

2013

# To Play or Not To Play: Using Drama as an Effective Pedagogical Tool to Teach Literature

Maeve Devlin

Follow this and additional works at: <http://commons.emich.edu/honors>



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Devlin, Maeve, "To Play or Not To Play: Using Drama as an Effective Pedagogical Tool to Teach Literature" (2013). *Senior Honors Theses*. 367.

<http://commons.emich.edu/honors/367>

This Open Access Senior Honors Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors College at DigitalCommons@EMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@EMU. For more information, please contact [lib-ir@emich.edu](mailto:lib-ir@emich.edu).

---

# To Play or Not To Play: Using Drama as an Effective Pedagogical Tool to Teach Literature

**Degree Type**

Open Access Senior Honors Thesis

**Department**

English Language and Literature

**First Advisor**

Annette Wannamaker

**Keywords**

Hesitant Readers, Struggling Readers, Story-Based Improvisation, Active Learning, Different Learning Styles

**Subject Categories**

English Language and Literature

TO PLAY OR NOT TO PLAY:  
USING DRAMA AS AN EFFECTIVE PEDAGOGICAL TOOL TO TEACH LITERATURE

By

Maeve Devlin

A Senior Thesis Submitted to the  
Eastern Michigan University

Honors College

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Graduation  
With Honors in the English Language and Literature Department

Approved at Ypsilanti, Michigan, on this date December 9, 2013

## **To Play or Not To Play:**

### **Using Drama as an Effective Pedagogical Tool to Teach Literature**

#### **Introduction:**

“I felt like I was there and experienced what they felt” (Student 8).

“It helped me to visualize what actually went on inside the attic”  
(Student 41).

“I liked to move around more when I learn” (Student 88).

“I learned more how the characters feel” (Student 9).

“Yes, the assignment was fun. But also helped us learn more detail  
of the story” (Student 68).

These were the words of students from a classroom of seventh-graders who had been reading the play, *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Their instructor allowed me to attend a class period and conduct a drama activity that I planned in order to help in their comprehension of their reading. I was able to obtain feedback from the students about the activity and learned about their thoughts and opinions on this different mode of teaching. It seems that the students were generally open to this different style and enjoyed a chance to do something different than the commonly used pedagogical tools of lecture and discussion. Various responses from these students illustrated that an addition of these types of dramatic exercises might deepen their understanding of the topic, keep them interested and engaged, and help them to interpret works of literature.

This study confirmed that there is an important link between children's literature and children's theatre—educators can greatly benefit from awareness and application of this association. The addition of drama activities in the classroom can help students to engage in active learning while looking at works of literature from new and different points of view. While some may worry that adding drama activities into the classroom can take away from the rigors of schooling, I argue that drama activities provide an excellent opportunity for students to interact with the texts they are reading and thereby engage more in their own learning.

### **Literature Review:**

Since the core of drama activities are based in play, it is important to know the effects of play on human development. It has been proven time and time again that play is important to the developmental, social, and intellectual growth of humans. For instance, in their article, "Proteus, The Giant at the Door: Drama and Theater in the Curriculum," authors John O'Toole and Jo O'Mara focus on the inclusion of drama activities in the classroom. They write that "from the nineteenth century, educational scholars have recognized that dramatic play is an important part of human development" (206). O'Toole and O'Mara believe that play, especially dramatic play, is essential to learning. Wendy Karen Mages makes a similar argument in her article "Does Creative Drama Promote Language Development in Early Childhood? A Review of the Methods and Measures Employed in the Empirical Literature." In her article, Mages reviews studies that focus on the link between creative drama and language development. She cites Vygotsky when she writes that,

Play is the source of development and creates the zone of proximal development. Action in the imaginative sphere, in an imaginary situation,

the creation of voluntary intentions and the formation of real-life plans and volitional motives—all appear in play and make it the highest level of preschool development. (125)

O'Toole, O'Mara, and Mages all suggest that playing stimulates development in children.

Stuart Brown further supports these three authors' statements in his book, *Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*. In his book, Brown writes about the importance of play, and how it is just as essential to our lives as sleep and nutrition. Brown provides various reasons why play—from which drama stems—is useful to humans: dramatic play “is simply practice for skills needed in the future” (31), it gives the players “the ability to perceive others' emotional state, and to adopt an appropriate response” (32), “it creates an arena for social interaction and learning” (49) and “it creates a low-risk format for finding and developing innate skills and talents” (49). Brown also shows how important continued research on the pedagogical values of play is when he writes that

Neuroscientists, developmental biologists, social scientists, and researchers from every point of the scientific compass now know that play is a profound biological process. It has evolved over eons in many animal species to promote survival. It shapes the brain and makes animals smarter and more adaptable. In higher animals, it fosters empathy and makes possible complex social groups. For us, play lies at the core of creativity and innovation. (5)

From everything that Brown, O'Toole, O'Mara, and Mage write, it seems that children who are allowed to play and have fun are learning essential skills that can benefit them for the rest of their lives.

