

# WELCOME TO THEATRE ARTS INTEGRATION

## Fun Facts: Meet the Teacher

My first play was in third grade! I played a baby owl who fell out of a tree. This will be my thirteenth year teaching theatre and my fifth in public schools.

Academically, I'm a candidate for an MA in Arts Administration from Southern Utah University. My undergrad is a BA in Theatre Arts Education K-12 from Brigham Young University, minor in History Teaching. I specialize in creating new plays and historical research (dramaturgy), and my creative work has reached over 15,000 youth throughout the state.



I love traveling with my wife, Camilla; baking; reading; and trying unusual ice creams!

## What is Theatre Integration?

Only 4% of American elementary schools have some form of theatre. Utah is very unique. Our state's Beverley Taylor Sorenson (BTS) Grant provides schools with licensed arts integration teachers who combine traditional subjects with arts.

In our class, students will learn language arts, social studies, and science as they act, design, create puppets, write, engage in stories, and play improvisational drama games. Every student at Elk Meadows gets theatre integration.

## Benefits of an Integrated Curriculum

Studies show elementary schools with the BTS Program achieved higher language arts and math scores than non-BTS schools (The Utah Foundation, 2013). Students who receive theatre education miss less school and are more likely to graduate high school (N. Barry, J. Taylor, and Kwall, 2002). Theatre students also score higher on SATs: 65 points higher in the verbal component and 34 points higher in math (College Entrance Examination Board, 2005).

Theatre helps build the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills: critical thinking, communication, creativity, and collaboration. As a result, students become more empathetic, increase in motivation and self-esteem, and are more prone to engage in community service (Champions of Change, 1999; Catterall 1998). The benefits of theatre are both academic and social-emotional!



**BEVERLEY  
TAYLOR  
SORENSEN**  
ARTS LEARNING  
PROGRAM

## Contact Information

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Classroom 129

## Class Rules

Our theatre class has three rules:

- 1) **Respect the space.**
- 2) **Respect others.**
- 3) **Follow directions.**

All students contract agreeing to our class rules, rewards, and remedies for misbehavior.



## Our Rewards System

Each time students come to theatre, they may earn three points, one for each rule kept. In earning these points, students rate themselves with teacher approval.

Approximately six times a year, our class will have a reward day. On these days, students spend their class points on the following rewards:

**Six points=** thirteen minutes of theatre games

**Twelve points=** seven minute freeze dance party (school-appropriate music)

**Sixteen points=** Mr. Duncan does an embarrassing thing invented by students

## Remedies for Misbehavior

If students break a class rule, they will receive:

**First:** a verbal warning

**Second:** an assignment analyzing behavior (ThinkTime)

**Third:** a "yellow card" for the traditional teacher to take further action

Students "reset" or start over each time they come to theatre.

Families and school administration will be notified of student behavior– including positive behavior– as necessary.

## The FAQ: Will we perform a play?

Yes! This year fifth and sixth grades will have the opportunity to participate in the musical *Annie Kids* afterschool this fall. Participation is free, but involves a heavy time commitment. Students may engage as either cast or backstage crew.

Additionally, I will send quarterly newsletters describing what we've been learning. Through the year, student work will either be exhibited or parents/guardians will be invited to see our integrated learning process through "informances."



## Supporting the Beverley Taylor Sorenson Grant

To show your state representatives you support having arts integration, please go to [btsarts.org](http://btsarts.org). Click "Get Involved." You will receive about two emails a year, and your voice will be accounted for when the Utah State Legislature discusses future funding of elementary school arts.