

# **That-theatre Company**

## **Spring 2011**

### **Oleanna by David Mamet**

Where lies the balance of power between teacher and student? What makes a good teacher? What makes a good student? Who decides?

At the age of 15 I remember asking my history teacher why we didn't have any German, Italian or Japanese versions of events that took place before, during and after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. Mr. Wetheral, who I regarded as a good teacher and someone that I respected and liked, asked me to remain behind after the class was finished. He then gently explained to me that those versions simply were not part of my History "O" level, but that if I were truly interested in history these details would be made available to me at a later date when I was older. My task at that point in time was to simply regurgitate the facts and dates at our disposal and to pass my exam.

My point was that we as English speaking students only had the "winners" version of events. A truism. It's the winners that write the history books. At the tender age of 15 I decided to accept that.

I did not have the almost limitless and immediate access to information that today's students have at their fingertips through the miracle of the Internet.

But in 2011 where does the power lie between student and teacher? Should the notion of "power" be an issue? A common sense balance of power based on mutual respect seems to be the ideal state for me speaking as an outsider.

Gone thankfully are the bad old days of corporeal punishment often issued publicly in front of all the school during morning assembly, when miscreants would be submitted to some form of beating across the buttocks, hands or legs by a thin wooden cane, metal ruler, slipper or shoe. Or the humiliation of being forced to stand in the corner of the assembly hall with one's back to the rest. Punishments such as detention after school or being given mundane tasks such as writing out sentences like, "*I must not be a disruptive influence in the class*" 1000 times in your absolute best

handwriting were also popular way back when. Or being prevented from playing in the school sports teams matches was another punishment that this writer experienced very frequently. I was never unfortunate enough to get the cane and if the truth were told I was a bit of a goody two shoes that as head of the students union tried to lead by example. I went to an ordinary secondary modern comprehensive school by the way, not a grammar, public or boarding school and I have to say that I enjoyed most of my 5 years there.

My English teacher who I adored and who is solely responsible for instilling in me a hunger for literary excellence took me to one side during lunch one day (teachers used to be encouraged to join students as one of 8 people around each table for a hot, subsidised lunch) and said, “*Women don’t just want equality in all things Ian, we want superiority*”. 3 decades plus later I still wonder to myself if that is what women actually want?

Which brings me back to the subject of power in the classroom. I know that my patience would snap many times on a daily basis if I as a teacher had to battle against stupidity and blatant rudeness in any of my classes. Mobile phones would be either be deposited in a locked drawer or turned off. Use of computers would only be for research **not** for the playing of games. You’d probably hate to have me as your teacher because I’d demand a certain amount of respect and concentration and that deadlines for work would have to be met, unless there was a good reason not to be.

Is education a **democratic** process? Teachers are there to teach and to hopefully inspire. Students may question individual teachers’ methods but should have some self-discipline with regard to the work that is actually required to pass exams. If this can be an enjoyable journey, so much the better, but teachers cannot do the work for students.

If any student or parent had the nerve to call me at home to complain about grades given I’d be apoplectic with rage. If any student had problems with any assignment then I hope that they felt that they could come and talk to me. I’d listen and try to help **during designated school hours**.

This preamble gives you an indication of what *Oleanna* is about.

It is a brilliant play. It examines what makes a good teacher and what makes a good student and asks the question of who makes that decision inside each utopia that is a school or college or University.

Provocative - as indeed the best plays are and one that we are looking forward to presenting for you.

I hope that you enjoy it. See you in the theatre,

Best wishes,

Ian Burns  
(Artistic director and actor)

Birgitte Holm Halkjær  
(Lektor, engelsk –dansk)

Borupgaard gymnasium

# Educational material for:

## Oleanna

*A play by*  
DAVID MAMET  
© 1992

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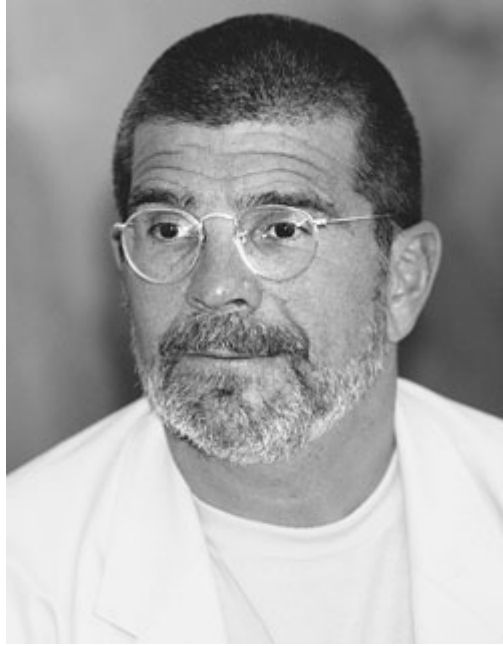
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## Pre-reading, “Oleanna”

### Task: Fact-finding

- 1) Check the internet for information about David Mamet’s life and work
- 2) Refine your search for information about David Mamet by combining several search words, for example David Mamet biography, David Mamet Oleanna, Mamet- speak etc.
- 3) Write a biography of David Mamet using at least three sources on the Internet. The biography should include an outline of his life, education, writing career (not just a list of titles) and an evaluation of the importance of his work (based on the opinion of others). The biography should not be longer than 400 words. It must include a list of source material. Next, compare your biography with that of another student in your class. In what ways are your biographies similar? In what ways are they different? Finally, compare your list of source material and discuss strengths and weaknesses of the different sources.



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**Task: Working with full stops and commas**

- 1) Add full stops (capital letters) and commas where needed in the text below:

*... Growing more irritable John fails to utter a single meaningful sentence when he hangs up and goes back to converse with Carol the whole matter turns into an and even more complex development leaving the issue of Carols ´s accusations unsettled the last two calls are equally significant as they take place as the tragedy approaches its end when the phone rings John does not wish to reply but Carol advises you ´d better get that phone (Pause)I think you should pick up the phone (Pause) disruption and misunderstanding reach a summit everywhere around John so that he becomes unable to understand anything everything is now vague and incomprehensible what does this mean John shouts at Carol in sheer panic*

*apparently anger impairs the communication process and the dramatist's use of language reflects both the inner pressures of his characters and the confusion of the urban environment.*

### **Task: Working with biographical information**

- 1) The paragraphs of the following piece of biographical information have all been mixed up. Your task is to rearrange the paragraphs so that they follow each other chronologically.

