ARTICULATE BODIES: WRITING INSTRUCTION IN A PERFORMANCE-BASED CURRICULUM

Stephanie Lein Walseth
WEC Research Assistant and
PhD Candidate
Writing Enriched Curriculum project

**WAC and WID**
- Writing is developed through constant practice in disciplinary contexts
- Writing is inseparable from processes of reasoning, creativity, and communication in those disciplines
- Ongoing writing instruction is the responsibility of all instructors in the discipline

**WEC**
- “Mark-making in the service of communication”
- Creating a definition of writing
- A thorough, institutionally supported process, ensuring writing instruction permeates entire curriculum
- Making disciplinary expectations about ‘good writing’ clear to students
Departmental Divisions

THEATRE

BA

Liberal Arts: Training critical thinkers

Theorists

Scholars/Critics

WRITING???

BFA

Conservatory: Training Artists

Artist/Practitioners

Technicians
Theatre and Dance: Expansive definition of writing
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
Key findings: Imagination
“In a twitchy effort to wipe imaginary mud off of her body, she caresses one leg with the other with a dawdling pace, moving from the knee to the foot and finishing the motion with a quick flick as to fling the mud accumulated from the stroke into the air. She performs this action repetitively, although she never seems to feel sufficiently unsoiled and comfortable.”
Two Key Issues in Theatre and Dance Writing:

1) Bodily Articulation as Writing

Translation
Metacognition

How am I honing the skills from class this week?

What artistic choices am I making?

How is my voice working?

How is this production shaping my artistic process?
ARTICULATE BODIES: WRITING INSTRUCTION IN A PERFORMANCE-BASED CURRICULUM