

## English Department Report

### Observations/Initiatives

#### **Professionalism/Collegiality**

- United effort to excel in all aspects of our jobs.
- Collaborative work at department meetings was productive, on task and comfortable
- Department-wide effort to be supportive of different styles and approaches and to value each member of the department for their strengths.
- Peter Driscoll's relationship building and hands on involvement with department members helped forge a culture of tolerance and support.

#### **FEI**

- After October each teacher electronically submitted one fully developed FEI lesson plan on Dropbox each week. Results of the initiative included
- A commitment to a lengthy period of student directed, collaborative, inquiry based learning each week.
- Focus on clearly joining objectives and assessments in each lesson.
- Department level discussions about the complexity of objectives driving the complexity and HOTS of the lesson; Blooming out objectives.
- Discussions about assessments. The "show me" revelation.
- Varying degrees of buy in. Useful as a tool, not an exclusive pedagogy.
- Aaron Howard's work with Kate.

## Common Core

- Department level discussions about core
- Jenn Parsont and Marge Mersereau PD training on core
- Inclusion of both competencies and common core standards on prototype finals and mid terms handed in to CA, DOI
- Discussions concerning complexity, close reading and text-based as opposed to student-based assessments.
- Parsont and Mersereau will present to department first meeting next year.

## Professional Development

- Sally Dowd, Andrew Chase (Audrey McBride) presented to the full faculty their work on developing and updating the English Department website and bank of electronic resources. Edmodo, social media based learning platform.
- Aaron Howard, Cate DiNitto, Samantha Sannella and Tyler Donlon redesigned the requirements and methodology of the research paper for the Freshman and Sophomore levels in an attempt to more fully and easily engage 21<sup>st</sup>. century learners and learning styles.
- Deb McManus, Marcia Goodnow and Lesley Hocking investigated current requirements and practices regarding honors level instruction and demands. They produced a common set of expectations designed to build cohesion and remove irregularities in honors instruction in the building.
- Jenn and Marge, paid for and finished an on-line instruction module in common core standards. Will present.
- Sam Little revised and updated his electronic resources relating to his senior level classes.
- Phil Richmond finished the second year of his three year goal to design and implement a senior elective class in Latin American Literature at DHS. Class in Spanish, immersion trip to Nicaragua, and over 20 history, culture and literary texts read in pursuit of the goal.

## Poetry Out Loud

- Excellent school wide participation in the event, organized and presented by Marcia Goodnow. 20 plus competitors representing 17 classes.
- Completely full auditorium, silent, last period Valentine's Day.
- Frentzen Pakpahan advanced to the finals of the state level completion, placing in the top students in the state.
- Very positive article written in Fosters by Ron Cole about the event.

## New Classes

- Revision of offerings to seniors for 2014-2015.
- Removal of the CP 12, history, communication, etc.
- Three new honors level senior electives designed to complement Honors Mythology. ½ credit issues.
- Honors Philosophy will be replacing Philosophical Quest. Upping the rigor, upping the expectations to better prepare and fuse with college level instruction.
- College Composition, in conjunction with Running Start program through SNHU. Targeted class in turning OK writers into writers who have the skills and confidence to really succeed in college. 22 signed up.
- Short fiction/Creative Non Fiction. Did not run.
- College Prep level, Science Fiction, designed by Tyler Donlon. Has 15 students signed up.

## Laptop Carts

- Two 32-unit laptop carts were purchased over the summer.
- Bare bones purchase. Nothing installed. Arduous process to load and configure. 100 plus man hours for IT. Lesson, more front work and communication with IT needed prior to purchases of this nature.
- First cart went on line late in first semester and was used constantly for writing and revising and research.
- Second cart went on line recently. Stored downstairs giving much easier access to all teachers.
- Sally Dowd (Little) is to be highly commended for her initiative and organization and effort in designing and implementing sign out and accountability practices for the common use of the laptop carts. She worked extremely well with the IT staff to provide a working system, and then support to other department members as the carts went on line.

