

Welcome! - to an exciting, special course designed for elementary and secondary teachers interested in integrating the ARTS into academic curricula. This is offered by the Critical and Creative Thinking Graduate Program (CCT), University of Massachusetts Boston, and co-sponsored by the Arts/Learning Program, Natick, MA.

Thinking Critically and Creatively Through the Arts

CRCRTH 630: 3 graduate credits, CCT Program, UMass Boston

(Note: This is an initial syllabus and subject to change.)

Four Saturdays: 8:30-4:30 PM (Mar. 12, April 2, April 27, May 7)

Location: Walnut Hill School for the Arts, Natick, MA.

Instructors

Nina Greenwald, Ph.D., Critical and Creative Thinking Graduate Program, UMass Boston

John Hooker, MA. Art Department, Bridgewater State University

David Martin, Ph.D., Critical and Creative Thinking Graduate Program, UMass Boston

Elaine Sisler, MA. Teacher, Dancer & Arts Advocate
Endicott College

Miriam Kronish, special guest presenter, May 7: former elementary school principal (Needham Public Schools); Massachusetts principal of the year; well-known fine arts educator; faculty, Cambridge College and Lesley University

Description

This unique course has two key focuses: 1) to demonstrate how the arts (e.g., art, music, dance, filmmaking, storytelling, screen writing) are powerful vehicles for promoting critical and creative thinking and problem solving across all domains of learning and 2) to demonstrate ways in which the arts can enrich our personal lives and help solve problems

Through experiential learning and opportunities to reflect on this, participants will learn ways to teach thinking, across curriculum, through the arts. This includes instructional strategies and the creation of learning climates that cultivate openness to ideas, original ideas, multiple points of view, perspectives and interpretations, and making considered judgments. This includes specific strategies for responding to and evaluating imaginative works in ways that are both supportive and discriminating.

Goals for Participants

- Understand what is meant by the arts and arts learning
- Experience arts learning and its roles in developing critical and creative thinking and problem solving skills and dispositions
- Practice the skills and disposition (behaviors, habits of mind) of “Artful Thinking”
- Reflect on the literature on teaching thinking through the arts
- Maintain an arts thinking journal
- Develop and field test instructional materials for teaching thinking through the arts

Instructional Contexts

Nina Greenwald: *“Think left and think right, and think low and think high. Oh the THINKS you can think up if only you try!” (Dr. Seuss)* Through engaging “artful think” forays, plus opportunities to reflect on and make our own sense of arts-based literature, we’ll explore the power of the arts to unleash and hone our abilities to think critically and creatively – to think deeply and expansively, to envision unique, effective solutions to problems, to become exciting possibility thinkers, to question the very nature of the relationship between critical and creative thinking - all of which is preparation for the special immersion journeys in art, dance, storytelling and music we’ll take with Elaine, John and David.

John Hooker: *“To draw is to put down your thoughts visually.”*

How does the artist “see”? How does an artist change a way of looking at things and learn *how* “to see”. What thinking processes and habits of mind enable us to represent ideas through drawing, painting, sculpting? What *conditions* enable making a mental shift to a different *mode* of information processing- that slightly altered state of consciousness that enables us to see well? In this context, you’ll discover the artist within and create art that means a good deal more than merely looking with the eye!

David Martin: *“Art forms like stories long outlast the cultures that generated them, just like shark’s teeth long outlast the shark that made them. Art forms and stories are the “teeth” a culture uses to “chew up” experience, into bite-sized chunks of meaning.”*

Three themes of culture (technology, social relationships, and cosmology) will be presented, and participants will reflect on ways our own and other cultures manifest these themes. Storytelling will be one of the major media through which this expression is examined. Visual and auditory experiences of one Inuit culture is used as a contrast case. Storytelling as a literary form is considered, and as an art form that corresponds with music, dance, and visual expression. Sample activities include viewing videotapes to show aspects of a non-Western culture, listening to recordings of stories from a non-Western culture to stimulate reflection on how cultures create and transmit values, and creation of original stories to explain or teach how the world came to be. (Note: Participants will view some aspects of another culture which may make them initially uncomfortable; by confronting these feelings and reactions,

they will deepen their understanding of what it means to be human and as a lens to reflect on one's own culture.)

Elaine Sisler: “*The communication of meaning through movement requires an ability to weave together physical, emotional and intellectual aspects of one’s thinking*” (John-Steiner)

Dance is explored as an art form that promotes critical/creative thinking and problem solving skills and dispositions. Based on the dance standards of the Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework, teachers will participate in creative movement and dance activities to develop effective strategies for teaching, learning, community building and artistic expression. They will investigate creative movement as a tool for self-expression, motivation for learning, enrichment and enlivening of subject areas. Through active participation in dance as an art form, teachers will learn to use dance as an alternative expression of ideas and translate this into teaching and learning materials.