Empathy, for instance, is an important skill that should be fostered in an ethical society and should be used daily while interacting with others. If a child does not learn how to empathize, he may have difficulties relating to his peers and understanding the problems or feelings of others. Empathy can also be applied to reading and understanding works of literature; by having the ability to empathize, children can relate to the protagonist's feelings and emotions and can then translate that knowledge to their own life, emotions, feelings, and experiences. Creativity is another important skill to possess. People who possess a creative mind can look at problems and find unique ways to solve them. Someone who is creative approaches problems from multiple different perspectives and points of view, and they can solve those problems in ways that are fundamentally new, original, and fresh. Both empathy and creativity are integral to a fulfilling and rich academic experience. The student who can empathize can relate to protagonists, antagonists, authors, and illustrators to gain a well-rounded and complete understanding of the text.

When empathy is combined with creativity, the student can see what is happening in the text and relate it to the real world. She can make connections between the two different worlds—real and imagined—and question and explore her real world based on some of the problems and situations faced in the imagined worlds of literature. While children play, they are not only learning the best ways to interact with their peers, but they are also developing complex brain functioning, learning about themselves, understanding how their bodies work, and exploring connections between themselves and the world.

Play, in its natural and serendipitous form, is beneficial to humans of all ages; but harnessing that natural value of play and adding structure to it can yield more specific pedagogical benefits. For instance, the inclusion of drama activities in the classroom can be

beneficial to students both on a developmental and an academic basis. O'Mara and O'Toole touch on this idea when they write that "drama might play its part in children's growth and self-development through formal schooling" (206). They explain that while the passing of knowledge from teacher to student (usually in a lecture format) is necessary to the schooling process, providing space and opportunities for self-discovery and exploration is also important. They cite Winifred Ward, a pioneer in the field of children's literature and creative dramatics who wrote *Playmaking with Children: From Kindergarten through Junior High School*. Ward gives various reasons supporting the inclusion of drama in the classroom. She believes that the objectives of playmaking are:

1. To provide for a controlled emotional outlet.
2. To provide each child with an avenue of self-expression in one of the arts.
3. To encourage and guide the child's creative imagination.
4. To give young people opportunities to grow in social understanding and co-operation.
5. To give children experience in thinking on their feet and expressing ideas fearlessly. (3-9)

It is important to note that the use of drama activities in the classroom is not merely supplemental—learning occurs while the students are playing and performing.

In *Drama as Pedagogy*, John O'Toole focuses on how drama can be used effectively as a learning tool in classrooms. He writes that "there is no external audience—the participants are engaged in the moment, which exists for their own experiential learning, not to communicate to others" (105). Because these activities are participation based, and not meant to be presented before an audience, when students participate in the activity, they are gaining new experiences



that can eventually lead them to discovery, understanding, and, hopefully, mastery of the current classroom topic.

Furthermore, in Donna Sayers Adomat's article, "Actively Engaging with Stories through Drama: Portraits of Two Young Readers," Adomat shows how drama activities can pull in the hesitant reader and encourage his interest in the reading. She states that "by interacting as characters through drama, children generate new meanings and possibilities for stories and come to understand stories and their implications from multiple perspectives" (629). It is important for students to engage in the activity and interact with the other students to make connections between the text and the real world. In her article, Adomat, like O'Toole, emphasizes the fact that the activities should focus on participation, not presentation. Adomat later states that

Building literary understanding through drama offered opportunities for students to use their strengths to create multilayered and rich understanding of stories—analyzing, developing, and transforming textual elements through taking multiple character roles, being active agents of creating meaning by bringing their own interests, wants, and needs into the process, and expanding their perspectives through the social negotiations and multiple viewpoints that were expressed in the drama work (635).

Adomat's phrase "active agents of creating meaning" is the core idea of the inclusion of drama activities. Participating in the activities and working through the content from multiple perspectives allows children to be active agents in their own learning. Children are capable of having new and original ideas; allowing them the space and opportunity to explore those ideas in

new ways can provide them with experiences that can change their outlook on their education and life.

In this era of standardized testing, some may say that the inclusion of drama takes away from the rigors of schooling; however, drama activities can help students explore, interact, and engage with the literary texts that they are reading in ways that can increase their interest in and comprehension of works of literature. Adomat writes that “by weaving drama into literacy activities, I found that struggling readers create and express rich understandings of text through modalities that are not usually emphasized in literacy instruction” (629). Adomat later writes that “a multimodal approach to literary understanding takes into account the whole range of modes involved in meaning making, such as speech, writing, image, gesture, music, and others” (629). Adomat is pointing out that the traditional teaching methods for reading and literacy may not work well for all students. By including different forms of activities—especially drama based activities—teachers can reach out to struggling readers, resistant readers, or even bored students who are tired of sitting still in their seats.

