

Abstract

In elementary school teacher education, ideas of meaningful art integration and even envisioning teaching as an art are of particular salience when it comes to working with texts written for children. Theatre is an artform that is text-based, integrative, and relational. In this praxis essay, I describe an integrated art + literacy + making project based on Dolly Parton's *Coat of Many Colors* (Parton, 2016) that I conducted with preservice elementary teachers as part of the "Introduction to Arts Integration" course. I applied the analytical framework of theatrical design to ask the question, "What would happen if I approached this learning experience as a play?" Student reflections show how the project helped them connect with the story and their peers, as well as their personal experiences as learners and thoughts on their futures in the classroom.

Key Words: Pedagogy, elementary teacher education, art, arts integration, multiliteracies, hands-on learning

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