

## **TE 822: Midterm Exam**

### **Email to Kyle by July 31.**

#### **Purpose:**

As stated in the syllabus, the midterm exam has two purposes:

- 1) to provide you with personalized feedback at a mid-point in the course;
- 2) to provide some accountability over your ability to stay current with all course readings.

#### **Rationale:**

Teachers are charged with not only giving academic instruction but with attending to the “whole child” and their complete development. Oftentimes, this takes the form of teachers being called upon by students to give advice and guidance.

When teachers give advice, they must consider how parents would respond. Teachers sometimes might encourage students to go against their parents’ advice, but doing so is always risky.

This task is meant to be a true-to-life scenario in which a student calls upon you for advice.

#### **A Viewpoint:**

Consider the following passage from David Elkind’s *The Hurried Child: Growing Up Too Fast and Too Soon*:

Children [often become] the symbols or carriers of their parents’ frustrated competitiveness in the work place. The parent can take pride in the child’s success or blame the coach for his or her failure . . .

Generally it is parent need, not a child’s authentic wish, that pushes children into team sports at an early age. School-age children need to the opportunity to play their own games, make

up their own rules, abide by their own timetable. Adult intervention interferes with the crucial learning that takes place when children arrange their own games. Certainly children learn something from competitive sports--for example, competence, self-assurance, teamwork. But this is by no means true for all or even most children who participate, many of whom end up feeling like failures.

You may agree or disagree with this perspective. However, I raise it because it provides a strong perspective and summarizes much of the discussion from cycle one.

**Scenario:**

You are a middle school teacher and its early in the school year. One of your students, Ray, a second-generation Mexican-American, asks to speak to you after school about an issue that he has been struggling with. He says he trusts you and would like your advice.

Even though you are just getting to know your students, this request for a talk surprises you. While this student is very studious, if not downright bookish--he almost always seems to be reading a fantasy book of some sort--he is also very quiet. He doesn't seem to have too many friends, but on the other hand, this doesn't really seem to bother him either.

When the time for the talk comes, the student walks into your classroom. He says that his father has really been pushing him to try out for the select youth soccer team. His father thinks that he "has his nose in a book" too often and that getting out on the pitch and "letting loose" would be good for his self esteem. It would "toughen him up" and also help him gain a new group of friends.

The student expresses to you his reservations about such an idea. The student wants to please his father, but on the other hand, he is sometimes intimidated by the buoyant (and loud) atmosphere that happens when his dad watches soccer with his friends. His dad works long hours running his own landscaping business, so finding something that they can both connect over seems really important.

**Your Task:**

Write a letter to Ray in which you provide counsel and advice. Then write an analysis that explains the thinking that went into your letter. Include in your analysis any questions you would want to ask of Ray about his life and background and your rationale for asking those questions.

The entire assignment should be between two and three pages, double spaced, 12 point font, with one inch margins.

**Time Limit:**

You have up to three hours to do this task. **If you need more time, you may take more time.** This limit is suggested so that you know about how much time and work I would expect a typical student to spend on this task.

**Grading:**

Students will be awarded from 1 – 20 points (20% of final course grade). Points are distributed as follows:

- Letter provides tactful and sensitive advice (5 points)
- Analysis makes clear connections to course themes (5 points)
- Analysis meaningfully integrates the Tobin book, the Rodriguez book, and the Rosen article (5 points)
- Letter and analysis explore multiple ways of interpreting the above scenario and provide Ray some advice in light of these different possibilities (5 points)

**Feedback:**

I will comment on the substance of your letter and anything else about your progression in the course thus far.