### **Biographical Information**

*Mamet was born in Chicago and raised in a Jewish community on the city's south side. After his parents divorced, he lived with his mother in Olympia Fields, a Chicago suburb. As a young man he was a busboy at Second City comedy club and worked at the Hull House Theatre. He attended the Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theater in New York for a year and then enrolled in Goddard College in Vermont, where he studied literature and drama. Mamet taught for one year at Marlboro College in Vermont, where he wrote his first play, Lakeboat (1970), which his students eventually staged. After working at a variety of jobs, Mamet returned to Goddard as a drama instructor, and he wrote an early version of Sexual Perversity in Chicago (1974).*

*Mamet's work is often compared to that of English playwright Harold Pinter and Irish playwright Samuel Beckett. One of the few major American playwrights to also find success as a screenwriter, Mamet was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1994.*

*In 1977 Mamet and actress Lindsay Crouse married. They had two children together but divorced in 1991. That same year Mamet married Scottish actress Rebecca Pidgeon. Mamet wrote his first screenplay in 1981, a film adaptation of the James Cain novel *The Postman Always Rings Twice*.*

*In 1972 Mamet returned to Chicago and formed the St. Nicholas Company with actor William H. Macy. During the 1970s several of Mamet's plays—including *Duck Variations* (1972), *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*, and *American Buffalo* (1975)—enjoyed successful and critically acclaimed productions in New York City. *American Buffalo* and *Sexual Perversity* each won an Obie award for distinguished playwriting.*

*Throughout the 1980s Mamet wrote and directed numerous films and plays. He won the Pulitzer Prize for drama, the New York Drama Critics's Circle Award, and a Tony Award nomination in 1984 for *Glengarry Glen Ross*, which was originally produced in London in 1983. Mamet has lectured and taught at several universities and colleges, including the University of Chicago, Yale University, New York University, and Columbia University.*

**Task: Work out your own vocabulary for “Oleanna”**

- 1) While reading the play, “Oleanna”, make your own glossary.
- 2) The following list of words may be your point of departure. Translate the words into Danish and find an English synonym(s).

My own “Oleanna” vocabulary:

Act 1: *easement, broached, obeisance, subscribed to, a realtor, verbiage, imbecile deluded, laughingstock, the Artificial Stricture, exploitation, encounter, spout back, the Tenure committee, hazing, predilection, unassailable, charts, void, easement ...*

***Is it John or Carol, or both, who use the most difficult words in Act 1?***

*Act 2: rigid, heterodoxy, covetous, unassailable, unflinching, to bribe, The Stoical Philosophers, bogeyman, demeaning, to strut, to deviate, vile, deranged, flawed, gist of, discourteous, impinge on, the courtesy...*

*Is it John or Carol, or both, who use the most difficult words in Act 2?*

*Act 3: the court officers, accusations, the indictment, alleged, recant, transpire, inquiry, to gloat, capricious, deficient, amenable to, to pursue criminal charges ..*

*Is it John or Carol, or both, who use the most difficult words in Act 3?*

**Task: Pieces of the past/ the timing of the play “Oleanna”**

- 1) “Oleanna” was written during, and appeared just after, the time of the hearings to confirm Clarence Thomas to the U.S Supreme Court, during which former employee Anita Hill charged that Clarence Thomas had sexually harassed her. Search the net for information about the Clarence Thomas’ case. Next, write a short news article to appear in the Daily Mail about the case. Choose an appropriate headline for your article.
- 2) While reading the play consider if and in what way(s) Mamet may be influenced by the Clarence Thomas – Hill controversy.
- 3) Discuss, if the popularity of “Oleanna”, was due to the

fact that it was simply ripped from the headlines of the daily news. At a time when the nation was divided by the “he said/she said” spectacle of the Clarence Thomas’ Supreme Court hearings.

- 4) Discuss, if “Oleanna’s” popularity, and here also its appeal to the audience may be the same today? Why/why not?

**Task: The title and the play – any connection?**

- 1) The title of the play you are going to read is called “Oleanna”. Look up the concept of the word in a dictionary  
From the title what do you think the play is all about?
- 2) Consider when reading “Oleanna”, if we get a direct or indirect reference to the title? If indirect, explain how we get the reference?
- 3) Discuss, the possible connection between the title and the play?
  - 2) How did Mamet’s inspiration to the title originate? The
  - 3) following line may get you started: *“The inspiration for the play originated from the writings of an 18th Century Norwegian composer, who through his music conceived a utopian society which he called, Oleanna, and which symbolised the ideals of a supposedly perfect world, ideals that Mamet subsequently ridicules in order to reveal their contradictory nature....”*. Search the net for more interesting information about Mamet’s title.

**Task: A folk-song titled “Oleanna”**

- 1) Comment on the content and form of the following folk-song titled “Oleanna”
- 2) Why is the song titled “Oleanna”?

***Oleanna (folk-song)***

***OLEANNA***

*(Translation from the Norwegian by Pete Seeger)*

Ole, oleanna, ole, oleanna  
ole, ole, ole, ole, ole, oleanna

Oh to be in Oleanna,  
that's where I'd like to be  
Than to be in Norway  
and bear the chains of slavery

Little roasted piggies  
rush around the city streets  
Inquiring so politely  
if a slice of ham you'd like to eat

Beer as sweet as muncheners  
springs from the ground and flows away  
The cows all like to milk themselves  
And the hens lay eggs ten times a day  
The women there do all the work  
As round the fields they quickly go  
Each one has a hickory stick  
And beats herself if she works too slow

In Oleanna land is free  
The wheat and corn just plant themselves  
Then grow a good four feet a day  
While on your bed you rest yourself

**Task: A folk-song titled “Big Rock Candy Mountain”**

- 1) Comment on the content and form of the following folk- song titled “Big Rock Candy Mountain”

**Big Rock Candy Mountain (folk-song)**

One evening as the sun went down and the jungle fires were burning

Down the track came a hobo a-hiking and he said: Boys,  
I'm not turning

I'm heading for a land that's far away beside that crystal fountain

I'll see you all this coming fall

In the Big Rock Candy Mountain

**Chorus**

Oh, the buzzing of the bees in the cigarette trees, by the soda water fountains

By the lemonade springs where the bluebird sings, in the Big Rock Candy Mountain

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains, it's a land that's fair and bright

The handouts grow on bushes and you sleep out every night

The boxcars are all empty and the sun shines every day

Oh, I'm bound to go where there ain't no snow

Where the sleet don't fall and the wind don't blow  
In the Big Rock Candy Mountains

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains you never change your  
socks

The little streams of alcohol come a-trickling down the  
rocks

Oh, the shacks all have to tip their hats and the railroad  
bulls are blind

There's a lake of stew and ginger ale too

And you can paddle all around it in a big canoe

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains, the jails are made of tin

You can slip right our again, as soon as they put you in

There ain't no short handled shovels, no axes, saws or picks

I'm bound to stay where you sleep all day

Where they hung the jerk that invented work

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains

4) Next, compare and contrasts the folk-song titled  
“Oleanna” with the folk-song titled “Big Rock Candy  
Mountain”.