To make difficult reading or long works of literature more interesting, a teacher can facilitate certain drama activities to draw potentially uninterested readers into the learning experience. In Laura Bates’ article, “The Play’s the Thing: Literary Adaptations for Children’s Theatre,” she focuses on how the use of drama and theatre in the classroom can help educators teach students. Bates writes that “the use of drama with the children in your classroom can catch the attention of even the most reluctant of students and bring literature to life in a way that other methods cannot” (37). Bates has provided educators with the knowledge that drama activities can draw in readers who might not have been interested before, however Mages gives the educator specific types of activities that he can use in the classroom. Mages introduces and defines three

general categories of drama activities in her article. The first is thematic improvisation, which she defines “as the enactment of themes such as a visit to the doctor or a trip to the circus” (131). Mages believes that “this form of drama intervention is less structured than story-based improvisation because thematic dramas do not have predetermined characters or predetermined plots” (132). If drama activities are a new addition to the classroom, the teacher may want to use thematic improvisation because it is an easier type of exercise to participate in. In this activity, students focus on drawing from their own experiences; they do not need to make connections between the text and the activity.

The second category of drama activities is story-based improvisation “Story-based improvisation is defined as the enactment of set stories” (131). In this type of drama activity, “the participants are invited to enact dramas based on the stories that they have heard” (133). This type of activity is a progression from thematic improvisation. Students are required to make connections among the text, the activity, and their own experiences. Adomat demonstrates a type of story-based improvisation in her article “Actively Engaging With Stories Through Drama: Portraits of Two Young Readers.” Her activity, based on a book with a rabbit family and a bear, requires the students to become characters and interview one another. To participate in this activity, the student must know the story, be able to empathize with the character, and understand appropriate ways that the character would respond. To summarize her experience with this activity, Adomat writes that “through this exploration of the ideas and dilemmas in the story, they have tried on multiple character perspectives; personalized their interpretation through voice intonations, gestures, and movements; and helped one another to build and clarify the meaning of the story” (628). In most instances, story improvisation seems the most beneficial for literature

educators. It is designed to make the reading and the student's participation the focus of the activity.

The last category that Mages defines is Paley-style improvisation. Paley-style improvisation offers a more unique use to the educator because "children are encouraged to dramatize stories that they themselves have created" (136). This category involves the same connection making skills required in story-based improvisation; however it adds an element of creative writing that empowers the students in different ways. Not only are they allowed to develop the characters, but they can also become active agents in the creation of the characters.

A particular student may not be able to or allowed to pursue reading in their area of interest, but instead may be forced to read literature, which has been mandated by education standards, that he or she may find boring or uninteresting. But when the instructor uses drama activities—thematic improvisation, story-based improvisation, and Paley-style improvisation—as a method to explore the book, it is no longer boring and uninteresting; instead, it is a time where they can participate with classmates and excel at skills that are not normally applied to reading classes. Drama activities can draw the uninterested student in and appeal to what they like or are interested in, broadening the potential audience the educator can reach by expanding her pedagogical techniques.

Adomat demonstrates the effectiveness of drama activities by discussing real-life examples of how drama is beneficial to students. Her article looks at two students and the effect of drama activities on their progression in school. She noticed that "by interacting as characters through drama, children generate new meanings and possibilities for stories and come to understand stories and their implications from multiple perspectives" (629). Adomat noticed how the drama activities engaged struggling learners and transformed them into participating students. Both

their comprehension and writing improved after participating in the various activities that Adomat included in her lessons. One of the students that Adomat discussed was Nathan (a pseudonym to protect privacy), a struggling student who had trouble corresponding letters and sounds as well as reading smaller words. However, after Adomat tailored her lessons to his stronger skills, such as dramatizing, she noticed that Nathan's reading skills were improving. Adomat's examples include all of the essential aspects that Ward believes are necessary to create effective dramatizations of literature, including:

1. Story
2. Characterization
3. Dialogue
4. Action and Grouping
5. Climax
6. Teamwork
7. Timing and
8. Voice and Diction (137-138)

These skills, all of which are present in dramatic activities, are what helped Adomat's struggling students, and what will continue to help students who are able to engage in the literature. The coupling of reading literature and participating in dramatic activities can provide students with an all-encompassing encounter with the language arts that engages a variety of learning styles.

### **Methodology:**

In March 2013, I contacted the principal of a middle school in our area (name omitted to protect the privacy of the students). After meeting with the principal of the school, I was given

permission to contact one of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers. We met with each other and discussed what content his classes would be covering in the coming weeks. I learned that they were in the process of reading *The Diary of Anne Frank*, a play adaptation of Anne Frank's life and diary.

After receiving approval for my study from the Human Subjects Review Committee in the Eastern Michigan University College of Arts and Sciences (Appendix I), I developed a drama activity to facilitate during one of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade class periods (Appendix II). My activity was for the students to extend scenes based on the knowledge they knew about Anne Frank and the conditions of Jewish people in hiding. I read the play and chose several lines that were at the end of a scene. For their activity, the students were able to choose a scene and then create dialogue and action to extend the scene based on what had just happened. Before I went to the classroom, I provided the teacher with the Informed Consent forms for the students' parents to complete (Appendix III).