Readings: (articles with full citations provided by instructors)

Greenwald (for April 2)

- Davis, G. A. *Barriers, blocks and squelchers: why we are not more creative*, Creativity is Forever, 1992.
- Greenwald, Nina. *Songs the Dinosaurs Sang*, Gifted Child Today, 1998.

**John-Steiner, V. *Visual Thinking and the Languages of Emotion*, Notebooks of the Mind, 1986.

- Lynch, Mervin D., & Harris, Carole R. *Teaching Creative Children with the performing arts problem solving pyramid*, Fostering Creativity in Children, K-8, Allyn and Bacon, 2001

**Tishman, S. and Andrade, A. *Thinking Dispositions: A review of current theories, practice and issues*, Harvard University, 1996

**Tishman, S. *The Artful Thinking Palette* (Harvard Project Zero document)

Greenwald (for May 7): TBA

Martin (for April 2)

- Teacher Manual for Netsilik at the Inland Camps, MAN: A COURSE OF STUDY, 1968. Cambridge, MA: Education Development Center.

- Teacher Manual for Netsilik at the Sea-Ice Camps, MAN: A COURSE OF STUDY, 1968. Cambridge, MA: Education Development Center.

- Songs and Stories. MAN: A COURSE OF STUDY, 1964. Cambridge, MA: Education Development Center.

Optional:

- Segedin, Lauren. *The spirit of ‘place’ transmitted through the arts*, University of Oxford
- Bartel, M. *Creatively Teaching Multicultural Art*. Goshen College

Hooker (TBA)

Sisler (for April 30)

- Carla Hannaford, *Smart Moves: Why Learning Is Not All In Your Head*. Great Ocean Publishers. Arlington, Virginia 1995. ISBN 0-915556-26-X
- Twyla Tharp, *The Creative Habit: Learn It and Use It For Life*. Simon & Schuster Publishers. New York 2003. ISBN 0-7432-3526-6

Assignments

1. Required readings (note: some changes and/or additions are possible)
2. **Arts Thinking** journal and accompanying two-page reflection paper (due April 30: guidelines to be provided)
3. Out of Class “Lab” Assignment:
 - Design and present (teach, facilitate, or direct) a lesson or group activity that integrates critical/creative thinking, problem solving and or the arts into a specific academic curriculum, community project or your own creative/artistic life.
 - Write a short paper (3 pages maximum) describing your project. Include goals, objectives and curricular concepts or themes to be explored.
 - Engage classmates in an activity from your project that demonstrates critical/creative thinking, problem solving and/or arts integration. Share what parts of your implementation plan worked and what you think needs to be changed, modified, or improved.

Projected workshop sessions:

Thinking Critically and Creatively Through the Arts (note: projected workshop sessions subject to modification)

March 12	April 2	April 30	May 7
<p>Morning Nina</p> <p><i>Welcome! “Picture framing” What is critical and creative thinking? What is artful thinking? Two different planets? Part of the same universe?</i></p> <p><i>Let’s play to find out! “Name Game” creative dramatics; “Pictures at an Exhibition”; “Carousel Thinking</i></p>	<p>Morning David</p> <p><i>Ways our own and other cultures manifest technology systems, social relationships, and world view themes - storytelling as a major expressive vehicle; as an art form that correlates with music, dance, and visual expression creating lesson plans using storytelling as means of artistic expression conveying cultural traditions</i></p>	<p>Morning Elaine and special guest educator Miriam Kronish</p> <p><i>Science is questioning: creating musical dance and movement sequences to express questioning and curiosity about how the world works</i></p> <p>Nina <i>posing questions through arts thinking lenses: a <u>Project Zero</u> exercise</i></p>	<p>Morning John and Elaine</p> <p><i>Through play, the artist as problem solver; e artist as playful child; play as the work of art</i></p>

<p>David (previews) <i>What's in a story? Storytelling as a multicultural art form for expressing world views</i></p> <p>John (previews) <i>Art as a way of seeing; the artist as thinker and problem solver; the artist as risk- taker</i></p>			
<p>Afternoon: John and Elaine</p> <p><i>Sculpting ideas: the artist as idea builder "Living Clay: Let's dance a painting!"</i></p>	<p>Afternoon Nina</p> <p><i>Guided imagery and Scribbles: promoting 6 creative thinking traits: perceptual flexibility and sensitivity to problems, fluency, elaboration, "ego-less" non-rational state, elements play, finding forced relationships</i></p> <p><i>Readings: small group "think about"</i></p>	<p>Afternoon David and Elaine</p> <p><i>Multicultural Dancing Stories: whose story is it? Dancing a story with a beginning, middle & an unexpected ending</i></p> <p>Nina <i>Creating "Symbol Stories" through multiple intelligences</i></p>	<p>Afternoon Nina</p> <p><i>The evaluation of creativity: how our responses can be supportive and still be discriminating by being specific</i></p> <p><i>Final Student Presentations and instruction team response</i></p>