# Reading Comprehension

## Act 1, “Oleanna”

- Comment on the beginning of the play, what is the situation, whom do we meet?
- Discuss: Does the Professor have good intentions in Act 1?
- If the Professor has a problem what seems to be his problem?
- Why is Carol so frustrated? State reference to the text
- Discuss: Is the Professor a good listener?
- Does he really understand why Carol has come to see him?
- Find evidence in Act 1 that the Professor expresses empathy for Carol
- Why do you think the Professor decides to bend the rules, and to give Carol an A? And how does Carol react when he says he will bend the rules for her?
- Why is it so difficult for Carol to express herself clearly?
- How would you characterize the conversation between the Professor and Carol?
- Why is it that the Professor cannot really focus on

the conversation with Carol?

- Carol thinks that John, the Professor, is being too personal with her. Do you think she is right? Substantiate your answer by referring to the text.
  - Why does John say to Carol that he thinks she is being angry?
  - What is it that Carol wants from John?
  - Why does John suddenly say that he owes her an apology?
  - Why does John talk to Carol the way he had wished someone had talked to him?
  - In Act 1 Carol reveals something about her background.
  - What is it that she tries to tell John about herself and her background? Does John listen to her?
- Comment on the ending of Act 1

## Act 2, “Oleanna”

- Why does Carol come to see John again?
- What is it that Carol claims?
- Discuss: Has Carol in some way(s) changed since her first visit?
- How does the Professor react when he hears about her intentions? State references to the text.
- Why is Carol unwilling to believe that the Professor’s intentions were good?
- Discuss: Do you think the Professor’s intentions in Act 1 were good?
- How does John feel when he receives the report from the tenure committee?
- Find evidence in Act 2 that John does not answer Carol’s questions
- Find evidence in Act 2 that Carol is no longer in need of help from the Professor  
Comment on the ending of Act 2.

## Act 3, “Oleanna”

- Why has the Professor been fired?
- Comment on Carol’s behaviour in Act 3
- Why has the Professor asked Carol to come?
- Discuss : Do you think Carol goes too far when she tells the Professor not to call his wife, baby – why/why not?
- How does, John, the Professor, react when it is revealed that Carol has taken criminal charges against him
- Find evidence in Act 3 that John is losing control of himself. How does this show?
- Find evidence in Act 3 that Carol is now in control of the dialogue
- In Act 3 John tries to be honest when answering Carol’s questions. How does Carol react to him being honest for the first time?
- Carol says, she came back to “instruct” the Professor. What do you think she means by that?
- Discuss: What does Carol mean when she says she does not want “revenge but understanding”?
- Carol tells the Professor that it is possible for her to withdraw the complaint (the charges against him) but on one condition. Does the Professor agree to that condition? Why/why not?
- Comment on the ending of the play. What does Carol

mean when she concludes that the Professor has failed in “his responsibilities for the young”? Do you agree/disagree with Carol’s statement?

## **Compositional Analysis / development of plot:**

### **Task: Development of plot**

- 1) Give a brief outline of Act 1. Divide the act into scenes and give each scene a headline and state page references.
- 2) Give a brief outline of Act 2. Divide the act into scenes and give each scene a headline and state page references.
- 3) Give a brief outline of Act 3. Divide the act into scenes and give each scene a headline and state page references.
- 4) Write a final synopsis scheme of the scenes in David Mamet’s play “Oleanna”.
- 5) Comment on the way “Oleanna” jumps forth in time.  
When does this take place?

### **Task: Compositional Analysis**

1) Often a dramatic play can be divided into: an exposition – a conflict- a turning point/ a climax – a resolution.

Please consider:

If we find any exposition in “Oleanna”. If so, how does this show?

If there is a conflict? If yes, do you consider the main conflict to be of political or psychological nature or maybe something else? Please explain.

If any climax – please give/state page reference

If there is a resolution?

How would you explain the ending of the play?

2) Mamet is known for his “*minimal plot structure*”. How would you characterize the plot structure in Oleanna?

Any evidence that it has a minimal plot structure?

Substantiate your answer by referring to the text.

## **Characters and relationship / character sketches:**

### **Task: Mamet and his characters**

- 1) “There is no character, there is no such thing as character development there are only lines upon the page”, (Quote, Mamet). Comment on and discuss this statement.
- 2) Next, try and apply the statement to “Oleanna”. Does John remain unchanged (untouched/a static character) and what about Carol is she the same character throughout the play, or does she develop?

### **Task: Writing character sketches**

- 1) Write a character sketch of John, the Professor. The following words may be of help to you:  
*arrogant, superior, helpful, understanding, considerate, callous, well-spoken, shocked, pedantic, sexist, University teacher, verbose vocabulary, distracted, interruptive nature, lewd, skilled, intellectual, aggressive, unconventional, callous, pompous, foolish, innocent, etc.*
- 2) Write a character sketch of Carol, the student. The following words may be of help to you:  
*scared, immature, hurt, humiliated, angry, female student, frustrated, hostile, powerful, afraid, fighter, concerned, confused, emotional, incompetent, aggressive, devious, etc.*

- 3) Present your character sketches in class.

**Task: Characters and mood**

- 1) Find adjectives to describe Carol’s mood when John tells her that he will change her grade.
- 2) Find adjectives to describe John’s mood when Carol accuses him of sexual exploitation.
- 3) “Oleanna” traces Carol’s internal turmoil through a series of feelings and emotions. Fill in the table below with line references for each feeling or emotion. Next, try to explain the cause of each feeling.

<i>Carol and her turmoil</i>	<i>Act?</i>	<i>Quotation?</i>
<i>Insecure, unbalanced</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>?</i>
<i>..please continue</i>	<i>?</i>	<i>?</i>
<i>?</i>	<i>?</i>	<i>?</i>

- 4) Discuss: Which is more dominant, the rational or the emotional side of Carol’s nature? Please, state page references
- 5) In the course of the play John experiences various states of mind. Compare and contrast John’s state of mind at the beginning of the play with how he feels at the end. What are the main differences?
- 6) Find evidence in the text that Carol has the presence of mind both to show and to hide her true feelings towards John.
- 7) Does John let Carol show her true personality (feelings)?

Why/why not?

**Task: Compare and contrast characters**

- 1) Compare and contrast the characters of John and Carol. Are they similar or are they direct opposites? Please, refer to the text in your answer.
- 2) “*Perhaps we´re are similar*” , (Act 1, John). Why do you think John says so?
- 3) John, the Professor, seems to live in a world of his own. Discuss, when does he cross the line between the world of University and grim reality?

**Task: Development of characters**

- 1) Trace the “development” of John´s character throughout the three scenes. At a certain point in the play his world seems to fall apart. Discuss when does this take place.  
Remember to state references to the play.
- 2) Trace the “development” of Carol´s character throughout the scenes. At a certain point in the play her world seems to fall apart. Discuss when does this take place?  
Remember to state references to the play.
- 3) Explain why Carol, in the final Act, expresses such

contempt for John? Account for her major reasons for doing so.

### **Task: Talking about characters**

- 1) What is understood by a “round” or “flat” character?
- 2) Discuss: Are the characters in “Oleanna” round or flat characters? State references to the play to substantiate your point of view.

