

THEATRE ARTS:
A CORE CONTENT AREA IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

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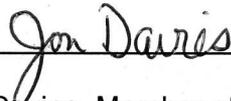
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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jon Davies". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a solid horizontal line.

Jon Davies, Member of the Faculty

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I wish to first thank Jon Davies for his continual support and guidance on this project. I also would like to express my gratitude to my cohort peers, especially Vida Long and Tracy McFarland, for their friendship, endless laughs, and for keeping me grounded.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to determine whether or not the theatre arts should be part of the core curriculum within secondary education. The primary rationale behind choosing this question was that throughout my educational experience in theatre, I have gained a deep love and personal connection with the dramatic arts. I was curious as to whether or not my belief about my own education in drama could be validated by research. I also intend to utilize the relevant findings from this paper to inform my practice when I am an educator of the theatre arts. I explore two historical political events (the New Deal and the creation of the National Endowment for the Arts), as well as how they had significant impact on the role of art within the public school. Of the three studies examined in regards to drama and social development, the findings indicate that the use of drama as a pedagogical strategy does in fact aid student social development. Drama-based instruction was also utilized in conjunction with other academic domains, and each of the studies reviewed in the academic development section found that the use of those strategies enhanced the participants' engagement, knowledge or skill in that particular discipline. There also appears to be many avenues through which educators expand their students' cognition, and according to the research, dramatic pedagogy seems to be one effective avenue that can be utilized in many unique ways. In the final section, pedagogical strategies, findings indicate that there are numerous dramatic strategies educators can utilize to administer a lesson in order to engage their students in the content, in addition to assess what their students have learned through active, participatory means. Suggestions for further research include the effect of technical theatre on student development, as well as on schools in which theatre arts has a role within the core curriculum.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The arts have long been utilized by cultures across the world as a means of expression, whether the intent is to communicate, share creative and aesthetic choices, demonstrate a skill, or purely to entertain. The role art has played in the educational setting in the United States has varied throughout human history, and according to Hetland and Winner (2001), the arts “have typically played a relatively unimportant role in American schools” (p. 3). In today’s educational setting, the arts are in a vulnerable position of being omitted from many school districts as a result of budget cuts. In fact, in August 2009, the Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, wrote a letter to leaders within the school and education community to bring their attention to the importance of the arts in elementary and secondary curriculum. “At this time when you are making critical and far-reaching budget and program decisions for the upcoming school year, I write to bring your attention to the importance of the arts as a core academic subject and part of a complete education for all students” (Duncan, 2009, p. 1).

In this letter, Duncan (2009) reminded educational leaders that under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, state and local school districts have the flexibility to fund arts programs through Federal Title programs and US Department of Education programs (p. 1). While Duncan stressed that inclusion of the arts were necessary for a well-rounded curriculum, the only arts programs he specifically addressed in this letter were music and visual arts. In fact, he stated that next spring, the Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) was planning to survey “elementary classroom teachers as well as music and visual arts specialists about their programs and resources” (Duncan, p. 1). NCES would then utilize these responses to make more informed decisions about arts in education.

While it is heartening to know that the issue of arts (specifically music and visual arts), as well as how they are being utilized within the classroom setting, is of interest to the federal government, I am curious as to why Duncan (2009) made minimal mention of the theatre arts or of dance. I am also curious to determine what role the dramatic arts have in today's classrooms. Duncan's letter is quite timely given that the purpose of my research paper is to see in what degree theatre arts are being utilized and implemented within the school setting. I intend to utilize this research to provide an answer to my question. My question is this: Should theatre arts be part of the core curriculum in secondary education?

Rationale

Drama education, and particular drama in the high school setting, has had significant impact on my life. I was fortunate to have attended a high school in which the theatre arts was part of the core curriculum, therefore I was able to take drama classes offered throughout the school day, rather than purely as an out-of-school extracurricular activity. It was in my own high school experience that the acting bug first bit me, as some theatergoers say. I was always driven to perform, but in my junior year of high school, my school put on its first musical ever. I was cast in the ensemble, and found a deep connection with the art of playing another character on stage. This personal connection expanded and broadened throughout my educational career in the theatrical arts. What I truly cherished about drama was that it enabled me to step into the unfamiliar, and see the world through another's eyes. Participating in the theatre arts gave me the opportunity to personify characters that I shared little cultural, emotional, historical or social experiences with. I have found that my experience in the theatre arts resembled what Duncan (2009) stated in his letter as a benefit of participating in the arts; I was becoming a "team-oriented problem solver who was confident and able to think creatively" (p.1).

Throughout my educational career, I have often heard statements about drama as a frivolous elective course (Rose, Parks, Androes, & McMahon, 2000), and one that does not adequately provide the cognitive demands of other content areas. These statements at first bothered me (given that based on my own experience, I did not believe that to be the case), but after I reflected on them further, they aroused my curiosity. I found myself wondering if the beliefs I had about my own education in the theatre arts could in fact be validated by research. Hence my primary rationale for choosing this research question.

Another reason I chose this question was because, as a future educator of the dramatic arts, I intend to utilize what I have found in these empirical studies in order to inform my practice in the classroom. Through analyzing this research, I have found certain types of drama-based instruction may be more effective than others at teaching different skills, or facilitating particular outcomes (Podlozny, 2000; Smithrim & Uptis, 2005; Rose, Parks, Androes, & McMahon, 2000). I also intend to draw on this research as a source of support when I encounter students, parents, administrators, peers, or others who do not see the value of theatre arts in education.

After examining research that has been conducted in relation to my question, I have found that I am not alone in my curiosity as to whether or not the theatre arts (drama) should be part of the core curriculum in secondary education (Eisner, 1998; Hetland & Winner, 2001). Barry, Taylor, and Walls (1999) explored the relationship between participation in the arts and high school drop out prevention. I have also found numerous studies suggesting that within the dramatic domain, social development is a natural bi-product (McNaughton, 2004; Hughes & Wilson, 2004; Leard & Lashua, 2006; Thomas, 2007). Rogoff (2003) and Lave & Wenger (2002) argued that learning is social, and it is this engagement in a community of practice that enables individuals to develop cognitively and socially. It is also through this social interaction that individuals are able

to utilize various modes of communication. Gee (2007) agreed that learning is social, and that each semiotic domain has its own discourse. Within the dramatic domain, students can “communicate using different ‘languages’ – ‘visual, aural, kinaesthetic/tactile and verbal’. In enabling children to act out situations or issues using different modes of expression, drama offers a unique experience in visioning the future” (McNaughton, 2004, p. 153).

Drama is one domain in which students can become socially engaged with each other, and this interaction heightens their ability to become active citizens. In her qualitative case study on the use of drama in teaching for sustainability, McNaughton (2004) stated “Drama allows children to rehearse and develop the skills they will need for active citizenship in a safe and non-threatening situation. They participate in fictional contexts, but they use real knowledge and real skills” (p. 152).

Thomas (2007) explored the social interaction and discourse between teachers and students, as well as the degree to which that impacted their level of engagement. She stated “people learn best when thinking is shared aloud, when hidden processes are made visible” (Thomas, p. 790). Her study supports Dewey’s theory of educative experiences as a social process, “in which all individuals have an opportunity to contribute and to which all feel a responsibility” (Dewey, 1938, p. 56). I mention this social interaction and discourse because I have found through my own experience, as well as through reading and analyzing numerous studies, that social interaction is a vital component of the theatrical arts.

As previously mentioned, the Secretary of Education wrote a letter to the educational community stressing the importance of the arts as a core component of the curriculum. This letter, in combination with the multitude of empirical studies on the topic, is evidence that my research question is indeed an important question to the educational community.

In today's technologically progressive society, where the many social, emotional, and academic cultures of this world are becoming intertwined, today's young people are being required to communicate and work across differences as never before. In a statement of support for arts education, new superintendent of public instruction Randy Dorn expressed, "We know that arts education allows students to learn and practice skills and behaviors that foster 'out of the box' thinking and creative problem solving. Those skills will be crucial to innovation in the 21st century" (as cited in Joseph, 2009, p. 1). If Dorn's claims about participation in artistic domains are true, such as enhanced creativity, problem-solving and critical thinking skills, then these skills may well help our global society transition successfully into a new decade.

