

## Undergraduate Research Symposium May 18, 2012 Mary Gates Hall

### Online Proceedings

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#### SESSION 1I

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#### INNOVATIONS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

*Session Moderator: Todd Herrenkohl, Social Work*

**Mary Gates Hall 258**

*1:00 PM to 2:30 PM*

\* Note: Titles in order of presentation.

#### **Literature in the Common Core State Standards: A Critique**

*Melanya Materne, Senior; English*

*Mentor: Candice Rai, English*

The Common Core State Standards were developed in collaboration with teachers, school administrators, and experts, in order to provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare American students for college, the workforce, and successful competition in the global economy ([www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)). The Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (henceforth, “the Standards”) were published on June 2, 2010 and have since been adopted by forty-five of the fifty states, including Washington. As schools begin the enormous effort of re-shaping their curricula to meet the Standards, students and teachers will find themselves subject to many changes. This presentation focuses on the changes that will impact the teaching of literature in the high school English Language Arts (ELA) classroom. It reveals the underlying assumptions the Standards make about literary texts: that they are not argumentative texts, that they therefore cannot be used toward the teaching of argument, and that they are therefore somewhat irrelevant to the Standards’ goals of college and career readiness. It then draws upon interviews I conducted with local ELA-teachers and relevant academic literature in order to critique these assumptions, demonstrating that literature not only *can* be used to teach argument, but *should* be. In short, it makes the case that using literature to teach argument better prepares students for college and the workforce than the use of informational text alone and, moreover, imparts the additional benefit of preparing students for responsible citizenship in a democracy.