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Illuminating the Fog: A Research-Based Perspective on Why and How to Teach Shakespearean Texts

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ILLUMINATING THE FOG: A RESEARCH-BASED PERSPECTIVE ON WHY AND HOW TO TEACH SHAKESPEAREAN TEXTS

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Abstract

This literature review seeks to reveal identifiable trends that indicate effective methods for achieving learning targets through the use of Shakespearean texts. Thirty studies concerning the use of these texts in the classroom context were reviewed and the methods were classified into three categories based on the Common Core English/Language Arts Reading Anchor Standards: Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas. The results indicated that activities involving performance-based pedagogy should be implemented when learning targets concern literary analysis. Activities involving close reading should be implemented when learning targets concern linguistic analysis. This project also highlights the need for more rigorous data collection for the purposes of bolstering the educational literature and instructional application.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

For generations, the plays of William Shakespeare have been an institution in the English Language Arts curriculum for middle and high school students, and an interested teacher can certainly find research dealing with the question of effective pedagogical strategies concerning Shakespearean texts in the classroom. To this end, Marder (1964) wrote, "What aims and ends do teachers of Shakespeare have? Is it enough to say that the goal of our teaching Shakespeare is the same as the goal for teaching all literature: the intelligent appreciation and enjoyment of what man has thought and written for posterity?" (p. 480). Here, Marder argued that the pursuit of effective instructional methods regarding and justifying Shakespearean texts in the classroom has been present for decades.

The ubiquity of Shakespearean texts in the English Language Arts classroom may seem self-evident, and it is a foundational pillar that we perhaps remove at our peril. This may not be a monolithic opinion that stretches into all corners of the academy. However, it would be presumptive to assume that trends and movements in literary theory will make short work of removing Shakespeare from middle and high school curricula, regardless of whether or not they inhabit a moment of particular cultural relevance. Shakespeare is the only author mentioned by name in the Common Core English Language Arts standards regarding Reading and Literature for 9-12th graders. It is reasonable to conclude that such a status will embed these texts into high school curricula throughout the United States for the foreseeable future.

If an instructor examines these standards closely, they will see that a Shakespearean text can provide a rich platform to accomplish the goals of each of the standards in this section, excepting perhaps for the ones that specifically reference the expectation to teach American, 18th, 19th, or 20th century texts. For example, Shakespeare's complex texts have been and can

be effectively utilized to help students key ideas and details, understand an author's craft and a story's structure, and analyze multiple interpretations.

However, Shakespeare's reputation in the English Language Arts classroom is perhaps as ubiquitous as the texts themselves. As an instructor, I notice that my high school students enter the English Language Arts classroom with an initial impression of Shakespeare that is much more developed than any other author or artist synonymous with the discipline. Casually observed, the impression typically ranges from indifference to dread, and his writing is viewed somewhere on a scale of challenging to indecipherable. This creates a set of conditions that are unique to Shakespeare compared to the study of many other texts, and any review of effective instructional methods should be considered in this light.

An instructor must also realize that to teach Shakespeare is to teach a different medium than a novel or short story. These texts are plays and poetry, and students generally need this emphasized. One of my most frequent comments on student essays written about a Shakespearean text is a variation on "refer to the text as a 'play', not a 'book.'" In addition, the books we pass out at the start of a unit are, in essence, scripts. The instructional methods employed to achieve learning targets must take this shift in medium into account. Instructors must not assume that replicating effective methods for teaching a novel will translate to a different medium. To achieve instructional goals by way of a Shakespearean text, methods must not only be constructed with the specific learning targets in mind (e.g., Common Core standards) but also be unique to the task of achieving these targets through a different medium. An invested instructor must take all of these factors into account, and it would be to an instructor's benefit to establish what methods, strategies, and approaches show considerable success in achieving these goals through these particular texts.

Guiding Question

If Shakespeare will remain in English Language Arts curricula, if these texts are effective for achieving learning targets and meeting standards, and if the texts themselves must be regarded as a unique medium that would demand unique approaches, an instructor may safely assume that a review of the educational research regarding Shakespearean texts will reveal a trend of particular, effective instructional methods. Furthermore, if it is taken for granted that Shakespeare has, is, and will continue to be taught in English Language Arts classrooms in the United States, how should instructors best utilize these texts as means to increase students' reading and writing skills?

I have reviewed the educational literature to identify whether there is a trend for which methods consistently achieve which goals. *The Common Core English Language Arts Standards for Reading & Literature in Grades 9-10* serve as the basis for the types of goals a particular method, strategy, or activity could meet, and the 30 studies chosen for this literature review are categorized according to these standards. The methods outlined in the literature and assessed here are divided into the following Common Core English/Language Arts Reading Anchor Standards' categories: Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas. Chapter III includes conclusions about certain methods instructors should employ as they continue to incorporate Shakespearean texts throughout their curricula.

This thesis project is an attempt to illuminate the ways in which instructors can effectively achieve their goals through the incorporation of these texts and to address the concern of the Feste in *Twelfth Night:* "There is no darkness but ignorance, in which thou art more puzzled than the Egyptians in their fog" (Shakespeare, 1623/2007, 4.2.41-43). If this project

allows for illumination for English Language Arts instructors, perhaps some of that fog will begin to roll away.

Definition of Terms

The following terms and definitions will be used in this review. They are included here for the purposes of clarification and consistency.

Close Reading

Close Reading is a method by which students interact with a text or portion of a text, make observations and interpretations, and often reread with the intention of discovering and developing ideas using text evidence (Lehman & Roberts, 2014). This is a process students engage in actively, as Lehman and Roberts (2014) explained, “close reading is something we should teach students to do, rather than something we just do to them” (p. 4).

Explanatory Notes

Explanatory notes are notes or definitions included in a printing of a text that help to translate, elaborate, contextualize, or supplement a reader’s understanding of a particular word or passage (Oska et al., 2010). These are often found in Shakespearean texts used in classrooms such as the Signet or Folger editions.

Functional Shift

A functional shift is a process by which a word is used in a different part of speech without shifting the inherent definition. "To google," for instance, is a ubiquitous example of the function of a word shifting from a noun to an action verb (Goodman, 2011).

Parallel Text

The term “parallel text” refers to a printing of a Shakespearean text which includes a modern English translation alongside the original text (Shoemaker, 2013). *No Fear Shakespeare* is a well-known example of a parallel text.

Performance Pedagogy or Performance-Based Pedagogy

Performance pedagogy, or performance-based pedagogy, is an approach to the instruction of Shakespearean texts that treats them as scripts to be performed rather than books to be read (Shupak, 2018). Rocklin (1995) asserted that a comprehensive approach to this type of pedagogy involves the implementation of performance-based activities as well as a need for instructors to increase their literacy in the domain of the theatrical arts.

Reading Skills

This term refers to the ability of a student to decode language with fluency and a comprehensive vocabulary. This is reinforced by background knowledge, proper levels of resolution in construction, and memory retention (Spangler, 2009).

Statement of Research Question

The purpose and primary question of this thesis project is: Are there any identifiable trends in the educational literature that reveal effective methods for achieving learning targets using a Shakespearean text?

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The range of grade levels of the participants in the selected articles and studies include K-12 students as well as university-level participants. To be included in the final analysis, articles and studies must have dealt with the works of Shakespeare in regard to the development or implementation of an instructional method concerning reading comprehension in line with the Common Core English Language Arts Standards for Reading and Literature in Grades 9-10. Research databases used in the search process for these articles and studies included but were not limited to EBSCOhost Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost Humanities Source, EBSCOhost MegaFILE, Education Database, JSTOR Arts and Sciences I, JSTOR Arts and Sciences IV, JSTOR Arts and Sciences VI, Project Muse Standard Collection, SAGE Premier 2020 SpringerLink Journals, and Oxford University Press Journals. Keywords used to identify applicable studies included the following: “Shakespeare pedagogy,” “Shakespeare pedagogical methods,” “Shakespeare instruction,” “Shakespeare instructional methods.” Results were filtered to include resources that were marked as peer-reviewed and accessible online.

Narrowing Process

Articles chosen for this analysis, with the exception of Porter (2009), described methods and practices designed to increase student reading comprehension through effective instruction of Shakespeare texts. Consequently, embedded in the search process was the criteria that the name “Shakespeare" must appear in the title of the selected article. “Pedagogy,” “pedagogical,” “instruction,” and “instructional” are common terms in educational research, so a clear focus on Shakespeare, expressed through the title of the article, became necessary for narrowing the scope of selected studies and articles. Exceptions included Kolloff and Rahimzadeh (2004), the title of which includes “bard” (a common shorthand for Shakespeare), and Favila (2015), whose title

includes the common Shakespearean term “player” and demonstrates a clear focus on Shakespeare in the abstract. The narrowing process consisted of limiting the searches to peer-reviewed articles and studies. The amount of video content, book reviews, and selected chapters from books that appeared in the searches in various databases reinforced the necessity for this criteria to avoid any confusion in the selection of appropriate articles. Various articles were discovered and selected as a result of their inclusion in a “related reading” sidebar on CLICsearch though they may not have shown up in the original search results; these articles were subject to the same criteria as mentioned previously.

This analysis deals with student outcomes as they are presented by the researchers; consequently, articles that dealt purely in the realm of theory and literary analysis are not appropriate choices for determining the most appropriate methods for teaching Shakespeare in the classroom. For example, a study that appeared in the search process that met all previous criteria was Casey (1998). This article was not included in the final analysis as it is concerned with a theory and how a political lens towards Shakespeare’s works may shape pedagogical approaches, not with data that indicates student outcomes or success. Articles such as Winston (2013), which have a theoretical conclusion in conjunction with a reported result dealing with student outcomes, were included in the analysis. In addition, Sabeti (2017) and Goodman (2011) seemed to have a more theoretical basis for their assertions about which modes of adaptation are effective and which strategies should be implemented therein. However, the results are presented with an aim toward an effective mode of communicating the content, not merely positing a theoretical framework. They are included because they suggest specific methods that can be observed and could be implemented even if the necessary data or methodology for evaluating the method’s effectiveness are lacking. A plurality of the studies included here do not

consistently or readily provide data indicating the specific number of participants.

Article Categorization

Chapter II is divided into three main sections: 1) Key Ideas and Details, 2) Craft and Structure, and 3) Integration of Knowledge and Ideas. These sections are based on the Common Core Reading Anchor Standards' categories which are found in the English/Language Arts Standards for Reading and Literature in Grades 9-10. This process involved reviewing the content of each article and an analysis of which specific standards the suggested ideas, methods, or data therein would be most helpful in meeting. If a study's outcomes and suggested methods addressed the goals of one broad standard in greater proportion than the others, it was categorized under that particular broad standard.

There are four broad anchor standards' categories included in the referenced section of the Common Core English Language Arts Standards for Reading and Literature in Grades 9-10; however, the category of "Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity" is not included as a section in this literature review. Part of the rationale here is that there is only one specific standard included in this broad standard category:

> 9-10.10- By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently,

In addition, the analysis concluded that each study included in this literature review could justifiably be categorized as fulfilling, in various ways, the goals set out by this specific standard. Therefore, it seemed most productive to approach the analysis with the

foundational understanding that these studies all deal with the advancement of reading and comprehension skills, and those conclusions will be drawn more effectively if categorization can be made more focused and specific.

A Note on Standard 9-10.6

Standard 9-10.6 states, "Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature" (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2021). This standard requires students to meet learning targets that compel them to interact with texts from diverse perspectives. However, several studies included in this analysis, such as Dyches (2017), dealt with what happens when these texts are taught to students who are positioned outside of the cultural background of Shakespeare. In theory, this would make Shakespeare a culturally-diverse text for a student outside of a culture heavily influenced by British literature. Whether it is engagement from English Language Learners, such as discussed by Balinska-Ourdeva et al. (2014), or a critical response discussed by Dyches (2017), Standard 9-10.6 seemed to be the most appropriate category under which to classify these studies.

Proportional Studies

If a study fit an equal number of specific standards underneath more than one of the three broad standards, it is highlighted here as a "proportional study," and further consideration of the specifics of the research and hypothesis were used to determine in which broad standard it would be classified in the final analysis.

Balinska-Ourdeva et al. (2014) dealt with subjective interpretations of Shakespeare from various cultural lenses and how non-native English speaking students engage with "culturally-unfamiliar texts" (p. 339). There were elements of this study that concerned the

integration of knowledge and ideas and text complexity. It was categorized under “Craft and Structure” as it dealt most explicitly with different perspectives on Shakespeare that students from diverse backgrounds expressed in the study, making it most appropriate to be connected to Standard 9-10.6.

Favila (2015) discussed the importance of understanding the vantage point of the player when analyzing the meaning and themes of a text. Though there are implications for the further understanding of the craft and structure of the text itself, Favila (2015) was most concerned as to how this shift in vantage point would help students to better comprehend the specifics of the plot and characters; therefore, it was categorized under “Key Ideas and Details.”

Though Dyches (2017) was certainly concerned with how the central ideas of a text are positioned, the main focus of the study was how an instructor could deliver "culturally responsive British literature instruction" (p. 303). Since the lens of the interpretation seemed most significant to the study’s aims, classifying it under “Craft and Structure” was most appropriate.

Fleske (2005) was categorized under “Key Ideas and Details” since the stated goals of the study concern student engagement with Shakespearean texts. Even though some of the specific activities outlined deal with and analyze the structure of the language, they are done so with a perspective toward the choices and actions of characters and what an observer of the text can conclude from them.

Casey (2019) analyzed whether students can recite key details or could provide an objective summary of a text, which would qualify the study for the categories of “Craft and Structure” or “Key Ideas and Details,” respectively. However, since the goal of the study was to determine the effectiveness of certain digital resources in meeting learning goals regarding

Shakespeare, it was more appropriate to classify it under “Integration of Knowledge and Ideas.”

Key Ideas and Details

Shoemaker (2013) considered and enacted five teaching methods with an eye toward their effectiveness in terms of comprehension and engagement. The researcher explored the effectiveness of close reading, parallel texts, graphic novels, viewing film adaptations, and performance with two classes of college preparatory students. Shoemaker (2013) aimed to prove and show the extent to which subjective interpretations of Shakespeare and his works affect understanding of a text when encountered with these prior stereotypes in place.