It is important that I state here that I am biased towards the inclusion of arts in the academic curriculum, specifically in keeping them a core component of the academic domain. However, I also fully support the integration of artistic disciplines into other academic domains.

While analyzing and critiquing the research, I have attempted to implement solely an academic lens as a way to keep my biases in check. Granted, there is no way my personal lens and biases could ever be wholly removed from my perspective. However, as I examined and reviewed the literature, I was able to remain objective as I considered the various strengths and weaknesses of the methodologies, as well as the components that threatened or aided the validity of the studies.

Controversies

The primary controversy my question addresses exists between two sides, and this research paper will address both sides. The controversy exists between those who support the integration of the arts into other academic subjects and those who value keeping the arts separate as stand-alone core disciplines within the school setting.

On one side of the controversy are those who support integrating the arts into other academic subjects. As cited in Burnaford, Brown, Doherty, and McLaughlin (2007) Beane is mentioned as a strong advocate of full-integration schools, arguing that learning does not exist in a unidirectional manner, and therefore should be approached through interdisciplinary means in the school setting.

Imagine for the moment that we are confronted with some problem or puzzling situation in our lives. How do we approach the situation? Do we stop and ask ourselves which part of the situation is language arts, or music, or mathematics, or history or art? I don't think so. Instead, we take on the problem or situation using whatever knowledge is appropriate or pertinent without regard for subject area lines. (as cited in Burnaford et al., p. 3)

Beane provided a valid argument, specifically stating that the school environment should provide learning opportunities in which disciplines are intertwined, therefore increasing the students' skills and abilities to function outside of the school setting. Integrated curriculum has long been promoted as an "improved means to prepare young adults for adult life" (Burnaford et al., p. 3).

On the other side of the controversy are those who feel the arts should stand alone as part of the core curriculum. Smithrim and Uptis (2005) presented the perspective of how incorporating the arts in other academic areas "makes the arts vulnerable" (p. 111). Winner and Hetland agreed, "By suggesting that the arts might serve as handmaidens to other subjects, a danger exists that the arts will not be valued for their distinct contributions to education" (as cited in Smithrim & Uptis, 2005, p. 111).

Other educators stressed the importance of keeping the arts as a core curriculum, and assessing it as such. Eisner argued,

Arts-based Outcomes of Art Education in which the success of the arts curriculum is based upon the outcomes (e.g. discerning about artistic form and

content of a piece of art or understand a Cubist painting) which the curriculum was intended to teach. (as cited in Luftig, 2000, p. 208)

In other words, the arts-based outcome stemming from the art-based lesson is what is most important; any positive impact on academic achievement is an added bonus. The authors on this side of the controversy also address an important point. Will the integration of art into core academic areas strip away the value of the arts as an independent content area, or will it rather provide a well-rounded education of the whole child?

Definitions

For the purposes of this paper, the term drama or theatre arts, incorporates the many performance-based/acting techniques utilized within this domain, including role-play, storytelling, improvisation, pantomime, creative dramatics, etc. It is important that I specify here that the term drama does not incorporate any component of the technical side of theatre such as set, costume or lighting design. In my critique of the literature, I specify which mode of the dramatic domain was utilized by the educator/researcher in their pedagogical strategies. Most of the research I present focuses on drama, with a few exceptions focusing on the broader arts (including dance, visual art, and music).

The purpose of this paper is to determine whether or not the theatre arts should be part of the core curriculum, and the primary problem resulting from this purpose is that there is a large focus on the integration of the art forms into other academic domains. Due to this focus on integration, I have utilized many studies in which the theatre arts were combined with other disciplines to provide an interdisciplinary education.

Chapter three is divided into four sections. The first three sections are devoted to various types of development that occur in the educational setting, specifically social, academic and cognitive development. When I refer to social development, I mean the

ways students' progress in their relation to society, specifically the "skills, qualities, capacities and resources that help people make successful transitions into adulthood" (Hughes & Wilson, 2004, p. 4). Cognitive development refers to the ongoing process of acquiring knowledge and understanding (specifically in relation to creative thinking and higher order thinking), resulting from new experiences. The term academic development is meant to describe the expansion of scholastic knowledge, specifically related to the core academic disciplines in the public school setting.

Limitations

The arts, and drama in particular, have been part of human existence since its origin. I fully acknowledge the grandness of the concept of drama in education. While I could focus on the role of drama with specific populations, such as at-risk students or inner city (urban) students; or the connection between inclusion of drama in school and the drop out rates, I have chosen to focus on whether or not theatre arts should be part of the core curriculum in secondary education.

A majority of the research that provided the framework for this paper was conducted in the United States, with a few exceptions in other countries such as Canada, Korea, Australia and Turkey. The focus however, is to explore the effects of drama and dramatic pedagogy on students in the United States public school setting. It is also important to address that even though my focus is in the secondary educational setting, I incorporated research conducted in the elementary environment, as well as one study in a college classroom.

Summary

Chapter one provided an introduction to the purpose of this research paper, to discover whether or not theatre arts should be part of the core curriculum within secondary education. It also shed light on the rationale behind my research question, as well as the controversies that exist within the educational community in regards to the

role arts should play in the curriculum. In chapter two, I examine two historical political events that had significant impact on the role of art within the public school. I also explore possible reasons underlying the emphasis in research on the integration of artistic domains into other academic areas. In chapter three I provide a critical review and analysis of research and literature on the role drama plays in the curriculum. In chapter four I present a summary of the relevant findings from the research, make recommendations that will inform my practice, and address areas for further research.

CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

Chapter one introduced the question that is focus of this paper, should theatre arts be part of the core curriculum in secondary education. Chapter one also explored the rationale behind this question. Chapter two explains the historical background of the question. While the primary purpose of this paper is to determine whether or not the theatre arts should be part of the core curriculum, an underlying problem exists if there is no federal support or financial backing to keep the arts in the public school setting. Therefore, this chapter is divided into two sections: the first addresses the impact the federal government has had on art in education, and the second provides a discussion, based on professional literature, of possible reasons as to why there has been such a large focus on the integration of artistic disciplines into other academic areas.

Political Influence

This section begins with an exploration of two significant political programs that were created that have impacted the role art plays within the public school setting. An explanation of these political events is provided because history has shown that without federal recognition and support (specifically financial backing), artistic disciplines would not be part of the educational setting. In a report issued by the Rockefeller Brothers in 1965, they state “federal support was crucial to the future of the arts in America” (Bauerlein & Grantham, 2008, p. 15). “Budget cutbacks decimate school arts programs” (Kornfeld & Leyden, 2005, p. 230). Without federal financial support, arts programs in school could become extinct; and therefore my research question would be pointless.

The first time artists worked within the public school setting occurred during Franklin D. Roosevelt’s presidency (Burnaford, Brown, Doherty, & McLaughlin, 2007). In the 1930’s, Roosevelt’s administration created various programs within the New Deal as a means to improve the economic downturn of the Great Depression (Bauerlein &

Grantham, 2008). These programs (the Federal Theatre Project and the Federal Art Project to name a few) brought unemployed artists and writers into public schools as a means to provide them with financial stability. It is important to note that the purpose was not to provide students within the schools exposure to the social, cultural or cognitive benefits of the arts.

While the implementation of the New Deal programs may have had a positive impact on unemployed artists, they unfortunately did not have a lasting influence on including artistic domains within the school setting. Even up until the 1960's, the common perception of the arts was that they were not accessible, and were primarily for the wealthy or talented (Burnaford, Brown, Doherty, & McLaughlin, 2007, p. 1). However, once Kennedy appointed a special consultant for the arts position in the early 1960's, public support grew for the arts and extended into Johnson's administration (Burnaford et al., p. 1).

The second event that significantly impacted the role arts played in schools occurred in 1965, when the United States Congress created the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). The mission of the NEA was to "spread the artistic prosperity throughout the land, from the dense neighborhoods of our largest cities to the vast rural spaces, so that every citizen might enjoy America's great cultural legacy" (Bauerlein & Grantham, 2008, p. 1). What better way to accomplish this than by including the arts in the public school setting?

