

Mamma Mia! Check out Wego Drama and Wego Speech

Wego Drama and Wego Speech students play some of the most memorable roles at WCCHS thanks to the efforts of drama director, **Mark Begovich**, and head speech coach, **Paul Lichy**. These veteran members of the English department shared their experience and expertise with colleagues throughout DuPage at the County-wide Institute Day held at Wheaton North High School on March 1st. Each facilitated a session for local drama and speech educators respectively, which promoted even greater collaboration between programs and schools.

Mr. Begovich led a discussion among local high school theater directors on County-wide Institute Day to discuss the challenges they face at the secondary level including funding, recruiting, staffing, and integrating technology. They also discussed how to enhance collaboration throughout DuPage County: "The magic of theatre is that it brings people together. As instructors, we must also come together for all of our students," Begovich stated. DuPage Area Theater Directors (D.A.T.E) now plan to meet twice during the 2019-2020 school year as a proactive way to serve students and their communities.



In addition to leading the session last month, Mr. Begovich and Wego Drama students have rehearsed and performed a number of pieces this year as a part of District 94's comprehensive theater education program. Last month, the Group Interpretation Team advanced to the IHSA

State Finals. The show, *The Rest of Us Just Live Here*, written and directed by Mark Begovich with technical direction by Chris Jensen received All-State nominations for the entire company. Individual All-State Awards were presented to junior **Josie Kotke** and senior **Jose "Rudy" Muñoz**, and junior **Nathan Bradley** was unanimously named to the All-State Team.

Next month, Wego Drama will present the musical *Mamma Mia!* on May 2nd-4th. The Advanced Drama Showcase performance of *We Just Live Here* will be held on May 10th, and the annual Plays-In-A-Day Festival is scheduled for May 17th. All shows begin at 7pm in the WCCHS Auditorium. Tickets are available at www.wegotheatre.com and at the door.

A concurrent session offered at the County-wide Institute for speech and English teachers, as well as coaches, was led by D94 English teacher Paul Lichy and co-facilitators Heather Danek from Minooka District 111 and Anthony Zoubek from Elgin U46. The session entitled "Returning to the Oral Tradition" included conversations about the value of Communication Education, Communication and College Readiness, and Communication in the Workplace, including information about the benefits of membership in the Illinois Communication and Theater Association (ICTA).

ICTA has concerns about the decline in communication classes offered in high school, as well as the minimized role of basic communication instruction. The association also promotes the value of communication education not only for school but also for the job market and "real world."

Questions for Consideration from “Returning to the Oral Tradition”

How are communication skills taught in various high schools and districts? In which courses?

What are English teachers doing to fulfill Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards (CCSS) in reading and writing courses?

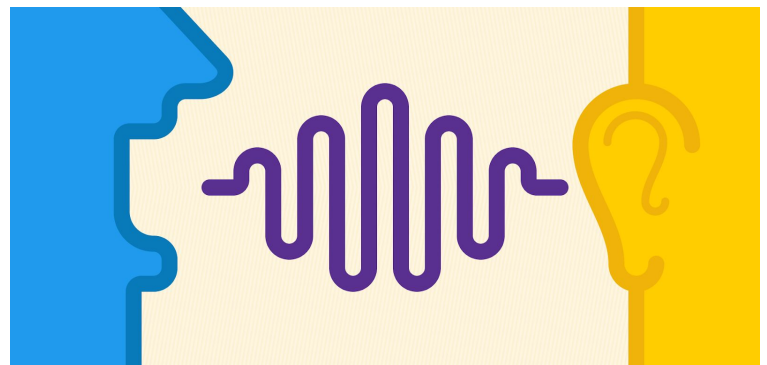
Do the CCSS fully address the speaking and listening expectations of our current workforce and society?

In what areas do teachers feel there are gaps in the communication skills that their students possess?

It what ways can an organization like ICTA, dedicated to communication and the building of those skills, support students in the classroom?

Participants in this session discussed how communication instruction is integrated into their classrooms, which pedagogical strategies are effective, and what methods can be utilized to increase rigor in the curriculum.

Local students can expand their communication skills this summer through the College of Dupage “Summer Speech Camp,” which runs from July 8th to July 19th from 1 to 5:30 pm. Information is available at ce@cod.edu or by calling (630) 942-2208.



The impact of groups like ICTA is evident in the recent passage of House Bill 2258 sponsored by Representative David Welter from the 75th district, which now includes speech as an option to fulfill Illinois’ one year requirement for a fine or vocational art in addition to music, art, world language or vocational education.

Author Travis Bradberry, the author of *Leadership 2.0*, told *Forbes*, “Communication is the real work of leadership; you simply can’t become a great leader until you are a good communicator. Great communicators inspire people. They create relationships that are real, emotional, and personal.” Drama and interpersonal communication students create meaning and relationships.

Like Young Donna in *Mamma Mia!*, the arts reiterate that “Life is short, the world is wide” . . .and it’s worth “mak[ing] some memories.”