:	9 th -12 th grade

Presentation: One of these scripts, of about 4- 5 minutes in length, will be staged and rehearsed to perform before the class. The performance will be followed by a 5-8-minute formal presentation on how the Reader's Theatre script will fit into the classroom curriculum, what special considerations are needed, other application ideas and related literature (booklinks). You will choose a specific theme or curriculum connection within the broader areas of multicultural literature, social studies, science/non-fiction, math, etc. Handouts of this information will be made available for the whole class.

Scriptfile: The other scripts you develop will be reviewed and critiqued in groups in class and then placed in a script-file of approximately 30 pages. Please provide 2 copies of this file along with disk containing scripts in "Word" files.

2. **Compilation scripts:** student will gather materials from various literary genres that address a common theme. These materials will be brought to class and student groups will use them to create a thematic script. This script will then be staged and rehearsed for an end of the quarter Reader's Theatre extravaganza! We will invite the public to see your talents and you will take part in planning the publicity.

Each student will also include other compilation script materials in their script-file. This may include completed scripts, materials that could be made into a compilation script, lists and bibliographies of related materials, etc.

Participation:

Participation is determined by:

- Prompt attendance at all class meetings
- Preparation of materials for scheduled script development sessions
- Effort made by the student during Reader's Theatre practice sessions
- Contribution to the in-class evaluation of class members' scripts
- Involvement in and contribution to class discussions
- Favorable peer report of participation in compilation script group meetings both in and outside of class. (Attendance and equal participation in these meetings)

Dates to remember: (Dates subject to minor changes)

April (various dates) Script Development checks
 May 2, 4 etc. - Adapted Script Performances and Presentations
 TBA - School performances (Poss. May 16/18)
 May 14 - Completed Book Report due
 May 25 - Draft of Compilation Script due
 June 1 - Completed Compilation Script due
 June 4 - Completed Script File due
 June 4 - Compilation Script "Dress Rehearsal"
 June 6 - Compilation Script Performance (school performance TBA)
 Scripts and reports will be checked for progress throughout the quarter.

GRADING PROCEDURES:

Book Report:	15%
Script File (20-30 pages)	30%
Adapted Script Performance And Presentation	15%
Compilation Script & Performance	25%
Participation	15%



Grade Distribution:

100-96 = A	86-84 = B	76-74 = C	66-64 = D
95-90 = A-	83-80 = B-	73-70 = C-	63-60 = D-
89-87 = B+	79-77 = C+	69-67 = D+	Below 60 = F

Academic Dishonesty Policy: Western Washington University students are responsible for reading, understanding, and upholding the standards of academic dishonesty as set forth in the *WWU Academic Dishonesty Policy and Procedure* (see Appendix D of the University Bulletin).



Reasonable Accommodation Policy: It is the policy of Western Washington University to provide reasonable accommodation to the known physical, sensory, or mental limitations of qualified individuals except where such accommodation would impose undue hardship on the institution. To request accommodation, students must contact WWU Disability Resources for Students at 360-650-3844.

Teacher Education Performance Standards:

For those students in this class that are, or hope to be, education majors, the following standards are targeted in this course: Content Pedagogy; Student Development; Diverse Learners; Motivation and Management; Communication and Technology; Planning; Assessment; Reflective Practice and Professional Growth.

Course Content:

The following topics will be covered throughout the quarter:

- ◆ Characteristics of Reader's Theatre
 - Differences between Reader's Theatre and conventional theatre
 - Theatre of the mind
 - Rules, or the lack thereof
 - Different types of Reader's Theatre
- ◆ Benefits of Reader's Theatre in the classroom
 - Benefits to the children
 - Benefits to the teacher
 - Benefits to the budget
 - Benefits to the flexible curriculum
- ◆ Adapting Fiction and Non-Fiction into script form
 - Choosing appropriate literature
 - Age appropriate and multicultural considerations
 - Fitting it together
 - Developing "Compilation Scripts" using multiple genres of literature
- ◆ Reader's Theatre resources
 - Books, journal articles
 - Where to find ready-to-go scripts
 - Script services
- ◆ Getting children involved
 - Introducing Reader's Theatre to children
 - Different way to implement the Reader's Theatre
 - Circle readings
 - Instant readings
 - Cooperative readings
 - Staged readings
- ◆ Teaching oral and physical performance skills to children
 - Use of script
 - Physical poise and posture
 - Gesture and movement
 - Vocal elements
 - Emotive content and characterization
 - Facial expression
 - Audience connection
- ◆ Arranging the Reader's Theatre
 - Staging, blocking, use of space
 - Entrances and exits
- ◆ Public performance of Reader's Theatre
 - Copyright permission
 - Performance rights
 - Publicity