At this progressive time in our country's history, more Americans were attending college and citizens were demanding access to education in the arts (Bauerlein & Grantham, 2008, p. 10). The NEA played a central role in meeting the demands of the people. However, in the late 1970's, the economy was going downhill and "the publication of *A Nation at Risk* worked to undo many of Johnson's administrations efforts to advance the arts" (Burnaford, Brown, Doherty, & McLaughlin, 2007, p. 1). Given the

fluctuating emphasis the federal government has given to the arts, it is not surprising that it took 15 years before the NEA made room for grants for artists in schools. The “Artists-in-Schools Program evolves into the Artists-in Education Program with grants going to state arts agencies for artists’ residencies in schools and other settings” (“NEA chronology”, 2000, p. 31). I present the above facts as evidence of the ways in which governmental support of the arts has impacted the degree to which they are included in the school setting.

After researching the history of the federal support for the arts, it has become clear as to why, in today’s society, there is such a large focus by researchers and educators on integrating the arts with other academic domains. Historically, it appears that integration of the arts into other academic disciplines was how our country successfully incorporated the arts into public schools. The funding provided to schools was given so that art could be taught temporarily by professional artists, rather than as part of the core curriculum taught by certified educators. Both the arts programs created by the New Deal and those fostered within the National Endowment for the Arts have promoted art in public schools through the means of an artist-in-residence.

Why Integrate?

This section provides a discussion, based on professional literature, of possible reasons as to why there has been such a large focus on the integration of artistic disciplines into other academic areas.

As previously mentioned, the role of art in education, and drama in particular, has varied throughout history, depending on who has been the President of the country and what guidelines or restrictions they put in place. For instance, even though the framework supporting No Child Left Behind placed the arts as a core academic subject, the focus on standardized high-stakes testing in reading, math and writing in fact deterred the necessity and relevance of arts courses. “The overwhelming reliance on

standardized test and IQ scores reflects a widespread attitude in American education that artistic talents are separate and distinct from other areas of intellectual ability” (Oreck, Baum, & Owen, 2004, p. 147). “In the current educational climate of high stakes testing and accountability, arts educators need systematic, high-quality, research-based approaches to justify the essential place of the arts in the curriculum” (Oreck et al., p. 161). The emphasis on high stakes testing scores could be one reason for the surge in research supporting interdisciplinary methods in which art plays a key role, as one way to keep the arts in school. Hetland and Winner (2001) also suggest that this approach of promoting the arts as a means to strengthen skills in more “valued” areas has become a “favored strategy for keeping the arts in the schools and for making sure that every child had access to arts education” (p. 3).

Unfortunately, it is a “fact that in many schools the arts are increasingly less important” (Luftig, 2000, p. 208). To illustrate his point, Luftig provided a statistic comparing the education budgets of the National Science Foundation, exceeding \$171 million, with the National Endowment for the Arts, not even reaching \$6 million (p. 209). This budgetary statistic is evidence of the true value the federal government places on arts within the education setting. Without the funds supporting arts as part of the core curriculum, where else could they exist within the educational setting apart from being integrated into other academic disciplines?

Another possible reason for this recent focus stems from standardized testing and the emphasis on student academic outcomes representing the accountability and effectiveness of the school and school district. The federal government will continue to fund schools if they meet the minimal necessary academic requirements, and some educators believe that the best way keep the arts in school is to show how they connect and benefit the students’ overall academic achievement (Luftig, 2000).

As already addressed, much research done during the 80's and 90's primarily focused on how arts-based learning heightened the learning in other subject areas. Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles (2000) identified this as a "unidirectional and linear model of learning in which certain capacities engendered in the arts are thought to travel to other subject disciplines and to be 'causal' in supporting enhanced learning" (p. 228). They argued that there are some inherent problems with this unidirectional model, or in other words, arts-learning as the cause for greater academic achievement. The first problem being that this approach stems from the assumption that the learning that occurs in other subject domains does not in fact "travel back to enhance arts learning. Second, capacities usually identified as 'engendered in arts learning,' such as creativity, imagination, critical and divergent thinking, are also dimensions that are widely held to characterize thinking in other subject domains" (Burton et al., p. 228). Given the purpose of this paper and the overwhelming focus in current research on the importance of integrating art into other academic domains, this is an important concept to address. Burton et al. suggest that the many disciplines in the school setting actually share cognitive elements or ways of thinking.

Summary

Chapter one introduced the purpose of this paper, as well as the rationale behind the research question. It also presented the two sides of the controversy the question addressed. Chapter two examined specific historical events that had significant impact on the role of art within the public school. It also explored possible reasons underlying the emphasis in research on the integration of artistic domains into other academic areas. Chapter three provides the critique and analysis of 30 empirical studies, as well as how the findings presented in each study relates to the purpose of this paper.

CHAPTER 3: CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Chapter one provided an introduction to the purpose of this research paper, as well as to the controversies existent with the fluctuating role art has played in public education. Chapter two explained specific historical instances that gave rise to arts role in education today, briefly explaining the slow progression of art into the academic curriculum, as well as the history of arts being integrated into other academic disciplines. Chapter three critically examines the research on drama in public education. The research explored is divided into four of sections: social development, academic development, cognitive development, and pedagogical strategies. The first three sections are organized according to the type of social, academic or cognitive development that occurred due to participation in/education through various art forms (primarily the dramatic domain). The largest section is the fourth and final section, pedagogical strategies. It concludes this chapter with studies that explicitly address various instructional choices utilized in teaching the theatre arts. Each empirical study in this section is analyzed and summarized. The research is reviewed to examine if theatre arts should be a core content in secondary education.

Social Development

The three studies examined in this section analyzed the social component of the theatrical arts. The first two studies utilized drama as a means to foster social change, specifically in incorporating real world issues that existed in the participants' lives. McNaughton's (2004) used a strategy called "Process Drama," which incorporated student and teacher improvisation of environmentally sustainable issues, fostering the participants' ability to become active citizens in their community. Leard and Lashua (2006) used a different dramatic strategy called "Popular Theatre," which gave the students the opportunity to identify issues of concern in their own lives, as well as

analyze how they might bring about a change. The final study in this section, conducted by Hughes and Wilson (2004), analyzed the personal and social development that resulted from participation in youth theatre.

In her qualitative case study, McNaughton (2004) taught two sets of drama lessons based on sustainability themes to upper elementary students in two different schools for the duration of 12 weeks. The dramatic pedagogical strategy she utilized was 'Drama in Education' or 'Process Drama', incorporating student and teacher improvisation, and was not for the purpose of performance for an external audience. Rather, 'Process Drama' was one way for students to explore ideas and feelings, as well as looking at situations from various perspectives.

The drama lessons she taught focused on sustainability issues at the local and global levels. The lesson specifically addressed in her study focused on a local environmental issue concerning illegal dumping. During her lesson, the students participated as residents of the town in which the illegal dumping occurred. "As residents, the children were able to suggest many ways of taking control of the situation and of being proactive" (McNaughton, 2004, p. 148). McNaughton did not provide a script for the lessons, so the students improvised scenarios from both perspectives of those negatively affected by the dumping and those who did the dumping. This gave them the opportunity to look at the problem from different perspectives.

As a framework for her analysis, McNaughton (2004) utilized the Scottish standards Aims and Learning Outcomes in Education for Sustainability. She presented her findings through the lens of whether or not they linked up with these standards. She provided evidence of student statements that suggest that her method of utilizing 'Process Drama' was in fact an effective medium for teaching about sustainability, as well as in social development.

The children were very able to comment on the quality of their own learning.

Many described themselves as more confident, more able to speak out, better at asking questions and better at standing up for something. The drama allowed them many opportunities to develop these skills and thus to feel more empowered. They also seemed to think that the drama helped them to get to know the other children in their class better and to provide them with opportunities to work together in different ways. (McNaughton, 2004, p. 151)

Even though the researcher's methods were transparent, the findings made general claims about student involvement and engagement in the lessons, and they did not address those students' voices that may have been silent or not as engaged in the activities. There was no mention of student demographics, or of the particular settings (either urban, suburban or rural) of the two schools. This lack of information prohibits the transferability of the findings onto other educational settings.

