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COUNTY COLLEGE**

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NEWS

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LIFE LESSON BRINGS WILLIAMSTOWN TEACHER TO GCC STAGE

Deptford Twp. – Williamstown Middle School’s Daniel Dooley practices what he teaches. He’s even willing to dress in strange garb and appear on stage in front of his eighth-grade students to reinforce a lesson.

For the popular language arts teacher, it’s all about encouraging students not to be afraid to try something new. Dooley doesn’t have a problem going back to school to learn and acting out of character. He’s currently pursuing a master’s degree in school leadership at Fairleigh Dickinson University on the Gloucester County College campus. And, after his stage debut as the moon in William Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, he’s not afraid of the spotlight either.

“Being on stage dressed in a goofy costume is not in my comfort zone,” admitted Dooley. “It was a good learning experience to be on the other side as a student, not a teacher. I worked alongside of some talented people. It was unbelievable how quickly they learned their lines.”

Dooley— who plays tailor Robin Starveling, an amateur actor portraying the moon during rehearsal in the woods for the fairies— was persuaded to take on the role by the show’s stage manager, his sister Katie Decker. GCC faculty member and theater director Rose Gruber provided acting guidance.

Even as an English major at LaSalle University, Dooley never had the opportunity to really appreciate the writings of Shakespeare. That the Bard’s play was being performed at GCC and appeared on the eighth-grade suggested reading list turned out to be advantageous. Dooley hopes that a fun, casual approach to Shakespeare will make his students more accepting and appreciative.

On November 14, more than 140 middle-school students boarded buses for the GCC campus to see *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. They also had the chance to see their teacher hamming it up on stage. Dooley is well known for his great sense of humor. A favorite among students, he was selected Williamstown Middle School's 2006-2007 Teacher of the Year.

“If you are going to teach kids to go out of their comfort level and expand their horizons, you as a mentor need to do the same thing,” said Dooley. “They have to know that it's okay. It doesn't matter if you're good or bad at it, just the experience that you've done it.”