### **Task: Characters in Oleanna – a question of trust?!?**

- 1) Discuss: Are the characters in “Oleanna” to be trusted? Why/why not? State references in support of your argumentation.
- 2) Is John e.g. to be trusted when he e.g says:  
*“I have no desire other than to help you”*  
*“I am talking to you the way I wish that someone had talked to me”*  
*“ I hated school, I hated teachers”*  
*“Do you know that I tried to help you?”*
- 3) Is Carol e.g. to be trusted when she says:  
*“I am doing what I am told. It’s difficult for me”*  
*“I want to know about my grade”*  
*“And you don’t have to fight with me. I’m not the*

*subject”*

## **Themes and critical reception :**

### **Task: Talking about themes**

- 1) Comment on the theme(s) of the play.
- 2) Divide the following themes into major and minor themes.  
Possible themes: *sexual harassment, miscommunication, power struggle, teaching methods, political correctness, academic politics, vision of utopia, student-teacher relationship, personal ambitions, academic power etc.*
- 3) How can you apply the themes to the play? In pairs, reflect on and account for your choice. If possible, reach agreement
- 4) Find at least one line reference for the themes that you find of most importance
- 5) Explain how the theme and the title of the play are related.
- 6) Discuss, what do you think Mamet is trying to shed light on in “Oleanna”.
- 7) Explain the difference between the literary term “message” and the literary term “theme”. Are there any places in the text where the message of the play shines through either directly or indirectly? State reference.

### **Task: Attitudes for and against the issue of Oleanna**

- 1) Discuss attitudes towards sexual harassment now and then (i.e at the time Mamet wrote the play “Oleanna”)
- 2) Discuss do you think it influenced Mamet’s fame that there was a current case about sexual harassment going on in the media.
- 4) Define the term “sexual harassment”. Is “sexual harassment” the overall theme that Oleanna deals with? Why/why not?
- 5) Discuss : Who is right? Who is wrong?  
Is the Professor really attracted to his student in Act 1?  
Does he behave inappropriately?  
Is he a good teacher? Why/why not?  
Does he deserve to be denied tenure?  
What are Carol’s motives for accusing him of sexual harassment?  
Does she have other issues (other personal problems) that she does not reveal?

### **Task: Critical Response to “Oleanna”**

- 1) Some critics argue that the play is “*less about sexual harassment and more about the abuse of powers by professors over their students*”. Discuss this quote in class what do you think? Remember to state reference to the play.

- 2) Some critics argue that the underlying issue portrayed by Mamet in *Oleanna* is a critique of modern idealism that: “... *people’s conceptions of utopia are contradictory and dependent on the person envisaging them; people hold incompatible beliefs both within and amongst themselves*”. In class, comment on and discuss this statement.
- 3) Some critics argue that Mamet in “*Oleanna*” unfairly “.. *depicts women as manipulative*”. Comment on and discuss this statement.
- 4) Some critics argue that the play is “... *less about sexual harassment than about higher education’s prevalent patriarchal mentality and the abuse of power by professors over their students*”. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why/why not?

### **Task: Mamet and the influence of Harold Pinter**

- 1) Mamet and Harold Pinter were friends and colleagues. Search the net to find information about their friendship.
- 2) It has often been said that Pinter has influenced Mamet’s style of writing. Compare and contrast the styles of Pinter and Mamet. Focus for instance on their use of pauses, abrupt sentences, minimal plot structure etc.
- 3) Mamet has been known for his so-called “Mamet-speak”. Search the net for information about this technique.

## **The Idea of game-playing in “Oleanna”**

### **Task: A study of the power-relationship between Carol, the student and John, the Professor:**

- 1) Explain how the dominance and submission relationship between the two characters is established in Act 1.
- 2) Explain how the dominance and submission relationship between the two characters is established in Act 2.
- 3) Explain how the dominance and submission relationship between the two characters is established in Act 3.

### **Task: Motivation and game-playing**

- 1) Discuss: What is / becomes Carol’s motivation for participating in the role-playing with John?
- 2) Consider how tension is built up in their relationship.
- 3) Study the three Acts and for each Act find examples where the tension in their relationship seems to come out.
- 4) The form the dialogue takes in “Oleanna” also seems to

mirror a game-playing/ power-relationship. In Act 1 it is John who does most of the interrupting, hereby exerting his dominance over Carol in conversation. Who is in control of the dialogue in Act 2, and Act 3?

### **Task: Tone and game-playing**

- 1) Act out the very first dialogue between John and Carol in “Oleanna”. How would you define the tone (e.g. calm, angry, menacing, hysterical, persuasive, controlled or?) of John’s voice in the dialogue? Comment on and discuss the way Mamet opens his play.
- 2) How would you define Carol’s tone of voice in the following dialogue? What are the characters’ feelings towards each other? Act-out the dialogue working with the voice quality and how it may change. Try saying the lines in different styles. Vocabulary to describe voice quality: high, low, sweet, clear, rough, etc.

*“Carol: Over. With what?”*

*John: Say this is the beginning*

*Carol: The beginning*

*John: Yes*

*Carol: Of what?*

*John: Of the class*

*Carol: But we can’t start over*

*John: I say we can (Pause) I say we can*

*Carol: But I don’t believe it*

*John: Yes, I know that. But it’s true. What is The Class but you and me?*

*Carol: There are rules*

*John: Well. We 'll break them*  
*Carol: How can we?*  
*John: We won't tell anybody*  
*Carol: Is that all right?*  
*John: I say that is fine*  
*Carol: Why would you do this for me?*  
*John: I like you. Is that difficult for you to ..*  
*Carol: Um...*  
*John: There is no one here but you and me (Pause)''*

- 3) As you read through Act 3 of “Oleanna” note every time there is a mood change or a new note of any kind. Try to explain why the change of voice takes place. Discuss: What do you think is the effect of this change?

### **Task: Relationship and role-playing**

- 1) Comment on and characterize the “relationship” between John and Carol
- 2) Trace the role-playing throughout the three scenes. Discuss who is in control in Act 1? And Act 2? And Act 3?
- 3) Explain how the relationship is an example of role-playing? Find examples in the text when they go in and out of their roles. What is the effect?
- 4) How does the game-playing end?

## **Mamet's language, grammar and style**

### **Task: Talking about and working with Mamet's style of writing**

- 1) Find examples of the many linkers used in the play. Before starting, in class talk about what is a so-called linker/ a so-called run-on? Next, discuss the function of these linkers in the play "Oleanna". Remember to state page references.
- 2) Find examples of the many gambits used in the play. Before starting, in class talk about what is a so-called gambit? Next, discuss the function of these gambits in the play "Oleanna". Please remember to state page references.

### **Task: Mamet's use of phone calls in "Oleanna"**

- 1) Discuss Mamet's frequent use of phone calls in "Oleanna"  
What do these phone calls represent?
- 2) How do the characters react to the many phone calls?  
Give examples of the way John reacts? And what about Carol, how does she react?
- 3) Characterize the language John uses when talking on the phone.
- 4) How many calls occur in Act 1? Comment on and discuss the function of these calls?
- 5) When does the phone ring in Act 2? Connect the call with John's state of mind.
- 6) In Act 3, three phone calls take place. Trace these three calls while paying special attention to how the calls depict the gradual collapse of John's nerves and final destruction
- 7) Compare and contrast the function of the phone calls throughout the play.