Another point of concern is that McNaughton (2004) specifically that the methodology was divided into two phases, with Phase 2 being a way to provide triangulation and a way to avoid personal bias. However, the findings presented in this study are solely from the data collection and analysis of Phase 1. The lack of any findings from Phase 2 of the study might make the reader question whether or not personal bias played a part in the data collection and analysis.

The above critiques are worth noting, however they are not enough to discredit this research. McNaughton (2004) utilized drama as a way to "bring together two basic human activities, play and story telling, and that it is through achieving the distance afforded by fiction that we can reflect more securely upon issues which have significant effects upon our lives" (p. 154). Through this pedagogical strategy, students showed heightened engagement with content on sustainability and developed social skills in communication and elaboration.

Leard and Lashua (2006) also conducted an empirical study that utilized theatre arts as a way to bring about social change. They explored the incorporation of popular media as a pedagogical strategy as a way to recognize and value those students who had traditionally been marginalized and silenced. Both schools were in urban settings and served students who had left the public school setting prior to completing high school, with many of the students experiencing homelessness and poverty. Leard taught at this school and researched the use of popular theatre as a pedagogical strategy, so it is her particular study that I will focus on. "Popular theatre strives for social change by involving individuals as groups or members of communities in identifying issues of concern, points of change, and analyzing how change could happen" (Leard & Lashua, p. 251).

Leard and Lashua (2006) followed a qualitative case study approach, collecting data over a two-month period, and based her findings on interviews and discussions with 12 students (including Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students between the ages of 14 – 21) and 8 of her fellow staff members. Popular theatre as a pedagogical strategy enabled the students to explore their own social realities, create their own conclusions and take ownership of possible responses through the dramatic medium. The process began with dramatic warm-up and group-building games, and progressed into issue-based topics and themes, such as racism, violence and prostitution.

The findings suggest that the incorporation of drama and the arts in general can generate the confidence needed for students to progress into other academic content. Leard and Lashua (2006) quoted a youth worker,

Students don't need a lot of skill to produce something that is sort of 'wowing,' and they have something that they can feel proud about and they're beaming, it's really important; if they can tackle the confidence the rest will follow. (p. 259)

Another finding addressed how participation in popular theatre heightened social development and impacted a greater awareness and connection with the out-of-school setting. Leard and Lashua (2006) quoted one student “Through involvement in ‘a lot of drama skits on everyday living and how you see things; you’re aware of a lot more things in the downtown area and the people that surround you” (p. 252).

In the particular setting of Leard and Lashua’s (2006) research, popular theatre appeared to be an effective strategy for engaging students and assisting in their social development. The setting of this study was an alternative school, not a traditional high school, and it is possible that the findings would be different in a more conventional educational setting. The participant sample was extremely small as well, and if the formal data collection existed over a longer period of time with a larger sample size, the findings may have been different.

The last study that focused on the possible connection between drama and social development was lead by Hughes and Wilson (2004). In their quantitative and qualitative research study, they strove to identify and explain the personal and social development of youth (aged 12 – 30) that resulted from participation in youth theatre. Youth theatre is a specific context and exists outside the formal school setting, and it is founded on the voluntary participation of young people. Hughes and Wilson utilized the UK National Curriculum definition of personal and social development, and it “refers to the skills, qualities, capacities and resources that help young people make successful transitions to adulthood” (p. 58).

Throughout the year and a half long study, the researchers (along with 12 volunteer trainees from four established youth theatres who assisted in the research) made contact with over 300 young people participating in youth theatre. The incorporation of the 12 volunteer youth researchers provided triangulation, and was also a way for the researchers to “enhance the reliability of the findings as interpretations

were tested and verified by participants of youth theatres” (Hughes & Wilson, 2004, p. 60). The research team facilitated workshops, designed questionnaires for participants of those workshops, and gathered data through qualitative interviews. The broad range of questionnaires and workshops allowed the researchers to determine patterns in terms of “young people’s perceptions of youth theatre’s impact on their development” (Hughes & Wilson, p. 60). Of the questionnaires that were distributed throughout the workshops, youth theatre participants returned 359. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using grounded theory and narrative analysis.

The findings presented in the study were taken from the qualitative interviews, as well as the research workshops and questionnaires. The following personal and social skills were identified through participants interview responses:

1. The ability to work on their own initiative – “you work it out yourself, you use your own imagination” (Hughes & Wilson, 2004, p. 63)
2. Taking part in a work-like, disciplined and committed process – “we have to commit, if you’re going to do a show you have to really do it, you can’t half act, you can’t half learn your lines” (p. 63)
3. An opportunity to explore and express thoughts and feelings – “every time you go in to act you’re making your emotions know to everybody, since I’ve joined I’m not afraid to show people how I feel” (p. 64)
4. Encourages youth participation in their own communities – “I think acting brings you in to the community more” (p. 65)

During the workshops and questionnaires, the participants were asked to describe the impact youth theatre has had on other areas of their lives. The responses were similar to those from the qualitative interviews. A few of the most frequently reported impacts were: “improved confidence, improved ability to make friends, ability to understand and work with other people, and the ability to express myself” (Hughes &

Wilson, 2004, p. 66). Overall, the findings “support the belief that youth theatre has a number of impacts on the personal and social development of young people” (p. 70).

It is important to note that the researchers stated the research design combined a qualitative and quantitative approach, however there was no evidence anywhere of the quantitative methods utilized. This study was an abridged version of the 100-page report, and it is probable that the quantitative design and methodology were presented there. Throughout the study, the researchers made some bold statements about the impact of youth theatre on personal and social development. Their study examined a specific population – those individuals who were committed to theatre – and there were many perspectives that were not represented; such as young people who tried youth theatre but decided it wasn't for them, or young people who participated in theatre solely in the school setting, or even young people who had no interest in engaging in youth theatre. This absence of multiple perspectives indicates that the findings cannot be transferred onto all youth. However, whether or not the participants voluntarily chose to engage in youth theatre is not the underlying issue. It appears that through involvement in youth theatre, participants gained a greater awareness of skills that would help them interact with those beyond the auditorium walls, their community and the greater society.

Analysis of these three studies suggests that the use of various dramatic techniques, such as “Process Drama,” “Popular Theatre,” and youth theatre, can have a positive impact on students social development and the way they interact in society. As Hughes and Wilson (2004) found, participants in youth theatre reported “improved confidence, improved ability to make friends” (p. 66). McNaughton's (2004) and Leard and Lashua's (2006) also found that not only did their participants' confidence increase, but that they also became “better at asking questions and better at standing up for something” (McNaughton, p. 151). The findings from these studies, in conjunction with each other, suggests that through engagement in the theatre arts (and specifically in

utilizing drama to tackle real world issues), students gained the skills, qualities and resources that would assist them in becoming more self-assured, as well as empowered to make a difference in their community.

Academic Development

For decades, arts educators have been put in the position of needing to justify the existence of arts programs in public schools on the basis of their contributions to other academic domains (Eisner, 1998; Hetland & Winner, 2001). As a future arts educator myself, it is vital that I become aware of the various perspectives on this topic and the research that has been done that either supports or rejects this claim. According to Hetland and Winner (2001), “this approach became a favored strategy in the United States for keeping the arts in the schools and for making sure that every child had access to education” (p. 3). Whether or not this justification stems from budget cuts, suggestions that arts courses are “frivolous,” etc., there are numerable studies examining this exact issue, and following are descriptions and analyses of what I have found. The studies in this section reflect one side of the controversy addressed in chapter one, those that support the integration of the arts into other academic disciplines.

