

“Rhapsody in Black: Starting the Conversation”

Professional Development Workshop

This workshop utilizes LeLand Gantt’s “Rhapsody in Black” to conduct an examination of how to have difficult, meaningful, and necessary conversations in classrooms regarding discrimination in ourselves and our society.

Professional Development/Workshop Schedule (2 hours):

Movement I: Discovery

“Starting the Conversation”

- Introductions & Goal Setting
- Manifestation of Discrimination

Movement II: Acceptance

“Conversations in the Classroom: Proximity AND Perspective”

- Analysis of “Rhapsody in Black” Study Guide
- Practical Applications with Common Core and Curriculum

Movement III: Transcendence

“FANTASTIC Future”

- Students as SUPERHEROES
- Reflections

Target Audience	# of Participants (maximum)	Time
English Language Arts Teachers	30	AM Workshop/2 hours
Social Studies Teachers	30	PM Workshop/2 hours

Educational Consultant Responsibilities:

- *Two (2) “Rhapsody in Black: Starting the Conversation” Workshops
- *Individual copies of the “Rhapsody in Black” Study Guide (max. 60)
- *Cooperative Discussion Group Materials

District Responsibilities:

- *Classroom/Small Setting
- *Smartboard w/Computer
- *Facilitation fee (per day): \$1,500.00

Educational Consultant:

Heidi M. Murphy
ceridwyn1012@gmail.com
845-527-8535

2/11/15

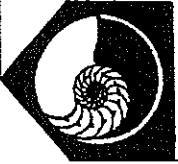
Dear Beland,

I loved your performance yesterday! My favorite parts were how you referred to the rasin in the rice and the sound effects were really cool. I also loved how that was your story and it was told from your life. And how blunt you were.

The thing that was amazing to me was the after-play Q and A with you. It was cool how we got to hear some things that we wouldn't otherwise if we just watched. People from our school got to open up about their experiences, which for me was awesome and how we could relate to you.

To finish this letter, I would just like to thank you for sharing your experiences. Come back soon!

Yours truly,
Halle Mercator



2/20/15

The Community School

1164 Bunker Hill Road
South Tamworth, NH 03883
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Dear Leland,

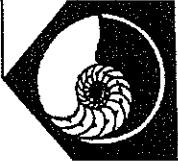
I attended Rhapsody in Black last week and stayed after as you talked to my small school. I'm middle/upper class white girl, so I don't face racism in a big way, and the best I can do, for people who do, is stand up for them and show compassion. I realized as the play went on, that it didn't just show relevance to racism, but to being an outsider, being depressed and shoved down, and never being the right amount of who you are. Things rarely, but sometimes, deal with were out in the open and you were saying "I hear you- I get it!" What deeply touched me, was how you made my friends feel. Friends who have suffered bullying, broken households, and prejudice. You made them feel like they could speak and be appreciated. It hurts me to see anybody shoved down, and your opening up their emotions, made me hopeful.

I think everyone from my school felt a connection to some part of your play, and that is important. It doesn't stop there though, because you not only sparked a connection, but your play brought out our "raisin in the pudding" side, and you made us do it with pride. It may motivate us to speak out on larger issues, or simply us ~~to~~ knowing that we shape our lives, and are capable of good things. Thank you, most

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ardently. Sincerely, Madeline Moreypenny ~

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The Community School

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Leland,

I just wanted to say I really enjoyed your performance. I found it so moving and it shared such an important message. Sharing your story was incredibly brave in my eyes. You are so admirable to me.

Your performance had me fully alert. The way you added lighting and sounds was really cool. I also love how you used different dialects and tones to express separate parts in your performance. The way the monologue followed a time line made it very easy to follow.

The fact that your story is so real and relevant effected me in a very emotional way. You opened my mind and eyes to really see legitimate problems faced in our society. To me, it was so different coming from a

on the news. A undA after your show, I was so impressed at how your answers were genuine and thought out even though they weren't planned. I just felt I had to hug you because you made me feel so good that such a big problem was addressed in such an artistic beautiful way.

Sincerely yours,
Sara Hedgling

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2/20/15

The Community School

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Dear Leland,

I go to The Community School in Tamworth NH. We attended your play last week, let me start out by saying you changed my life.

I am a young white teenage girl, and have never experienced racism before, but I have always thought about it. It makes me so angry to think that people are treated differently just because of the color of their skin. I feel it is completely unfair and ridiculous.

I am known for talking and standing up for what I believe in, but your play was just so powerful I couldn't even speak, all I could do was cry. You touched me in so many ways and I think that you are the perfect person to talk and tell your stories to others.

Thank you so much for doing what you do, you are truly changing the world. You're my roll model.
with love and hope,

Galen



The Community School

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2-20-15.

