



NAME:

Dave Graham

ROLE:

English Teacher

INSTITUTION NAME

Woodland Christian
High School

LOCATION

Ontario, Canada

“The variety of productions makes it simple to show scenes interpreted by different theatre companies ... It is so helpful for students to see the breadth of variety in the interpretation of these scenes”

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO DIGITAL THEATRE+?

I was first introduced to Digital Theatre+ when teaching Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible* and looking for a production of the play to share with the class. The challenge was for students to see an interpretation of the play performed on stage in front of a live audience as opposed to a production intended for a movie theatre. The search took me to Digital Theatre+ where the production starring Richard Armitage was spellbinding for me and for my students.

HOW DO YOU USE DIGITAL THEATRE+?

In English classes Digital Theatre+ provides a wide variety of excerpts that I can use when teaching plays. It is not always time efficient to show entire performances to classes, but the variety of productions makes it simple to show individual scenes from plays interpreted by different theatre companies. For example, when studying the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet* there are both traditional and contemporary versions available, presented in both proscenium and thrust stage venues. It is so helpful for students to see the breadth of variety that is available in the interpretation of these scenes.

WHICH RESOURCES DO YOU FIND MOST VALUABLE?

The production of Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* with Hattie Morahan is a valuable production to share with students as it provides a world class interpretation of Nora’s character while also brilliantly demonstrating other elements of theatre such as stage design and costuming. Watching this production as a class easily promotes conversation that moves beyond interpretation through text alone.

Another resource that I find valuable is the “At Home With Shakespeare” series that provides expert commentary on side-by-side comparisons of scenes. The conversations with students after watching one of these videos helps develop students beyond comprehension of the play to interpretation of it, as well as bringing new perspectives to our own study of the play.

HOW HAS DIGITAL THEATRE+ HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT IN YOUR CLASSROOM?

Students have the experience of viewing extraordinary live performances of the plays that we study; from the Stratford Festival to the RSC and Broadway, these productions lead to an appreciation of both the text itself and the remarkable talent of the actors.

WHAT MAKES DIGITAL THEATRE+ PARTICULARLY VALUABLE FOR TEACHING ENGLISH?

I have benefitted from the lesson plans included that help me to deepen my own perspectives on the plays I teach. It is also so very good for students to have access to the plays as performed by a diverse collection of actors and directors who interpret the plays from different cultural environments.

Individual student access allows students who are passionate about theatre to dive deeper into plays that are in our curriculum. Students who are looking for the challenge of advanced work in the study of English Literature are also well served by using the additional background material and critical resources that support the productions.