This section is organized according to the interdisciplinary relationship between various subject disciplines and the application of dramatic pedagogy. The first five studies explored the language arts domain (specifically writing, reading, and speaking skills). Rose, Parks, Androes, and McMahon (2000) examined the effects of drama-based instruction on reading comprehension. Pelligrini (1984) explored the effects of drama, drawing and discussion on narrative writing, whereas almost ten years later, Moore and Caldwell (1993) examined the effect of those same three variables on narrative writing. The next two studies (one a meta-analysis) focused on the effect of integrating drama on verbal speaking skills (Niedermeyer & Oliver, 1972; Podlozny,

2000). The final three studies in this section examined the role of drama within the academic domains of mathematics (Smithrim & Upitis, 2005; Duatepe-Paksu & Ubuz, 2009) and English language development (Kim & Hall, 2002).

Academic Discipline: Language Arts

Over the past 35 years, approximately 200 experimental studies have assessed the relationship between drama instruction and various kinds of academic ability. More than 40 % of these studies examine the relationship between drama instruction and academic achievement in verbal areas, including reading, oral language growth and writing. (Podlozny, 2000, p. 239)

Rose, Parks, Androes, and McMahon (2000) conducted a true experiment (with a randomized pretest/post-test control group design) to examine the impact of drama-based teaching techniques on fourth-grade students' reading comprehension. They found significant differences between the experimental and control groups, supporting the use of drama-based teaching techniques to improve students reading comprehension.

The researchers studied approximately 160 fourth graders randomly selected from four ethnically diverse urban schools. The school sites were selected by Whirlwind (the Chicago-based nonprofit arts education organization that designed *Reading Comprehension through Drama*, RCD). Whirlwind offered the opportunity to participate to four school principals who had worked with them in the past. The principals and schools were accepted for the study with the understanding that two teachers would be randomly assigned to teach, one for the experimental group (with an artist in residence coming in to lead the drama techniques), and one for the control group.

Over a 10-week period (from late February - early May of the 1996 -1997 school year), 20 lessons were delivered to each group, with each session lasting one hour. During that hour, the experimental group was taught reading using drama-based

instructional methods. There were 5 steps that were used in the drama-based lesson – (1) students read the story, (2) the artists/leader read the story (so nonreaders could participate), (3) students identified specific elements in the story, (4) students recreated (using props) the elements identified in step 3, and (5) students re-told the story using props to dramatize the elements. The control group received traditional text-based methods on the basis of reading and completing workbook activities, such as fill-in-the-blank and complete-the-sentence questions about the text. These traditional methods emphasized read-and-drill exercises from district-approved textbooks.

Rose, Parks, Androes, and McMahon (2000) utilized two testing instruments to assess the experimental and control group's improvement in reading comprehension. The first was the *Iowa Tests of Basic Skills*, which was administered the spring of every year. The researchers compared the 3rd grade results to the 4th grade results (test-retest reliabilities were reported by the publisher and were all above .70 on the reading portion of the test). The second testing instrument was a *Performance Assessment (PA)*, that was designed by the researchers to measure improvement in reading comprehension and drama skills. The PA was used to reduce method bias, provide a measure of reading comprehension immediately before and after the program (the ITBS test had been administered several months before the program began), and lastly to function as a manipulation check to assess whether the differences in ITBS scores could be reasonably attributed to students' improved ability to dramatize a story. The PA consisted of students reading a short text aloud, then were asked a series of questions to assess their comprehension, and finally they then dramatized the actions of the main character in the same order they occurred in the text – they were rated on accuracy.

Overall, the students who participated in the RCD program improved their reading comprehension at a more rapid rate than the control group participants – “Specifically, RCD students improvement in reading grade-equivalent level was 33%

greater than control students' improvement" (Rose, Parks, Androes, & McMahon, 2000, p. 62). When comparing the overall reading improvement rates on the ITBS scores, the researchers found that RCD students' increased significantly more than the control students' scores ($p = .006$). "Students who participated in the RCD program improved an average of 3 months more than students who did not participate" (Rose et al., p. 60). The findings of this study therefore suggest that drama-based instruction, which required students to act out a story previously read, strengthens their ability to comprehend a written text.

In analyzing this study, there were many factors that support the internal and external validity. The authors research design "addressed the general lack of rigor found in current drama-language arts research by using samples greater than 80 in a controlled study of randomly selected students" (Rose, Parks, Androes, & McMahon, 2000, p. 56). There were a few participants who dropped out during the course of the study, either because they were transferred out of the school or transferred into another classroom. However, this external variable was controlled and addressed by the research team. "There were no differences found between the control group and the experimental group regarding the transfers" (Rose et al., p. 61).

The participants do appear to represent an extreme population, with a majority of the students coming from poverty. It is therefore questionable as to whether the findings from this study could be generalized to other settings, or would apply to students of different ages. It is also possible that it was simply the application of a novel teaching method (drama-based instruction) that positively affected student achievement and improved reading comprehension. Without extending the length of the study, it is plausible that the positive affects of the drama-based instruction could have worn off.

The findings from this study are substantial however, and the methodology used was sound and supports the results.

Almost 20 years earlier, Pelligrini (1984) conducted a true experiment (post-test only, control group design) on the effect of dramatic play on children's generation of cohesive text. She found that the students' ability to comprehend written text was expanded due to their participation in dramatic play sessions.

Throughout the course of her study, Pelligrini (1984) observed the children's ability to recall a text (story) through one of the following three conditions (dramatic play, discussion, and drawing). Each treatment session was videotaped and began with reading a children's book to the participants. Following each treatment, the participants were asked to retell the story to an experimenter. It was those retellings that were analyzed for the findings of this study.

The participants included 108 children that attended a rural elementary school. They were randomly selected from all the children in grades K – 2. In small groups, (within the same grade and the same condition) students were taken out of their classroom to an experimental playroom for three separate treatment sessions. In the playroom, there was one male and one female experimenter that had been randomly assigned. During each session, the experimenter read the group a different book and then exposed them to their appropriate training conditions, either play, discussion or drawing. Each session lasted approximately 30 minutes.

The treatment sessions were conducted as follows. The dramatic play participants were assigned roles from the story by the experimenter, and were told to play about the story they just heard. The experimenter played a role in the play sessions to facilitate the children's play. Pelligrini (1984) utilized the method and criteria of dramatic play from Smilansky. The discussion group's treatment consisted of questions asked by the experimenter to prompt discussion. The questions were in relation to whether or not the participants enjoyed the story and why. The drawing group was asked to draw as much about the story as they could remember.

What the findings reveal is that at the first grade level, the players gave significantly more endophoric references than either the discussants or the drawers. (The players – 28.166, the discussants – 6.083, the drawers – 8.416). From this finding, it appears that dramatic play (specifically when participants and teachers engage together) is an effective strategy in aiding student recall and cohesion of a written text. It was through the verbal communication, social interaction and symbolic dramatic-play that students were able to use each other as more capable peers and therefore engage in more explicit language. The findings also suggest the possibility of dramatic play as a way to assist in students' becoming literate.

In order to become literate, a primary goal of schooling, children must learn to produce and comprehend linguistically conveyed meaning; these abilities are necessary, but not sufficient, conditions for writing and reading. Given the importance of the ability to use explicit language, it seems paramount for educators to design pedagogical techniques for developing this skill. (Pelligrini, 1984, p. 59)

One critique of this study was that what seemed to be a factor in the children's ability to lexicalize meaning was their social interaction with their peers. In both the drawing and discussion conditions, that peer-to-peer interaction did not exist. It is therefore questionable as to whether or not the positive findings were solely from the use of dramatic play. They could have resulted rather from the students' ability to dialogue with each other about the text (rather than the discussion condition – where they were merely responding to questions from the experimenter, or the drawing condition – where they were individually drawing what they recalled from the text). Another factor to consider when analyzing this study is that the participants were taken out of their normal classroom setting to engage in the treatment sessions, therefore possibly threatening the internal validity.

The findings in this study do support the possibility, however, that dramatic play could in fact be used as a strategy to aid in children's ability to lexicalize meaning, or in other words, not relying on shared experiences or knowledge in order to get the meaning across.

Ten years after Pelligrini's (1984) study, Moore and Caldwell (1993) conducted a true experiment (repeated measures control group design) examining the effects of the same three variables as Pelligrini's study. Their study explored the effects of drama, drawing and traditional language instruction (discussion) upon the quality of students' narrative writing. They found that engagement in both the dramatic and drawing activities had a significant positive impact (more so than the discussion) on the quality of children's narrative writing.

