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NSDA Educator of the Year Personal Statement.

Last August I took one giant leap of faith...and spit into a cup. Long curious about my ancestral roots that I could not untangle after years of following the leaves on my family tree on ancestry.com, spitting seemed the next best option to paying a genealogist to delve into the mysteries of my undisclosed past. The results were not so much surprising as staggering. My Celtic lineage so prevailed that there was no denying that the gift of blarney, and the inveterate disposition to challenge the conventional wisdom at any cost, was indubitably the essence of my soul. You see, as far back as I can remember (and I swear that was around the age of two and some when my sister, Jackie, was born) the fine art of argumentation was an integral part of my daily life. Nightly dinners routinely teased our appetites proportionately with headlines from the New York Times and Walter Cronkite alongside of the meat, peas, and mashed potatoes. The weekly Sunday dinners at my grandmother's house guaranteed the constant clash of thought on politics and religion, as well as whether the Mets could ever really replace the legacy of the once (that would be baseball) New York Giants. I am not going to lie, from early on, I was enthralled, if not transfixed, by the banter. My father and my Aunt Gladys often went at it full throttle, but at the end of every meal, before the homemade cherry cobbler and the Wonderful World of Disney, an exhausted quiet was reached. If only with the expectation that they would agree to respectfully disagree...until the following Sunday.

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In the forty-six years since I first stood before forty-two seventh graders, woefully unprepared and filled with naïve resolve, I've discovered that I am pretty good at initiating and continuing the banter. It did not come easy. That first year was hell. And in between that first year and now, there have been years that have matched it seismically. But what I have learned in both the bowels of the devil and the celestial awakenings is the power of words, the power of stories, and the power of voice. I have learned from the more, and the most vulnerable that what I say matters, and what they say matters more. In a time when the buzz of the sound bite has

silenced elongated, logical, and critical thought, it is crucial that students embrace their voices. Today, the classroom has become the sole surviving portal where words matter more than ever. As an educator, tapping the reserves of those placed in my trust has become daunting. Children come to school plugged in, prodded by monumental goals, driven by test scores, hovered over by parents and counselors, with no room to breathe. The struggle of eliciting sonorous sound has become a cause. The world of speech and debate inside the brick and mortar classroom, and the classroom of the world provides grit. It is a place where it is not only ok to fail, it is essential. It teaches children to be inquisitive, to be tolerant of opposing viewpoints, to be responsible for their rhetoric.

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Leadership guru Simon Sinek has observed that, “A true sense of purpose comes not from what we can do to get. A true sense of purpose comes from what we can do to give.” This is a principle I have tried to emulate in the classroom and in my role of mentor and leader. It is the principle that provides the groundwork for every lecture, every essay, every presentation, every debate. I believe the first step to achieving this principle comes from building community. It is my allegiance to community that has encouraged peer coaching and mentorship in my classroom and on my team. Every novice and seasoned competitor has the opportunity to give notes on a performance or a critique on a debate case. When I assumed my responsibilities as the President of the New Jersey league, and eventually as the District Chair under the most absurd circumstances in 2003, my conviction that community would be my priority was steadfast. I strove to break down barriers that kept our District at stalemate. I sat down with new coaches to help them enter points, and understand the recognition of degrees. I tried to encourage new leadership, and recognize the fledgling and ailing programs that brought value to our District. I eagerly waited for each Rostrum, and upon its arrival flipped to the back pages, hoping to see the slow but exponential progress we were making out of the bottom strata to become a force to be reckoned with. I probably spend too many hours and too many Saturdays of my life building bridges, but I think it has resulted in a cohesive, collaborative unit. There are no doubt rivalries among us; after all that is what the competitive urge to be heard is all about. Yet, at the end of the tournament day, however, an inherent respect for one another’s achievements is palpable as we stand in recognition for our champions and top non-advancing novices.

And so what I have learned since the blessings of the Sunday squabbles at my grandmother’s sanctuary, and the dining room table lessons with my siblings about geographical locations that have regenerated new names, as well as political, religious, and social ideologies,

is that education is about adaptation and the inevitability of change. Not the technology of change- that's strangely predictable, frighteningly hypnotic, and odiously constant. I mean change in the mythic sense – metamorphosis, mutability. Insomuch as we would like to control life, and I would be the first to admit that I hate relinquishing control, we cannot. The world in which we take residence, the world of speech and debate opens our students to the possibilities provided by the mutable. The lives placed within our hands, educators' hands, are evolving, unfolding. We dare not let them blend, or be forgotten. They need to embrace the value of the voice. And, they need to know we care. I still do. I listen. I listen for the story. And, sometimes in the process, I share what I know. After all, as the bequest of Cu Culainn demands...I have a story, too.

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NSDA EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR  
PORTFOLIO  
2018