### **Task: Mamet's language and style**

- 1) Style refers to the way a writer says what he wants to say. It is usually analysed in terms of diction. The term diction refers to the choice of words in a literary work. A writer's work may be described, for example, as abstract or concrete, colloquial/informal or formal, technical or common, literal or figurative. Discuss, how would you characterize Mamet's language and style of writing?

The following lines may help you, find more references yourself:

*“John: The Social Philosophers say if you remove the phrase “ I have been injured”, you have removed the injury”*

*“Carol: Then say it. For Christ’s sake. Who the hell do you think you are? You want a post. You want unlimited power ...”*

*“John: Get the fuck out of my office”*

*“Carol: YOU FOOL. Who do you think I am? To come here and be taken in by a smile. You little yapping fool. You think I want “revenge”. I don’t want revenge. I WANT UNDERSTANDING “*

*“John: I wouldn’t touch you with a ten-foot pole. You little cunt”*

*“Carol ... And I am going to tell you ... And for whom you are the clown. And you mock and exploit the system.. You’re wrong I am not wrong. You’re wrong..”*

2) Mamet himself describes his distinctive dialogic language as  
*“ not being realistic but poetic ... it is language that is tailor-*

- made for the stage*”(Quote, Mamet). Comment on and discuss this statement.
- 3) Mamet himself says that his language “... *demonstrate his characters’ inability to concentrate or understand*”(Quote, Mamet). Try and apply this statement to the play “Oleanna” Remember to state references.
- 3) Find examples of the use of informal language (slang) in “Oleanna”. Remember to state page references.

### **Task: Close-reading of dialogue**

- 1) Write a brief commentary on the following extract, mentioning features such as style of writing, mood, dialogue, characters, and conflict.
- Carol: .... What do you want of me?*
- John: (Pause) I was hurt. When I received the report. Of the tenure committee. I was shocked. And I was hurt*  
*No, I don’t mean to subject you to my weak*  
*Sensibilities. All right. Finally, I didn’t understand.*  
*Then I thought: is it not always at those points at*  
*which we reckon ourselves unassailable that we*  
*are most vulnerable and ... (Pause) Yes. All right.*  
*You find me pedantic. Yes, I am. By nature, by birth,*  
*by profession, I don’t know .... I’m always looking*  
*for a paradigm for ...*
- Carol: I don’t know what a paradigm is ..*
- John: It is a model*
- Carol: Then why can’t you use that word? (Pause)*
- John: If it is important to you. Yes, all right. I was looking for*  
*a model. To continue: I feel at one point ...*

Carol: I ....”

**Task: Monologue, dialogue and descriptions**

- 1) In plays, it is often characteristic that we, the readers, are inside the minds of the characters. Does Mamet make use of this narrative technique? Discuss: Why/why not?
- 2) Dialogue often has two main functions in drama. It contributes to the telling of the story and it reveals/ creates character(s). Dialogue is, therefore, an essential storytelling device in drama. Consider the role of dialogue in *Oleanna*. How would you characterize the dialogue in the play? Find for instance evidence in the text that dialogue contributes to the telling of the story or/and that it reveals character(s)?
- 3) Finally, discuss the effect of the choice of/ the refrain from descriptive passages in “*Oleanna*”. Remember to state page references to substantiate your point of view.
- 4) Comment on the content and form of John’s rather long monologue at the very beginning of Act 2, starting with the line: “*You see, (pause) I love to teach. And flatter myself I am skilled at it ..... Which is one of the reasons that I went into education*”. Think of rhetorical/stylistic devices such as for instance: repetition, rhetorical questions, modes of appeal, syntax, diction, use of figurative language etc.

### **Task: Language and characters**

- 1) Find places where John seems to talk down to Carol – and the other way around. Describe the language used in these situations.
- 2) Is there any connection between the way they speak and their mental states of mind? Remember to give examples.

*Said by John to Carol:*

*“Let’s take the mysticism out of it, shall we? Carol?..”*

*“I think that the ideas contained in this work express the author’s feelings in a way that he intended, based on his results. What can that mean? Do you see? What..”*

*“... though I sympathize with your concerns, and though I wish I had the time, this was not a previously scheduled meeting and I...”*

### **Task: Language and social background**

- 1) Does the language used by the characters in “Oleanna” tell us something about their social background? If so, give examples of how John speaks, and of how Carol speaks.
- 3) Next, consider if any changes takes place in the way the characters speak? If so, give examples, and discuss also why you think this change takes place.

### **Task: Dialogue and pathos find evidence in the text**

- 1) Point out (i. e find) an essential dialogue in “Oleanna” between John and Carol
- 2) Consider what elements in this dialogue contribute to building up pathos (i.e passions, deep feelings, tenderness, pity, sympathetic sorrow etc).

### **Task: Style and grammar**

- 1) Discuss the function of the use of verbs in the following excerpt from “Oleanna”: *“Carol: No, No ... There are people out there ... People who came here. To know something they didn’t know ... Who came here. To be helped. To be helped. So someone would help them. To do something. To know something. To get, what do they say? To get on in the world. How can I do that if I don’t, if I fail? But I don’t understand. I don’t understand. I don’t understand what anything means...”*
- 2) Turn the following excerpt from “Oleanna” from the past tense into the present tense:  
*“John: I asked myself if I was wrong to covert it. And thought about it long, and I hope, truthfully, and saw in myself several things in, I think, no particular order... That I would pursue it. That I desired it, that I was not pure of longing for security , and that that, perhaps, was not responsible in me. That I had duties beyond the school, and that my duty to my home, for instance, was or should be, if it were not, of an equal weight. That tenure, and security, and yes, and comfort, were not of themselves, to be scorned: and*

*were even worthy of honorable pursuit. And that it was given me*". Next, comment on the use of "that" in the excerpt.

- 3) Comment on and discuss the use of the verb "will" in the following excerpt: *"Now: The Tenure Committee will meet.. and hear your complaint – which you have the right to make; and they will dismiss it. They will dismiss your complaint; and in the intervening period, I will lose my house. I will not be able to close on my house. I will lose my deposit and ..."*

## **Post- reading Oleanna**

## **For Oral Discussion and Presentation**

### **Task: For or against**

- 1) A lot of critics have said that John gets what he deserves. Do you agree or disagree ? Discuss in pairs.
- 2) A lot of critics have said that Carol goes too far in her sexual accusations towards John. Do you agree or disagree? Discuss in pairs.
- 3) A lot of critics have said that both characters are deeply

flawed. Throughout the play they rarely agree or understand each other. Discuss in pairs, and try and come to an agreement.