Their study lasted a total of 15 weeks, in which 63 students (the entire population of two second- and two third-grade classes) were divided into one control group (discussion) and two experimental groups (drama and drawing), in which gender and grade levels were mixed, in an arranged, random designation.

All three groups were given the same pretest at the start of the study, which was a writing assignment on the topic of *fears*. The pretest began with a 15-minute discussion directed by the teacher followed by a 30-minute written composition. Moore & Caldwell (1993) utilized a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to compute and compare the pretest scores. Pretest scores were used to measure initial group equivalence, and there was found to be no significant difference in the writing ability among the three groups.

The researchers developed a scale (*Narrative Writing Scale*) to evaluate the writing quality of the students and utilized three sources of content validation. The NRS scale was also pretested by two experienced raters who used samples of second- and third-grade students narrative writing, and was later revised. Raters received training,

and after the training, they independently scored a set of 30 papers chosen at random. The overall interrater reliability was .97 on the analytic categories, and .96 over all other areas.

Researchers also designed an *Attitude Scale* to be given at the end of the study. The *Attitude Scale* was designed to determine if changes in student attitudes toward the planning activities and the writing process activities could have impacted the quality of their writing. Moore and Caldwell (1993) utilized face validity as the criteria and the instrument (which had first been used in a pilot study to determine usability and reliability).

During the treatment sessions, the three teachers rotated among each treatment group to eliminate the teacher variable. Each treatment session began with a 15-minute discussion focusing on narrative writing aspects such as plot, characterization, and setting, illustrated by examples from children's literature.

Each group then participated in a warm-up activity that built on the theme from the previous discussion. (The drama activities involved narrative pantomime, paired improvisation, mime, sensory exploration, dialogue improvisation, group stories, movement, individual pantomime, and poetry dramatization.)

Following the warm-up activities, students in all three groups engaged in 30 minutes of writing the first draft of a narrative composition. It was these drafts and writing samples (approximately 1,200) that were collected weekly and analyzed as data for the effects of planning activities. Researchers chose "the repeated measures analysis design because it enabled weekly comparisons of the three treatments over time, as well as comparison of the overall effects for the three treatments averaged across the entire study" (Moore & Caldwell, 1993, p. 105).

What Moore and Caldwell (1993) found was that there was a significant difference between the overall mean scores of the control group and the overall mean

scores of both experimental groups, in favor of the experimental groups ($p = .007$). Drama had the highest overall mean score at the conclusion of the study – starting at 3.12 and ending at 4.53. This finding supports the theory that participation in drama would lead to a positive difference in writing quality over equivalent participation in traditional discussion.

The researchers, due to the design and methodology of their study, controlled many factors that strengthened both internal and external validity. They provided an explicit description of the experimental treatment process, as well as sufficient information about the testing instruments utilized. They provided additional training sessions for the raters as a way to minimize rater drive. Another strength was that the teachers rotated among the treatment groups, therefore eliminating the teacher variable. As a means of preparing the teacher participants for instructing with drama and drawing strategies, researchers provided two 2-hour training sessions each week for a total of 8 weeks. Also, prior to start of the study, teachers and students were introduced to a variety of drama and drawing exercises, receiving adequate initial preparation.

Although repeated testing occurred in this study, this did not create tension among the participants because it involved collecting writing samples, and no formal formative testing was given. All writing samples collected from the participants were typed and coded using the same format, and the three raters then rated each sample independently and blindly. Also, even though the use of one school limits the generalizability of the findings onto other settings, the use of a true experimental design and the avoidance of the teacher variable do strengthen the overall validity and objectivity of this study.

The findings presented in this study suggest that the use of drama as a pedagogical strategy does in fact have a positive impact on elementary students' narrative writing. The specific strategies and dramatic activities of narrative pantomime,

paired improvisation, mime, sensory exploration, dialogue improvisation, group stories, movement, individual pantomime, and poetry dramatization, appeared to be an engaging and successful outlet which aided in the narrative writing process.

The three studies explored so far were specific to the impact of drama-based instruction on children's ability to understand written text and also as a means to aid in the process of narrative writing. They each utilized strong methodology and research design, therefore significantly improving the validity of their findings. The following two studies were conducted almost 30 years apart from each other, but both address the relationship between drama and the development of verbal skills.

Verbal Skills

Niedermeyer and Oliver (1972) conducted a quasi-experiment on the effects of dramatic instruction on young children's public speaking skills and found that dramatic instruction did heighten selected speaking skills.

Their study was conducted in the last 5 months of the school term in 1970 – 1971. In conjunction with this study, the researchers developed a two-year program in dramatics and public speaking. The intent of this program was to give children practice in four types of dramatic and speaking skills: pantomime, improvisation, extemporaneous speaking, and play production. In order to determine the effects of the dramatic instruction, seven first-grade and kindergarten classes were randomly selected to participate in the experimental group. The remaining seven kindergarten classes and six first-grade classes were the comparison group, receiving regular language instruction. The experimental group received one dramatic lesson a week, lasting 30 minutes, for the duration of 20 weeks. These lessons consisted of small group work, and also were conducted in a manner that gave the students space to move and perform in a comfortable environment. The teachers of the experimental groups were provided with

instructional materials, such as Activity Sheets and a Teacher's Guide, to assist them in facilitating the dramatic lessons.

The post-tests administered to both groups were the same. They consisted of the teacher reading a series of printed cards, and then calling on individual children or small groups to perform in each of the skill categories taught in the program – pantomime, improvisation, extemporaneous speaking, and play production. The children who performed were randomly selected by the researchers, and were rated by a trained observer who sat in the back of the room.

Additional sources of data were frequent classroom observations of the dramatic lessons by the researchers, and meetings with classroom teachers (from many of the experimental lessons) who offered comments and suggestions based on their experience with the program.

What Niedermeyer and Oliver (1972) found was that the dramatic instruction administered to the students did promote and heighten selected dramatic and speaking skills.

All by one of the t-values for the kindergarten test significantly favored the experimental group. For first grade, significant differences favoring the experimental children were found for all but two of the performance components under pantomime and seven of the eight components under extemporaneous speaking. (Niedermeyer & Oliver, p. 98)

They also found that students were engaged in the dramatic instruction.

In one first grade class, the children cheered and clapped when the teacher announced that it was time for their weekly lesson in dramatics. In two of the experimental kindergarten classes, fifty children were asked whether they liked to 'act out stories in the drama lessons.' In response, 48% said that they like this

activity 'a whole lot,' 20% like it 'just ok'. Only 4% said they 'did not like it'.

(Niedermeyer & Oliver, p. 99)

When considering the validity of this study, there were flaws in the design that should be taken into account. Even though the intent of this study was for each of the experimental classes to receive the same dramatic instruction, the design of the study did not in fact control for this variable. Each teacher administered the dramatic lessons differently, some modeling the dramatic categories more effectively than others, and some administering the lessons more frequently than others. There were in fact then multiple-treatments given. In regards to this variable, the effectiveness of the treatment therefore depended on the specific individual who administered it.

The researchers also did not provide an adequate explicit description of the experimental treatment, and it is questionable that if this study were to be done again, that the results would be the same. Due to the fact that there was one post-test administered immediately following the treatment, the longevity of the findings is also questionable. The results might be different if the post-test was again administered one- to three-months after the treatment had been given. While the results of this study were statistically significantly different between the experimental and the comparison groups, it is questionable as to whether or not the differences in the data are actually large enough as to mean anything on a practical level.

Another factor to take into account was the inadequate information provided about the participants. The only information on the participants was as follows: participants included fourteen kindergarten classes (including students and teachers) and thirteen first-grade classes in two urban school districts in southern California. With no further information provided, the generalizability of the findings onto other populations is questionable. Something else to consider was that an observer sat in the back of the room and rated the students performances. Even though the students were randomly

selected to perform by the researchers, the presence of this new individual, the observer and rater, might have impacted the students' comfort level and therefore their performance.

