

May 27, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I had the pleasure of observing Jenni Reinke's "Dancing Clown" class at the American College Dance Association's North Central Regional Conference at the University of Minnesota - Morris in March 2019. It was evident throughout class that Jenni is an excellent teacher who constantly evaluates and reevaluates what the students in the class need and how they receive the information and exercises she gives to them. As an experienced teacher in higher education myself, I was inspired by the masterful way that Jenni's class progressed, her helpful feedback, her wonderful rapport with the students, and the way she introduced "clown" to the students. "Dancing Clown" was an extremely well-crafted and executed class.

Jenni's class was masterfully designed moving from a circle in which the students introduced themselves and Jenni gave some context to clowning and an overview of what the class would entail to a rapid-fire improvisation game as a warm-up. This was followed by several exercises which were designed to promote surprise, vulnerability, authenticity, and in the moment awareness. These exercises included having the students enter one by one and stand in front of the rest of the group followed by Jenni asking questions of the group about what they saw. In the next exercise Jenni had the students make a 16-count phrase in whatever dance genre they felt most comfortable with and then had the students show these phrases looped 2 times through in smaller groups along with acknowledging each other, acknowledging the group watching and taking a bow based on their phrase. In the last exercise Jenni passed out red noses and had the students wear these as they performed their phrases together starting in a line up based on their status in relation to the rest of the group. She finished the class back in the circle bringing together the ideas laced throughout the class.

The exercises, prompts and feedback given by Jenni inspired the students to go beyond what was comfortable or pre-planned. Some phrases used included "Surprise yourself, there is no time for thinking" and "Be vulnerable, free the voice, free the body." She also talked about the clown mind; staying within yourself but being able to observe from the outside. Jenni's directives and questions were clear but allowed space for interpretation by the students. She also provided the right amount of feedback to help students dive deeper into their explorations. The class as a whole had an ease to it and it was clear that Jenni knows the material inside and out. The easy rapport she had with the students was evident as well and she created an environment in which she was a fellow explorer of the material rather than an "expert know it all" trying to help the



**Heather Klopchin**  
**Chair / Associate Professor**  
**Dance Department**

507-786-3070  
[stolaf.edu/dance](http://stolaf.edu/dance)

novice students understand. The class and Jenni's directives and questions were clearly student focused.

In an hour and a half class, Jenni Reinke was able to challenge students expressively, physically, and intellectually and to help them develop further as authentic artists rather than just as technical dancers. It was such a pleasure to get to witness this skilled teacher who is so knowledgeable and passionate about what she does engage with and inspire students from institutions across the region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heather Klopchin".

Heather Klopchin  
Chair/Associate Professor of Dance  
St. Olaf College  
1520 St. Olaf Ave.  
Northfield, MN 55057  
507-786-3070  
[klopchin@stolaf.edu](mailto:klopchin@stolaf.edu)