According to the study, teachers are oftentimes met by a wealth of resources, methods, and suggestions on how to effectively teach Shakespeare. Despite this, students will often form negative impressions of Shakespeare once they leave high school. Is it possible that the methodology at play in English language arts classrooms is to blame for this unfortunate reality? Shoemaker (2013) set out to evaluate the effectiveness of five common approaches to teaching Shakespeare in the high school classroom. These were measured not only in terms of their usefulness in helping students comprehend a text but also the level of engagement and investment they elicited.

Shoemaker (2013) applied five different methodologies for teaching Shakespeare to the five respective acts of *Hamlet*. These included close reading, parallel texts, graphic novels, film adaptations, and performance. Two separate college preparatory classes enacted all five methods throughout their study of Hamlet; one method was utilized for each act in the play. Students studied an act of the play through the framework of one of the above-mentioned methodologies, and their levels of comprehension were assessed alongside their self-reported levels of enjoyment and engagement.

The best results for comprehension and engagements were found when students had the opportunity to study to play through viewing a film adaptation. Close readings and parallel texts were found to have the lowest levels of comprehension and engagement. Shoemaker (2013) readily admits that there were limitations to the study, amongst them time restraints and the limitations of comprehension texts to paint a full picture of a student's level of engagement or understanding. However, the takeaway concerns the importance of differentiation, especially regarding the effect of teaching Shakespeare in the high school English Language Arts classroom. The researcher encouraged teachers to think of their classrooms as research laboratories in and of themselves, to perform experiments such as this within our restraints, and this will perhaps lead to a greater understanding of the most effective methodologies.

Smith (2013) demonstrates this practice while describing how the knowledge transformation model, and moving on from a knowledge telling model, can be put in a practice using Shakespearean comedies as example texts, giving students the opportunity to mimic Shakespeare's writing style. A sophisticated approach to writing may be described as a navigation of a potentially complex series of problems that need to be solved in sequence. Different cognitive processes need to be activated, and the solutions within this complex set of problems are self-evidently open-ended (Smith, 2014). Smith (2014) described how beginning writers would operate in a framework where the goal seems to be moving one's thoughts out of one's head into an intelligible form on the page, perhaps to answer one specific prompt. In contrast, sophisticated writers will pay attention to organizational considerations, as well as the tone and purpose of the piece. Smith (2014) constructed the study to consider how moving into a transformative methodology of writing can help elementary as well as secondary students; the latter focused on a project concerning Shakespeare.

This specific activity involved “gifted” seventh grade students studying Shakespearean comedies with the intended purpose of writing their own narratives in the style associated with Shakespeare. No other sociological or demographic data was provided. Students were introduced to Shakespeare’s plays, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. They began by identifying some of the major plot elements from act one of a particular play as they read through it together out loud (Smith, 2014). Through comparing and contrasting it with the subsequent play, they were able to establish a sense of what the plot structure for a Shakespearean company looks like before moving on to identifying certain trends in the figurative language of both plays (e.g., oxymorons) (Smith, 2014). Ultimately, students created their own ‘Shakespearean’ comedies that reflected the identified trends and aspects they had discovered through the reading process (Smith, 2014).

Smith (2014) explained this process in distinct phases of the transformation model of writing: executive subproblems, structural subproblems, and content subproblems. These were identified as structuring the model, defining the set of problems, and understanding figurative language. Students were first given a model for identifying key features of Shakespeare's writing style and plot structure as they read aloud at one of several Shakespearean comedies. Next, they were instructed to identify common elements between corresponding acts in different plays. The next phase focused on the specific use of language, in this case, the figurative language that is so prevalent in Shakespeare's work. Ultimately, the entire group of students was instructed to take the common elements they saw in Shakespeare's writing and construct a play of their own utilizing all of those characteristics.

The methodology described directs instructors to focus students’ attention on the particular problems to be solved when writing, not merely the ideas that appear as responses to

an initial prompt. Through modeling this format of a Shakespeare lesson, students seemed equipped to not only identify key aspects of Shakespeare's literary form but were also able to imitate it in their own creative project. Smith (2014) included descriptions of and excerpts from the student-written play to give the reader a sense of how effectively they were able to mimic the voice and tone of Shakespeare. There are also selected examples in an appendix of student answers to "Shakespearean elements" questions, which include how they describe main characters, what they sense may have taken place before the beginning of the play(s), and so forth. However, no data in comparison to a control group is present to determine whether there was measurable growth in their competency as readers or writers.

However, the clear limitation to Smith's (2014) account of this project is the lack of quantifiable data. Without any sense of where the script students began and where they ended up in terms of their reading and writing skills or ability to effectively comprehend a text written by Shakespeare, it is not evident that this model is replicable for those purposes. The project is also a collaborative one as students work together to produce one final product in the form of a staged reading of their completed "Shakespearean" play. Unfortunately, Smith (2014) provided no insight as to whether the application of this knowledge transformation model in group settings translated into effectiveness during individual assessments.

Appropriately, Schupak (2018) explored the practical limitations that can be encountered by instructors implementing performance-based activities and methods in the classroom. Performance pedagogy is defined here as "an approach that treats these works as scripts to be performed, rather than texts to be read" (p. 6). The researcher established that there is legitimate scholarship suggesting that performance based activities are generally effective for helping students engage and comprehend Shakespeare more effectively. Schupak (2018) outlined

limitations that exist within the aforementioned performance pedagogy, specifically relating to Shakespeare and how instructors work through those particular challenges.

Schupak (2018) implemented performance based activities in classrooms from high school to the graduate level. Specific demographic data is not readily offered, and the conclusions are summarized together in terms of conclusions about the limitations of performance-based activities. Schupak (2018) began by outlining a theoretical justification for these kinds of performance based activities and methods by establishing the effectiveness of viewing Shakespeare's work as scripted text open to auxiliary methods of interpretation. Shakespeare's plays are texts with a" tripartite nature," inhabiting the worlds of "theatre, of orality and of literature" (p. 6). Schupak (2018) also presented the reader with a spectrum of performance-based activities for instructors to consider.

Schupak (2018) concluded that there are three challenges instructors face when implementing performance-based activities. The first is timing. Staging an entire play, or even a series of important scenes, inevitably requires much more preparation and intentionality, both on the part of instructor and students, than activities simply based around a lecture. These kinds of activities "in the wrong hands have the potential to squander a great deal of time while accomplishing little" (Schupak, 2018, p. 10). Second, approaching a Shakespeare text with the intention of performing it can also lead to prioritizing the general plot and events at the expense of interpretive or contextual knowledge, as well as linguistic proficiency. Shupak (2018) contended that students might find themselves working much harder on simply finishing the scene than truly comprehending the greater themes and ideas explored by the text. To this point, Schupak (2018) asserted that "a bad actor can perform chunks of texts with nothing more than the most general comprehension of what is going on" (p. 12). This leads to the third challenge;

most English teachers who approach Shakespeare with their students lack training in theatrical methods. "The potential for the problems of poor acting is partially rooted in the fact that performance methods are inherently acting and theatre-based" (p. 13). This places an extra burden on instructors who are now obligated to expand their tool kit of Shakespearean expertise. However, it should be mentioned that Schupak (2018) does not simply outline the challenges but provides instructors with ways in which they may address and confront these issues when planning performance-based activities.

Schupak (2018) claimed that these observations were gathered from a wide range of different classrooms at different ages and expertise levels across a period of time. This lacks further specificity, contains no demographic clarity, and claims the conclusions are to be taken as quite broad and applicable to different types of classrooms.

Sticking with the theme of evaluating performance-based pedagogy, Favila (2015) expounded upon the efficacy of using performance-based activities in the classroom and asked how students can engage in performance-based techniques that will allow them to understand the perspective of a player interpreting the same material. Constructing activities that give students a chance to take the role of a player will, according to Favila (2015), result in more profound connections and comprehension of the assigned material. The anecdotes outlined in the first section of the article seem to illustrate the ways in which this perspective can be adopted effectively.

Favila (2015) did not provide specific information on the number of participants in the activities outlined in Appendix B. The implication was that these activities are effective for students, especially at the college level, and are sufficient to be considered as part of an effective pedagogical strategy for approaching Shakespeare. Favila (2015) outlined the intratextual

justifications for a certain approach or mindset that necessarily must be adopted in service of a holistic pursuit of comprehending the words and motivations of Shakespeare's characters.

The research was accomplished via analysis of the texts referenced much more than any specific data about the effectiveness of the methods. Anecdotes, at times explicitly referred to as such by Favila, are present and offer support in favor of the suggested methods. However, the nature of the study itself is to highlight instances in Shakespeare's plays that lend themselves effectively to the creation and implementation of such performance-based activities; these include scenes from *Hamlet*, *Henry IV*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Favila (2015) provided text evidence indicating the areas in which performance and the perspective of the player are addressed in the text itself, such as Hamlet's reaction to the First Actor's speech about Pyrrhus, Priam, and Hecuba and his decision to spend "a good deal of the play acting mad" (p. 38). Favila (2015) claimed that since there are sufficient arenas provided by Shakespearean texts to give students the opportunity to perform and take on the responsibilities of the player, that "seeing from the stage" is a necessary vantage point for comprehension of the text as it creates a "personal connection to the power of acting" (p. 33). Favila (2015) claimed that these strategies would lead to "success both in and out of the classroom" (p. 41).

Favila (2015) favored evidence and potential pathways into the evidence from the texts themselves as sufficient to indicate that these performance-based strategies are naturally effective; however, no quantifiable data was provided about what exactly students would gain from these activities. The strategies are suggested; for instance, the appendices provide specific activities for instructors to implement, which seem grounded in the conclusion that Favila (2015) has drawn about how Shakespeare is most effectively taught.

Harmoniously, Rocklin (1990) presented a theory concerning performance methods that take place in the classroom and provides an opportunity for instructors to build upon the unified theory of how a text, a writer, and reader interact and overlap. Rocklin (1990) elaborated on the relationships inherent in the process of writing and reading and how a shift had taken place in the way critics and instructors understand these relationships. Namely, this spoke to the unified theory that suggests that the writer and reader shape the meaning of a text through their observation of it as such, which is based on Rosenblatt's (1978) transactional theory. Rocklin (1990) claimed "the writer must be her text's first reader and hence first interpreter; while the reader must be a text's rewriter and hence a later composer or re-composer of the text" (p. 149). Drama and performance are naturally suited to this form of complex interpretation and "provides the fullest embodiment of the new theory's vision" (p. 150).

Rocklin (1990) used an example of a high school class of 22 students who were studying *A Midsummer Night's Dream* through this lens and asserted that instructors of drama should refer to this theory and model of the interpretative structure and embed it into their practice. According to Rocklin, this framework helps students understand how they interpret a Shakespearean text in regard to these implied relationships, and "if such pedagogical designs are effective, the students, like the readers of texts, will become the co-creators of meaning" (p. 154).

Rocklin's (1990) class of post-secondary English students, many close to graduation and several in training to be teachers, participated in an activity where they were tasked to act out a scene from a Shakespearean text in small groups. Each group was given a different prop to incorporate into their performance. Each group acted at the same scene with the provided prop, which acted as a catalyst for varied interpretations of the same material. Students reported that "They were surprised at the way the prop could change the text," the varied interpretations of

how to perform the scene led to further discussions of how to interpret the theme, how to stage a particular interpretation of a theme, other options that may have been available in light of using different props, and how their interpretations served to re-imagine and re-interpret the text itself in keeping with the idea of the unified theory. Rocklin (1990) also recounted that this activity prompted a student to reflect on her own resistance to performance-based activities and led to growth in the area of her full participation in creating meaning through these interpretive strategies. The sample group size was quite small, and no additional demographic data was provided.

Turning the attention to the other side of the classroom, Rocklin (1995) also sought to uncover the effects that designing performance-based activities can have on instructors. As instructors develop into more novel designers and participants in those designs, the researcher asked what the indirect effects of performance-based pedagogy involving Shakespeare could do for them as they designed lessons and activities to address student learning targets. "The performance approach to drama" was highlighted here for its potential to invite students into collaboration with the intention of creating individual connections and "reinventing the play" by "widening their imaginative powers" (p. 135). Rocklin claimed that expanding the scope of inventiveness and imaginative environments in the classroom, which can break down the assumed barriers of what kind of imaginative activities are effective for primary, secondary, and post-secondary classrooms, would result in an increased likelihood of learning targets met within the classroom environment. According to Rocklin, if instructors embrace this task of reading Shakespeare's text imaginatively, it will create avenues and environments for imaginative invention in their pedagogy.

Rocklin (1995) claimed that post-secondary instructors could find ways to do this by expanding their scope of instructional strategies as most "limit their methods to lecture and some form of discussion" (p. 137). Rocklin (1995) outlined eight elements of drama that, when employed consecutively, can serve as a "heuristic to design my own pedagogic script" (p. 139). They are as follows: the initial collaboration of audience and artist; the tacit contract between audience and artist; the incarnation of the script in real time by the performance of the artist; the acknowledgment of the presence of each other and the effect it can have on the performance; the understanding that the artist guides the audience to a particular perspective; the temporality of the enactment of the script in real time; the transformation of words into character through the use of speech; and the script as a blueprint for the performance.

Rocklin (1995) asserted that employing these elements of effective drama can serve an equally useful purpose when enacted in the classroom and suggested through a series of examples that "this heuristic can enable teachers both to illuminate surprising moments in their own classroom experiences and to probe the alternative pedagogic choices available to them at any point in the unfolding action" (p. 142). Rocklin highlighted that teachers play a role that involves not only provoking reactions to and guiding deeper understanding of a text but also to the actions and choices of the instructor themselves, "someone who engages in the craft of provoking us to learn" (p. 144).

Bloom (2015) analyzed the growing field of games, specifically video games, related to Shakespeare, making a case for their inclusion under the wide understanding of what could be considered performance-based pedagogy. Though some games were connected to Shakespeare only through the marketability of his "culturally iconicity," (p. 114), there exist games that can provide instructors of literature and theater with new ways to immerse students in the process of

interacting with and performing Shakespearean texts. The challenge with this style of games becomes apparent when the focus shifts from "theater-making" to "drama-making" (p. 115). Theater-making games deal with the process of developing a full production, whereas drama-making games follow a more traditional path found in most video games, whereas a character "inhabits or controls" (p. 115) a specific character. Bloom (2015) described the difference as one of creation on the part of the former, as opposed to consumption on the part of the latter. A game that can be classified as "theater-making" can provide a participant with implicit or explicit pedagogical pathways and "holds great potential for teaching users about Shakespeare in performance" (p. 116). Bloom (2015) claimed that not all games related to Shakespeare are pedagogically effective, but the development and promulgation of "theater-making games" connected to and reinforced by effective digital tools can increase a participant's understanding of the performance and production.