- 4) A lot of critics have said that John really tries to help Carol. Comment on and discuss his advice to Carol: *“You have to look at what you are, and what you feel, and how you act. And, finally, you have to look at how you act. And say: If that’s what I did, that must be how I think of myself”*.
- 5.) A lot of critics have said that Carol tries to help John to become a good teacher: *Treat us with respect, and that will show you your responsibility. You write that education is just hazing (Pause).. But we worked to get to this school (Pause). And some of us (Pause). Overcame prejudices. Economic, sexual, you cannot begin to imagine”*. Comment on and discuss Carol’s advice to John. Apply the quote to the play in general.

**Task: Ask students to tell a “chain-story” in class.**

- 1) The story may begin with the line from “Oleanna” where John, the Professor, tells his student that he is not her father : *“I’m not your father”*
- 2) One of the students begins the story with this line and stops after a few sentences. The next student picks up the thread and continues, then stops ... and so on until the story comes to a natural end.
- 3) Ask the students to begin another story with a new line from for instance “Oleanna”

### **Task: Argue for your point of view**

- 1) Find three interesting sentences in the play “Oleanna”
- 2) Next, write your immediate response to each sentence and argue for your choice.
- 3) In pairs: Compare, and if possible, reach agreement

### **Task: Telling Carol’s story**

- 1) The following references (said by Carol) are all mixed up. place them in chronological order as if you were telling Carol’s story from beginning to the end:
  - a. *... and don’t call your wife baby*
  - b. *My group has told your lawyer that we may pursue criminal charges..*
  - c. *... you have no idea what it cost me to come to this school - you mock us. You call education “hazing” ...*
  - d. *I want understanding.*
  - e. *You worked twenty years for the right to insult me. And you feel entitled to be paid for it.*
  - f. *Excuse me, but those are not accusations. They have been proved. They are facts.*
  - g. *And you don’t have to fight with me. I’m not the subject.*
  - h. *Let me go.*
  - i. *I’m bad*
  - j. *I don’t understand you.*
  - k. *There are rules.*
  - l. *I want to know about my grade*

*m. Why would you want to be personal with me?*

*n. Teach me. Teach me.*

- 2) Now, do the same and tell John's story. Work in pairs: One student finds the quotes and mixes them all up. The other student tell John's story from beginning to the end.

**Task: Oral presentation with elements/ingredients to be included**

- 1) Tell students that they are going to use their imagination and tell a story with given elements and words to be included.

*Title: Sexual harassment*

*Setting: Gymnasium*

*Time: 2011*

*Conclusion: Teacher gets fired*

*Words to be included: sexual harassment, student abused, Headmaster, parents, letter, article, teacher's office.*

- 2) Ask the students to think about what they hope to achieve by telling their story? (to shock, to entertain, to inform etc.)
- 2) Ask the students to write down their story.

**Task: To develop a story from a "cliff-hanger"**

- 1) Write a selection of different cliff-hangers ( i.e lines

that leave a story hanging in mid air) on prompt cards  
*Possible “cliff-hangers” :*

- a.... Carol goes to John’s room, she wants to ..*
- b. John tries to be nice to her, but Carol ..*
- c. Carol tells John that it is difficult for her to follow his thoughts, but John ...*
- d. Now, your turn*
- e. ?*
- f ?*

- 2) Tell each student to pick a card and develop the story from this point. Ask the student to prepare for an oral presentation. Ask students to tell their story to the rest of the class.

### **Task: Pointing out essential quotations**

- 1) Point out/ choose two quotations from the box below which to you would seem to be the play’s most important ones?

*Quotations:*

- a. “I’m doing what I’m told. It is difficult for me” (Carol)*
  - b. “Do you know that I tried to help you” (John)*
  - c. “Look: I’m trying to save you” (John)*
  - d. “Excuse me, but those are not accusations. They have been proved. They are facts”, (Carol)*
- 2) Compare and, if possible, reach agreement

### **Task: How were you left feeling at the end of the play?**

- 1) Discuss. When does the climax (turning point) occur in “Oleanna” ?
- 2) Comment on the ending of the play
- 3) Choose three words from the following which best describe your state of mind at the end of the play:  
*desperate – uplifted – heavy-hearted- hopeful- resigned  
disheartened- desolate – dejected – light-hearted- depressed  
accepting- confident – optimistic- numb – dazed – broken-  
hearted – melancholic- distressed – aggrieved – woeful –  
disillusioned- sad*
- 4) Mamet wrote two endings to “Oleanna”. Compare and contrast the different endings. Why do you think Mamet chose to rewrite the first ending? Discuss which of the two endings do you like most – and why?

### **Task: Give a speech**

- 1) Give a two-minute-speech on sexual harassment. Use at least three words from the following and make sure that your audience (class - mates) will remember them after your speech. *Words to be used: teacher- student- relationship- removed her shirt- behaved inappropriately –conduct unacceptable – fired- the General Teaching Council- incident ..*
- 2) Link each sentence to a character in the play “Oleanna” and with one of them as your starting point prepare a short talk.
  - a. “As I see I have failed ... In my responsibilities”

- b. "... and don't call your wife "baby""
- c. "My Group has told your lawyer that we may pursue criminal charges"
- d. "Do you hold yourself harmless from the charge of sexual exploitativeness..?"
- e. "... and is this not simple The White Man's burden"?

**Task: Statements for discussion in class**

- 1) Complete the following table indicating which controversial statements you think are true, which are false, or if you are not certain, tick the box column headed (?)

<i>Statement</i>	<i>True</i>	<i>False</i>	<i>(?)</i>
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1. *Education is not a democratic process.*
2. *Students may question individual teachers' methods but should have some self-discipline with regard to the work that is actually required to pass an exam.*
3. *It is ok to be on personal terms with a teacher.*
4. *John ought to treat Carol with a little more respect.*
5. *Carol crosses a line when she tells John not to call his wife baby!*
6. *John fails as a teacher because he cannot help Carol!*
7. *Carol does not want revenge she wants understanding!!*
8. *Oleanna divides us not about a specific issue, but about the uses and abuses of power ?!*
9. *Oleanna is a perfect example of an imperfect utopia!*

10. *“Oleanna” has been a target for feminists*
11. *Carol fails as a student because she does not realize that John cannot help her – she can only help herself!*
12. *Higher education is something other than useful?!*

**Task: Pro- and against Oleanna**

- 1) Discuss objections for and against “Oleanna” in general
- 2) What about the ending of the play how satisfactory do you think it is?

**Task: Mamet’s message?**

- 1) Comment on the message of the play (2 min. creative writing)
- 2) Discuss: Do you think Mamet wants to tell us something about the relationship between a student and a teacher? Or do you think Mamet’s primary concern is with the lack of communication between characters. Or what do you think?