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<b>21st Century Themes</b>
*Global Awareness
<b>21st Century Skills</b>
*Communication and Collaboration
*Creativity and Innovation
*Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
*Information Literacy
*Media Literacy
<b>Technology Integration</b>
video clips; power point introduction
<b>Equipment Needed</b>
smart board projection
<b>Goals and Objectives</b>
Develop an appreciation for the role of setting in William Shakespeare's Hamlet
Understand the role of expectations; the demands that alter Hamlet's character development
Understand the development of foils; recognize the unseen foil in Hamlet; identify how does Hamlet measure himself with respect to Prince Fortinbras?
<b>Learning Activities or Instructional Strategies</b>
Lecture: -Introduction to Shakespeare's Hamlet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Background on the Bard of Avon</li> <li>o The framework of the play</li> <li>o The setting of Denmark: historical background</li> <li>o Use of foils in plot development</li> <li>o The examination of the human psyche</li> </ul> Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the exposition of conflicts</li> <li>2. the revelation of the crisis</li> <li>3. the role of the minor character</li> </ul> Focus on: development of relationships: Hamlet and the Court: Claudius; Gertrude; Polonius; Ophelia; Horatio; Rosencrantz; and Guildenstern Discuss the mixed messages of the play/the double standards for men and women; and the role of gender stereotypes Discuss the role of culture: medieval vs. Renaissance man Discuss the role of women (Ophelia and Gertrude) in the evolution of Hamlet's character and his perception of self: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Has the rejection of both his mother and his potential mate influenced his behavior?</li> <li>2. What bearing does Ophelia and Gertrude's relationship play in Act IV?</li> </ul> Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How does Hamlet feel he measures up to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. His father's expectations</li> <li>2. His own plan</li> <li>3. Fortinbras</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Differentiation</b>

<p>Will take place in the small and large group discussions</p> <p>Essay choice</p> <p>Debate strategies</p>	
<p><b>Resources Provided</b></p> <p>William Shakespeare's Hamlet</p> <p>Various film clips of Hamlet (particularly Acts 4 and 5)</p> <p>Interviews with men who have played Hamlet (ex. James Wallis, Dickie Bowe, Ian McClellan, Jude Law)</p> <p><a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/hamlet/past_productions/">www.bbc.co.uk/hamlet/past_productions/</a></p> <p><a href="https://matthewtofo.com/.../interview-with-actor-james-wallis-shakespeare-bash/">https://matthewtofo.com/.../interview-with-actor-james-wallis-shakespeare-bash/</a></p>	
<p><b>Assessments</b></p> <p>CHOOSE:</p> <p>a. ESSAY: How does the development of Shakespeare's Hamlet parallel the conflict of youth in a contemporary world?</p> <p>b. ESSAY: Using the 5 soliloquies of Hamlet, discuss Hamlet's own foreshadowing of his own demise.</p> <p>DEBATE: 1. Is Hamlet mad? 2. Had Hamlet lived, would he have been a noble king?</p> <p>Students will be divided into groups of six; 2 groups will be assigned topic 1; 2 groups, topic 2. Students will research both sides of the topic. On the day of the debate, they will flip for sides. A hard copy of the two cases will be handed in. The teams will debate in a modified version of Public Forum Debate</p>	
<p><b>QUOTE TEST</b></p>	
<p><b>Standards</b></p> <p>1. 11-12.L.05.A Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.</p> <p>2. 11-12.RL.02 Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.</p> <p>3. 11-12.RL.04 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)</p> <p>4. 11-12.RL.10 By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.</p> <p>5. 11-12.SL.01.B Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.</p> <p>6. 11-12.SL.03 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.</p> <p>7. 11-12.SL.04 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.</p> <p>8. 11-12.W.01.C Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.</p> <p>9. 11-12.W.02.B Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.</p> <p>10. 11-12.W.03.A Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.</p>	
<p><b>Lesson Documents</b></p>	

1. Hamlet Act 4.doc
2. Mad Hamlet.doc
3. PFNFL.pdf
4. To Be or Not to Be\_ That is Debatable..pptx
5. HAMLET ESSAY.doc
6. Subtext and Sarcasm in Hamlet.doc

## THE DINNER PARTY

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this assignment is to actively engage students in a review of textual material, and characters within those texts, as part of preparation for benchmarks and/or exams.

**PROCESS:** As the students enter the classroom they are asked to blindly draw from an envelope the name of a writer or character studied in class. Once each student has completed that process they are instructed to do the following:

1. Imagine you have arrived at a large dinner party or banquet alone, where the majority of the guests are strangers. During the “cocktail hour” you are required to move around the room and to engage in conversation with the other guests, eventually finding three (3) others who share nothing in common with you. For example: if you are Jordan Baker from *The Great Gatsby*, you may not socialize with any of the characters from that novel. If you are Emily Dickinson, you may not enjoy the company of Stephen King.
2. Once you have found and established your foursome, you should create a table for four somewhere in the classroom. (Instructional prerequisite: There should be at least 5 or 6 extra names within the envelope to avoid the possibility that the required variety cannot be met. On the rare occasion, one or two students may need to re-draw to meet that criteria; for a class of 24, a minimum of 30 names should be provided).
3. Once your four top has been established, each group will draw from two more envelopes. The first envelope will determine the location of the dinner party. For example: the scaffold in *The Scarlet Letter* or Weedpatch in *The Grapes of Wrath*. The second envelope will contain an item unique to a particular text, like cracker jacks in *The Devil in The White City* or a guava in *When I Was Puerto Rican*.
4. Using the characters/writers, the venue, and the item, each group is to create a scenario, and then a script in which each character reveals the essential elements of his/her story within the current scenario. How you reconcile the gaps in time, place, and genre is part of the creative process, and the fun. It is important to maintain the idiolect and/or the sociolect of the individuals wherever possible to ensure authenticity. \* The revelations about the life experiences of each character or writer must be implied rather than stated. The location must also be suggested contextually, but the item can be mentioned within the context of the story. The completed script must be 8-10 minutes in length.
5. Each group will present within the dinner table setting, ala fishbowl set-up. Following the presentation, the remainder of the class will be required to guess the identity of the characters, and the location of the dinner party, either verbally or in written form.