Several games were analyzed for their interactive qualities and pedagogical value; the conclusions of such came directly from Bloom's (2015) individual analysis. Bloom (2015) focused this analysis most explicitly on the ways in which certain games might "translate the phenomenology of theater into gaming" (p. 115).

Certain games were shown to be more effective than others in a pedagogical sense when they mimicked the creative process inherent in the production of a play rather than when they simply communicated historical context or presented the process of staging a production as one of "geographical mobility" (p. 117). In addition, Bloom (2015) explored how game mechanics cannot replicate the process of acting and directing in a physical sense and implies that this will be a limitation as long as the physical nature of playing the game differs from that of actual performance. A game can become more effective when it compels the development of a creative

product; that is, when "their materials of play more closely resemble materials used in theater production" (p. 119).

The game Bloom (2015) highlighted as an effective example wields more advanced game mechanics, motion-capture, and collaboration to mimic various aspects of the process of putting on an actual production. *Play the Knave* is a Windows game that uses connect technology. It provides participants a chance to act out various scenes from Shakespeare's plays, capturing their actions and developing a digital version of their performance which can be augmented by creative digital stage and costume design. If used in a pedagogical setting, students, or, more precisely, their avatars, can share "a digital stage with the avatars of friends or strangers anywhere in the world" (p. 120). Bloom (2015) described this game as a digital extension of a performance-based pedagogy employed by instructors, characterized by "having students perform scenes from a Shakespeare play in order to study its language, themes, plot, and characters" (p. 121), and suggested that since these productions are captured by a digital tool, they contribute to the text itself by providing another performance thereof.

No specific data was outlined as to the pedagogical effectiveness of any game discussed in the article. *Play the Knave* introduced a new way to expand on a traditional pedagogical strategy, but the technical needs may present a barrier to entry. Bloom (2015) disclosed her participation in the development of this game, and, at the time of the article, it was still under development. No relevant data was provided suggesting the effectiveness of *Play the Knave* in a classroom setting, and Bloom (2015) admitted that its success is still an "open question" (p. 122).

Hawkes and Thomas (2018) reported on the findings of an experiment that observed the results of using a blended learning model to teach Shakespearean texts. In addition to the potential findings of what moving past a traditional lecture format can do for student

understanding and engagement, Hawkes and Thomas (2018) expressed that students may have diverse reasons to engage with Shakespeare, whether they are pursuing a career in education, focusing on the form and style of writing, or concentrating on the dramatic arts.

Because of these challenges in maintaining student engagement in regard to Shakespeare, Hawkes and Thomas (2018) contended that a unit or lesson plan must be constructed with a concern for various aspects of how students might make connections relevant for their individual educational purposes. Low levels of engagement can be correlated with dropping attendance and assessment scores. Hawkes and Thomas (2018) pondered how to "engage students in content, discussion and assessment when Shakespeare is perceived by them as ‘difficult’, ‘hard to understand’ or ‘not relatable’" (p. 83). Since instructors, in general, work against this perception, students must have avenues in which to engage with aspects of Shakespeare's work that both does and does not relate to their personal experience. Hawkes and Thomas (2018) indicated that moving into a blended style of learning, incorporating technology, and more peer-to-peer interaction would create further pathways for engagement.

The curriculum of the course taught focused on Shakespeare's plays such as *Hamlet* and *The Winter's Tale*. It had previously been taught in a lecture to assessment style and had seen declining student engagement according to student feedback as well as assessment and attendance data. This data "increasingly showed that the teaching staff had to change the structure of the unit and its delivery, as these no longer suited students’ preferred forms of engagement" (p. 83). Since blended learning models have shown to have positive outcomes in these metrics, strategies like increased instructor involvement, small-group discussions, and lectures that bookend class periods (as opposed to monopolizing them) were implemented.

Hawkes and Thomas (2018) assessed the data according to student feedback and attendance numbers and claimed that "the outcomes of the blended learning approach that were successful included that small group discussion proved to be more rewarding and focused than tutorials, given that student engagement seemed higher" (p. 84). The blended approach also indicated that some students chose the option of participating fully online through the Blackboard interface, indicating that student engagement could be higher than the data suggests; attendance seems to be the metric by which student engagement is measured. However, Hawkes and Thomas (2018) also indicated that the study revealed the need to reconceptualize the strategies implemented as this project revealed challenges in the cross-disciplinary nature of teaching this content to university students. For instance, in their feedback, education students revealed that they would have appreciated more resources for how to teach Shakespeare to students or access to the instructor's materials to utilize as a model. Hawkes and Thomas (2018) admitted that the study spoke to a need to "identify some common problems across all of our teaching practices" (p. 85). It is not clear what the digital resources offered on the Blackboard interface were, nor what exactly was revealed from the formal student feedback data.

Also seeking answers regarding student engagement, Felske (2005) described a series of activities led by a guest instructor that sought to increase understanding and appreciation for a group of advanced placement English students in the midst of studying a Shakespearean text. The guest instructor, David Daniel, led these activities as part of a weeklong actor residency in the building, and the activities described were led exclusively by him. Felske (2005) asked how instructors could produce a similar feeling of inspiration around a text in the classroom as may be created in the context of a theater, as the groups of students participating are described as proficient at strategic textual analysis, yet "they weren't hooked" (p. 58) and remained indifferent

to the material as such. Felske (2005) anticipated that "Daniel's presence would be the antidote to reading Shakespeare-while-sitting-in-desks syndrome" (p. 58).

Daniel's activities stressed the relationship between the experience of live theater and emotional connection to a text, expressing that the proper order of events in a classroom is to read the text, interact with it through instructional methods, and see the work as such performed live. Since access to live theater is not always available or practical, introducing "the experience of live theater into the classroom, then, becomes imperative" (p. 59). If this is successfully accomplished, Felske (2005) claimed that a student's interaction with the text would become more authentic.

Felske (2005) outlined three activities in which students engaged as Daniel led them. Activity One focused on breaking down the text, mainly soliloquies, into sentences and identifying what meaning is created by stressing punctuation in the delivery of certain lines. Felske (2005) described the effectiveness of this lesson as one that allowed students to engage in a concrete task that made them "eager to find the 'right answer'" (p. 59), yet it led to a close read of the text in which students could express various interpretations of the meaning of a word or phrase.

Activity Two was described by Fleske (2005) as "'bodies-on;'" students were compelled to create physical representations of metaphors found in the text, culminating in a short performance of excerpts from the text. Daniel worked with each group of students through activities which encouraged "physically expressing text" (p. 60) and eventually led them to memorize their lines for their in-class performance. Students recited these lines while physically expressing the metaphor in the text simultaneously. Felske (2005) claimed that students were able to "attain a greater propensity to weigh carefully each of Shakespeare's words" (p. 61).

Activity Three asked students to reflect on the effect a character's words may have on another character. Felske (2005) recounted an activity where one student played Othello while a group of seven students surrounded her, each playing Iago. As the Iagos spoke their lines, accusatory in nature, towards Othello, Daniel instructed them to move closer and closer toward Othello. At the point of maximum tension when Othello spoke the final line, Felske (2005) described the atmosphere in the classroom as greatly affected; having stated "The ensuing silence in the classroom is eerie and emotionally charged" (p. 63). In this instance, the experience of the tension that would have been communicated in the atmosphere of the theater was successfully applied to the classroom in this instance. The positive results observed from these activities fall in line with Felske (2005) and Daniel's shared conviction that the experience of the theater must be replicated as closely as possible within the classroom and that this is the most effective way to "do justice to the playwright's words" (p. 63).

Felske (2005) included no data indicating the effect these activities had on a student's overall comprehension of Shakespearean texts. Student reflections were only relayed here when they supported the hypothesis.

Finally, O'Brien (1993) explicated the educational philosophy promoted by the Folger Shakespeare library. The researcher focused on addressing the common realities shared by Shakespeare instructors and the particular beliefs held by the organization which serve to address the problems that need to be solved. O'Brien (1993) asserted that the philosophies by which instructors approach the teaching of Shakespearean texts stem more from confronting the challenges that they face rather than a set of guiding principles. If these principles, or '"beliefs" (p. 42), are reinforced and acted upon, the hypothesis is that students will find themselves in dynamic learning environments which utilize performance-based methods and activities.

O'Brien (1993) used the library's philosophy to explain the kind of beliefs that may lead to instructional methods that are more effective for students at all grade and skill levels. O'Brien (1993) included a description of four beliefs predicated on a straightforward philosophy that "has stood the test of time and experience in schools all over the country" (p. 42). O'Brien claimed that integrating these beliefs into instructional practice will lead to positive outcomes in student engagement.

O'Brien (1993) used anecdotal evidence to justify the beliefs embedded in the library's instructional philosophy. This collected evidence of first-hand experiences and reflections from both the author and participants in the library's methods served as the primary indications as to why these beliefs should form the foundation as to how instructors should design activities for their practice.

O'Brien (1993) asserted, through the four beliefs, that "Shakespeare is for all students," a teacher's job is akin to a "tour guide and not a translator," students will best "learn Shakespeare by doing Shakespeare," and students must make their own connections by "saying his words in their mouths" (pp. 42-43). These beliefs reinforce these ideas and are intended to provide an instructor with a model around which they may build and design their own way forward through Shakespearean texts. The stories and methods describe all lead to performance based activities, and O'Brien (1993) emphasized the notion of owning the text and becoming part of the text as a pathway towards student engagement. When this took place, students engaged in the "process of generating their own questions and posing answers", which "puts students on a playing field with scholars, actors, and directors" (p. 45).

There are some weaknesses to this study. One, no particular study group is referenced as proof of any concept outlined here. Two, the anecdotal stories of each belief in action are not

reinforced by data collection. Three, these stories are not explicitly indicative of replicability across a wide range of participants.

Craft and Structure

Lange et al. (2015) presented a structured digital media project where students were compelled to create a visual tapestry of images connected to specific pieces of Shakespearean text. The purpose was to show how close-reading can lead to a more complex understanding of the meaning of a text and what kind of connections can be made to certain types of imagery. Literacy, whether it refers to the ability to navigate textual or digital spaces, has become a priority in English Language Arts classrooms. In an attempt to utilize the familiarity students may have with digital spaces in order to clarify a textual space that has a reputation for confounding readers, that being Shakespeare, the authors of the study attempted to bridge that gap. They proposed a project that compelled students to engage in close reading while making connections to images and sounds that would find their way into a short video project. The rationale was that this would increase students' curiosity toward a text by connecting it to a new level of digital literacy, a multi-sensory aesthetic experience (Lange et al., 2015).

The authors proposed that slowing down the process of how students interact with particular lines in a Shakespeare text will help them to understand it further. Lange et al. (2015) conducted this project with at least one classroom of high school students and presented this new strategy of close reading where students were asked to create digital projects they believe to reflect a meeting or theme found in a particular line from Shakespeare. Some examples given by Lange et al. (2015) for scaffolding activities included text conversations between Shakespearean characters and Facebook profiles from the characters in *Romeo and Juliet*.

The project itself involved students selecting a line of text from a Shakespeare play to create a short video where the words were connected to images, a more dynamic slideshow as it were (Lange et al., 2015). Students had creative freedom over how they chose to construct this project and provided explanations for why they connected certain words and phrases to certain images (Lange et al., 2015).

Through recollections from instructors and reflections from students, Lange et al. (2015) concluded that the project has positive effects (p. 48). There were also collected rationales from students about why they selected particular images for their assigned Shakespeare passages. The project recap also spent some time discussing why it was important to teach students how to use appropriately licensed images for this project rather than simply finding them through the typical resources. However, no quantifiable data was provided in this article to get a better understanding of the effectiveness of this project as an assessment strategy. The collection of concrete data itself was somewhat neglected in favor of specific reflection statements from teachers and students.

Also concerned with the way in which Shakespeare's language may take root and influence reading skills, Winston (2013) summarized the results of a project conducted by The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), which observed the effects of early introductions to Shakespeare texts on student use of language and general comprehension skills. In accordance with a stated goal of encouraging students and educators to study Shakespeare at earlier ages, the company constructed a project in which *The Tempest* was introduced to students, and their language and communication skills were subsequently observed by the researcher. Winston (2013) promoted and explained the idea that Shakespeare could be clearly and effectively taught

to students early in their education and that the benefits thereof could be seen immediately and as foundational pieces to their continued developing literacy.

This study showed there might be some validity to that hope. Thirty-one children participated in the initial RSC study. Eight students were ELL learners, and seven participated in free-to-reduced lunch programs. While the particular data regarding how students were able to improve their use of language, and perhaps comprehension skills is less apparent, Winston (2013) did draw the reader's attention to the fact that activities involving Shakespeare at the early levels of education have a theoretical, if not research-based, framework by which they can be implemented.

Winston (2013) highlighted, from the RSC project, how structured activities that allow students to focus on the aesthetics of Shakespeare's language rather than the pure vocabulary as such can produce a level of enthusiasm for the content. In a series of six hour-long sessions, students engaged in active storytelling activities, which introduced them to the characters of *The Tempest* and worked their way through the plot. Within the series of activities and highly energized, gamified mini-lessons, they were encouraged to repeat or listen for particular excerpts from the play, often encouraged to express these phrasings and lines themselves as integrated parts of the rules of play within the activity.

Winston (2013) provided a theoretical explanation for the results; these were overwhelmingly positive in terms of observable criteria, particularly within the categories the school used for measuring improvement in language use. The results indicated a high level of enthusiasm for the project as well. This particular article provides little more explanation on the particulars of the data in the original study.

The purpose of this particular paper was not purely to report the results of the initial project but to provide a theoretical framework through which to view those results and perhaps provide a way for educators to incorporate the idea of language aesthetics into their instruction of Shakespeare. Winston (2013) indicated that the results corresponded well with theoretical frameworks of play and language learning. The positive outcomes of the RSC's activities, and the observable enthusiasm, matched up with the ways that language can take on a meaning for young students in terms of its form rather than its meaning as such. Using the work of Cook (2000), Winston (2013) delved into the idea that ambiguous language can be tolerated and integrated for young students if presented in a form that resembles play. Nursery rhymes are a prime example of this framework. Winston (2013) also established that the methods used in the study reflected the 'rubrics of play', in which he referenced the work of Callious (2001). Ultimately, the author provides some convincing rationale for the use of projects like the RSC's introduction to *The Tempest* as they are aligned with the research regarding the pedagogy of play.