After reviewing my plans with the teacher, I visited the students and facilitated my activity. The teacher introduced me to each classroom, but the subsequent activities were solely my responsibility. I introduced the idea behind my study and then explained how the activity would run. I broke the students up into groups of four to five people, handed out the activity sheet with the lines from the play, and gave the students time to discuss and practice their scenes. I wandered through the groups, assisting some and redirecting others to approach the topic more appropriately, emphasizing respect for the events that occurred during World War II and the people who were persecuted. After the groups had enough time to work on their scenes, they performed their piece to the class as a whole. Once all of the groups had performed, I led a discussion that made connections between their performances and the reading. I prompted them to think about the decisions they made throughout the creation of their scene; why they had

certain characters act in a particular way, and how they speculated the scene might continue even though it had ended in the play. By asking these questions, I was asking the students to think critically about the connections between the original text and their own creations.

To roughly assess the effectiveness of my activity, I gave every student a pre-questionnaire and a post-questionnaire (Appendix IV). The students received the pre-questionnaire, as well as a consent form to be signed by the students' parents, before I visited the class. The post-questionnaire was given to the students after the activity and discussion had ended. The first-hand feedback from students allowed me to evaluate their opinions concerning this different type of instruction.

After attending the classroom and facilitating my activity, I was able to compile the responses from the students (Appendix V). I grouped the responses by class then by questionnaire in order to effectively notice any changes in student opinion. I transcribed each student's responses to the pre- and post-questionnaire. Responses to questions that involved a scale from 1 to 10 were transcribed directly, while the responses to yes or no questions were coded. Any positive response was equated with 1 (one), while negative responses were equated with 0 (zero). If a student responded with a neutral feeling, I equated their answer with 0.5 (one half) so that their response was accurately measured.

Once the data from the questionnaires had been compiled, I began computing their responses. For each class, I counted the number of students and added the responses to the scaled questions and the yes or no questions. Using the number of students, I was able to find the values of: the average response to the questions (mean), the response that showed up most frequently (mode), and the response at the midpoint of the data when arranged from lowest to highest (median).

By looking at these computations, and combining them with student comments and my classroom observations, I was able to ascertain the students' response to my drama activity.

### Findings:

Many of the students thought that the activity was fun, creative, and interesting. In all three classes, students responded positively in measurable ways. Below are the charts comparing answers to three questions that I asked in both the pre-questionnaire and the post-questionnaire.

Question 1: On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you like your class?

	Pre-Activity	Post-Activity
CLASS A	6.33	8.45
CLASS B	5.5	7.92
CLASS C	5.79	7.7

Question 2: On a scale from 1 to 10, how interested are you in your class?

	Pre-Activity	Post-Activity
CLASS A	5.74	7.96
CLASS B	5.30	7.8
CLASS C	4.95	7.07

Question 3: On a scale from 1 to 10, how involved do you feel in your class?

	Pre-Activity	Post-Activity
CLASS A	6.31	7.96
CLASS B	7.34	8.6
CLASS C	6.5	8.03



Students showed that they were consistently more interested and more involved in the class when it included a drama activity that supplemented their reading. Drama activities are especially beneficial to students who like to move around and be active while learning. In his post-questionnaire, one student responded that he “liked to move around more when I learn” (Student 88). During the activity, the student’s teacher even noticed his change in mentality and attitude about the assignment and mentioned this positive change to me. Other students responded similarly to the questions on the post-questionnaire.

When asked if the different type of assignment helped them better understand the topic, one student responded that she “felt I could be more involved in a small group” (Student 32). Another question I included on the post-questionnaire was if the students felt like they learned more about the topic. One student responded “yes, I learned more how the characters feel” (Student 8) and another said that “I got the feel of the setting a lot more” (Student 15).

There were some students who showed hesitancy about having drama activities in every class, both in class and on their post-questionnaire. It seemed that the students who had shy personalities were nervous about this presentational type of activity, however they warmed up and found ways to engage in their own personal way. Nevertheless, there were still some negative feelings towards the activity expressed in the post-questionnaire. In response to the question “Do you prefer this type of assignment or the types of assignments you regularly get from this teacher,” student 41 said “Yes, but you can’t act out plays and assignments all the time.” I believe that this student has touched upon something that is very important for educators and professionals who deal with children to know. Although the drama activity provided an important opportunity for the students to make connections between the original text and their own creations, it is only meaningful when the educator thoughtfully combines the activity with

lecture, reading, and discussion. The lecture and reading gives the students the information they need to understand the topic. The activity allows them to explore the topic from different perspectives, and the discussion provides an opportunity for the students to acknowledge the connections they had made and begin to master the topic.