## Staffing Issues

- Two freshman teachers had mid-year maternity leaves that occurred well in advance of scheduled dates. Darcy Cronan and Heather Woods.
- Kristen Crosier replaced Darcy at the mid-year. Started reading research papers in the first week.
- Excellent commitment to the district, professionalism teaching half a year of demanding classes for 80 dollars a day.
- **Serious problem with district expectations and practices concerning long term subs. Many angry parents. Impossible to answer questions positively.**
- Geoff DiBello replaced Woods in early April. Social Studies background helpful in *Persepolis*, revolution in Iran.
- We had three one-year contracted teachers.
- Tyler Donlon taught his second year on a one year contract and was rehired for a third on year position as Audrey McBride is on maternity leave.
- Tyler excelled in coaching freshman basketball.

- Cate DiNitto was hired for a one year position. Cate excelled teaching Freshman and one Junior class. She has agreed to work on a one –year contract for next year. Will be teaching freshman, and will be rising to the challenge of working with Deb McManus to teach Honors 11. She is filling the one-year position formed when Heather was granted a maternity leave of absence.
- Cate routinely worked until 5:00 pm for the entire year.
- Samantha Sannella filled in for Lesley Hocking in spring of 2013 when Lesley was on maternity leave.
- Samantha was hired to the full time position that opened when Darcy Cronan resigned.
- Samantha will teach honors level college composition class in the fall. Testament to her work ethic.
- Brooke Repucci, veteran teacher, will be rejoining our department and teaching freshman for 2014-2015 as she concluded two years of maternity leave.

### **Book and supply budgets**

- No major text book purchases
- Filled existing sets of titles such as *The Things They Carried*, *The Great Gatsby*, *The Crucible*, *Of Mice and Men*, *Carrie*, *Girl of the Streets*
- Bought several class sets (60, 90) of new titles such as *The Fault in our Stars*, *The Hunger Games*, *Salvage the Bones*, *Puddinhead Wilson*
- 90 *Chinese Cinderella*, other freshman texts.
- Started process of buying titles for new electives. *A Day of Life*, *Dune*, Honors Philosophy texts.
- Updated videos. New *Gatsby*, *crucible*, various teacher requested titles.
- Art supplies, white lined paper, tissue, hand sanitizer, organizational supplies

## Credit Recovery

*promotes  
every other day*

- Tremendous success
- Grade level, very small classes. Less than 10
- Extremely effective model
- Flexible responsive
- Serving as a de facto advisory for needy population

## Budget Needs

- Smart boards. We have five rooms with smart boards and seven rooms without. Very difficult on itinerant teachers who have a board in one room and not in another where they may be teaching the same class.
- Very difficult to move teacher's rooms. Lesson plans developed for smart board, now of no use. **MUST ADDRESS**
- Technology support. Supplies, training.
- Book funds. New electives will require expensive, centering text books. College Composition, Science Fiction, Latin American Literature will all need class set of 30 anthologies moving forward
- Common Core Training. Full commitment to Common Core and competency-based grading could really, really use professional development funds.
- Professional Development funds badly needed in general. Technology, pedagogy, inclusion, liability, content area, smarter balanced assessment, classroom management are some areas.

## Individual Teacher Highlights

### Marge Mersereau

Drama Club- This 2013-1014 school year Directed and Produced the Musical - You're a Good Man Charlie Brown - with 2 separate casts. -Feb. 2014; Directed and Produced Thornton Wilder's -"Our Town" - With both productions, students assisted in the direction, and ran both the sound and lights.

#### Academically

Theater 1, Theater 2, and Theater 3 classes- not only learned the basics of theater acting and production, but also directed, cast, performed, and evaluated both original and published theatrical works.

Film Studies- Each student offered a presentation to justify why their favorite performers should be nominated for the Dover HS Actor of the Year Awards! In addition students were then asked to evaluate each others presentations.