Winston (2013) cited examples that seemed to regard the enthusiasm of students toward the project as evidence in and of itself, where it could have just as easily been seen as anecdotal. The results of the study could have been shared in greater detail to provide educators reading this study with some more concrete expectations as well as more of an idea of what exactly should be implemented. The activities described were only presented in terms of their connection to the specific play being studied and not as general activities that could be applied to a number of Shakespeare texts. It may be possible that they are able to be applied in this way, but the article provides no instruction on how this could be done.

Additionally, Goodman (2011) explored the benefits of applying the same care and attention that instructors typically devote to plot, structure, and theme to the words on the page

themselves. This article is an exploration of three distinct ways Shakespeare wields language to great effect; it hypothesized that instructors must equip student writers with tools that will build their confidence as writers. Goodman (2011) asserted that Shakespeare could be a resource through which students can be equipped with these tools.

The first concept that Goodman (2011) identified is Shakespeare's use of functional shifts. This is when a word retains the core of its definition but the part of speech or mode of operation may change. For example, “to google” is a functional shift that has entered common parlance in contemporary English (Goodman, 2011, p. 40). Spelling and vocabulary are also regarded as important areas of focus for instructional methods while approaching Shakespeare since they can also help students to make contextual connections and identify ways in which they use similar methods of linguistic fluidity. Goodman (2011) discussed how Shakespeare’s mastery of the language allowed him to experiment with spelling and the meaning of words and that students should regard this as a model for developing confidence in their skills.

Despite the bold assertion, Goodman (2011) provided no concrete data to reinforce the effectiveness of this perspective or its implied methods. The claim is an interesting one insomuch as it may lead instructors to equip students with a bit more creative license in the way words operate functionally (functional shifts), aesthetically (spelling), or definitionally (vocabulary) in their writing. However, the lack of specific data makes it difficult to claim that students will develop strong writing skills simply as a result of their confidence being raised.

Whether or not Shakespearean texts can help students wield confidence to great effect in their writing, Oska et al. (2010) set out to determine whether certain instructional methods applied to a Shakespeare text are effective in similar ways for students with little to no exposure to Shakespeare or for students who have encountered his work before. Students who may have

had experience or exposure to Shakespearean texts may come into the classroom with different needs than those who are encountering these texts for the first time. Oska et al. (2010) sought to prove that the types of explanatory notes that can be helpful for novices are, in fact, unhelpful for those who have a measure of comfort or comprehension when approaching these texts. Oska et al. (2010) compared the effect on comprehension that explanatory notes, which immediately followed each line, would have for students and Shakespearean experts alike.

Oska et al. (2010) asked what can be observed about how novices to the texts learn compared to those who have a level of familiarity; the researchers also investigated which instructional methods are effective for one but not the other. This study viewed the findings through the lens of the expertise reversal effect, implying that instructional strategies should evolve as students are exposed to more Shakespearean texts. The hypothesis asserted that explanatory notes in a complex Shakespearean text would be beneficial to novice readers of Shakespeare but would hinder experienced readers of these types of texts, thus triggering the expertise reversal effect.

Experiment 1 included a group of 20 high school students proficient in reading skills but with little experience reading Shakespeare. An "elite group of experts" (p. 220) were chosen for Experiment 2; they were selected for their expertise in the subject matter covered in the excerpt used. Experiment 3 enlisted a group of 20 high school students with similar characteristics to the first. Oska et al. (2010) measured the effectiveness of explanatory notes embedded in the text for high schoolers proficient in reading skills but without prior encounters with Shakespearean texts. The data, gathered from "participant's prior knowledge, subjective ratings of mental load, and post-test text comprehension scores" (p. 225) showed that these notes were a helpful tool in increasing the comprehension of the text for this type of student; the result was reinforced by the

results in both the first and third experiments. However, experiment two revealed that these same notes were shown to be counter-productive for a group of Shakespearean experts; in fact, the data revealed a decrease in passage comprehension for this group when the notes were embedded in the text.

The results indicated that the usefulness of embedded notes and strategies that may assist students to comprehend the linguistic flair of a Shakespearean text are helpful in the first exposures. It implied that as more comfort is gained with this style of text and as students gain confidence with interpreting the language, embedded explanations or "translations" (p. 234) can be counter-productive once a certain level of comfort is reached. Oska et al. (2010) identified this as a result of the expertise reversal effect.

The researchers implied that the explanatory notes are most effective when inserted directly into the text following every single line. This was proven effective by the study in the case of independent analysis, as the students in Experiments one and three did not learn anything about the excerpt or text prior to the experiment. Explanatory notes are effective for students, but an effective instructor could also fill that role in direct classroom instruction, mitigating the need for instructors to insist on this specific version of the text.

On the lines of decoding the plot and themes of a text, Balinska-Ourdeva et al. (2014) aimed to prove that, and show the extent to which, subjective interpretations of Shakespeare and his works will affect understanding of a text when encountered with these prior stereotypes in place. They began with a perspective that the inclusion of Shakespeare's works as a foundational piece in the curriculums of Canadian high schools carry an inherent assumption of a certain colonial mindset, one that privileges works prevalent in the western canon (Balinska-Ourdeva et al., 2014). Subsequently, they set out to see whether there were any patterns to be observed from

the ways that students, specifically those who are two or fewer generations removed from the experience of immigrating to the west, have interpreted who Shakespeare is and how he is viewed as a foundational element in the study of the English language. Balinska-Ourdeva et al. (2014) asked what patterns emerged in students' interpretative approaches to unfamiliar Shakespeare texts, what meaning-making strategies were applied when encountering these texts, and what they reveal about "linguistic or cultural dissonances" that may be present. As many participants in this study were non-native English speakers, the researchers also examined how students adequately engage with "culturally-unfamiliar texts" (p. 339).

Though a clear hypothesis was not stated, Balinska-Ourdeva et al. (2014) seemed to imply that some findings may indicate a bias toward the idea that Shakespeare's cultural significance is a cultural construction, rather than a result of inherent value. Therefore, the reader of the study can expect that the conclusions, and the emergent patterns, will analyze the value of Shakespeare's ubiquity amongst diverse cultural frameworks.

Grade 10 students at a large, diverse high school in Alberta, Canada participated in this voluntary study. Fifty percent of students had a language other than English as their first language, and 38% were first generation immigrants. These students were all in the midst of studying *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, or *Romeo and Juliet*. Eight of these students voluntarily participated in the second round of the study, a focus group discussion in which they could elaborate on their responses to the survey, discuss a new passage, and complete a reading comprehension activity.

The students began by filling out a survey that asked about their enjoyment of the plays they were studying, the level of difficulty they felt they experienced, and whether Shakespeare should continue to be studied in high school English classes. The participants gathered together

for focus group discussions that allowed the researchers to gain specific insight into how these students used the skills and reference points at their disposal to interpret a passage from *Macbeth*. From here, Balinska-Ourdeva et al. (2014) presented data in the form of general observations and selected quotes from several students.

The data they collected show the challenges students face when they approach Shakespeare with preconceived notions or stereotypes of, or established patterns of thinking about these works. From the conversations they had with the focus group students, a re-evaluation of what teachers try to use as a 'hook' for the study of Shakespeare should be re-evaluated and instructors should consider how they might approach a text in a way that will not play into preconceptions. It is also suggested that the very notion of whether or not to study Shakespeare at all should be a topic approached explicitly with students, as the researchers suggested new schemas as to why he is studied, particularly those influenced by the lens of colonialism.

The main limitation seems to be that the study focused most specifically on only eight students. The specific questions or prompts used for either group of students were not provided for the reader's benefit. It is unclear how long the focus group engaged in these discussions, and only selected quotes were provided to reinforce the researchers' conclusions. The theoretical implications made by the researchers from the outset were an indication of their perspective and critical lenses. Establishing an interpretive lens that sees the prominence of Shakespeare in the ELA curriculums as reinforcing colonialism paints their results in a certain light, as this interpretive lens seems to be in no way challenged.

Additionally, Spangler (2009) described the experience of encountering instructional methods in classrooms studying Shakespeare that do not seem to enhance student appreciation

and understanding. Good pedagogy is defined here as something apart from "minutiae", or methods that prioritize developing a base of knowledge derived from a Shakespearean text (p. 130). Reading Shakespearean text is presented as an ineffective method for achieving desired student outcomes, which in this case are defined as appreciation and comprehension of "rich vocabulary."

Spangler (2009) asked how instructors could move beyond a "banking method" in their instruction of Shakespeare and into methods that more effectively help students connect to the essence of the text. A danger inherent in these activities is that students may assume that the knowledge they need will simply find its way to them through the explanatory task utilized by the instructor. The result for the student would be "if they wait long enough, the teacher will tell them what the words mean" (p. 130). Spangler (2009) also claimed there is a fundamental lack of reading skills taught in literature-based English classrooms, and that the methods incorporated for Shakespeare should reflect this alleged deficiency.

Spangler (2009) asserted that students would gain a greater appreciation and deeper understanding of a Shakespearen text if they experience it the way it was meant to be seen: onstage, or, in the case of the classroom, perhaps onscreen. "If Shakespeare's plays were shown instead of read, teachers could capitalize on student's primary discourse and help them consciously articulate that tacit knowledge, collaborating with students instead of working against them" (p. 131).

Spangler (2009) provided no data that indicated what number, level, or demographic group of students found success in the methodological framework proposed. Spangler (2009) provided claims of what methods should work according to the nature of the text itself, as a script, as well as an insistence that the medium shift from written word to performance inevitably

would result in a more clear avenue for student engagement. According to Spangler (2009), the instructor should consider the performance to be the "primary text," while the written words in a book should be considered auxiliary. Spangler (2009) contended, "This method of engaging with Shakespeare's texts teaches multimodal literacy skills and critical thinking skills that the traditional methods cannot" (p. 131). In this way, the importance of the written text itself is not discounted, but the shift from the written to the performed as the primary text may allow students to more easily apply their own interpretations and create their own connections.

Regardless of its coherence and anecdotal strength, no data was provided for the reader that would indicate any measurable improvement between students and classrooms who use the written word as the primary text compared to those who prioritize the performed version. A full accounting and study of this perspective is needed in order to incorporate these claims in the full justification of rigorous scholarship.

Along the lines of determining useful texts for generating engagement, Steelman (2018) explored opportunities for primary source documents to be included in the teaching of a Shakespearean text in the interest of maintaining high levels of interest in the text. Historical context is often discussed by instructors, but this project highlighted the effectiveness of utilizing artifacts from the time period, which provide an avenue to understand the contemporary anxieties into which the play taps, to help "consider how Shakespeare’s world can be the impetus for powerful thinking, writing, and discussions” (p. 39). This provides students with more concrete ways to understand "cultural beliefs and how Shakespeare manipulates them in his plays" (p. 40). According to the researcher, introducing historical artifacts and approaching the text through the framework of New Historicism will result in heightened student connections to the texts.

The participants in this research project were the students in the researcher's classroom. Steelman's (2018) study involved 11th-grade students, though the specific number of participants or other demographic data was not provided. Steelman (2018) implemented different strategies such as close readings, small group discussions, and socratic seminars around primary documents relevant to the time period and explicit textual references in *Hamlet*. Students were encouraged to not feel pressured to understand the entirety of the archaic language and to " simply see what they could comprehend" (p. 41). Steelman provided narratives of students making relevant connections to the text through these documents and rationales for the documents chosen in the unit.

Steelman (2018) claimed, "I had never heard students discuss early modern historical and cultural issues" (p. 43) prior to this study. Students were able to use the primary source documents shared in the unit to create text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections. Students also increased their familiarity with Shakespearean language. The focus of the units taught also experienced a shift "away from play-centered discussions and toward historical and cultural issues" (p. 46), indicating that implementation of these documents could lead to the use of Shakespearean texts as an avenue for meeting other various learning targets.

Porter (2009) narrowed the focus and described a wide range of activities involving Shakespeare designed for increasing literacy for ELL students. Since the tasks set before ELL students are as Porter (2009) described it, often detail-oriented, repetitive, and revolve around memorization, the instructional methods presented deal with how Shakespeare's texts could be incorporated into the learning goals for these students while enlivening and differentiating the curriculum (p. 44). According to Porter, Shakespeare provides ELL students with an opportunity to pay close attention to the detail of the language, which is necessary for non-ELL students,

while giving them the chance to deepen literacy and gain valuable experience reading and studying these canonical texts.

Over the course of two years, Porter (2009) collaborated with a cooperating teacher to teach a series of lessons to a classroom of grade 9-12 ELL students. These students were reading a year or more below grade level and spoke at least nine different first languages. The plays taught were *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, subsequently.

Porter (2009) emphasized the notion of increasing the accessibility of the text. Porter and the cooperating teacher used different scenes from different plays and provided students with optional scene summaries to read before studying the primary text. Within these scenes, students were given the opportunity to perform short scenes based on different types of interactions, such as fathers and daughters, lovers, and famous deaths in the texts. Another activity, "Beating Up Shakespeare" (p. 45), involved students determining where natural changes and shifts happened within a scene, which helped break the interactions in scenes down into more manageable portions for interpretation.

Other activities included chances for them to read and speak selected lines from the primary text, act out scenes silently based on pre-written descriptions, and interpret visual aids concerning character connections in the text. Students also read the text aloud at their seats, and Porter (2009) encouraged them to work together in groups to interpret vocabulary based on context clues. From there, students discussed in groups how certain lines should be spoken in terms of the intended emotion. Porter (2009) explained how this activity could be helpful for students to develop a sense of context with the tone of a line in addition to the pure vocabulary. Porter (2009) claimed that a Shakespearean text in this type of classroom can be "a means to

explore the wonders of language" and could provide ELL students “confidence in the acquisition of their second language" (p. 49).

The results of each activity were expressed anecdotally with praise and implied recommendation, and resources for these activities were provided. While these activities were implemented with different groups of students across several years, the conclusions are not data-driven. There are no specific data provided to indicate whether these activities had a direct correlation of moving students whose language skills were classified as "expanding" into the "bridging" category, or if "bridging" (p. 45) students more effectively approached grade-level reading skills.

In contrast to teaching standard English, Grady (2017) reflected on the ways in which non-standard English vernacular could have an invigorating effect on student engagement during the study of Shakespearean texts. As a diversity of voices and experiences becomes a more pressing priority for educational institutions, and if Shakespeare is embedded into English literature curricula, the task before instructors involves fostering cross-cultural dialogues that orbit a particular text. This necessitates a perspective on the historical role of non-standard vernacular can create a pathway for students, particularly students of color, to more effectively explore Shakespeare's language by providing the classroom with more chances to create connections between different styles of standard and non-standard English. Grady (2017) claimed that fostering this type of environment "invigorated my class’s understanding of Shakespeare" (p. 535).