**EVALUATION:** The accuracy with which the class guesses will be worth 30% of the final evaluation. The remainder of the evaluation will be based on: 30%: the presentation of material, such as (but not exclusive of) volume, articulation, pronunciation, group dynamics; 30%: the accuracy of the material presented; 10%: grammar, spelling, and punctuation (taking into consideration the vernacular used).

**REFLECTION:** This is a relatively painless form of review that generates a great deal of conversation, first in the initial encounters, next in the creation of the scenario and the script, and finally in the aftermath of the presentations. From scenario to scenario, and script to script, there are obvious crossovers of storylines, however the direction that each group takes the story is a pleasure to behold.

**TIME FRAME:** Depending upon the academic level of the class (and therefore the number of texts), and the number of participants, the time frame fluctuates for this activity. For a class of 24 juniors, this activity should typically take 5-6 days to complete.

\*see appendix

## THE EVOLUTION OF HOLDEN CAULFIELD

**STARTING POINT:** Read and watch the following as a foundation for future discussion and the eventual argument essay:

Text to Text | “The Catcher in the Rye and the Case for Delayed Adulthood” by Amanda Christy Brown

<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/23/text-to-text-catcher-in-the-rye-and-the-case-for-delayed-adulthood>

**THE PURPOSE:** To explore the various iterations of Holden Caulfield from pre-WWII short stories to post-WWII novel; to recognize the impact of PTSD on Salinger and Caulfield; to identify the shift in Holden’s idiolect within the 3 texts.

**THE PROCESS:** A SOCRATIC SEMINAR: The Evolution of Holden Caulfield in text and context

### TO BE CONSIDERED:

The impacts of:

1. Salinger’s transference of attitudes and experiences within the 3 texts
2. The observable changes in the environment(s) and Holden himself in the pre-WWII short stories, “Slight Rebellion on Madison” and “I’m Crazy” and the post WWII novel *The Catcher in the Rye*
3. The evolution of social, cultural, historical context and Holden’s relevance and/or irrelevance today
4. The long term impact of trauma and depression on the iterations of Holden Caulfield
5. The shift in voice: seeing Holden from different p.o.v.(s)
6. Peter Pan Syndrome and the American male

### TO BE USED:

*The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger (you have the paperback)

The 2 short stories written prior to the novel (Slight Rebellion ... and I’m Crazy)

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1946/12/21/slight-rebellion-off-madison>

<http://www.unz.org/Pub/Colliers-1945dec22-00036>

The Vanity Fair article on Salinger:

<http://www.vanityfair.com/culture/features/2011/02/salinger-201102.print>

The Anne Trubek article in Stimuli:

[www.good.is/articles/stop-teaching-catcher-in-the-rye](http://www.good.is/articles/stop-teaching-catcher-in-the-rye)

and on NPR:

<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=94129299>

Elisabeth Kubler Ross's Stages of Grief:

<https://grief.com/the-five-stages-of-grief/>

Mayo Clinic on Teen Depression:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/teen-depression/symptoms-causes/syc-20350985>

The Salinger Documentaries:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dhHMY8sih8A>

[www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/jd-salinger-film-salinger/2642/](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/jd-salinger-film-salinger/2642/)

**THE FINAL PRODUCT:** Upon the completion of the Socratic Seminar (approximately 2-3 days), you will choose one of the six (6) lenses through which we have viewed Salinger and Holden and develop an argument using the Salinger texts, and a minimum of three (3) of the resources provided to validate your argument. Thesis Statement and Final Essay due dates: TBD following the seminar.

NB: My reflection: Over the course of my career, I have taught J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* many, many times. Having read it myself in high school, I like Trubek, have on occasion questioned its relevance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. What I have learned from my students over the last two years in particular, is Holden Caulfield has never been more relevant. With the rise of teen anxiety and depression, confusion regarding sexuality, and dysfunctional family life, students view discussing the plight of Holden as an opportunity to air their feelings on their own microcosm. Being from an upper-middle-class community, it is not lost on them that many of Holden's "first world" problems and the "phoniness" of the bubble they live in require that they examine their own values in preparation for the real world of adult decision-making.

## THE TRANSFORMATIVE USE OF CONTENT

**STARTING POINT:** Amanda: “I know so well what becomes of unmarried women who aren’t prepared to occupy a position. I’ve seen such pitiful cases in the South – barely tolerated spinsters living upon the grudging patronage of sister’s husband or brother’s wife! – stuck away in some little mousetrap of a room – encouraged by one in-law to visit another – little birdlike women without any nest – eating the crust of humility all their life! Is that the future that we’ve mapped out for ourselves? I swear it’s the only alternative I can think of! It isn’t a very pleasant alternative, is it? Of course – some girls do marry!” Tennessee Williams, *The Glass Menagerie*; scene 2

**CLOSE READING:** Take 10 minutes to read closely the above excerpt from *The Glass Menagerie*, and respond in your notebooks. In spite of the fact that this is currently taken out of context, what message can be gleaned. How does Williams effectively create tone through the use of punctuation? What is that tone? What word(s) jump out at you? Create a statement that identifies the theme of the passage.

**DISCUSSION:** This passage provides a foundation for this unit. What is your reaction? Does this passage translate for your demographic? Why? Why not? How? What impact might these words have on the recipient of this rhetoric? What impact might these words have on an audience?

**THE PURPOSE:** To explore the power of the spoken word; to understand the nuances of diction/language; to identify the use of syntax as a tool, particularly the ellipsis, the dash, and the effective pause; to recognize subtext; to observe the use of foils and the dynamics of dialogue as a vehicle for conflict and resolution.