**Conclusion:**

If I were to replicate this experiment, I would make certain changes to improve the effectiveness of the study. I would attempt to work more closely with a teacher on a long-term basis to provide drama activities to a classroom for a longer period of time. By collaborating with the teacher who knows the students very well, we could create a program that fits all the students' personalities, their learning styles, and their differences from one another.

The inclusion of drama activities can benefit many students. It allows them to explore different possibilities, involves them in the story, and encourages them to take a more active role in their learning and education. However, it is best applied when combined as one of many varied approaches that engage different learning styles. To maximize learning, educators should experiment to find a balance between lecture—the giving and receiving of information—and drama activities—the exploration and discovery of knowledge.

Many of the students that I interacted with mentioned that they enjoyed the opportunity to be creative and to empathize with the characters. Creativity and empathy are the main ideas that O'Toole, O'Mara, Brown, Ward, and Adomat believe to be beneficial, and they are the main reason why drama activities should be included as routine classroom activities.

Overall, I feel that my study can provide educators with knowledge about the inclusion of drama activities in the classroom. I have given current and future educators rationale to make

drama a part of their pedagogical techniques and demonstrated the benefits of drama to the students. The data and responses from the students are also a new contribution to the field that support the argument that drama activities give students an opportunity to interact with literary texts they are reading and to engage more in their learning.

**Works Cited:**

- Adomat, Donna Sayers. "Actively Engaging with Stories through Drama: Portraits of Two Young Readers" *The Reading Teacher* 62.8 (May 2009): 628-636. Web. 10 October 2013
- Bates, Laura. "The Play's the Thing. Literary Adaptations for Children's Theatre" *International Journal of Early Childhood* 39.2 (2007): 37-44. Web. 10 October 2013.
- Brown, Stuart. *Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*. New York: Penguin Group, 2009. Print.
- Mages, Wendy Karen. "Does Creative Drama Promote Language Development in Early Childhood? A Review of the Methods and Measures Employed in the Empirical Literature" *Review of Educational Research* 78.1 (March, 2008): 124-152. Web. 10 October 2013
- O'Toole, John and O'Mara, Jo. "Proteus, The Giant at the Door: Drama and Theater in the Curriculum" *International Handbook of Research in Arts Education*. Liora Bresler. Netherlands: Springer, 2007. 203-218. Web. 10 October 2013
- O'Toole, John. "Drama as Pedagogy". *Drama and Curriculum*. New York: Springer Science and Business Media, 2009. 97-116. Web. 10 October 2013.
- Ward, Winifred. *Playmaking with Children: From Kindergarten through Junior High School*. New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, Inc., 1957. Print.

## EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

*Education First*

---

March 13, 2013

Maeve Devlin  
Department of English

Dear Maeve:

The College of Arts and Sciences Human Subjects Review Committee (CAS HSRC) of Eastern Michigan University has reviewed and approved your proposal (#1163) titled, "Teaching Active Learning Through Creative Writing and Drama." The CAS HSRC has determined that the rights and welfare of the individual subjects involved in this research are carefully guarded. Additionally, the methods used to obtain informed consent are appropriate, and the individuals participating in your study are not at risk.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the HSRC of any change in the protocol that might alter your research in any manner that differs from that upon which this approval is based. Approval of this project applies for one year from the date of this letter. If your data collection continues beyond the one-year period, you must apply for a renewal. Please specify in your consent form that approval is from 3/13/2013 to 3/12/2014.

On behalf of the Human Subjects Committee, I wish you success in conducting your research.

Sincerely,



Alissa Huth-Bocks, Ph.D.  
CAS Human Subjects Review Committee Chair

Note: If project continues beyond the length of **one** year, please submit a continuation request form by 3/12/2014.

cc: Annette Wannamaker, Ph.D.

## Appendix II

**Instructions: As a group, decide which section you would like to perform. Everyone will need to participate to create a new section that accompanies the section you chose.**

Page 7: Miep: Are you all right, Mr. Frank?

Mr. Frank: Yes, Miep, yes.

Act out the interactions between Miep and Mr. Frank before he went back up to the safe house. Was he sad to be back at the safe house? Did Miep attempt to stop him?

Page 12: Mr. Frank: Mrs. Van Daan, Mr. Van Daan, Peter. There were too many of the Green Police on the streets...we had to take the long way around.

Act out what the Franks were going through before they arrived at the safe house. Were they sneaking? How did they look when they were heading to the safe house?

Page 25: Mr. Frank: It's safe now. The last workman has left.

Act out what everyone in the safe house was doing before they could act normally. Were they talking to each other? If so, how were they talking? Were they moving around?

Page 91: Anne: Do you mean it?

Peter: I said it, didn't I?

[Anne goes to her room and closes the door. Peter goes to his room and closes the door. Dussel stands there, bewildered, forlorn]

Act out Dussel's reaction to being locked out of two rooms. Where did he go? What did he do?