Grady (2017) drew upon his experiences with a particular classroom setting. No specific demographics were provided, but "an unusually high number of students of color were enrolled, adding to what is generally a limited range of vernacular and colloquialism in courses on the

early modern period" (p. 533). As discussions of Shakespearean texts took place within the classroom, Grady (2017) highlighted situations where non-standard vernacular could be used to better understand the meaning and purpose of the original text.

Several situations in which these discussions took place were recounted that involved various Shakespearean texts and how non-standard terms like "side piece," "basic," and "played with" (pp. 533, 536, & 537) were used to illuminate the discussions of particular characters more than they could have been by maintaining adherence to standard English terms. Grady (2017) described the process for the instructor as one that fosters the connections students can make to develop further understanding. It also approaches their personal vernacular, or their understanding of Shakespearean English, with humility, saying "it is essential that we listen even and especially when their rhetoric ostensibly conflicts with what our standard educations have inured us to" (p. 536). The examples included here serve as models for fostering a discussion dynamic that stretches perceptions about the English language and fosters inclusivity.

Grady (2017) did not claim that what happened in the classroom environment described here is easily replicable across all educational situations, at least insofar that it is not a "quick fix" (p. 539). Clearly, the cooperation of an entire class is involved on a level more profound than whether each student completes the homework assignment.

Desmet (2016) explored a more individual aspect of grasping Shakespearean language through various digital projects. Most of the projects explored allowed the user to participate through a digital application or another form of electronic instructional method. Consequently, Desmet (2016) stated that the projects would be assessed by individual analysis on their nature as "small-screen" (p. 214) reading resources. Since Shakespeare's language has been not only a major focus of, but also seen as a "barrier" in the way of effective instruction in the area of

English pedagogy, it has been necessary for instructors to communicate both the ways his language can capture and provoke attention while maintaining an air of mastery and trust with their students. Desmet (2016) focused on whether specific digital apps would help students develop an effective balance between an understanding of and passion for these texts. Desmet (2016) asserted that the use of the relatively new medium of apps would provide students with an effective arena to develop a strong understanding of Shakespeare's language, and claimed they would "support, encourage, constrain, and shape the reading of Shakespeare" (p. 214).

The participants in the study as such were the apps themselves. Desmet (2016) began by highlighting the digital platforms available online for accessing Shakespeare's texts as such, such as MIT's Works of William Shakespeare and the Folger Digital Texts site. While useful for making the texts accessible, Desmet (2016) highlighted that these tools, in organizing Shakespeare's works into a database, do not address the need for "collection of minds" collaborating on ways to make interpretations and explanations of the work readily available and accessible (p. 216). Desmet (2016) claimed that "They help us decode texts but do not, I think, offer direct access to the hallucinatory quality of Shakespeare's language" (p. 217).

Desmet (2016) focused next on the "burgeoning field of Shakespeare apps" (p. 217) and provided commentary and analysis on the following tools available on digital devices: Luminary Shakespeare, Shakespearience, Wordplay Shakespeare, and Shakespeare in Bits. In the corresponding analysis, Desmet (2016) provided a sense of how each app seeks to negotiate a balance between highlighting the text itself, annotations and commentary, and performances of the plays both visual and aural.

Desmet (2016) provided analysis of how YouTube may serve as an open-source tool that could direct students towards commentary, analysis, and performances of specific texts, but

concluded that "a good deal of scaffolding is required to match the athletic engagement with text, voice, and vision that is possible with a good iPad app" (p. 224).

Desmet (2016) established that the apps discussed provided a promising outlook for the use of apps as "tools available for tackling the rigors of Shakespearean text" (p. 224). Desmet (2016) concluded that these apps would clarify and allow instructors to use "the largely opaque and even accidental relations that govern the articulation of vision, sound, movement, and text within a digital medium" (p. 226) to their advantage to meet learning targets. These apps were analyzed without any data as to whether their use by students provides any measurable advantage in their understanding of the material. Desmet (2016) was optimistic, but no concrete understanding of their effectiveness was provided beyond that perspective.

As opposed to a more individualistic approach, Burton (2019) highlighted how Shakespeare could be effectively taught in high school classrooms through practices informed by culturally sustaining pedagogy. Culturally sustaining pedagogy "honors the cultural expertise of students" and "promotes the cultural dexterity necessary for success in our demographically changing communities" (p. 111). Therefore, a strategy that regards the text and cultural context in tandem must be developed in order to achieve learning targets for students through Shakespearean texts. According to Burton, Shakespearean texts can be incorporated into the English classroom by ways and means other than the passion of the instructor for the material, often through an assumption of "timelessness" or the ubiquity of the texts embedded in ancillary resources and curriculum materials (p. 111). Burton (2019) asserted that effective comprehension and engagement with these texts would take place when the codes and context students weave throughout their everyday language is honored in the process, and break down the barriers between the way students speak and the construction of language in the literature.

Burton (2019) focused on a particular classroom in a "South Los Angeles charter high school with a student body that is 95% African-American" (p. 112) as an example of effective implementation of the philosophy presented here. Burton observed the classroom of Jordan Greenwald, a teacher who "understands that a Shakespeare unit needs to be located where the students live and draw on (rather than devalue) their linguistic and cultural knowledge" (p. 112). The units observed included introducing students to the Shakespearean Sonnet. Greenwald modeled the task of reading and annotating the poem. Next, students were instructed to read the poem to each other and paraphrase it according to the way they speak in an everyday context. This allowed them to effectively construct a summary of the poem's meaning. Students were also instructed to take colloquial phrases and translate them into Shakespearean parlance. These activities allowed students to treat the language with less reverence and skepticism, as "culturally sustaining pedagogy marks the entire unit, in performance exercises, film study, and creative projects" and led to more sophisticated analysis of a Shakespearen play later on in the unit (p. 113).

Burton included reflections from students in his observations of the classroom alongside detailed descriptions of the activities. The conclusions reported from students indicated positive outcomes insofar that the chosen examples highlight specific instances of the learning target being met. The examples from the assignments discussed are minimal in their observable scope, as only one table with only two examples of student work is provided, and no data was provided to indicate that perceived improvements in engagement and comprehension produced corresponding results on assessments.

Interestingly, Kolloff and Rahimzadeh (2004) detailed a study that was performed in order to help teachers in training shift their attitudes towards approaching, and ultimately

teaching, Shakespeare in their classrooms. It is a unique study in this regard but echoes Rocklin (1990) in its focus. Kolloff and Rahimzadeh (2004) asked how role play as an educational method would prove effective in online learning environments, and theorized that role play would have positive effects in online learning situations in the same way that the data they cited indicate. They also expressed that they were open to new insights as little work seems to have been done regarding electronic instruction in general, let alone online role play in particular.

Through the methods of role-play, students developed questions for a performed "interview" with "Shakespeare," and data was collected indicating how these students' attitudes toward the author had changed. However, Kolloff and Rahimzadeh (2004) did not indicate the number of participants nor their ages, but did explain that the project was carried out six times across six semesters, and the gathered data was cumulative. It also seems to have involved students in the midst of training to be teachers, as evidenced by certain comments in the gathered data.

Students developed questions meant to be asked of an instructor "playing" Shakespeare. Through researching material on Shakespeare beforehand, they developed sets of questions that broke down into the categories of biographical, historical/cultural, pedagogical, and personal. The personal questions were the overwhelming majority, and since these were not questions the instructors may have been able to effectively answer in an evidenced way, many went unanswered during the synchronous online interview with "Shakespeare." This created a sense of frustration among students, but Kolloff and Rahimzadeh (2004) observed that the discussion students engaged in after the interview provided insight about the trustworthiness of the author, their own internalized assumptions about Shakespeare, and the ultimate benefits of the task.

The third step of the project surveyed students concerning their personal reflections on the exercise. Students indicated that the purpose of the exercise was to "teach facts about Shakespeare, provide insights into his plays, model a technique that would work in these teachers' own classrooms, provide fun, motivate teachers to want to learn about Shakespeare, and motivate teachers to want to teach Shakespeare" (Kolloff and Rahimzadeh, 2004, p. 389). The instructor who "played" Shakespeare also conducted face-to-face meetings with each student to gather assessment data and further insight into the value provided by the activity. Kolloff and Rahimzadeh (2004) pointed out that these kinds of debriefing sessions in person are critical for reinforcing the purpose of the role play exercise.

This project seemed to outline a more focused method and provoked a discussion about the intent of the author rather than about Shakespeare himself or his works as such. It may be a strength of the activity itself that it could easily swap out Shakespeare for any other significant writer in the Canon, but the student insights outlined by Kolloff and Rahimzadeh (2004) did not seem to be concerned with any further understanding or comprehension of a particular text as they seem to be with authorial intent. The author is central to the discussion, not the text.

The demographic data of the study is implied, but it is not made abundantly clear. There's also no data indicating whether this discussion, which revolves around authorial intent, had positive effects on these students', or their subsequent students, comprehension of a particular Shakespearean text.

Finally, Savino (2011) described how developing both mastery and comfort with expanding vocabulary could contribute to a sense of empowerment for students. Vocabulary activities have the potential to establish a foundation in conventions, demonstrate flexibility and adaptability, and lend themselves to careful planning and effectively meeting learning targets.

Activities involving vocabulary instruction were described as multifaceted and sufficient for inviting students into "active experiences with words" (p. 445). Savino (2011) asserted that effective, wide-ranging vocabulary instruction can develop all facets of student literacy, as they will be familiar not only with definitions, but with the context, origin, and "future potential" (p. 446) of words. According to the researcher, students must also become conscious of their own word choices, “aware of diction and learn to question their own word choice and the word choice of other authors” (p. 448). As such, the author contended that positive results would manifest themselves as a result of consistent exposure to new words.

To this end, Savino (2011) claimed that students should be made aware of this process through specific instructional strategies and play involving vocabulary; several activities in particular were highlighted. Word journals, vocabulary theater, palindrome exploration, word association with pictures, word identification and invention utilizing prefixes and suffixes, and discussion of Shakespeare’s influence on the language were presented as “monumental, multitudinous, and premeditated experience with words” (p. 451).

No data is presented on behalf of the rigor or effectiveness of any particular activity. They are all outlined in such a way that would be beneficial for instructors' review in the literature and for teacher-practitioner self-assessment, but there is no indication of which activities are most effective for which students. The connection of Savino's (2011) conclusions to instructional methods regarding Shakespeare are tangential, for the article does not explore how these strategies increase reading skills, comprehension, or engagements with or by means of a Shakespearean text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Casey (2019) analyzed the effects of digital resources on students generally with particular attention to how the detrimental outcomes thereof may present challenges for the comprehension of Shakespearean texts. The impacts of multitasking and implementation of digital reading devices are explored primarily in regard to their disadvantages and how they encourage habits that are not conducive to effective comprehension.

The ubiquity of digital resources presents instructors with the challenge of which devices, apps, and tools are appropriate to supplement or encompass the task of instruction. Casey (2019) drew attention to the research which illuminates the great extent to which students struggle with chronic distraction and how the digital resources instructors bring into the classroom may be covertly exacerbating the problem. Conceding that digital resources may be helpful for assessments requiring content creation, Casey (2019) suggested that they are less effective for encouraging comprehension of a complex text, stating "digital Shakespeare's work best when the students have a very firm understanding of the intricacies of the text—and that often requires pre-digital close reading and analysis" (p. 2). Casey (2019) asserted that the use of digital resources, especially digital copies of a text, must be implemented judiciously as digital resources have a tendency to play into the unique challenge that digitally-native students can experience, that of being "habitually distracted" (p. 3).

Casey (2019) reviewed the literature concerning the comprehension and reading skill level of Millenials and of Generation Z along with that which reveals the advantages and disadvantages of using digital texts in a classroom; anecdotal evidence from his classroom is also provided.

Casey (2019) first addressed the research-based conclusion that the process of multitasking is rarely effective at allowing students to succeed at accomplishing different tasks

simultaneously. Citing statistics that indicate the amount of time students spend interacting with devices, Casey (2019) highlighted that multitasking leads to poor performance, can distract others in the vicinity of the multitasker's device, and that students who are affected by these habits are likely to comprehend a text on a less complex level than students who interact first and foremost with a print text.

Next, Casey (2019) evaluated the impact of reading a complex text solely on a digital device like an e-reader as compared to a print text. Citing research that those who interact with the print text retain significantly more information than those who read exclusively from a digital text, Casey (2019) indicated that this would be disastrous for comprehending a Shakespearean text, as "reading less than a third of the text and failing to remember what one has read will make the play or poem utterly impenetrable" (p. 6). Casey (2019) also experimented with e-readers. A digital copy of a text was provided to one class and print copies to another. Casey concluded that even though students using the digital text seemed to retain more information initially, their comprehension of the text and assessment scores were consistently lower than those who read the print text exclusively, “more than 15 points lower on average” (p. 6).

Casey (2019) concluded that the digital text creates more opportunities for students to engage in a form of reading that is analogous to how they may absorb information on the internet, leading to the very habits exacerbated by the ubiquity of devices. Casey (2019) claimed that "the deterioration of critical reading and thinking skills is the most disturbing side-effect of digital reading" and "decoders of information may read a Shakespearean play or poem and be able to recite facts, but they will not be able to fully engage with the complexity of the text" (p. 8). Casey (2019) stressed the importance of clearly defined close-reading activities and highlighted how a digital text may impede this process by playing into the tendency for digital

devices to lead to distractions or the resources they may provide (e.g., definitions of terms available at a click) will disincentivize and undermine the value of such activities necessary for deep comprehension.

No demographic data is provided about any of Casey's (2019) classrooms in which the experiments mentioned were conducted. Based on anecdotal experience, Casey (2019) suggested that students should shut down all devices and remove them from the literature classroom, and if digital resources are implemented, they should be controlled by the instructor. The devices also should be used primarily to provide historical and cultural context to the plays or texts being discussed.

Adaptations can serve as a text when studying these works, and Sabeti (2017) aimed to illuminate the challenge undertaken by creators of content based on the works of Shakespeare or that adapt the works of Shakespeare. The study sought to clarify how those who adapt these texts into new or novel mediums make decisions about what is most important in a text, knowing their work will be consumed for both pedagogical and aesthetic purposes. Sabeti (2017) asked what factors might inform the choices made by those who create adaptations of Shakespeare's work and asserted that the more an author, or an adaptor, is able to build trust with the reader, the more effective, relevant, or transformative the work will become.

