ARTICULATE BODIES: WRITING INSTRUCTION IN A PERFORMANCE-BASED CURRICULUM

Stephanie Lein Walseth
University of Minnesota, Department of Theatre Arts and Dance
WEC Research Assistant and PhD Candidate
Writing in Theatre

WHY DO WE WRITE IN THEATRE?
• Writing in theatre is a part of the artistic process.
• Like artistic practice, writing in theatre communicates a vision, experience, or idea.

WHAT MAKES GOOD WRITING IN THEATRE?
• It is aware of its audience
• It is multi-disciplinary
• It is poetic
• It balances the subjective with the objective

HOW DO WE GO ABOUT WRITING IN THEATRE?
• Writing in theatre originates in research
• Writing in theatre is similar to the process of rehearsal
• Writing in theatre requires commitment

WHAT ABILITIES DO WE NEED TO WRITE EFFECTIVELY IN THEATRE?
• Conduct research
• Unlock and explore the imagination
• Create descriptions of performance, design components, and/or dramatic texts
• Identify, interpret, and analyze
• Create and support a thesis driven argument
• Develop an awareness of differences between conventions and genres of writing
• Deepen ideas to reach new levels of complexity
• Develop self-reflexivity
• Practice revision
Theatre and Dance: Expansive definition of writing
TAD Curriculum Mapping Project
Identifying our Strengths and Gaps

**STRENGTHS**

- Capacious definition of writing
- Ubiquity of writing instruction across the curriculum
- Eliciting process-based, exploratory, expressive dimensions of writing

**GAPS**

- Unclear where higher order analysis and synthesis skills are happening
- Revision is primarily happening in WI courses
- Expectations for student ‘writing’ often implicit, especially with higher level abilities
Modeling
For Instructors:
- Intro to Theatre: Text Analysis
- TH 3541: Artist Statements
- BA/BFA New Voices Workshop

For Students:
- Fall Faculty Retreat 2011
- Developing Writing Statements for Syllabi

Other:
- Making Writing Instruction Less Overwhelming
- Working with Non-Native English Speakers
- Devising Effective Writing Assignments

Modeling Concrete Teaching Tools & Writing Instruction
Performing Writing/Writing Performance
Writing in Theatre

WHY DO WE WRITE IN THEATRE?
• Writing in theatre is a part of the artistic process.
• Like artistic practice, writing in theatre communicates a vision, experience, or idea.

WHAT MAKES GOOD WRITING IN THEATRE?
• It is aware of its audience
• It is multi-disciplinary
• It is poetic
• It balances the subjective with the objective

HOW DO WE GO ABOUT WRITING IN THEATRE?
• Writing in theatre originates in research
• Writing in theatre is similar to rehearsal
• Writing in theatre requires commitment

WHAT ABILITIES DO WE NEED TO WRITE EFFECTIVELY IN THEATRE?
• Conduct research
• Unlock and explore the imagination
• Create descriptions of performance, design components, and/or dramatic texts
• Identify, interpret, and analyze
• Create and support a thesis driven argument
• Develop an awareness of differences between conventions and genres of writing
• Deepen ideas to reach new levels of complexity
• Develop self-reflexivity
• Practice revision