Creative Writing (32 students!!) - Students presented a portfolio of their best pieces, and then read aloud a favorite piece to the class (students offered up songs, guitar performances and art work for their class presentations).

English 11A- Students took part in a Crucible "like" assignment with a modern twist. A role playing activity- "Situation takes place in a private school, where students are asked to turn other in to protect their own selves"- ethics and morals were key to the activity.

English 11B- "Streetcar Named Desire" became the new favorite play- Discussions of desire vs. love; and loyalty to family or spouse became a target topic to discuss.

What didn't work....lower level classes (like English 11B) offered last block of day. A/B classes are best taught during block 3 where there is a lunch break. Also, Creative Writing with 32 students left very little time for students to share work with class, as well as conference time.

## **Cate DiNitto**

Freshmen and Juniors

Thinking of a really positive moment from the year, one of the first things to pop in my mind was the Poetry Out Loud in-class competition. We had worked hard in class to pick out the poems, find meaning in them, and memorize them, and the results were truly impressive. Even the most shy students stood in front of the class to recite their poems. Some were not perfect or complete, but everyone tried. One of the best parts was seeing how supportive the students were of one another. It was also great to see that some of the class-competition winners were willing to go to the school-wide competition

## **Sally Dowd:**

American Studies highlights

- Students wrote a movie review, poetry, researched persuasive essay on Imperialism, four 3-4 page analytical papers, and wrote a ten page junior term paper on the modernist movement (all students submitted the term paper) in addition to writing based homework assignments and class writing prompts.
- Turn of the century silent films—each class wrote, produced, filmed/directed two silent films that were submitted to Film Festival

- Student led discussions on *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* during Industrial Revolution unit
- Junior term paper on Modernist movement—All students submitted a paper (two blocks)
- Mr. Strickland joined class during 1950s unit and led discussion on Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg
- Student led Decades projects on 1960s-21<sup>st</sup> century—joining literature, history, and culture in project that involves technology driven presentation
- Both Ms. Dowd and Mr. Salmonsens used teacher websites for students to access resources and homework
- Ipads, Smart board, and mobile labs used constantly in class
- Field trip to Odiorne Point State Park and Strawberry Banke Museum

## **Deb McManus**

### **Highlights from the school year**

#### **AP Language and Composition:**

- 17 students took the AP Language and Composition Exam (5 more than last year)
- Students have completed excellent independent reading projects this year: thoughtful dialectical journals and creative presentations.
- All students have significantly improved writing skills:
  - Writing insightful and specific thesis statements.
  - Varying sentence structure and using precise vocabulary
  - Experimenting with different patterns of arrangement
  - Using relevant supporting information.

#### **English 11:**

- Most students stayed with me (and were successful) for the entire year.
- We read three books during the second term (*Gatsby*, *Salvage the Bones*, and *The Things They Carried*) and students enjoyed all of them.
- Most students have significantly improved basic skills: Writing clear and effective sentences and paragraphs, organizing longer essays and finding and incorporating support, basic research, defining vocabulary words in context, identifying and answering questions about themes and abstract ideas in literature, and debating and discussing ideas in both small and large groups.

#### **Lesley Hocking:**

The sophomores challenged themselves to think critically about symbolism this year, focusing on J.D. Salinger's classic, The Catcher in the Rye as well as more contemporary novels like The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time and The Perks of Being a Wallflower. Students created visual representations of original symbols to represent characters or events and presented them to the class. I'm proud that sophomores at all levels were able to push themselves to think in abstractions.

## **Jenn Parsont**

### **CP Mythology**

#### **Pros:**

\*A very popular course offering that meets the needs of a variety of learners

\*My inquiry of CCSS and adaptations have influenced my teaching methods this year, we are doing a lot more close reading exercises, and I am looking forward to expanding this process next year

\*Have started working with a social studies teacher to create field trip to MFA for Mythology and Archeology students. Combining both classes supports our interdisciplinary goals.

