

## 'O this learning, what a thing it is!'

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Tulane students Susan Lanigan and Brendan Bowen perform during Shakespeare on the Road at John Dibert Community School in New Orleans. (Photo by Cheryl Gerber)

Although Shakespeare-speak sounds a bit different than the language that seventh-graders at John Dibert Community School in New Orleans are used to hearing, the young students have learned that many of the worldly issues addressed in William Shakespeare's plays are relevant today.

Revenge, discrimination and relationships ? all topics of Shakespeare's plays ? are of contemporary concern in society.

As part of the Shakespeare on the Road [service-learning](#) course, six Tulane theater students recently performed at Dibert School introducing the class to scenes from *Henry the VI*, *Hamlet*, and *Midsummer Night's Dream* among others.

The course is taught by Chaney Tullos, an adjunct lecturer in the Tulane University [Department of Theatre and Dance](#).

"One of my goals is to make it [Shakespeare] relevant and that's why we aren't showing up in tights," says Tullos. "It's really a two-way street. The Tulane students

are learning just as much the young students do.”

Before the start of the performance at Dibert, the student actors arranged chairs in a semicircle to mimic how an audience would have viewed a play during Shakespeare's time.

The middle school audience initially watched with skepticism. But the actors soon grabbed the audience's attention with a rousing sword fight, a kiss during *Romeo and Juliet* and a scene from the tragedy of *Titus Andronicus*, in which Titus reveals to his dinner guests that he's baked their family members into the pies they've already begun eating.

The Dibert performance was one of three performances held this semester. The others were held at Audubon Charter School and McWilliams Hall on the uptown campus.