When Shakespeare is mentioned by name in sets of national standards for education, specifically in the English language arts, how much flexibility do instructors have in determining what counts as "Shakespeare" (p. 338)? The plays themselves have been produced in varied mediums that have potential applications to the classroom setting. This study focused on a particular adaptive form of Shakespeare's work: a series of graphic novels. As it focused on the creation of these adaptations, it showed how the content creators evaluated pedagogical

considerations against issues of aesthetics and viability for an audience (Sabeti, 2017). Sabeti (2017) argued that for an adaptation to be effective, the adapters must prioritize the level of trust their readers place in their work.

Sabeti (2017) conducted interviews with 10 content creators who helped develop these graphic novel adaptations, specifically in the Manga style, of Shakespeare. Sabeti (2017) began the interviews with prior knowledge of these creators' presence on the Internet and social media as well as a comprehensive understanding, through close reading, of their Shakespeare adaptations. The results of these interviews seem to be evidence of this particular team of adapters placing a high priority on not only engaging their readers through adapting the narrative in a novel and aesthetically-interesting way, but understanding that, the nature of the content they have adapted, the final destination for this adaptation would be the classroom. Therefore, the creators felt compelled to approach Shakespeare's words with the utmost respect, keeping them intact when included and issuing the perspective that comprehension of the plot itself is paramount in achieving pedagogic goals.

Sabeti (2017) outlined and revealed a trend. First, the adapters had a reference, or trust, for Shakespeare's original text; they selected certain passages on account of space limitations but never edited Shakespeare's words themselves. Since the annotations were constructed with a reference for Shakespeare's words, they described how that level of trust allowed the reader to establish a level of trust with the adapters, manifesting in the way they were able to employ some liberties with the aesthetics of the narrative. Sabeti (2017) reported the ways in which the participants had to balance the trustworthiness of Shakespeare's fictional world by making sure the fictional world in which they said Shakespeare's narratives are consistent with his words, events, and context.

This trust is uncovered throughout the interviews to be directed at Shakespeare the person. The content adapters had an understanding that Shakespeare's words have always been adapted from the page to another medium, most often the stage. This means there is a practical trust that is established between individuals when one adapts another's work. Sabeti (2017) claimed that the adapters displayed a tremendous amount of care for their task of adapting these works. The researcher concluded that when an adapter creates a level of trust with both the original content and the reader, an adaptation has the potential to serve as a text that is as effective for reaching pedagogic targets as the original text as such.

The lack of quantifiable data is a limitation. Sabeti (2017) presented this study as offering insight as to how adapters approach a task with pedagogical implications. However, there is no mention of how the adapters arrived at a sense of what is important in terms of achieving pedagogical targets other than what they perceived to be important about Shakespeare in a vague cultural sense. The study did not appear to reference all, or even most, of the interviews given to the author from the team of adapters. If they did have a common goal or understanding of what learning targets were being addressed by their projects, that information was not included.

Farris (2019) also presented a pedagogical perspective on the use of graphic novel adaptations of Shakespearean texts and their effectiveness in the classroom, outlining the way she taught a course that viewed the medium of the graphic novel as a form of performance. An instructor in "comic study theory", Farris (2019) claimed that comics and graphic novel adaptations of Shakespeare would provide an effective way for instructors to access performance-based approaches and meet learning targets with a wide range of students.

Farris (2019) emphasized the methods and strategies used for a university level course that "focused on the medium of graphic annotations as a means to understand performance" (p.

560). The course materials included three Shakespeare plays, taught primarily through their graphic novel adaptations, and a textbook on understanding the medium of comics. Farris (2019) sought to first "introduce students to graphic storytelling" and "critically analyze graphic novels" (p. 565). Drawing examples from how this particular medium uses analogous methods for creating meaning as film and staged productions may, Farris (2019) created a rationale for emphasizing this medium. Next, students engaged with understanding this medium as a type of performance and were tasked with creating their own adaptations in this format. No tables indicating collected comprehension data are present, and only one figure is included with a sample of student work. No demographic data was provided about the students who participated in the course.

In a similar way to how graphic novels were analyzed, Osborne (2002) explored the ways in which instructors may incorporate film clips into their teaching of a Shakespearean text. The focus was primarily centered on the ways in which instructors become de-facto film editors in the process of selecting clips of a Shakespearean work to present to a group of students. Editing is often understood, in film studies, to be the creation of meaning attained by the arrangement of particular scenes and shots. Instructors take on this role of editor when teaching a text supplemented by film clips as they choose which clips to include and which to leave out.

Osborne (2002) claimed that "film, even in fragments, always resists subordination to text by introducing cinematic structures of perception and meaning- production that can become the unacknowledged object" (p. 230). A film clip, with its meaning-making structures such as mise-en-scene, score, and editing, can draw a student's attention to itself beyond the words of the text. Film clips can be an effective tool in the classroom as long as instructors are judicious and sensitive to cultural implications in their selection. Osborne (2002) asserted that "the point is not

that this strategy is either good or bad, but academic clipping requires that we understand the ways in which excerpts function in our culture" (p. 228).

Several insights were offered for the implementation of effective strategies involving embedding film clips into an instructor's lesson plan or curriculum. Osborne (2002) theorized that instructors should approach the use of film clips with one eye toward learning targets, while fixing another on the methods employed by the film industry. "Just as the film industry has undoubtedly analyzed pedagogical practices both to understand the possible roles for film and to market them, so we must analyze uses of film in the context of commercial film practices and effects, including the ways in which we promote the Shakespeare films that in turn promote us" (p. 232). Since a film clip draws the attention of students not only toward the narrative or the text as such but may also highlight choices made by the director, editor, or actors that may serve to sway interpretation of the scene, instructors must be cognizant of the ways they can use the medium, and the choices made by an editor, to create an energized learning environment where they assert authority over the film clip, much as a voice-over in a trailer might do. Obsorne (2002) elaborated on this idea by claiming that "our professional voiceovers invoke the voiceover's interpretive authority remaining "safely" embodied. In effect, we are reworking a film technique, much theorized in terms of gender identification, one consequence of which is that the inquiry becomes also a "live" performance of the professor as multimedia event" (p. 231).

Ultimately, Osborne (2002) concluded that it is incumbent upon instructors to approach film clips with an understanding as to how they function independently of the source material, that "those performances will give students access to more than we intend" (p. 240). Instructors must address what both texts, the film and the play, say and how they interact with and reinforce

one another. The task before instructors is to develop a sense of film literacy if they plan to incorporate clips into their instruction of Shakespeare. These conclusions provide instructors with a pathway into teaching and developing in the arena of digital literacy. Osborne (2002) did not provide a way for instructors to develop that literacy further, and no data was provided as to the effectiveness of the incorporation of film clips.

In contrast to analyzing the way a work is adapted, Shamberg et al. (2009) sought to document two methods by which Shakespeare's texts are used as a springboard from which to develop students' digital literacy; this culminated in asking how performance-based projects can lead to greater digital literacy. Shamberg et al. (2009) asserted that the nature of Shakespeare's texts are inherently geared toward 'remix' and that each generation of literary critics and performers would view Shakespeare through a lens tinted by contemporary anxieties and trends. “When students integrate movies and songs from their lives with Shakespeare's words and worlds, they get to synthesize and create from rich sources of language, drama, and digital content - discovering, amplifying, and extending their voices" (p. 74). Therefore, allowing students to develop their skills in digital literacy (video and audio production in this case) is to continue the tradition in which Shakespeare has always been approached, and perhaps students will be able to credit their interactions with Shakespeare for their development in the realm of digital literacy. Shakespeare can be a "trojan horse" for "new literacies" (p. 77).

Shamberg et al. (2009) provided the reader with a view into the projects conducted by two specific classrooms. In one classroom, students were tasked with performing a scene from a Shakespeare play, recording it, and splicing together their performances with clips from popular movies. This was done with the intention of creating a unique tone and setting for their scene with intentional thematic connections in their choices of staging and of selected clips. The other

classroom engaged in similar projects in the domain of audio recording, creating a dramatic sized audio reading of a scene from a Shakespeare play which utilized not only their own voices and understanding of the play but also sound effects and music.

Shamberg et al. (2009) outlined the benefits of the project by explaining how students are engaging, and building their digital literacy, through the methods of participatory culture and of "remix" (p. 76). The claim was that if students are given the objective of creating a product with an audience in mind, it would help them understand they are participants in a literary tradition dating back to Shakespeare's time. Shamberg et al. (2009) claimed that this could be empowering and liberating for the choices students make in these projects. "Remix" comes into play when the original text meets and is synthesized with selections from other texts or concepts (such as sound effects). Both of these methods, assert Shamberg et al. (2009), are sufficient for developing both digital and Shakespearean literacy.

The results from the classrooms in which these projects were implemented are presented positively, as though students' understanding of the text as well as their ability to communicate this comprehension using digital tools were all advanced in measurable ways. Specific, anecdotal examples are provided as to the particular insights certain students had when engaging in the process, specifically in the realm of text-to-text connections.

However, there is a lack of quantifiable data. For one, no control group is provided. Two, no insight is provided as to how this group of students developed in their ability to make text-to-text connections or to wield digital tools compared to a control group;. It is also unclear whether the focus of the project is developing students' literacy in the realm of digital tools through Shakespeare or vice versa.

In contrast to the idea of “re-mixing”, Dyches (2017) investigated, through extended observation of one instructor’s approach to teaching a high school British literature course, how the demographics of the canon in the curriculum may fail to reflect the demographics of particular classrooms, specifically those with a majority of non-white participants. Dyches (2017) noted that this could create a "cultural mismatch" (p. 301) since students from marginalized backgrounds lack explicit or obvious avenues in which they may see their own experiences reflected in British literature. Therefore, the researcher asserts that curricula with a heavy emphasis on white voices put these students at a disadvantage.

British literature, and Shakespeare in particular, seem to be entrenched in high school curricula to such a degree that upending the written standards, such as Common Core, could easily be viewed as impractical. Yet Dyches (2017) explored, through a case study project, a way to work within these expectations, specifically how teachers can be best positioned to deliver "culturally responsive British literature instruction" (p. 303).

Dyches (2017) presented the theoretical frameworks of Critical Race Theory and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy as methods for addressing the inequities that arise from the instruction of the British literature canon. These perspectives highlight the centrality of "Whiteness" in typical high school curricula and reframe the task of instruction as development of "student's sociopolitical consciousness of the issues and matters of salience to their lives" (p. 305). In these frameworks, The task of instruction is also geared toward taking action against social inequity.

The study took place at Middleton High School, in the southeastern United States, in the classroom of "Sam" (a pseudonym). It followed three British literature courses, two of which had honors level designations. In total, 67 students were observed for the study of which the vast

majority identified as Black. Dyches (2017) observed Sam's classroom over the course of 18 weeks. The methods employed included extensive note taking, structured and semi-structured interviews with the instructor, and the coding of all data within the Multicultural Teacher Capacity Scale.

The findings were outlined in terms of the constraints experienced by Sam in his instruction of a British literature curriculum as well as the ways in which he was able to incorporate approaches, lessons, and methods reinforced by the aforementioned theoretical frameworks. Dyches (2017) found that while Sam made attempts to connect his teaching to discussions of "Whiteness" and privilege, and in some cases moved towards establishing more awareness of cultural issues of equity with his students, he did not achieve a learning target “that positions students to deconstruct the curriculum they engaged" (p. 313). Part of Sam's reticence to fully accomplish this goal related to the constraints of time and the perception that punitive backlash may have followed the implementation of certain methods or communication of certain ideas.

Dyches (2017) outlined Sam's success in "restorying of canonical curriculum" (p. 318) by describing several significant lesson plans and activities implemented in his classroom that contextualized the themes and ideas of canonical British texts within the current social political landscape. Sam, an instructor who seemed to embrace the theoretical frameworks discussed earlier, "intentionally worked to thematically link his canonical literature to contemporary issues-ones that matter to students allowed them to share their experiential knowledge and deeply shaped their lives" (p. 317). Dyches (2017) concluded that the task before instructors who hoped to be culturally responsive is to "strategically subvert" (p. 321) the required curriculum by

implementing methods that are responsive to the demographics and subsequent experiences of the students in the classroom.

Dyches (2017) did not explicitly discuss whether or not Shakespeare himself is a particular contributor to the "whiteness" of the British literature curriculum. There is no exploration here of how marginalized voices are represented in Shakespeare's work. The specific data relating to Sam's instructional practices across the Multicultural Teacher Capacity Scale are missing, so there is no clear understanding of how this instructor is to be assessed along the criteria brought to bear by the researcher.

On the other hand, Lucas and Radia (2017) presented an analysis of two extracurricular projects that supported the practical aims and goals of an education rooted in the humanities. One of these projects was an after school Shakespeare program and added students in younger grades but was made available for more experienced students to participate in as mentors; this project will be the focus of this article review since, unlike the other project the article dealt with, it deals directly with Shakespearean texts.

Comprehensive training in the humanities is often criticized, according to Lucas and Radia (2017), as it fails to provide students with practical, marketable, monetizable skills. However, one argument for the humanities has been the way it provides pathways to creative methods of learning and the development of creative projects. Lucas and Radia (2017) claimed that "the emphasis on transforming theory into practical and creative knowledge has been at the heart of the humanities' ethos since the Greeks" (p. 130). The projects explored here the ways in which theoretical, abstract ideas, like a text, can be used to develop skills in the practical sense.

Through a connection with their community, creating a real product meeting a need for real people, and participating in lessons and activities that move students from passive to active

agents in the creation of knowledge, the study of the humanities proves itself not only foundational, but it will "stand to gain currency in the contemporary consumer economy if they embrace a more hands-on, creative, and service-driven approach to learning" (p. 131).

The program was a voluntary, six week-long drama program that served students seven to twelve years-old. It was run by university students and culminated in a 25-30 minute production. Lucas and Radia (2017) recounted that the program began by asking students to perform an analysis of the text in order to edit it for appropriate length and narrative efficiency. This collaborative process involved the likes of cutting scenes, adding a narrator, and/or creating other bridges between different parts of the text. Students then worked through a set of scheduled workshops that dealt with all aspects of the project, encouraging "the children to find fun in reading and rehearsing" (p. 136).