**THE PROCESS:** Over a period of 3-4 weeks, we will be studying four (4) plays; 2 by Tennessee Williams (*The Glass Menagerie* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*); a play by Neil Simon (*Brighton Beach Memoirs*); and a one-act play by Christopher Durang (“For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls”). You have received a listing of the characters of each of the plays with a brief, and sometimes briefer, description of them. The brevity of the description of FWTSBT cast will become obvious when we get there.

Because these are plays, and therefore an oral medium, the majority of the reading will be completed out loud during class time. This will be done in a variety of theatrical formats:

1. TGM will be done as a table reading;
2. ASCND will be done in scene groups with a final tableau;
3. BBM will be done in small groups of 7, scattered around the classroom, in a run through scenario style;
4. FWTSBT will be staged performance.

Sign-up sheets for parts will be on the front bulletin area for the 2 Williams's plays; groups for the Simon play will be randomly selected; I will cast Durang's play based on past performances. Don't be a diva and hog all the biggest roles, or a church mouse, and quietly choose a one-liner. Be brave, but not "brutish"; stretch yourself! Several of the smaller parts in ASCND can be assumed by one person.

**YOU ASK:** Why so many plays all at once?

**THE ULTIMATE GOAL:** These 4 plays share much in common, certainly the most obvious is that two share a playwright, and if you look down the cast of characters, you will begin to recognize that some share names and personality traits. Certainly, our close reading and discussion should lead you to believe that there some thematic truth(s) that link these plays. Annotate the texts with post-its when similarities appear, particularly when reading and watching the two later texts. Through the use of allusion, Simon's play is regarded as an homage to both of Williams plays; Durang's play is a parody of TGM. Definitions are provided on the prompt.

The prompt for your synthesis essay is based on the following:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/02/theater/play-reimagining-threes-company-wins-case.html>

<https://www.hersherman.com/2015/03/31/david-adimis-3c-freed-from-legal-purgatory/>

<http://www.nytimes.com/1994/12/04/theater/sunday-view-for-limping-parody-durang-to-the-rescue.html?pagewanted=all>

Complete the following at home while we are reading the texts in school:

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/neil-simon-about-neil-simon/704/>

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/tennessee-williams-about-tennessee-williams/737/>

<http://www.christopherdurang.com/Biography-Long.htm>

\*NB: My reflection: This assignment has been an exhilarating and satisfying experience for both myself as an educator, and my students. I can see them come to appreciate the language of these playwrights, and the repartee of the characters. They recognize the softening nuances of the *The Glass Menagerie* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* characters in *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, and fully embrace the absurd humor in "For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls". The court case referenced has become the icing on the cake. It has provoked great conversation, and for the most part, very insightful analytical writing.

THE CAST OF CHARACTERS from: *THE GLASS MENAGERIE*, *A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE*, *BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS*, and "FOR WHOM THE SOUTHERN BELLE TOLLS"

*The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams:

**Amanda Wingfield:** A faded Southern belle, abandoned by her husband, who is trying to raise her two children under harsh financial conditions. Amanda yearns for the comforts of her youth and also longs for her children to have the same comforts, but her devotion to them has made her – as she admits at one point – almost "hateful" towards them.

**Tom Wingfield:** Amanda's son. Tom works at a shoe warehouse to support his family but is frustrated by his job and aspires to be a poet. He struggles to write, all the while being sleep-deprived and irritable. Yet, he escapes from reality through nightly excursions to the movies, but also to local bars.

**Laura Wingfield:** Amanda's daughter and Tom's older sister. A childhood illness has left her with a limp, and she has a mental fragility and an inferiority complex that have isolated her from the outside world. She has created a world of her own symbolized by her collection of glass figurines. The unicorn may represent Laura because it is unique and fragile.

**Jim O'Connor:** An old high school acquaintance of Tom and Laura. Jim was a popular athlete and actor during his days at Soldan High School. Subsequent years have been less kind to Jim; however, and by the time of the play's action, he is working as a shipping clerk at the same shoe warehouse as Tom.

**Mr. Wingfield:** Amanda's absentee husband, and Laura's and Tom's father. Mr. Wingfield was a handsome man, full of charm, who worked for a telephone company and eventually "fell in love with long distance," abandoning his family 16 years prior to the play's action. Although he does not appear onstage, Mr. Wingfield is frequently referred to by Amanda, and his picture is prominently displayed in the Wingfields' living room. This unseen character appears to incorporate elements of Williams's own father.

*A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams:

**Blanche DuBois:** A sensitive, delicate moth-like member of the fading Southern aristocracy; a widow who has just lost her teaching position as a result of her promiscuity.

**Stella Kowalski:** Blanche's sister who is married to Stanley Kowalski and lives in the French Quarter of New Orleans. She has forgotten her genteel upbringing in order to enjoy a more common marriage.

**Stanley Kowalski:** A WWII army veteran, a rather common working man whose main drive in life is sexual and who faces everything with brutal realism. He is a drinker and gambler who enjoys living on the edge.

**Harold Mitchell (Mitch):** Stanley's friend who went through the war with him. Mitch is unmarried and has a dying mother for whom he feels a great devotion.