One strength to their methodology was that each teacher administered the post-tests, and four trained observers rated the students in each of the skill categories. The inter-rater reliability between the observers was as follows: “.92 for pantomime, .89 for extemporaneous speaking, .79 for improvisation, and .62 for play production” (Niedermeyer & Oliver, 1972, p. 98).

Even with the threats to the internal and external validity, the findings are consistent with other studies in that the use of dramatic instruction does in fact engage students and has the capability to heighten and impact their learning and academic development. In this particular study, there were significant differences found that favored the experimental group over the comparison group in a variety of speaking skills.

In 2000, Podlozny conducted a meta-analysis that examined the effect of classroom drama on various verbal outcomes. Through an extensive and thorough meta-analysis of 80 studies, she found that drama instruction does have a positive effect on a variety of verbal outcomes, from story understanding to reading readiness and achievement to oral language development.

Podlozny (2000) carried out a comprehensive search on a variety of databases, as well as hand searches of journals, published bibliographies and reference lists. From this search, she selected 80 studies based off the following criteria:

1. Article was an empirical study
2. Date specific – released no earlier than 1950
3. Study examined relationship between some type of drama instruction and at least one measure of verbal achievement

4. Study was experimental in design (observational and correlational studies were not included)
 5. Study had to include sufficient information for an effect size to be calculated
- After assembling the studies, Podlozny (2000) and a research assistant coded each study separately and then created nine hypotheses to test on each of the seven meta-analyses. The hypothesis were: type of plot, role of leader, degree of transfer, amount of drama instruction, age, population, publication status, publication date and study design. This is important to note because the findings were organized and analyzed according to these nine hypotheses.

A few of her findings that are relevant to this particular paper were:

1. *Type of plot* – the type of plot in the drama instruction (structured or unstructured) seemed to influence the effectiveness of the drama instruction on different required verbal outcomes. For example, the use of a structured plot appeared to heighten the verbal skills of story understanding (written measures), reading achievement, reading readiness and writing. “Because these measures require participants to develop skills in story structure and comprehension, it makes sense that structured story enactment would be more closely aligned to the outcome measures than unstructured enactment” (Podlozny, p. 265).
2. *Role of leader* – only on the verbal outcome of story understanding, the role of the leader proved to be significantly related to the effectiveness of drama instruction
3. *Degree of transfer* – each of the seven verbal outcomes had a varying degree of transfer required between the drama instruction and new material, or a new setting “looking across the seven meta-analyses, it appears that drama has more power to inculcate skills applied to the particular texts that are enacted than to

inculcate skills that transfer to new texts” (Podlozny, p. 266). She also found however that drama does indeed promote skills that transfer to new material.

4. *Amount of drama instruction* – the results on this hypothesis were mixed –

The studies that found *more* drama time associated with higher effect sizes had very high amounts of instruction overall, averaging between 1200 to 1640 minutes of classroom time. On the other hand, the studies that found *less* drama time associated with higher effect sizes had much shorter periods of instruction, averaging only 315 to 720 minutes of instruction across all of the studies (Podlozny, p. 266).

5. *Age and Student population* – she found that out of the seven meta-analyses, five showed that drama was an effective means of instruction for the desired verbal outcomes, regardless of age (K – 12) or student population (average, low SES, or learning disabled students)

Overall, Podlozny (2000) found that drama instruction was an effective means of educating and engaging students, and the type of drama instruction was important to consider.

Different types of drama instruction may be more facilitative than others for particular types of outcomes: structured enactment seems best suited for verbal outcomes that require an understanding of story structure, while unstructured enactment seems better suited for promoting oral language growth. (p. 268)

The criteria Podlozny (2000) used for including and sorting studies made sense. She introduced her meta-analysis by providing the reader with an in depth critique of two other meta-analysis’ on drama instruction and various cognitive outcomes. Her critique of their lack of definitive definitions of “drama instruction”, as well as that they did not provide any “ particular aspects of drama instruction that might predict achievement in the various outcomes” (Podlozny, p. 241) therefore prompted her criteria for sorting

studies. She selected a significant amount of studies to include in her meta-analysis, and the criteria she implemented to select her studies strengthened the probability of the results she found.

In each of the seven meta-analyses, Podlozny (2000) provided a sufficient outline and description of the studies examined, the assessments used, the methods by which the researchers went about their studies, the results found, and the significance of the findings. One important finding from this meta-analysis was that not only did drama instruction heighten students verbal abilities, but it also “helps them master new material not enacted” (Podlozny, p. 268). Another significant finding, specifically in regards to the focus of my paper on secondary education, was that drama-based instruction appeared to be an effective means for strengthening students’ verbal skills regardless of the age (from K – 12) and demographics of the participants. Her meta-analysis showed that drama instruction is indeed an effective way to heighten students’ academic skills, in particular verbal skills. It is therefore up to the instructor as to how they engage students in the drama.

Academic Discipline: Math

Although not as common as studies relating dramatic pedagogy with language arts, there have been a number of research studies that explore the effects of drama-based instruction on mathematics. Following are two such studies.

Smithrim and Upitis (2005) explored whether or not integration in the arts – specifically in Canada’s Learning Through the Arts schools, enhanced student engagement. They utilized a design that was both qualitative (grounded theory) and quantitative (quasi-experimental, consisting of a random participant sample with pre- and post-testing). They found a strong indication that involvement in the arts positively impacted student engagement and learning at school.

The study lasted a total of 3 years in conjunction with the Learning Through the Arts Program (LTTA). The LTTA program was introduced to each school in the following manner: “students and teachers in grades 1 and 4 received LTTA programming in the first year, with grades 2 and 5 being added in the second year, and grades 3 and 6 added in the final year” (Smithrim & Uptis, 2005, p. 112). The testing and survey schedule therefore corresponded to the structure of the program.

In each of the LTTA schools, participants were randomly selected from grades 1 – 6 (approximately 3,900). By the end of the research study, there were 4,063 students sampled from 55 LTTA schools. Researchers also selected 35 control schools as a comparison, and attempted to demographically match the LTTA schools in their selection; based on size, location (urban/rural) and socioeconomic status. The control schools ranged from having no school-wide initiatives relating to the arts, to having initiatives focused on technology, to having no special initiatives in place. Once all schools and participants were in place, each student was assured confidentiality and was issued an identification code.

The researchers gathered their qualitative data through observations at the school sites, and with interviews and surveys. The data was then collected and all student information was coded and later analyzed through principle component analysis. The quantitative data was collected and analyzed based off standardized achievement tests, holistically scored writing samples, and surveys regarding attitudes and practices.

One of the most significant findings was that “at the end of three years of LTTA programming, the grade 6 LTTA students scored significantly higher on tests of mathematical computation and estimation than students in the control schools ($p < .05$)” (Smithrim & Uptis, 2005, p. 116). This finding indicates that involvement in the arts program did not come at the expense of academic achievement in mathematics. Rather,

the gains in the LTTA students' mathematic scores provide strong evidence that overall, the students' were highly engaged at school.

Researchers engaged in a prolonged and persistent observation, therefore strengthening the credibility of the study. However, due to breadth and duration of this study, history and maturation might not have been controlled, therefore impacting the internal validity. The participants and schools selected for the study ranged across ages and socio-economic backgrounds, therefore strengthening the generalizability of the findings onto other settings and populations. The methods utilized in this study were thorough, and the sample selection (randomly arranged) was inclusive of both LTTA schools and control schools. Smithrim and Upitis (2005) were also transparent, and provided sufficient description of the testing instruments used.

One critique when exploring this study's relation to my paper is that the researchers provided little to no information about the types of artistic activities the participants in the LTTA schools engaged in. Given the breadth and magnitude of the study, it is understandable as to why that information might have been omitted. However, when examining the possibility of arts programs having a positive impact in other academic areas (in this case, mathematics), it would have strengthened the study had the researchers provided more depth as to what made the LTTA schools successful.

Duatepe-Paksu and Ubuz (2009) also conducted a study examining the relationship between drama instruction and mathematics, with a focus on student achievement, attitude and thinking level in geometry. They utilized a quasi-experiment design (separate sample pre-test-post-test), as well as qualitative measures, and found that drama instruction had a positive impact on the students' understanding and perception of geometry.