#### **Cons:**

\*class sizes are huge compared to other classes

\* books get used more frequently and wear out faster as all texts are paperback

### **Honors Mythology**

#### **Pros:**

\*limited to seniors only

\*ability to get more in-depth with content: we read a full translation of The Iliad, not just a summary

\*I spend more time getting in depth in my lesson planning, it gives me a chance to brush up and research my curriculum more.

#### **Cons:**

\*As there are no prerequisites for the course: not every student is at the honors level with their reading and writing skills. This isn't a con for me, as their teacher, but it can be for some students not ready for a course with Honors level expectations.

### **Credit Recovery**

#### **Pros:**

\*Small class sizes allows individual and group instruction at the student's pace

\*Curriculum flexibility that allows texts chosen to meet the needs of each reader in the class

\*Purposeful instruction in grammar and vocabulary to support and expand reading and writing skills

\*Writing and reading skills can be assessed and issues identified faster than in regular classes.

\*When DHS moves to competency based assessments, credit recovery students will be able to address and reclaim missing competencies as needed, allowing greater flexibility in course selection for future semesters.

**Cons:**

\*Behavior issues can overshadow academic issues

\*Any level student that fails an English class is required to take Credit Recovery, this means an Honors student can find themselves in a class setting they are not used to.

\*It also means a great deal of individual planning from the teacher, which can be time consuming (but worth it).

\*Having taught Credit Recovery with much larger class sizes in the past, class size does matter. These students need a great deal of support and instruction to find success in school, and a large class makes it difficult.

\*Socio-economic issues for some students mean they drop in and out of class (and school), depending on transportation issues and tendency to move frequently.

Aaron Howard

# Applications of English

## Career Exploration and Assessment

Before they begin to work on their *Career Portfolio*, it is important to spend time thinking about what they like to do and exploring different career areas. The time they spend now doing career exploration and assessment will help them decide which businesses/colleges to apply to in the future. There are many tools and activities that they can use to gather some information about themselves—their particular learning style, strengths, and abilities. Once they have thought about and identified this information, they can then begin to explore careers that match their personal characteristics. They will use this knowledge to create a career portfolio.

This document is designed to make it easy for students to display their best work and accomplishments. Employers and college admissions staff will use their completed portfolio to judge their academic ability, maturity, and motivation. The portfolio, along with a personal interview, will help determine their future employment or their acceptance into a two- or four-year college.

Below, in order, are the items they need to include in their portfolio:

- **An appropriate three-ring notebook/binder**
- **Typed Introduction**
- **Typed cover letter**
- **Typed resume**
- **All drafts of their resume and cover letter**
- **Three (3) letters of recommendation**
- **Samples of your work**
- **An official high school transcript**
- **Copies of personal interests and achievements**
- **A two-page reflection of themselves as a potential employee**

## Interviewing

Their final assessment for the interviewing unit is to actually interview for a position in which they choose. I, along with Ms. O'Keefe, will put them through a real life interview in which we ask them questions as if they are actually in an interview. They will be graded on the combined score of both teachers. They need to dress appropriately and remember to always be prepared for whatever comes their way.

## **Business Ethics Power-point**

Students will, in the form of a power-point presentation, present their idea of what business ethics are. Do they believe they still exist? Where do we see them? What are they? Are they just a myth? Students must give a visual representation of a minimum of 10 slides.

## **Creating their own business**

Students create their own business. They will start by looking at the business ethics part of their business. They first have to start out by thinking about the following questions: What services do you provide and to whom? In doing so, they will need to write a mission statement. This is their business ethics statement. Do they stand by their products? Next they will have to create a business plan which lays out where this business is going. Students will then make a name and a logo. Finally, they will have to present their business as if they are going for a loan at the bank. This will include either a movie maker or slideshow presentation.