Page 112: Dussel: Stop it, you're spoiling the whole invasion!

Act out how the family celebrated when they heard the news.

Page 122: Mr. Frank: She puts me to shame.

Act out how Mr. Frank and Miep left the safe house. What did Mr. Frank end up doing?

## Appendix III

### **Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s) Informed Consent**

**Investigator:** Maeve Devlin, Eastern Michigan University

**Co-Investigator:** Annette Wannamaker, Ph. D., Eastern Michigan University

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this research study is to gain a better understanding of the different teaching techniques-specifically creative learning assignments and theatre activities-that teachers can use to encourage active learning in his or her students.

**Procedure:** Your child will be asked to take an initial survey that asks him or her about the assignments he or she generally receives from teachers. He or she will then participate in an assignment (that is based either in creative writing or theatre) given to him or her from his or her teacher. Lastly, another survey will be administered asking your child about his or her thoughts on the experience he or she had with the assignment. The duration of this study should only last one class period.

**Confidentiality:** Your child will be given a specific code. The results will be stored separately from the consent form, which includes your child's name and any other identifying information. At no time will your child's name be associated with his or her responses to the survey. All related materials will be kept in a locked file cabinet and electronic data will be stored on a password-protected computer.

**Expected Risks:** The expected risks to this project will only be a slight disruption to the classroom on the day that the primary investigator visits to run the study.

**Expected Benefit:** The results of this study will provide future and existing teachers with techniques that encourage active learning in students.

**Voluntary Participation:** Participation in this study is voluntary. You and your child may choose not to participate. If you and your child do decide to participate, you can change your mind at any time and withdraw from the study without negative consequences. Refusal to participate will result in no penalty or loss of benefit.

**Use of Research Results:** No names or individually identifying information will be revealed. Results will be presented at an Eastern Michigan University conference as part of an undergraduate project being conducted by the principal investigator.

Future Questions: If you have any questions concerning your child's participation in this study now or in the future, you can contact the principal investigator, Maeve Devlin, at [mdevlin@emich.edu](mailto:mdevlin@emich.edu), or co-investigator, Annette Wannamaker, at [awannamak@emich.edu](mailto:awannamak@emich.edu).

This research protocol and informed consent document has been reviewed and approved by the Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee for use from 3/1/2013 to 3/22/2013. If you have any questions about the approval process, please contact the UHSRC at [human.subjects@emich.edu](mailto:human.subjects@emich.edu) or call 734-487-0042.

**Consent to Participate:** I have read or had read to me all of the above information about this research study, including the research procedures, possible risks, side effects, and the likelihood of any benefit to me. The content and meaning of this information has been explained and I understand. All my questions, at this time, have been answered. I hereby consent and do voluntarily offer to follow the study requirements and take part in the study.

PRINT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix IV

For Researcher Use Only
-------------------------

CODE:
-------

### Initial Student Survey:

**Your teacher will not see your responses to these questions, so answering them truthfully will not affect your grade in any way.**

- On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being the least and 10 being the most, how much do you like your class?
- On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being the least and 10 being the most, how interested are you in your class?
- On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being the least and 10 being the most, how involved do you feel in your class?
- 
- Do you write creatively at home? (Short stories, poems, etc.) What do you write and how often?
- Do you write in a journal at home? (Daily thoughts, feelings, emotions, etc.) How often?

For the next four questions, please circle your answer.

- |   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| • Do you write creatively for school projects?  | YES | NO |
| • Do you write in a journal for school assignments?   | YES | NO |
| • Do you ever put on plays, play-act, or pretend at home?   | YES | NO |
| • Do you engage in theatre-type exercises (performing in plays or skits, role-playing, or play-acting) in school? | YES | NO |

For Researcher Use Only
-------------------------

CODE:
-------

**Final Student Survey:**

- On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being the least and 10 being the most, how much do you like your class?
- On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being the least and 10 being the most, how interested are you in your class?
- On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being the least and 10 being the most, how involved do you feel in your class?
- Did this different type of assignment help you better understand the topic?
- Were you more willing to participate in this assignment than in other assignments?
- Did you feel like you learned more about the topic?
- Do you prefer this type of assignment or the types of assignments you regularly get from this teacher?