Dear Leland,



Thank you so much for writing this play. Most people wouldn't share that much of their life stories but you were so brave and did anyway. You weren't shy about it either, you told us the good, the bad and the ugly (minus the sex, drugs and rock and roll). Your performance was so relevant to where I am in my life right now, literally I feel like the raisin in the pudding. Yes I am a white girl, but I've always been the loud one, the odd one the gullible one and also I'm bisexual with a stutter and small lisp. I've been trying to accept these sides of myself, but often times things backfire and I wonder why I don't try to change myself. Your performance was just the boost I needed, to realize I'm going to make it out of high school alive and with all the tools I need within myself to accept me, for me! I am who I am, and that's perfectly okay and there's people in this world who love me for me! Without seeing this play I don't know how long it would have taken me to truly realize this truth.

Please keep performing and spreading your message to the world, you have effected my life and I know you'll effect hundreds of others.

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Thank you for being the man you are, -Mari

2/20/15



The Community School

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Dear Leland,

Thank you for letting us come see your performance. It's really a pretty rare thing for anyone around here to stand up and talk about the topics that you talked about. No one ever talks about racism because no one acknowledges the fact that we are very oblivious to our own racism. I think that's why your performance meant so much to, not only me, but my entire school. We've never heard someone say the things that you did or give the perspective that you gave us. It was very breath taking and eye opening.
Thank you

Ally Norris-Parsons

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The Community School

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2/19/15

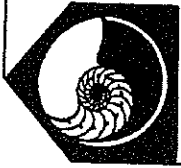
Dear Leland,

I want to thank you a lot for slowly creating change around racism. You have really inspired me about racial discrimination. I thought your play was really powerful and moving and as you progressed through it, I felt speechless and amazed. I'm sure that many other people that have seen your play felt the same way.

As I was growing up in public middle school it was not the best experience. Even though I got picked on and bullied at times there I was still proud of who I

was. My 11th and 12th grade year at that school I was really struggling. My mom's friend daughter had gone to the school at the time, so my seventh grade year my parents decided I should try it for a year. It was one of the best decisions I have made.

The Community School has change the way I look at things. It has offered an education that public schools would never offer. Attending your play has changed me even more. Although I didn't talk at all when you were answering questions, when we hugged I felt like we hugged I felt like we had been friends for a long time. Thanks again for coming and talking with us I really appreciate what you're doing. Sincerely



The Community School

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February 19, 2015

Dear Deland,

Thank you for inspiring
our group to think & feel
so much about racism.

Most importantly, you
started an important
conversation and "jumping
off" point for us.

Your performance was
powerful and eye opening.
I think we have much
to keep talking about
and I hope we can
continue this conversation
with you at least in
spirit. With gratitude, *Donita*

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English Teacher



The Community School

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Dear Leland:

First of all, I would like to thank you for presenting your performance to us. I cannot express how eye-opening it was. It caused me to feel deep within myself along the lines of racism and segregation in the world and my community. I still feel like some of my questions and solutions are not answered, but your performance asked us to do just that: talk among ourselves, see if we can answer some of those open ended questions within ourselves. I love how you brought to light the fact that anybody who is an outsider, who is not in the loop or is alone and by themselves, may need your attention. Whether they are an outsider because of racial status, gender or just because they aren't like anyone else it's inspiring how kind and caring the action of saying "hello" or "how are you?" is... I know this because I have been in a similar situation in the past. Even transitioning from a homeschooling to The Community School has been difficult for me, trying to fit in with the already established community while accepting myself for who I am. There have been a handful of people

who have reached out to me, even though I was new and different and I am eternally grateful to them for their kindness. When I was little and was just beginning to grasp the whole concept of racism, I used to think it was just white against black. Dark and light. That was it. But I have now learned that racism exists between every ethnicity, every race, that has some tension between it. We watched an interview with the rapper Eminem, and how he was white living in a black community doing something that blacks primarily do. He has been accused of many awful things that have been heard through his lyrics and attitude, but I think that was some of his anger flooding out, his past from being bullied and challenged still haunting him. He has come such a long way, I have heard a song recently by him about taking his hand, changing this world together. In a way I think you are doing the same thing, trying to change this world, giving people room for thought and taking time for action. So in the end I would like to thank you again for your performance, your intellect, and your understanding. Keep doing what you are doing, you changed my views and I hope you can change thousands of others through your acting and voice.

All the best,

Elli J. Steven son ♥♥♥

Dear Leland,

It's Grant, from the Community school. Remember the "human torch" story? Yeah that's me. Anyway, I just have more to say on your presentation.

It's one thing to say it, it's another to say it in a way people can understand it and connect to it. People almost always hear the speaker, but they almost never truly understand the speaker. Your way of connecting to people in your play does just that. It makes us open our minds to the phenomenon of discrimination, and also how it has affected or is affecting our lives.

You really drive your points home and connect with the audience like you did with us. As Aily had pointed out, it is a difficult topic for people to talk about, especially in areas like ours where it is never really mentioned. So keep going! Make that mark on people. Cause conversations! It all makes the world a better place.

You know, people are often afraid to talk about problems. They want to change society for the better, but they are just afraid of the backlash-the response- the oppression. They are afraid that people will not like the idea they present. So it's a good thing you are talking about discrimination. It takes an army to make change, but only one person to start a revolution. People will be supportive, they just need to know. People do stand up for what's right, one person just needs to say what's wrong.

Thanks for listening to my rambles. Good luck!
Grant