



Teachers Act Up! Creating Multicultural Learning Communities Through Theatre

Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor, Mariana Souto-Manning

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If teachers want to create positive change in the lives of their students, then they must first be able to create positive change in their own lives. This book describes a powerful professional development approach that merges the scholarship of critical pedagogy with the Theatre of the Oppressed. Participants "act up" in order to explore real-life scenarios and rehearse difficult conversations they are likely to have with colleagues, students, administrators, and parents. The authors have practiced the theatrical strategies presented here with pre- and in-service teachers in numerous contexts, including college courses, professional development seminars, and PreK–12 classrooms. They include step-by-step instructions and vivid photographs to help readers use these revolutionary theatre strategies in their own contexts for a truly unique learning experience.

Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor is an associate professor of language and literacy education at the University of Georgia. **Mariana Souto-Manning** is an associate professor of early childhood education at Teachers College, Columbia University.

"If teaching is performance, as the saying goes, then all teachers have the ability—indeed, the right and joy—to eduACT."

—From the Foreword by **Johnny Saldaña**, Arizona State University

"By embodying the constraints that teachers face in the classroom and beyond, we witness teachers who begin to problem-solve together and to articulate and frame dilemmas in ways that can help make solutions more evident."

—From the Afterword by **Kris D. Gutiérrez**, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, University of California, Los Angeles, and President of AERA (2010–2011)

"*Teachers Act Up!* provides educators with a safe, critical, and generative space for wrestling with the challenges of teaching across culturally diverse settings. Theoretically grounded, this book offers a unique and compelling model for teacher professional development and its transformative potential."

—**Carol D. Lee**, Northwestern University

"Through play, fun, games, and theater, Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor and Mariana Souto-Manning recapture the joy and energy inherent—but too often forgotten—in teaching."

—**Sonia Nieto**, Professor Emerita, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, author of *The Light in Their Eyes: Creating Multicultural Learning Communities*

"I can't wait until our next 'therapeutic session' together. I realize how much our games and performances help every time I am face to face with the 'surreal' in the classroom. It does something to my subconscious that helps me take and change things with sympathy and with a sense of humor."

—**Act Up! participant**

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