## **Turning stories into theatre- acting and reading aloud**

### **Task: Act-it-out**

- 1) In groups of three: Dramatize an excerpt of the play “Oleanna”
- 2) Explain to the students that one of the students is the theatrical director who has to cast the characters’ roles within his or her group
- 3) Ask students to perform their excerpt from the story
- 4) In class discuss the performance and make the director Explain how he or she chose to present it in that way

### **Task: Improvise, acting out and reading aloud**

- 1) Practice acting out the following scene between John and Carol in “Oleanna”. Think of intonation and voice  
The dialogue starts with Carol saying:

*Carol: “I want to know about my grade*

*John: Of course you do*

*Carol: Is that bad?*

*John: No*

*Carol: Is that bad that I asked you that?*

*John: No*

*Carol: Did I upset you?*

*John: No. And I apologize. Of course you want to know about your grade. And of course, you can't concentrate on anything .. (the telephone starts to ring). Wait a moment*

*Carol: I should go*

*John: I'll make you a deal*

*Carol: No, you have to ..*

*John: Let it ring. I'll make you a deal. You stay here. we'll start the whole course over. I'm going to say it was not you, it was I who was not paying attention. We'll start the whole course over. Your grade is an A. Your final grade is an A”.*

- 2) Improvise and write down a scene between John and Carol. Next, act out your scene in class think of intonation and voice.

**Task: Act –out – timing, stress and pitch**

- 1) Timing, stress and pitch are important in all forms of drama. Before rehearsals begin the director and actors will sit down with the script and work out the issues such as stress, pace, pausing, volume and pitch. Work in pairs choose 15-20 lines of the play you have read and make notes about the timing, stress and pitch.
- 2) Next, try to perform the lines following the indications.

**Task: Act-out - dialogue and subtext**

- 1) Act out the very intense “question-answer- dialogue” between John and Carol. Consider the tone of the dialogue. How should the characters speak their lines?

*Carol: I'm going*

*John: Good*

*Carol: (exciting) ... and don't call your wife baby*

*John: What?*

*Carol: Don't call your wife baby. You heard what I said*

*(Carol starts to leave the room. John grabs her and begins to beat her)*

*You vicious little bitch. You think you can come in here with your political correctness and destroy my life?*

*(He knocks her to the floor)*

- 2) What do the characters say, as opposed to what they intend to say - in other words find the subtext (i.e the unsaid, the hidden intension of what the characters actually say) in the above very intense dialogue. Next, write out the subtext.

## Genre and Creative writings

### Task: Structuring a piece

- 1) Divide the passage below into paragraphs. Formulate a question for each of the paragraphs.

*“An unknown amount of time passes (probably a few days), and John meets with Carol again. However, it is not to discuss education or philosophy. The student has written a formal complaint about the professor’s behaviour. She feels that the instructor was lewd and sexist. Also, she claims that his physical contact was a form of sexual harassment. Interestingly, Carol is now very well-spoken. She criticizes him with great clarity and mounting hostility. The teacher is astounded that his previous conversation was interpreted in such an offensive way. Despite John’s protests and explanations, Carol is unwilling to believe that his intentions were good. When she decides to leave, he holds her back. She becomes scared and rushes out of the door,*

*calling for help”*

**Task: Rewrite in a new genre**

- 1) Turn the play into a poem about the rise and fall of John, the Professor
- 2) Turn the play into a short story about the rise and fall of John, the Professor
- 3) Turn the play into an article about the rise and fall of John, the Professor

**Task: Rewrite and change attitude**

- 1) Rewrite the below dialogue changing Carol’s attitude towards the Professor. The dialogue starts with Carol saying:

*“Carol: Teach me. Teach me*

*John: .. I´m trying to teach you*

*Carol: I read your book. I read it. I don´t under ..*

*John: ...you don´t understand it*

*Carol: No*

*John: Well, perhaps it is not well-written*

*Carol: No, no, no I want to understand it*

*John: What don´t you understand? (Pause)*

*Carol: Any of it. What you´re trying to say when you talk about.. “*

- 2) Rewrite another dialogue between Carol and John. This time changing John’s attitude towards Carol.
- 3) Discuss the function of the changes of attitude.

### **Task: Diary writing**

- 1) Imagine you are John, the Professor in “Oleanna”. Write a page in his diary. Your focus of concern has been giving: *My first meeting with Carol, my student.*
- 2) Imagine you are Carol, the student in “Oleanna”. Write a page in her diary. Your focus of concern has been giving: *My last meeting with John, my Professor.*
- 3) Imagine you are John. Write a page in his diary, where he confesses to himself that he has fallen in love with Carol, one of his students.

### **Task: Essay-writing**

- 1) Write an essay about “Oleanna”. In your essay you must include:

- a characterization of John, the Professor
- a characterization of Carol, the student
- the title of the play
- theme(s)
- language

### **Task: SMS-writing**

- 1) Write a text-message (SMS) in English about “Oleanna” which you then send on your mobile to another person in class. He/she reads the message and replies and so on.
- 2) In class, discuss the rules you used or invented when you created your text-messages.
- 3) Compare the language of text-message to the language of everyday speech.
- 4) Turn the language of one of the text-messages (SMS) that you received in English about “Oleanna” into written language. Compare and contrast.

### **Task: Writing a summary**

- 1) Write a summary of the play. Use as many words as possible from the following: *a two-character play, power-struggle, sexual exploitation, a 19<sup>th</sup>-century escapist vision of utopia,*

*miscommunication, fire and passion, love and lack of understanding, phone calls, higher grade ...*

2) In class: Present your summary

### **Task: Letter - writing**

1) Put yourself in Carol's shoes. Write a letter to John telling him that you are sick and tired of the way he treats you. Your letter starts with the lines: *Dear Professor, I wish you would try and put yourself in my shoes. It is very difficult for me to study at the University and I do not think that you are capable of .....*

3) Put yourself in John's shoes. Write a letter to Carol telling her that you are sick and tired of the way she treats you. Your letter starts with the lines: *Dear Carol, I wish you would try and put yourself in my shoes. When you came to see me I did my very best to help you. I even expressed empathy for you because I liked you, and now you have written a formal complaint about my behaviour towards you. Who do you think you are? I have worked very hard to ...*

### **Task: Arguing for a point**

- 1) Write a paragraph (about 150 words) in which you argue for a wider understanding of the issue of sexual harassment. State your main point in the first sentence and signpost your supporting arguments with appropriate linkers.
- 2) In class: Read aloud and discuss your point of view.

**Task: Creative writing – use your imagination and write on**

- 1) Write a continuation of the play and concentrate on the kind of life John will have in the years to come.
- 2) Write a continuation of the play and concentrate on the life Carol will have in the years to come.
- 3) What will happen in Act 4? Write a continuation of the play.
- 4) Write your immediate response to the ending of the play. While writing do not think of grammar or punctuation.