Class A -Initial

Questions--> Student's Response	V	On a scale from 1 to 10, how much do you like your class	On a scale from 1 to 10, how interested are you in your class?	On a scale from 1 to 10, how involved do you feel in your class?	Do you write creatively at home?	Do you write in a journal at home?	Do you write creatively for school projects?	Do you write in a journal for school assignments?	Do you ever pretend at home?	Do you engage in theatre-type exercises in school?
1		1	2	5	1	0	1	0	0	1
2		4	5	5	1	1	1	1	0	1
3		5	7	5	1	0	1	1	0	0
4		6	6	6	0	0	1	0	0	0
5		8	6	7	0	0	1	0	0	1
6		4	4	3	0	0	1	0	0	0
7		7	5	6	0	0	1	0	0	0
8		8	6	9	0	0	1	0	0	1
9		9	9	10	0.5	0.5	1	0	0	1
10		2	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	1
11		7	8	9	0	0	1	0	1	1
12										
13		8	7	6	0	0	1	0	0	0
14		6	7	4	0	0	1	1	0	1
15		8	8	9	0	0	1	0	0	1
17		6	7	5	1	0	1	1	0	1
18										
19		8	7	5	0	0	1	0	0	1
20		6	4	7	0	0	1	0	0	0
21										
22		4	3	3	0	0	0	1	1	0
23		5	5	7	0	0	1	1	0	0
24		8	7	9	0	0	0	0	0	1
25		7	5	9	0	0	1	0	1	0
27		9	8	8	0	0	1	0	0	0
28		9	9	6.5	0.5	0	1	1	1	1
29		8	7	8	0	0	1	1	0	0
30		9	7	5	0	0	1	0	1	1
31		7	3	9	0	1	1	0	1	1
32		2	2	3	0	0	1	0	1	0

STUDENTS: 30

TOTAL:	171	155	170.5	5	2.5	25	8	7	15
MEAN:	6.333333333	5.740740741	6.314814815	0.185185185	0.092592593	0.925925926	0.296296296	0.25925925	0.555555556
MEDIAN:	7	6	6	0	0	1	0	0	1
MODE:	8	7	5	0	0	1	0	0	1

Class A -Final

Questions--> Student's Response	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
On a scale from 1 to 10, how much do you like your class?	10	3	6	7	8	10	10	10	9	10
On a scale from 1 to 10, how interested are you in your class?	9	3	8	7	8	10	10	10	9	10
On a scale from 1 to 10, how involved do you feel in your class?	10	5	7	7	8	10	10	10	10	10
Did this different type of assignment help you better understand the topic?	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
Were you more willing to participate in this assignment than in other assignments?	1	0.5	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1
Did you feel like you learned more about the topic?	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
Do you prefer this type of assignment or the types of assignments you regularly get from this teacher?	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
STUDENTS: 30	10	3	8	7	8	10	10	10	9	10
TOTAL:	253.5	239	239	25	26.5	21.5	28.5			
MEAN:	8.45	7.966666667	7.966666667	0.8333333333	0.8833333333	0.716666667	0.95			
MEDIAN:	9	8	8.5	1	1	1	1			
MODE:	10	10	10	1	1	1	1			

## Class B –Initial

Questions→ Student's Response   V	On a scale from 1 to 10, how much do you like your class?	On a scale from 1 to 10, how interested are you in your class?	On a scale from 1-10, how involved do you feel in your class?	Do you write creatively at home?	Do you write in a journal at home?	Do you write creatively for school projects?	Do you write in a journal for school assignments?	Do you ever pretend at home?	Do you engage in theatre-type exercises in school?
34	8	7	7	1	1	1	1	1	1
35						1	0	0	0
36	1	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
38	1	1	5	0.5	0	0	1	0	1
39	7	7	9	1	1	1	0	0	1
40	7	8	8	0	0	1	0	0	0
41	3	3	8	0	0	1	1	0	1
42	8	8	10	0	0	1	1	1	1
44	6	5	7	1	0	1	1	0	1
45	7	6	7	0	1	1	1	1	1
46	7	6	8	1	0	1	1	1	0
48	10	10	9	0	0	1	1	0	1
49	9	8	9	0	0	1	1	0	1
50	6	6	7	0.5	0	1	1	1	1
51	5	5	4	0	1	1	0	0	1
53	3	1	5	1	0	1	1	0	1
55	4	2	10	1	0	1	0	0	1
56	4	9	10	0	0	1	1	1	1
58	2	2	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
60									
61	5	5	6	0	0	1	1	0	0
62	3	2	5	0	0	1	0	0	0
63	7	7	8	0	0	0	1	0	0
64	7	7	8	0	0	1	0	0	1
68	7	6	6	0	1	1	0	1	1

STUDENTS: 25

TOTAL:	127	122	169	7	5	20	14	7	16
MEAN:	5.52173913	5.304347826	7.347826087	0.304347826	0.217391304	0.833333333	0.583333333	0.291666667	0.666666667
MEDIAN:	6	6	8	0	0	1	1	0	1
MODE:	7	7	8	0	0	1	1	0	1