**Eunice and Steve Hubell:** The neighbors who quarrel and who own the apartment in which Stella and Stanley live.

*Brighton Beach Memoirs* by Neil Simon: an homage

**Eugene Morris Jerome:** almost 15; much like Tom Wingfield, a narrator who will on occasion break the 4<sup>th</sup> wall

**Blanche Morton:** 38: Eugene's widowed aunt; with her two daughters, has lived with her sister, Kate, since her husband's death

**Kate Jerome:** about 40: Eugene's mother, a strong Jewish matriarch

**Laurie Morton:** 13: Eugene's younger cousin, has heart problems

**Nora Morton:** 16½: Eugene's beautiful older cousin, a dancer and an aspiring actress

**Stanley Jerome:** 18½: Eugene's older brother, an impulsive risk taker, who helps to support his extended family

**Jacob "Jack" Jerome:** about 40: Eugene's father and the head of the household. The primary breadwinner of the family.

*For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls* by Christopher Durang: a parody

**Amanda Wingvalley:** the mother

**Tom Wingvalley:** the son

**Lawrence Wingvalley:** the other son

**Ginny:** the "feminine caller"

Video clip: Michael Urie's 1996 Dramatic Interpretation performance of *Confessions of a Nightingale* will provide some context for Tennessee Williams's subject matter.

Video clip and picture from *Gone With the Wind* scene with Scarlett O'Hara and "the gentlemen callers".

## Tennessee Williams, Neil Simon, and Christopher Durang: the synthesis assessment

### TRANSFORMATIVE USE: ALLUSION, HOMAGE, PARODY, AND TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

**ALLUSION:** a passing or casual reference; an incidental mention of something, either directly or by implication.

**HOMAGE:** respect or reverence paid or rendered; something done or given in acknowledgement or consideration of the worth of another.

**PARODY:** a humorous or satirical imitation of a serious piece of literature or writing.

In a recent court case involving a parody of *Three's Company* called *3C* by David Adjmi . Federal Judge Loretta A. Preska ruled in New York that “a darkly comic reimagining...did not infringe the copyright...that the play represented a drastic departure, and represented a significant enough departure to pose ‘little risk to the original.’”

Within that same ruling, Preska also referred to the play as “transformative use”, something that has gone on for ages, dating back to ancient Greece and Rome, Shakespeare, as well as in several works we have recently read. Ironically, *Three's Company* was in form theoretically an homage to French playwright, Moliere, in much the same way that Durang and Simon playfully and provocatively “shout out” to Williams.

Using the definitions above as a frame of reference, discuss Christopher Durang’s “For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls” and Neil Simon’s *Brighton Beach Memoirs* as “transformative use” of *The Glass Menagerie* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* (for example: language, situation, character development) as enhancements, and “a significant enough departure(s) to pose ‘little risk to the original.’”



## **SPEECH AND DEBATE EDUCATION OUTSIDE THE TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM**

Very early this morning (5:30 am EST, January 25, 2018) I found myself watching a streaming of a speech by Jack Ma at the *World Economic Forum*. (Don't judge me!) In his speech Ma warns that in less than thirty years, a minimum of 800 million jobs will be lost to robots. His recommendations included a more radical shift away from traditional fact based learning, and a re-emphasis on individual sports, the arts, and soft skills to fill our time, particularly leisure time, more productively. What struck me first was that all those Mike Rowe "dirty jobs" that he has been advocating for, in lieu of sending those non-academic students off to college, are doomed. But, it also began to occur to me that many of my Honors and AP students, who are being pressured by their helicopter and tiger parents to be the best, get the highest GPA and SAT/ACT scores possible, and win at everything they do, may also be in trouble. Which, returns me to the soft skills Ma was promoting, and for us, the most important of which is speech and debate, an activity that fosters communication, effective argumentation and negotiation skills, and an appreciation for research and recreational reading...literacy. How do we convince a group of parents that these soft skills are important for their children's lifelong success, even when they do not bring home a trophy, a medal, or a plaque? Get them into a big room together.

As an ongoing initiative in the New Jersey District, we have been committed as a team to provide yearly training sessions for both new and returning parent judges and local college students who may be new to the activity. As part of our calendar set up in the spring, as a league we establish several dates (typically 5 between October and November) that will be used for that purpose. Those dates are provided at both the spring and fall meetings, and appear on both the NJSDL calendar and website.

As part of this ongoing process, in addition to hosting a home event in the evening at my school, for the last five years I have been actively engaged as a presenter at our largest training event at Delbarton School in Morristown\*. As this event occurs on a pre-season Sunday afternoon, it draws the largest crowds from all over the NJ District. Because this has become a social and

seminar event, it has opened up a spirit of collegiality among the parents and the coaches. Because we use student presenters, parents not only have the opportunity to watch what their child might do, but they also learn what the student presenters would like on the ballot, such as more constructive criticism and fewer kudos, and what this activity has provided for them as a life changing skill. The parents have come to understand that there are others who share the same insecurities about evaluating a performance or adjudicating a debate, and that everyone (competitor and judge alike) wants to do a good job. I believe these events have also created a comfort level regarding accessibility. I am frequently approached throughout the season with sometimes a friendly hello, sometimes a question to clarify a rule, and occasionally just coffee talk. Sometimes, when necessary, I have provided a mini-tutorial or refresher for judges prior to the onset of a tournament. However, we have actually found it to be more effective to use seasoned judges (parents and alumni) to do these, and offer shadowing of the veterans as part of that process.

Recently, in tandem with the training of judges for high school competitions, we have expanded our horizons to middle school parents. Three times a year at Montville, we host middle school tournaments on Friday afternoons in November, January, and April. At these tournaments the Montville HS students, as well as students from neighboring school districts, take on the role of judges. Following a brief informational session with the parents of the middle school competitors, the parents shadow our high school judges, who then compare notes with them following the round(s). Hopefully, these sessions will help to provide a foundation for future high school parent judges, and open the possibility of new programs within the district.