**Task: Write a letter to the editor**

- 1) Letter to the editor: *Dear Madam, my problem is that my teacher at University is so absent-minded that he does not seem to understand that a knock on his door, means a cry for help!! The last time I came to talk to him he simply told me that he would change my grade and let me*

*pass. But this is not what I want!! I want him to teach me how to pass my exam. I want him to understand that when I come and see him he is not supposed to be talking on the phone – he is to help me! Please help me what do you think I should do? Write an answer to Carol*

**Task: Write an article or a review**

- 1) You are a literary journalist. Write an article telling your readers why they should/should not read the play you have just read. *Useful vocabulary: to begin with ... secondly ... another reason is ... the main thing is ... the most important aspect ... oddly/surprisingly/strangely enough ... the point is... what I find particularly the play conveys ... what fascinates me about Mamet's play is that .. I will not recommend this play because .. the main thing is ... etc.*
- 2) Imagine you are a literary journalist. Write an article about the actors who play John and Carol in "Oleanna". Before you start writing your article you need to find a point of departure for your article. Prepare therefore an interview with John and Carol. Write down questions that you would like to ask them. Your final product is an article in a literary magazine.
- 3) Write a review of "Oleanna" in no more than 200 words. Before you start consider what to include and not to include. Begin your review with:  
*Mamet's "Oleanna" is a very interesting play to read. The mixture of high and low style, the many abrupt sentences and*

*the lack of communication between the two character turns the play into a special ... “*

### **Task: Translate and rewrite into your own words**

- 1) Turn the following excerpt from “Oleanna” into Danish:  
*“John: A pilot. Flying a plane. The pilot is flying the plane. He thinks: Oh, my God, my mind’s been drifting! Oh my God! What kind of cursed imbecile am I, that I, with this so precious cargo of Life in my charge, would allow my attention to wander. Why was I born? How deluded are those who put their trust in me? .... et cetera, so on, and he crashes the plane”*
- 2) Why does John tell Carol the story of a pilot flying a plane?
- 3) Rewrite the story in your own words

### **For further reading – useful links**

Articles about sexual harassment:

<http://vtheatre.net/vTheatre/mamet.htm>  
**!**

[http://mamet.eserver.org/review/1994/oleanna\\_london.html](http://mamet.eserver.org/review/1994/oleanna_london.html)

<http://www.ricolins.com/oleanna-2?lang=en>

### **'Stripping' teacher reprimanded**

*A supply teacher filmed stripping off in front of a class at a Suffolk school has been found guilty of misconduct.*

*When a college Professor agrees to meet a struggling student behind closed doors, their conversation yields only mutual misunderstanding...and an unexpected charge. As their antipathy turns ugly, it destroys lives, derails careers and ultimately leads to a cataclysmic event that no one could have expected.*

A pupil filmed Martin Rouse removing his shirt in June 2008 at Sudbury Upper School and put the footage on YouTube.

The teacher, who had also threatened to throw a pupil out of a window, was banned from all schools in Suffolk.

Now the General Teaching Council (GTC) has issued Mr Rouse, from Norfolk, with a reprimand for what it called an ill-considered attempt to control a class.

In a statement the GTC said: "Mr Rouse removed his shirt in the classroom which was a clear breach of the standards of propriety expected of the profession.

"The video of the incident became publicly available and Mr Rouse's actions were seriously detrimental to the standing of the profession."

### **'Viewed as threat'**

The GTC added it was also satisfied that "Mr Rouse behaved inappropriately in threatening to throw a pupil out of the window".

"We are satisfied that Mr Rouse did not intend to throw a pupil out of the window and may have meant the words used by him as an attempt to humour and engage pupils," it said.

"Nevertheless, the words used were capable of and may have been viewed as a threat by some of the pupils in the class."

The GTC decided to reprimand him because the incidents were "isolated" and Mr Rouse had a "previous good history".

The reprimand will remain on the register for two years.

"This reprimand marks the fact that Mr Rouse's conduct has been unacceptable and must not happen again," said the GTC.

The teacher was employed by Suffolk County Council through a Hertfordshire supply teacher agency.

# *East Lancashire teacher rapped over 'arm-break' jibe*

*9:20am Saturday 5th December 2009*

*By Nafeesa Shan*

A SUPPLY teacher has been disciplined after ‘threatening’ to break a child’s arm at an East Lancashire primary school.

Grace Astley, of Sabden, told a pupil whose arm was in a sling that her other arm would end up broken too if she did not stop misbehaving.

She apologised yesterday, but said her comment to a girl at Sacred Heart RC Primary School, Lynwood Road, Blackburn, ‘was not meant to be malicious or threatening’.

Mrs Astley was brought before the General **teaching** Council over that incident and five other allegations of ‘unacceptable professional conduct’.

The GTC said her comments to the pupil were ‘completely unacceptable’ and ordered her to take a behaviour management course.

Mrs Astley has also been told that she will not work as a teacher in Blackburn with Darwen again, after both Supreme Education, the supply agency which employed her, and the borough council, ‘de-registered’ her.

But Mrs Astley said she felt the incident, which happened during her only day of work at Sacred Heart on April 25 last year, had ‘got out of hand’.

She said: “It wasn’t meant to be malicious or threatening.

“I am sorry I said it. It is not an ideal thing to say to a child.

“Normally I come across as having a happy classroom but that day was a bad day and my bad day has been made very public.

“The child had been talking and I said it to attract her attention.

“It wasn’t meant to carry any weight at all.

“Teachers say things every day that aren’t appropriate but mine has been highlighted.

“But you should be professional at all times. I regret what has happened and I’m sorry.

“I have let myself down and I can’t change it.”

Mrs Astley was also found to have spoken in an inappropriate manner to teaching assistants and used her mobile phone while supervising pupils during break-time.

In a separate incident, she was also found to have ‘inappropriately reprimanded a pupil in a way which made physical contact’ at a school in Failsworth, Greater Manchester.

The GTC said Mrs Astley’s behaviour ‘did demean her colleagues although this was not serious’.

It continued: “The committee’s principal concerns were regarding Mrs Astley’s failure to take reasonable care of pupils in her class.

“The manner in which she dealt with the pupil who had her arm in a sling and the suggestions that she made to the pupil that her other arm would end up in similar fashion if she continued to misbehave was completely unacceptable.

“The committee had similar concerns as to the manner in which Mrs Astley made gesticulations in close proximity to the children in her care

which could have been frightening.

“These examples of behaviour fell short of the standards expected of a registered teacher and was a breach of the standards of propriety expected of the profession.”

The GTC could have suspended her from the teaching register but said the facts were not ‘so serious’ as to warrant the action.

Simon Johnston, national operational manager for Supreme Education which works in partnership with Blackburn with Darwen Council, said: “We follow all the stringent guidelines and checks.

"All of those checks were followed with regard to Grace Astley and they came back clear.

“When she went to the school we received an allegation.

"We followed procedure and investigated the matter.

"The case was also referred to the General Teaching Council.

“This was an unfortunate incident.”

Humma Ahmed, headteacher of Sacred Heart RC Primary School, said it was a ‘regrettable incident’.

She said: “The incident was treated very seriously and dealt with immediately by staff at the school.

“We are pleased with the action that has since been taken by the General Teaching Council.”

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