Class B -Final

Questions-> Student's Response	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
On a scale from 1 to 10, how much do you like your class?	8	6	1	9	10	9	10	10	9	10
On a scale from 1 to 10, how interested are you in your class?	8	6	1	8	10	9	10	10	9	10
On a scale from 1 to 10, how involved do you feel in your class?	7	7	5	9	10	10	10	10	9	10
Did this different type of assignment help you better understand the topic?	0.5	0	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1
Were you more willing to participate in this assignment than in other assignments?	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Did you feel like you learned more about the topic?	1	0	0	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1
Do you prefer this type of assignment or the types of assignments you regularly get from this teacher?	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
34	8	6	1	9	10	9	10	10	9	10
35	6	6	1	8	10	10	10	10	9	10
36	1	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1
38	9	8	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
39	10	10	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
40	9	9	8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
41	10	10	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
42	8	8	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
44	10	8	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
45	10	10	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
46	9	10	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
48	10	10	9	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1
49	10	10	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
50	6	7	6	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
51	9	10	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
53	2	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
55	10	10	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
56	6	6	10	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1
58	9	9	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
60	10	10	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
61	5	4	10	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
62	3	4	5	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1
63	8	7	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
64	10	7	8	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1
68	10	10	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
STUDENTS: 25										
TOTAL:	198	195	215	19	23	19	22.5			
MEAN:	7.92	7.8	8.6	0.76	0.92	0.76	0.9			
MEDIAN:	9	8	10	1	1	1	1			
MODE:	10	10	10	1	1	1	1			

Class C -Initial

Questions-->	Student's Response	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
On a scale from 1 to 10, how much do you like your class?	69	5	7	7	4	6	6	0	0	0	0
On a scale from 1 to 10, how interested are you in your class?	70	7	8	7	7	8	8	0	0	0	0
On a scale from 1-10, how involved do you feel in your class?	71	8	9	6	6	8.5	8	0	0	0	0
Do you write creatively at home?	72	9	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Do you write in a journal at home?	73	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Do you write creatively for school projects?	74	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Do you write in a journal for school assignments?	75	9	9	8	8	9	9	0	0	0	0
Do you ever pretend at home?	76	7	7	4	4	8	8	0	0	0	0
Do you engage in theatre-type exercises in school?	77	4	4	2	2	7	7	1	1	0	0
	79	7	7	6	6	5	5	0	0	0	0
	80	6	6	6	6	6	6	0	0	0	0
	81	3	3	2	2	5	5	0	0	0	0
	82	8	8	7	7	9	9	0	0	0	0
	83	8	8	7	7	8	8	0	0	0	0
	84	8	8	5	5	4	4	0	0	0	0
	85	8	8	5	5	4	4	0	0	0	0
	86	7	7	8	8	10	10	1	1	1	1
	87	5	5	2	2	7	7	0	0	0	0
	88	4	4	9	9	8	8	0	0	0	0
	89	7	7	6	6	5	5	1	1	1	1
	90	2	2	3	3	5	5	0	0	0	0
	93	4	4	2	2	3	3	0	0	0	0
	94	6	6	5	5	7	7	1	1	1	1
	95	8	8	5	5	7	7	0	0	0	0
	96	3	3	6	6	4	4	0	0	0	0
	98	5	5	4	4	8	8	1	1	1	1

STUDENTS: 26

TOTAL: 139      119      149.5      5      4      19      8      4      12

MEAN: 5.79166667      4.958333333      6.229166667      0.2083333333      0.166666667      0.791666667      0.3333333333      0.166666667      0.5

MEDIAN: 6.5      5.5      6.5      0      0      1      0      0      0.5

MODE: 7      6      8      0      0      1      0      0      0

Questions--> Student's Response	On a scale from 1 to 10, how much do you like your class?	On a scale from 1 to 10, how interested are you in your class?	On a scale from 1 to 10, how involved do you feel in your class?	Did this different type of assignment help you better understand the topic?	Were you more willing to participate in this assignment than in other assignments?	Did you feel like you learned more about the topic?	Do you prefer this type of assignment or the types of assignments you regularly get from this teacher?
69	8	8	8	1	1	1	1
70	9	9	8	1	1	0.5	1
71	3	1	2	1	1	0	1
72	6	6	7	1	1	1	0
73	8	9	7	1	1	1	1
74	9	10	10	1	1	1	1
75	10	9	10	1	1	1	1
76	8	9	10	1	1	1	1
77	4	5	7	1	1	0	1
79	6	2	4	0.5	0	1	0
80	6	7	8	1	0	1	0
81	5	2	9	0	1	0	1
82	10	10	10	1	1	0	1
83	9	10	9	0	1	1	1
84	7	7	5	1	1	1	0
85	10	10	10	1	1	0	1
86	10	10	10	1	1	0	1
87	9	9	10	1	1	1	1
88	3	2	3	1	1	1	1
89	9	1	10	0	0	0	1
90	10	8	7	1	0.5	1	1
93	10	10	10	1	1	1	1
94	9	8	7	1	1	1	1
95	8	7	8	0	1	1	1
96	5	5	10	0	0	0	0
98	10	10	10	1	1	1	1

STUDENTS: 26

TOTAL:

201

184

209

20.5

21.5

17.5

21

MEAN:

7.730769231

7.076923077

8.038461538

0.788461538

0.826923077

0.673076923

0.807692308

MEDIAN:

8.5

8

8.5

1

1

1

1

MODE:

10

10

10

1

1

1

1