The skills fostered in these programs were done so collaboratively with a practical application that produced a product (a Shakespeare play). Lucas and Radia (2017) highlighted that skills developed in the humanities, "from research and editing to dramaturgy and time management," were encouraged to flourish in this program both for the student participants and the student volunteers. The production of the play and the success of the program were proof that practical skills can be fostered in a humanities-focused environment. Lucas and Radia (2017) concluded that “they are in charge of developing and executing the process of creative production, and through their work, students sharpen the problem-solving, leadership, and communication skills that most employers are looking for" (p. 137).

The program was voluntary, so the applications for an in-school, classroom setting are inconclusive. There is also neither any demographic data provided nor any indication of whether

or not these programs helped increase students' engagement or comprehension of Shakespearean texts.

CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This literature review includes 30 studies and articles that explored various methods that can be incorporated in the instruction of a Shakespearean text. These are divided into the following Common Core English/Language Arts Reading Anchor Standards categories: Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas. This set of standards mentions Shakespeare by name and is consequently an appropriate arena into which the methods explored may be categorized. Overall, the trends that emerged suggest that the implementation of performance-based pedagogy and close reading working in tandem will help instructors meet the goals outlined in each of the aforementioned standard categories.

Key Ideas and Details

The Key Ideas and Details category deals with direct textual analysis for the sake of understanding a text and its major themes in a more complex way. The studies included in this category highlight methods and activities that are concerned with a student's ability to articulate what a Shakespearean text says both explicitly and implicitly. This category includes standards 9-10.1, 9-10.2, and 9-10.3, which are articulated as follows by the Common Core State Standards Initiative (2021):

> 9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text;
>
> 9-10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text;
>
> 9-10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and

advance the plot or develop the theme.

A review of these methods reveals a focus on performance-based pedagogy. A majority of the studies explored methods that direct students toward active participation in a performance-based activity influenced by a Shakespearean text (Bloom, 2015; Favila, 2015; Felske, 2005; O'Brien, 1993; Rocklin, 1990, 1995; Schupak, 2018, Smith, 2014). These studies claimed that interaction with Shakespearean texts is most effective for understanding key ideas when attention is given to their "tripartite" nature (Schupak, 2018). These studies also elaborated on the understanding that the very notion of a theme or main idea of a text may be transformed by the addition of elements that affect the nature of a performance. For example, Favila (2015) asserted that students must see from the perspective of the actor on stage in order to fully comprehend the details and ideas in a text, and Rocklin (1990, 1995) invited students to become "re-composers" (p. 149) or engage in "reinventing" (p. 135) the text through performance-based activities. Bloom (2015) expounded on the potential for video games to serve as an avenue for the creation of a performance, and Smith (2014) called attention to the need to closely read a text in order to understand how to construct a performance. Felske (2005) highlighted specific performance-based activities that allowed students to make more authentic connections and become more engaged. In contrast, Shoemaker (2018) contended that film adaptations proved to be a more effective method for comprehension as well as one that students found to be more engaging. Hawkes and Thomas (2018) focused on the effectiveness of online learning compared with direct lecture and concluded that an understanding of the main ideas of a Shakespearean text is, at the very least, best gained through interactive, communal activities. The scholarly literature implied that performance-based activities, ones in which students approach the text as a script where meaning may be developed through

participation and analysis of the means of the text's transmission (e.g., staging, acting, props), are to be implemented by instructors in secondary classrooms. These methods will help instructors meet the goals set out by the Key Ideas and Details category in the Common Core English/Language Arts Reading Anchor Standards.

Craft and Structure

The Craft and Structure category is chiefly concerned with the author's production of meaning and the choice of words that contribute to this purpose. This includes the meanings and functions of words, cultural context, and implementation of literary devices. This category includes standards 9-10.4, 9-10.5, and 9-10.6 which are articulated as follows by the Common Core State Standards Initiative (2021):

> 9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone);
>
> 9-10.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise;
>
> 9-10.6 Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature

In contrast to the number of performance-based strategies discussed in Key Ideas and Details, most studies in this category promote activities centered around close-reading of a Shakespearean or Shakespeare-adjacent text (Balinska-Ourdeva et al., 2014; Burton, 2019; Desmet, 2016; Goodman, 2011; Grady, 2017; Kolloff & Rahimzedah, 2004; Lange, 2015;

Porter, 2009; Winston, 2013). The methods were wide-ranging and best illustrated by the diversity of tools and philosophies employed by the instructors or researchers. Lange (2015) documented a strategy in which students connected visuals to Shakespeare's imagery and created video projects to present the two simultaneously. This is consistent with Winston's (2013) method that approached the "aesthetics" of language rather than the direct meaning and how Grady (2017) described a method in which students were encouraged to incorporate non-standard vernacular to assist in their interpretations of Shakespeare's choice of words. This coincided with the focus on ELL students highlighted by Porter (2009) as the studies were concerned with developing a greater sense of comfort and confidence for students as they approached unfamiliar linguistic territory.

Several studies explored sociological phenomena and their intersection with Shakespearean texts. Goodman (2011) described a method that revealed the nature of the functional shift in Shakespeare's work and drew attention to that same linguistic practice in contemporary settings. Burton (2019) highlighted a method that embraced "culturally sustaining pedagogy" in the interpretation of language in a Shakespearean text which allowed students to make contextual connections to the words. Balinska-Ourdeva et al. (2014) and Kolloff and Ramizedah (2004) illustrated how methods that employ close reading could be used to evaluate the text and author on a sociological level whether through the incorporation of historical context or the connections to student experiences. Kolloff and Ramizedah (2004), in particular, illustrated how the cultural context aspect of this category's goals could transition from an evaluation of the text to an evaluation of the author and their effectiveness in the educational setting. Desmet (2016) described the trend evident in this category most explicitly; simply, a close reading of a Shakespearean text required a tool or angle that provided students

with an entry point or guide for their study of the words on the page. Here, Desmet (2016) provided an evaluation of different programs and applications that can be distributed to students to help them interact with the words of a text more effectively as well as provide the needed cultural, historical, and linguistic context. The most effective tools were those that had means by which students could access film versions of performances meant to contextualize the words. This is consistent with the method described by Spangler (2009) in which instructors were encouraged to view the performance of the text as its primary form; whereas, the words on the page are one piece of the greater whole. Oska et al. (2010) illustrated that a parallel text may be an effective tool for close-reading and comprehension of the language, and that this tool is most effective in the settings in which students are developing their reading skills. However, the use of a parallel text was actually counterproductive for those who had developed a high level of comfort with Shakespeare's language. Additionally, Savino (2011) demonstrated the conclusions that can be drawn in this category, approaches to understanding the meanings, and functions of words, cultural context, and implementation of literary devices, must be wide-ranging in terms of methods and tools implemented; Also, these methods may not ultimately be exclusive to Shakespearean texts. To meet the goals set out by the Craft and Structure category in the Common Core English/Language Arts Reading Anchor Standards, the scholarly literature implied that close-reading activities that incorporate a wide range of tools ought to be implemented by instructors in secondary classrooms.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

The Integration of Knowledge and Ideas category concerns the ways in which texts interact with one another and how an understanding of certain texts can reinforce and strengthen comprehension of other texts across diverse mediums. This category includes

standards 9-10.7 and 9-10.9 which are articulated as follows by the Common Core State Standards Initiative (2021):

> 9-10.7 Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts" and Breughel's Landscape with the Fall of Icarus);
>
> 9-10.9 Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare). (p. 52)

Unlike the previous two, this category does not highlight one method in a significant proportion over others. Instead, there is a diversity of strategies and rationales for helping students develop literacy across mediums through the study of a Shakespearean text. Sabeti (2017) and Farris (2019) highlighted the use of graphic novels as an effective form of adaptation, and as Farris (2019) claimed, performance. These studies allowed students to develop literacy with a new medium. Casey (2019) highlighted the need for close reading before new digital mediums and tools are introduced; however, Shamberg et al. (2009) spoke to the effectiveness of methods that allow students to express their digital literacy. The former study dealt with finding the most effective avenue for close reading and claimed that digital resources may impede effectiveness, and the latter illustrated how digital literacy may be channeled to produce a performance-based assessment. Even digital literacy, as asserted by Osborne (2002), must have capable instructors who illustrate the purpose of the tools incorporated, provide a "voiceover" for the implementation of film clips in the direct instruction of Shakespearean texts and closely read the performance for the classroom. Dyches (2017) discussed culturally responsive pedagogy which brings to the forefront the idea of

"restorying;" this places Shakespeare in the context of modern political and cultural conversations and draws a connection between observing works in different mediums and observing them across time. Ultimately, the Integration of Knowledge and Ideas category in the Common Core English/Language Arts Reading Anchor Standards suggests that diverse methods can be incorporated to understand how texts reinforce one another and help students develop various competencies. Finally, Lucas and Radia (2017) encapsulate the findings of this thesis project; they highlighted close reading as an essential part of the process for producing a performance-based assessment.

Overall Trends

The trend that has emerged from this literature review is that performance-based pedagogy and close reading, when implemented as part of a comprehensive strategy while studying a text, will produce the most effective results for achieving the goals in the Common Core English/Language Arts Reading Anchor Standards through the use of Shakespearean texts. Of the studies reviewed, performance-based pedagogy is recommended by seven studies in which the goal involves understanding the story and its themes. Close reading is recommended by 11 studies when the goal involves decoding and interpreting Shakespeare's choice of words. Notably, one should not be promoted at the expense of the other; they must be implemented together and harmoniously for effective results in meeting learning targets.

Professional Application

Lucas and Radia (2017) cast a vision for instructors attempting to achieve the Common Core English/Language Arts Reading Anchor Standards through Shakespearean texts. They illustrated how performance-based pedagogy and close reading should be implemented in tandem to achieve learning targets in perhaps the most comprehensive way possible. Lucas and

Radia (2017) summarized their observation of the Shakespeare-After-School program as follows: "Through their participation in small-time Shakespeare, from dramaturgical work with text and script to the process of rehearsal and the culminating performance, students put their learning to practice and exemplify judgment, organization, and leadership" (p. 136). The educational literature supports the use of both performance-based pedagogy and close reading to achieve a complex understanding of the text, whether it be the story or the words, and instructors should take this into consideration when planning activities that reinforce an understanding of the text.

When instructors set out to meet goals concerning skills in textual analysis (e.g., understanding the main idea, understanding character motivation, drawing conclusions and inferences), the research supports the use of performance-based pedagogy which Schupak (2018) defined as "an approach that treats these works as scripts to be performed, rather than texts to be read" (p. 6). Instructors should be conscious of how the analysis of a script must operate differently from that of a novel or short story. Schupak (2018) addressed this by providing examples of what specific methods could look like, including the production of a full play with a cast and crew of students, improvisation, writing and performing omitted scenes from a play, and the implementation of film clips. However, Schupak (2018) stated that performance-based pedagogy is best defined as "a sensibility, an attitude toward the text rather than a literal enactment of these dramas" (p. 7). Instructors should adopt this mentality in the interest of knowing how to best approach and present this particular type of text as there are more elements to consider in terms of how a story will unfold or what it means thematically than can be assessed simply by reading it as if it were a novel.

In my instruction of *Much Ado About Nothing*, Claudio's intentions for marrying Hero are a rich ground upon which to anchor discussions about power and gender dynamics as well as

an analysis of who or what is at fault for the abuse Hero suffers throughout the text. Claudio asks Don Pedro in Act I, Scene I "Hath Leonato any son, my lord" (Shakespeare, 1623/2018, 1.1.288). The text itself, if read without attention given to the choices an actor or director might make, does not offer a window into his true intentions. Is this an innocent attempt to gather necessary information, or is he factoring in his chances to inherit Leonato's wealth as part of whether or not he will pursue marriage with Hero? A review of the way this scene is played and the choices made by the actor portraying Claudio will provide a sense of clarity to answering this question, and students, if given the chance to perform this part, will be empowered to rationalize their choices about Claudio's true intentions. Schupak (2018) emphasized this idea by saying, "When students take ownership of their learning, then they are motivated to do more and go further" (p. 166). Performance-based pedagogy will help students not only understand but develop a sense of ownership over the characters, the story, and their interpretations thereof.

When the goals consist of decoding the meaning and choice of the author's words and the weight they carry in diverse contexts, the research supports the use of close reading activities. Lange et al. (2015) articulated a definition for close reading as slowing down the act of reading for the intended purpose of deciphering meaning from the text. The researchers emphasized that "Shakespeare's work in particular requires a slower approach, several re-readings, because his text is so rich in word plays, double meanings, and seeming contradictions" (p. 44). Lange et al. (2015) suggested that this is done best when a specific portion of the text is not only read, but paraphrased by students; this allows students to look closely at the language and develop a deeper understanding of each word, literary device, and authorial intention. The educational literature recommended that instructors embrace this process of "slowing down" (p. 44) to develop a more comprehensive sense of meaning in individual lines of a Shakespearean text.

Instructors should determine which goals they would like to achieve through their implementation of a particular Shakespearean text and utilize this process to highlight how a certain choice by the author is illustrated in one particular section of the text rather than simply highlighting how there may be a pattern of this same device or allusion throughout a text.

As an instructor, I spend a great deal of time with my ninth-grade English students pursuing these goals through the instruction of *Julius Caesar.* These findings regarding close reading have highlighted and emphasized an implicit understanding I had about the usefulness of these texts that I now intend to display in my choice of activities more consciously. The speeches of Brutus, Caesar, and Antony are an excellent opportunity to draw attention to the craft of an author and the way an argument can be structured. I have seen these as valuable for students who may be considering a move into AP English classes in the future as they are excellent examples of rhetoric. This literature review has shown how an intentional focus on the connotative, figurative, and contextual elements of the well-known speeches in the play could be productive for meeting goals that concern decoding and deciphering Shakespeare's choice of words. For example, when Antony emphasizes over and over again that Brutus is an "honorable" man before the crowd assembled to witness Caesar's corpse, a close read of the speech will render this repetition unavoidable and lead to an opportunity to further define a term like "honorable." (Shakespeare, 1623/2011, 3.2.91, 96, 103, 108, 136, 163). Students will have a chance to discuss what that term might have meant in the context of the ancients, in Elizabethan England, and in contemporary times. They will also be able to closely examine how the use of repetition here is a literary device that will deepen an understanding of not only what is happening in the story as such but also how the intended dynamic between speaker and audience should be interpreted.