Let's face it, speech and debate is unlike any other competitive sport or spectator activity. Parents are often frustrated by the fact that they cannot sit in the bleachers and cheer on the team, or give that shout out when their child makes that winning shot, or breaks a school record. There are no curtain calls and standing ovations with roses. And, it would be less than honest to say that all the parents that show up at these informational and judge training sessions, continue on as judges. Yet, I am fairly certain what we have been able to do is to educate those who do come

to us about the significant difference speech and debate will make in a child's and an adult's life. Keeping parents engaged is fundamental, and even those who are reluctant to judge because of a variety of reasons, including language barriers (and believe me, we have a large proportion of those within our District) we have a responsibility to reach out and support them, so that they can reach out at the end of a long day of competition, and say to their child, "Bravo, I know how hard you have worked today!"

\*see appendix/agenda

## APPENDIX

**OPENING ASSIGNMENT: Understanding Language: Idiolects and Sociolects**

Just as every individual has an idiolect – the language that varies in minute ways from the language of every person – so every group has a sociolect or language of its own. That language may differ from other varieties of the same language in its pronunciation, inflections, syntax, or the manner and the conditions in which it is used.

Write an essay describing some major features of the language used in one specific group that you know well – an occupational, ethnic, social, or age group, for example. Your essay should indicate what purposes these features serve or what influences they reflect. You should assume that your reader is not familiar with the language you describe.

(AP Language and Composition sample test question; 1985)

**APPLICATION GOING FORWARD:**

Just as you have identified a sociolect with which you are familiar (ex.: doctors, debaters, sportscasters), writers also utilize idiolects and sociolects to distinguish characters and the communities that inhabit their texts. Going forward, become more aware of the idiosyncrasies that writers incorporate as part of their rhetoric in both fiction and non-fiction literature. This will help to inform a better understanding of your reading, as well as enhance your analysis and writing.

NB: THE DINNER PARTY ACTIVITY can be a demonstration of student understanding of this concept.

## Socratic Seminar Rubric

<b>Socratic Seminar Rubric</b>	<b>Text Preparation—</b> reading and annotation of text	<b>Engagement—</b> participation in discussion and on-task	<b>Use of Text—</b> support of ideas with text;	<b>Conduct—</b> encouragement of group; participation is civilized and respectful	<b>Listening—</b> Building on ideas from others	<b>Insight and Reasoning—</b> asks thoughtful questions; makes significant connections or brings new ideas	<b>Openness—</b> Acceptance of other points of view
<b>5</b> <b>Exemplary</b>	Remarks and written work reveal a critical reading of text with annotations, vocabulary and at least four critical, discussable questions connected to the text.	Demonstrates thoughtful and active participation throughout seminar. Consistently stays on task. Body language is active. Consistently makes eye contact.	Initiates specific references to text to support and defend ideas without external prompting.	Contributes to the success of the group and makes invitations by name to include and support all participants. Is consistently nonjudgmental and respectful.	Listens unusually well. Frequently responds using names. Comments indicate accurate and perceptive listening and connect directly to what has been said.	Questions and comments are insightful, logical and contribute to deeper construction of meaning. Presents new ideas and makes connections to previous/outside topics or dialogues.	Accepts points of view other than own and uses them to expand own ideas and discover new meaning about concepts.
<b>4</b> <b>Accomplished</b>	Remarks and written work reveal text was read—ideas are relevant. Annotations are present and three or four critical, text-based questions are present.	Demonstrates active participation throughout seminar. Stays on task. Body language is active. Often makes eye contact.	Makes specific references to text to support ideas. Uses text effectively when challenged to do so.	Demonstrates respect and enthusiasm attempting to include and support all participants. Makes invitations to participants.	Listens and is able to respond to ideas and questions from others with little digression. May sometimes use names in responses.	Questions and comments are apt, logical, and relevant but do not necessarily offer significantly new insights or ideas.	Accepts points of view of others and attempts to use them to expand own ideas but may reflect set thinking.
<b>3</b> <b>Average</b>	Remarks and written work reveal text was read, but ideas may be irrelevant or annotations may be scant with only three or fewer questions present.	Demonstrates active participation through most of seminar. Stays on task most of the time. Body language and eye contact show some engagement.	Occasionally makes references to text to support and defend ideas but may have to be challenged to do so.	Demonstrates general respect for the group but is not always supportive and inclusive. May at times be judgmental or impatient of others.	Generally listens but is not always attentive as evident in some unconnected responses. Frequently focuses on same people.	Questions and comments are apt and logical but do not move the group forward to a deeper understanding. Some ideas may be off topic.	Acknowledges other points of view but may try to argue or refute them. Points reflect a lack of flexibility.
<b>2</b> <b>Needs Improvement</b>	Remarks and written work reveal cursory reading of the text. Few questions present or questions lack substance for discussion.	Participates in seminar although may be off task. Occasionally carries on side conversations. May be disengaged or lack eye contact.	Makes few references to text and is unable to defend origin of ideas when challenged to do so.	Speech and manner suggest a lack of support and/or respect. Lacks awareness of group dynamics by conversing with same people most of the time.	Comments are relevant to topic but lack connection to what has been said by others.	Questions and comments reveal personal reactions but lack logic and/or insight.	Argues with other points of view and is reluctant to acknowledge them as possible or relevant.
<b>1</b> <b>Undeveloped</b>	Remarks and written work suggest the text was not carefully read. Questions lack substance for discussion.	Is a passive observer of seminar or is off task. Side conversations are frequent.	Makes no references to text to support and defend ideas. Ideas appear “off the cuff.”	Makes no attempt to be inclusive. Uses disrespectful language. Centers dialogue on self or specific classmates.	Does not listen adequately; therefore, comments are random and may be irrelevant.	Questions and comments are illogical, difficult to follow and offer no benefit to the group.	Does not acknowledge or accept other points of view. Engages in debate over dialogue.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: \_\_\_\_\_