Limitations of the Research

Within each category of standards and the subsequent application of methods, there was a wide range of age groups, socio-economic backgrounds, and demographics from the United States and Canada. Such a variance may be interpreted as a confirmation of the trends noted in terms of which methods are effective in meeting which goals. However, such a demographic variance may have affected the results of the studies and methods applied. For instance, Balinska-Ourdeva (2014) highlighted the responses and experiences of only eight students who participated in a voluntary study. Though there may be insight to be gained from their feedback, such a small number of participants cannot provide a thorough understanding about the effectiveness of a method over time and in diverse classrooms.

There was also significant variety across the activities that could be categorized into each type of method. For instance, the performance-based pedagogy activities highlighted by the studies in this review included, but were not limited to, the filming and editing of Shakespeare scenes as discussed by Shamberg et al. (2009), individual reflection on the perspective of an actor as highlighted by Favila (2015), and the use of digital applications to create virtual performances such as the video games promoted by Bloom (2015).

The most significant limitation encountered when evaluating which methods seemed to be the most effective across a wide range of the educational literature was the lack of quantifiable data throughout a majority of the studies. Of the 30 studies included, eight were Action Research Projects, 10 were Case Study Projects, and seven were Grounded Theory papers. This left only five that could be classified as Qualitative Studies that approached a significant level of academic rigor.

Of the Action Research Projects, each one lacked sufficient data to indicate that the

effectiveness of the methods outlined would be replicable across demographics and for the age groups specified by the Common Core Standards highlighted in this literature review. Rather than outlining the data specifically, Lange (2015) relied on excerpts from the assignments and anecdotal evidence to prove the effectiveness and novelty of the method. Kolloff and Rahimzadeh (2004) did not include specific demographic data and did not indicate whether the method produced any measurable results in meeting goals highlighted by the standards. The project highlighted by Steelman (2015) took place in one classroom, and full demographic data that would be required to draw comprehensive conclusions about the effectiveness of the method was not provided. The lack of any sort of control group also created difficulty in determining how this method would compare to others or how it would blend effectively with appropriate activities incorporating various strategies. To that end, it was unclear what other strategies for working through the text itself were implemented by the instructor. Smith (2014) introduced a project by referencing the ways in which professional writers will engage with the knowledge transformation model, but there was no clear pathway for students to embrace this model for themselves in their individual demonstrations of reading and writing skills. It is seemingly implied that the final product itself, as observed, was evidence of meeting these goals. The data gathered by Shoemaker (2013) concerns one group of students from one school. Shoemaker (2013) also mentioned that time constraints kept him from exploring the methods as thoroughly as may have been necessary to achieve more comprehensive conclusions. Further clarity is needed on how different demographics may affect the implementation of the kinds of activities highlighted by Schupak (2018). Though Schupak (2018) claimed that the methods were implemented and observed when conducted among diverse groups, collection of more specific data is needed to reinforce the validity of these methods. As a result of the findings, Favila

(2015) included appendices that give instructors suggested activities to implement. However, the lack of specificity on the scope and breadth of these activities kept them from attaining any status as methods reinforced by rigorous, scholarly evidence. Spangler (2009) did not provide data to speak to the effectiveness of the method of recontextualizing which incarnation of the text should be considered the primary text. It was not made clear how advantageous this mindset shift may be for students, nor was it evident in which arenas these results may manifest.

Within the Case Study Projects addressed in this review, there is a lack of sufficient, quantifiable data which could indicate the effectiveness of the methods. Grady (2017) demonstrated how discussions concerning Shakespeare's language can be made more dynamic when instructors "enable various points of access" (p. 537) but the anecdotes provided came from just one group of students in one classroom. Grady's (2017) method requires active student buy-in for these results to be replicated, so gathering rigorous data in regard to this method is complicated by the social and cultural factors that affect the implementation and results of these ideas. As no two classrooms are exactly the same, Grady's (2017) methods for decoding Shakespeare's words may have had different results with different groups of students. Felske (2005) did not include specific data that indicated measurable growth in a student's ability to understand or comprehend the plot structure or ideas of a Shakespearean text, and the evidence exhibited from the method was only included when it was confirmation of the original hypothesis. Comprehensive sets of data in both of these aspects could have reinforced the effectiveness of the anecdotes shared concerning these particular activities. Farris (2019) outlined a rationale and justification for a course which revolved around the use of graphic novels as a type of manifested performance of a Shakespearean text. However, only anecdotal evidence and theoretical assertions are provided to indicate the soundness of the methods and

goals of the course. Farris made the following claims: “For visual learners, seeing Shakespeare's words visualized can be essential in understanding the play. In the same way, by providing the text in multiple forms, verbal learners were not forced to learn in a way that limited their grasp of the material” (p. 571). However, neither was specific data from these subsets of learners and their development in these skills provided, nor were any direct quotes from students included. As well, no demographic data is provided about the students who took the course. Though Burton (2019) included student reflections, an important piece of demographic information, and detailed descriptions of the activities, no data was provided to indicate measurable results in students’ abilities to more effectively interpret a Shakespearean text. The student quotes provide a positive perspective on the method, but there was not enough rigor in the data collection to assume it to be replicable in different classrooms. The small sample size that illustrated the method highlighted by Rocklin (1990), as well as a lack of demographic data, indicated that there was no particular conclusion to be drawn about this particular activity as it concerns the wider population of students tasked with studying Shakespeare. Casey (2019) provided data indicating how students interact with print text as opposed to digital texts and drew conclusions as to what may be the most effective methods for their implementation. The data regarding the observed group of students, however, is anecdotal and seems to be merely an extension of what the research already claims as opposed to observable results. Shamberg et al (2009) did not provide quantifiable data nor insight as to how a group of students developed their ability to make text-to-text connections or to wield digital tools compared to a control group. Dyches (2017) admitted to a participatory role in the classroom that participated in the study as opposed to a strictly observational role. "Frequently, I piped up to offer insights in your particular conversation, such as when I explain the notion of meritocracy when the students read an article

on university health and mission discrimination as a precursor reactivity to unpacking the social hierarchy of feudalism" (p. 307). There is no exploration present as to how this may have affected the outcome or conclusion of the study. This is an external factor that would affect the missing data indicating whether students were able to ascertain a better understanding of a Shakespearean text and to develop reading and writing skills as a result. Despite the fact that Porter's (2009) observations were gathered over the course of several years, no data was provided to indicate whether ELL students consistently move into new categories of reading comprehension as a result of approaching Shakespearean texts and participating in the highlighted activities.. Even Lucas and Radia's (2017) observations can be called into question as participation in the Shakespeare after School program was voluntary, and no data was collected to indicate whether these methods and strategies used to produce a Shakespeare play had any measurable result on a student's ability to integrate the ideas of the play into their reading or writing skills.

Of the Grounded Theory papers, none provided sufficient data to decisively conclude that the theories generated can be applied to the practice of instruction or attempts to meet the goals outlined in the Common Core English/Language Arts Reading Anchor Standards. Rocklin (1995) mentioned that these strategies had been implemented in classrooms under his instruction but reached conclusions without having offered data-based insight as to how these strategies derived from effective performance interactions in the classroom. The study also did not provide specific insights into effective methods specifically involving the instruction of Shakespearean texts. In the pursuit of exclusive insights into what is effective for teaching these required materials, Rocklin (1995) did not approach any specific applications beyond the general. Bloom (2015) did not include specific data that indicated the usefulness of the games in terms of

meeting educational goals; it is assumed that their novel method of embodying performance-based pedagogy is evidence for their effectiveness. Bloom (2015) admitted that it is an "open question" (p. 122) as to whether these intriguing games will fulfill the same role as traditional performance-based pedagogy and prove effective in meeting learning targets. O'Brien (1993) put forth a theoretical framework for guiding principles that should illuminate the implementation of performance-based pedagogy. However, there is no clear proof of concept, there is no data present to reinforce anecdotes, and there is no indication that the results experienced by those who interact closely with the Folger Shakespeare Library can be replicated across diverse and varied classrooms with diverse and varied demographics. Osborne (2002) offered a theoretical framework for how instructors should view and approach the implementation of film clips in the context of direct instruction, but there is no data provided to indicate that students will gain a greater understanding of how a Shakespearean text operates and creates meaning when presented in different mediums. Goodman (2011) considered the idea of the functional shift and how highlighting the aesthetics of language would give students another pathway into understanding more clearly the words on the page of a Shakespearean text, but there were no results regarding any of the implied methods. Desmet (2016) discussed the implementation of extra-textual applications, defining them as "tools available for tackling the rigors of Shakespearean text" (p. 224). They may provide increased accessibility for all students, make the connection between different aspects of the text more clear, highlight the usefulness of aural resources for students in individual settings, and give instructors a chance to teach new digital skills. However, the apps were not deployed in any way to analyze their effectiveness with a group of students against a control group.

As for Savino (2011), this study appeared among the search results as part of the

educational literature that concerns itself with meeting learning targets through the instruction of Shakespearean texts. However, the methods presented by Savino (2011) were only tangentially related to Shakespeare and could be applied to the use of other types of texts in a English Language Arts curriculum.

Of the remaining studies, data was more readily available. This creates a clearer picture for instructors to observe the methods implemented and draw conclusions for their own classroom practices. Winston (2013) highlighted that student enthusiasm rose in conjunction with improvements in their understanding of Shakespeare's use of the English language. Balinska-Ourdeva et al (2014), Hawkes and Thomas (2018), and Sabeti (2017) all made use of formal interviews or feedback when conducting their observations and developing their results on the effectiveness of methods. Oska et al. (2010) made use of different groups of participants when assessing the effectiveness of explanatory notes for students studying Shakespearean texts, and these results shed light on the usefulness of this tool and method regarding a student's continual mastery of Shakespearean language.

Implications for Future Research

Though trends are observable in the educational literature regarding which methods may be most effective for achieving certain learning targets through the teaching of a Shakespearean text, few studies encountered in this review met a standard of rigorous data analysis. This standard of rigor and analysis could be defined as one that instructors could observe and assume implementation of the methods would produce similar, positive results in different classrooms. This standard should be considered necessary for instructors to draw more comprehensive conclusions about the methods they should implement.

One way that studies in the future could achieve a standard such as the one previously

mentioned would be to conduct controlled studies that account for externalizing factors. The analysis of the limitations previously mentioned revealed that many studies did not account for what would happen in a control group of students, or what the results would be with a slightly modified version of the method or a different method. Most of the observations of the researchers concern a small group of students who interacted with a specific method independently. On account of this trend, the conclusions thereof cannot be generalized with regard to externalizing factors. Though demographics and numbers of participants were occasionally included, control groups should be included to give the observer of the study a sense of what the implementation of certain methods would look like across demographics and group sizes.

Several studies (Balinska-Ourdeva et al., 2014; Dyches, 2017) discussed the ways in which Shakespeare could be reinterpreted or reconsidered as a part of the framework of the English Language Arts curriculum. However, a question of whether or not to study Shakespeare is irrelevant if instructors are following or influenced by the Common Core English/Language Arts Reading Anchor Standards. Standard 9-10.9 highlights a pathway for achieving the goal of understanding ideas and themes across mediums "how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare" (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2021). If the question of whether or not Shakespearean texts are to be used in the classroom monopolizes space in the discussion and corresponding research regarding the most effective methods for meeting learning targets, it is unclear how or if learning targets such as key ideas, details, word choice and context, and the scaffolding of ideas between and across mediums will be met at all. If an instructor accesses the research intent on finding methods that could help enhance the instruction of a Shakespearean text and finds that a significant portion of

the research literature is devoted to the question of whether or not Shakespearean texts should be implemented, the instructor will not discover anything useful for their practice if the Shakespearean text is already part of their syllabus. Not all instructors may be at their leisure to investigate whether a text should be subject to a deconstruction or whether the students in their charge would benefit most from diverting their attention to other educational goals. At that point, it is also reasonable to consider whether a deconstructive mindset towards the use of Shakespearean texts in a classroom setting meets different learning goals than the ones outlined in this project. Clear delineations need to be set up between methods that seek to use Shakespearean texts or seek to question their effectiveness, as it is reasonable to assume these goals would seek to achieve different ends.

These studies can be heartening in the sense that there were none encountered in this review that documented the implementation of a method that proved to be entirely ineffective or counterproductive to the achievement of the highlighted learning targets. Anecdotes, however, cannot be replicated in different classrooms. As an instructor, I look at the findings and claims made by these studies and find myself curious to implement certain strategies. Yet the implementation of these methods in my classroom will look quite different from the instructors observed and highlighted in this review as the demographic data will vary between educational environments. Without an understanding that the educational literature regarding the use of Shakespearean texts lacks a sufficient amount of rigorous data and controlled studies, implementing these methods and achieving different results could be disorienting for instructors. Though the educational literature shows trends and patterns as to which methods are most effective for which goals, the quality and depth of the research makes it unclear whether those methods, as described, would produce similar results in any given 9th or 10th grade classroom in

which students may be introduced to Shakespeare at the same time. Therefore, the educational research community must prioritize the streamlining of which standards and goals Shakespearean texts are most useful for addressing and meeting. This could take place in accordance with established standards and their corresponding mandates, but a common understanding of what goals are typically attained in the instruction of these texts may emerge within the community of instructors utilizing them. A competent instructor can use a Shakespearean text to meet a variety of goals, but a further understanding as to why a Shakespearean text is useful for achieving specific learning targets will have positive reverberations throughout the research community and classroom instructors. The overall conversation could move from simply how to implement a Shakespearean text into a curriculum by adding a measurable "why," a strong justification as to why Shakespeare has been and remains an institution. Thorough studies must be conducted where methods are implemented with certain groups, with relevant demographic data provided, and the results must be compared with a control group implementing a diverging method. These results must be promoted to instructors and delineated from more theoretical approaches. Instructors should be able to access the educational literature and gain a sense of confidence that a promoted method will yield results similar to that of the study when appropriately implemented in their own classrooms.

Conclusion

The purpose and primary question of this thesis project was to identify trends in the educational literature that revealed effective methods for achieving learning targets using a Shakespearean text. The Common Core English Language Arts Standards for Reading & Literature in Grades 9-10 provided a framework for the goals these methods could achieve for 9th and 10th grade students and provided a categorization method for the studies in this literature

review.

Overall, the trends that emerged suggested a two-pronged approach to meet these standards through the implementation of Shakespearean texts. When the goal involves understanding and analyzing story structure and main ideas, performance-based pedagogy is an effective method for achieving these goals. Close reading is effective when the goal revolves around deepening an understanding and mastery of the complexities of the English language.

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