## Oral Presentation Rubric

	4—Excellent	3—Good	2—Fair	1—Needs Improvement
<b>Delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holds attention of entire audience with the use of direct eye contact, seldom looking at notes</li> <li>• Speaks with fluctuation in volume and inflection to maintain audience interest and emphasize key points</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent use of direct eye contact with audience, but still returns to notes</li> <li>• Speaks with satisfactory variation of volume and inflection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Displays minimal eye contact with audience, while reading mostly from the notes</li> <li>• Speaks in uneven volume with little or no inflection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holds no eye contact with audience, as entire report is read from notes</li> <li>• Speaks in low volume and/or monotonous tone, which causes audience to disengage</li> </ul>
<b>Content/ Organization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates full knowledge by answering all class questions with explanations and elaboration</li> <li>• Provides clear purpose and subject; pertinent examples, facts, and/or statistics; supports conclusions/ideas with evidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is at ease with expected answers to all questions, without elaboration</li> <li>• Has somewhat clear purpose and subject; some examples, facts, and/or statistics that support the subject; includes some data or evidence that supports conclusions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is uncomfortable with information and is able to answer only rudimentary questions</li> <li>• Attempts to define purpose and subject; provides weak examples, facts, and/or statistics, which do not adequately support the subject; includes very thin data or evidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not have grasp of information and cannot answer questions about subject</li> <li>• Does not clearly define subject and purpose; provides weak or no support of subject; gives insufficient support for ideas or conclusions</li> </ul>
<b>Enthusiasm/ Audience Awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates strong enthusiasm about topic during entire presentation</li> <li>• Significantly increases audience understanding and knowledge of topic; convinces an audience to recognize the validity and importance of the subject</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows some enthusiastic feelings about topic</li> <li>• Raises audience understanding and awareness of most points</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows little or mixed feelings about the topic being presented</li> <li>• Raises audience understanding and knowledge of some points</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows no interest in topic presented</li> <li>• Fails to increase audience understanding of knowledge of topic</li> </ul>
<b>Comments</b>				

## Resources for Individual Events (Speech) Judges

### Generic Comments

Please note that these are general comments to use as a guideline only. The comments you write on the ballot should be specific to the individual performance.

#### Positive Comments

#### Constructive comments

Excellent attention-getter and transition to main points	Need to transition to main point
Good conclusion; tied to introduction	Weak introduction
Excellent use of sign posting (stating points in advance and then referring back to them)	Weak conclusion; restate points and tie into introduction
Excellent vocal variety	You need 3 areas of analysis
Effective eye contact	Performance was too monotone
Good use of gestures; very natural!	Look up more; make eye contact
Excellent rate of speaking	Too much unnecessary movement
Volume was appropriate for size of room	Gestures were distracting/stiff
Excellent facial expressions	Delivery was too fast/too slow
Effective use of evidence/support/citations	Adjust volume for the room
Good choice of topic/selection	Inappropriate facial expressions
	Not enough evidence to support your argument/point
	Give specific citations for your evidence
	Topic/selection was weak/offensive

### Judging Grid

This matrix is used by many speech judges to assist them in tracking the rankings of contestants as the round progresses.

Speaker #	Code	After 1 <sup>st</sup>	After 2 <sup>nd</sup>	After 3 <sup>rd</sup>	After 4 <sup>th</sup>	After 5 <sup>th</sup>	After 6 <sup>th</sup>	After 7 <sup>th</sup>
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								

Start by writing in the code numbers of the contestants in the order in which they will speak (the first speaker's code goes next to the "1" box). After each speaker has finished, mark down the rankings of all speakers up to that point. For example, after the first speaker has finished, give that person "1" since he/she is in 1<sup>st</sup> place. After the second speaker has finished, you are ready to give one of the speakers a "1" ranking and the other speaker a "2" ranking. If you do this for all speakers, then you

will be done ranking the round as soon as it has ended! Transfer this information to the master ballot and the speaker's individual ballots.

Here is a sample of a completed grid:

Speaker #	Code	After 1 <sup>st</sup>	After 2 <sup>nd</sup>	After 3 <sup>rd</sup>	After 4 <sup>th</sup>	After 5 <sup>th</sup>	After 6 <sup>th</sup>	After 7 <sup>th</sup>
1	AB102	1	1	2	3	4	5	5
2	BC104		2	3	4	5	6	6
3	AT109			1	1	1	2	2
4	BF117				2	3	4	4
5	AH101					2	3	3
6	AR105						1	1
7	AX104							7



**NJSDL Judge Training Session**  
**Delbarton School**  
**Sunday, October 11, 2015**  
**12:00 – 4:30 PM**

**Presenters:**

Ms. Mary Gormley (Montville HS, NJ NFL District Chair)  
 Fr. Michael Tidd, OSB (Delbarton School, NJSDL Vice President)  
 Mr. Philip Bauchan (Delbarton School)

<b>Time</b>	<b>Location (all rooms in FAC)</b>	<b>Topic</b>
11:30- 11:50 AM	Lobby	Registration
12:00- 1:30 PM	Auditorium	Introduction to Being an Effective and Efficient Judge in the NJSDL
1:40- 2:10 PM	F 260	Judging Lincoln-Douglas Debate (Mr. Bauchan)
	Auditorium	Judging Individual Events (Ms. Gormley)
	Band Room	Judging Public Forum Debate (Fr. Michael)
2:20- 3:10 PM	F 260	Judging Lincoln-Douglas Debate (Mr. Bauchan)
	Auditorium	Judging Individual Events (Ms. Gormley)
	Band Room	Judging Public Forum Debate (Fr. Michael)
3:15- 4:30 PM	F260	Demonstration Round and “Practice Judging” in Lincoln-Douglas Debate (Mr. Bauchan)
	Auditorium	Demonstration performances and “Practice Judging” in Individual Events (Ms. Gormley)
	Band Room	Demonstration Round and “Practice Judging” in Judging Public Forum Debate (Fr. Michael)

Event-specific sessions will include either live student performers or video of actual performances.

E. L.

Ms. Gormley

7 April 2017

AP English 11

### Originality Through Character Differentiation

In a world where there is little to no completely original thought, authors use well known pieces of literature to comment on different aspects of society. Despite the obvious similarities, Federal Judge Loretta A. Preska rules, “a significant enough departure to pose ‘little risk to the original’” is sufficient to ensure that new pieces of literature based on well known pieces are regarded as original pieces. Tennessee Williams’s plays, *The Glass Menagerie* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* are well known pieces, and Christopher Durang’s parody of *The Glass Menagerie*, *For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls* and Neil Simon’s *Brighton Beach Memoirs* thematically juxtapose the characters; the character development itself is different enough to constitute originality.

The description of characters as well as their dialogue is a distinguishing factor within the four plays, most evidently through the characters Blanche and Laura. The language Simon uses in his play is drastically different than Williams’ language when describing the character Blanche, showing different perspectives of an attractive woman placed in a difficult situation. Blanche is universally described as a widow with no job, relying on the charity of her sister. When Williams describes Blanche, he harps upon her sexual aura, and Blanche even calls a delivery boy over, saying, “Come here. I want to kiss you, just once, softly and sweetly on your mouth!” (*Streetcar*, 5.116). Simon, in comparison, shows Blanche as classy, shown through the

stage directions, “Blanche comes out of her room and appears at the head of the stairs. She is all dressed up and looks quite lovely” (Simon, 89). Simon, therefore, gives Blanche a sense of dignity in her hard times, portraying her as a proper lady as opposed to a sexual woman. Similarly, Simon gives Laura respect in *Brighton Beach*, showing that “the doctors say she has a flutter in her heart,” which may be the symptom of a serious medical condition (Simon, 6). Because a heart flutter is a physical illness rather than a mental one like her lack of confidence in *The Glass Menagerie*, the reader is more likely to feel compassion for her, making her a more likeable character. The difference in description of the characters prompt the reader to feel differently about each of them, changing the role the character plays even though their names are the same.

Besides physical characteristics, all of the authors describe the characters as struggling against primal instincts because they are all in poor financial situations. In *For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls*, and *The Glass Menagerie*, Amanda is shown to be the figure of authority because she is the oldest. Even though she is “in charge,” she relies on her son, Tom to pay their bills. When Amanda finds out that Tom plans on leaving her in both plays, she starts yelling savagely, telling him to “go, go, go- to the movies!” (*Glass Menagerie*, 7.24) (Durang, 1442). Unlike her normal self who prides herself on her Southern hospitality and grace, Amanda acts out when confronted with fiscal troubles, pushing her son to leave. Likewise, Stanley struggles with his primitive instincts in *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, relying on his wants to make decisions. Stanley is described with, “animal joy in his being is implicit in all his movements and attitudes.... He sizes women up with a glance, with sexual clarifications, crude images flashing into his mind and determining the way he smiles at them” (*Streetcar*,

1.205). Simon also depicts Stanley as an “animal,” using his fight or flight instincts when he is faced with losing his father’s respect over gambling. Stanley spontaneously tells his younger brother that he is, “leaving Gene. I don’t know where I’m going, but I’ll write you when I get there” (Simon, 106). The actions of Amanda and Stanley show that all people, in their simplest form, rely on the same responses to survive.

Though the characters react similarly, their circumstances that surround them differ, allotting their reactions unproportionate value. Amanda tells Tom to leave in both *For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls* as well as *The Glass Menagerie* after discovering that the woman Tom brought home is unavailable because she is in a relationship. In *For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls*, however, Amanda discovers that the woman who Tom brought home is lesbian which enrages Amanda who calls the woman, “that overbearing, booming-voiced bull dyke” (Durang, 1143). Because Amanda is much more desperate and open in her desire to get rid of her dependent child, her reaction is perceived as more melodramatic and needy. When she says the same line in *The Glass Menagerie*, Amanda is furious with Tom for his “selfish” ways. Stanley is also an “animal” for contradicting reasons in *Brighton Beach Memoirs* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. In *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, Stanley holds on to his principles, choosing to leave his family because he believes he is a burden to the family as he lost the wages necessary to support everyone. On the other hand, Stanley in *A Streetcar Named Desire* has no principles, physically assaulting Blanche with his “animal joy.” The circumstances that the characters find themselves in classify the way their actions are perceived, and each of the plays interprets the characters’ actions dissimilarly.

Whether a play is original is based on if the message and circumstances the characters represent are the same, despite the fact that character's names or actions may be similar. The apparent differences between the novels *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls*, *The Glass Menagerie*, and *A Streetcar Named Desire*, are large enough that each work is considered original with its own message. While uniqueness is a standard all authors strive for, efficacy can be optimized through the transformation and comparison of works.

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