Their study involved 102 participants from 3 seventh-grade classes, who attended a public school in a middle class neighborhood in Ankara, Turkey. The three

classes were taught the same geometrical content at the same pace. Two classes were the experimental groups and were taught geometry using drama-based instruction. These sessions were facilitated by one of the researchers, due to the extensive training necessary to teach this method, with a classroom teacher present who “controlled the flow of the lesson in terms of the objectives covered and the researcher bias” (Duatepe-Paksu & Ubuz, 2009, p. 276). Students usually worked in groups and were involved in make-believe play and improvisation. One class was then randomly selected to be the control group, and was taught in the traditional method by the classroom teacher. The traditional method consisted of direct instruction, and the students worked independently.

The drama-based instruction consisted of three phases: introduction, development and quieting. In the first phase, there were warm-up activities used to prepare the students for make-believe play, for working in groups and for trusting each other. The second phase consisted of students working in groups to experience ideas that were embellished with geometry (one example: the concept of circles, diameters, radius – the students engaged in make-believe play as a scout troupe trying to figure out the best way to get equal heat around the campfire). The third phase involved the students in summarizing or reviewing what they learned from the day’s activity. In the last phase, the teacher also “emphasized the analogy created between the real-life conditions and geometric facts, with the help of the make-believe play and dramatic moments” (Duatepe-Paksu & Ubuz, 2009, p. 276).

Prior to the treatment sessions, all participants were tested using three testing measurements to measure their thinking level and attitudes towards geometry (*Van Hiele Geometric Thinking Level Test* – reliability coefficients .39 and .57; *Mathematics Attitude Scale* – reliability coefficients .95 and .96; and *Geometry Attitude Scale* – reliability coefficients .92 and .95). The same tests, in addition to two achievement tests,

were administered after the treatment. The two achievement tests (developed by the researchers with reliability coefficients of .98 and .95) were then administered again four months after the study to measure the level of retention in the topics covered by the tests.

What the researchers found was that on each of the five post-tests given to the participants, there were significant differences between the experimental groups and control group, in favor of the experimental groups ($p = .000$). For greater insight, they also interviewed the participants to determine the effects of the treatment on students learning. What they found was that the students were more engaged with the geometric concepts when it were presented through dramatic instruction. Through dramatic instruction, they could improvise and make-believe the geometric concepts. In this way, geometry was connected to their personal lives, and this connection heightened their engagement and motivation to learn and participate in the class. "While studying the situations from real life, we understood when it is useful... Because when it is from daily life, it is more fun and we are interested in much more and participate more" (Duatepe-Paksu & Ubuz, 2009, p. 281). Drama-based instruction also gave students the ability to visualize the geometric concepts they were learning. "When we saw visually, we were more interested in and easily caught the crucial points. We will solve the life problems which we will face in future by the help of it" (Duatepe-Paksu & Ubuz, p. 281).

A few factors were found that threatened the internal validity of this study. The treatment the experimental groups received was quite different than the control group. If the participants in the control group did in fact become disgruntled (even though they were learning the same mathematical content at the same pace as those in the experimental groups), this may have impacted their performance on the post-tests. Another threat was in relation to one of the testing instruments used. The Van Hiele Geometric Thinking Level Test's scores showed low reliability coefficient values. This

low reliability is a concern, therefore calling into question the reliability of the VHL results. The other testing instruments (for the quantitative component) yielded reliable coefficients results.

It is possible that the new treatment produced positive results merely because it was a novel instructional method, however the use of the follow up post-test proved that the application of dramatic instruction had a lasting effect. Another strength of the methodology was that the events that occurred during the course of the study were under public observation, and were therefore trustworthy.

The confirmability of this study is questionable due to the dual role (as teacher of the experimental treatments, as well as researcher), as well as the use of a regular classroom teacher teaching the CG. The relationships between both the classroom teacher and his/her classroom is something that must be taken into account. The use of a new teacher to present the treatment to the two experimental groups might have stimulated and motivated the participants in those groups in way that a regular classroom teacher may not have.

It is important to note that some of the characteristics of the treatment were not specific to drama-based instruction, such as contextualizing the problems in real-world situations, group work & communication. However, role-playing and improvisation are unique to drama-based instruction, and it appears that the use of these strategies engaged the participants in learning and engaging with geometric concepts. Overall, the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods strengthened the validity of this study. There were threats to the validity, but they did not exceed the strengths of the methods used.

Academic Discipline: English Language Development

The last study to be explored in this section involved the use of dramatic role-play as an assessment measure on children's development of a second language. Kim

and Hall (2002) conducted a one shot case study to examine whether or not engaging in interactive reading sessions in English would help native Korean-speaking children develop their English skills. They used a microgenetic observational method.

This method required the intense observation of the development of a skill, concept, or strategy by a small number of participants over a short period of time in order to detect changes in the children's English pragmatic competence during the peer interactions associated with the school context. (Kim & Hall, p. 335)

The participants were 4 young boys in the third and fourth grade. The researchers purposefully selected the boys because they had no overseas experience or exposure to English, were in the same elementary school and knew each other well.

The treatment combined an interactive reading program with dramatic role-play. One researcher, Kim, and the participants engaged in the interacting reading sessions (all conducted in English) twice a week for the total of 4 months. The sessions were all conducted at Kim's private residence. For the treatment, the researchers chose 7 books (all by the same author) that depicted the school environment in the United States. The books were selected because of their descriptions of the school context and their illustrations. The role-play sessions were used as an assessment tool, and consisted of the participants engaging in pretend situations based on the scenes read during the interactive reading sessions.

Data analysis consisted of video taping the role-play sessions, which were later transcribed based off the conversational exchange transcribing system of Gumperz and Berenz. The transcriptions were then presented to 2 individual coders to check for accuracy. "An interrater agreement of 81% was achieved" (Kim & Hall, 2002, p. 336). To measure the quantitative changes, the researchers used the sign test, a nonparametric statistic. The researchers analyzed changes in the participants' vocabulary, number of

utterances, and their talk management (specifically the initiations, elaborations, closings, and formulaic expressions).

What Kim and Hall (2002) found was that the interactive reading programs had an overall positive effect on the participants' development of pragmatic competence in the English language. They found a "significant change in the mean number of words, utterances, and talk management features used during the role-plays" (Kim & Hall, p. 342). What they noticed was that this increase was not consistent across all book sessions. They observed that the language the children used in role-play varied according to the book they were role-playing out.

The study was conducted at the home of one of the researchers. This condition, in addition to the extremely small participant size, was so specialized that it is questionable whether the findings could be generalized to teachers in a large classroom environment, or to other student populations or demographics.

Even though role-play was used in this study as the assessment tool, the findings suggest that it was an effective tool that may have positively affected the development of a second language.

We found it (the use of dramatic play as the assessment) advantageous because we were able to document changes without producing anxiety among the children and without relying on any degree of metacognitive or metalinguistic awareness on the part of the children. Moreover, we were able to observe a wider range of the children's pragmatic abilities than we would have with the more traditional methods. (Kim & Hall, 2002, p. 346)

The studies analyzed in this section presented some relevant findings in regard to this paper. Even though the focus of these studies was on the effect of integrating drama-based instruction with other academic disciplines, the findings still suggest that

participation in the theatre arts has a positive impact on students' ability to read, write and verbally communicate.

Pelligrini (1984) found that when the students discoursed with each other in the dramatic play, the language expressed was more explicit than in either the drawing or discussion group. Moore and Caldwell (1993) utilized the same three variables and found that the participants in the drama condition achieved the highest overall mean score at the conclusion of their study, suggesting that engagement in the dramatic activities had the most significant positive impact on children's writing quality.

Podlozny's (2000) found that drama instruction appeared to be an effective means of instruction for the desired verbal outcomes, regardless of age (K – 12). This is a significant finding relevant to this paper because my focus is on secondary education. Niedermeyer and Oliver (1972) conducted the other study that explored the relationship between drama-based instruction and students' verbal skills. Their study had numerous flaws, such as each teacher administering the dramatic instruction differently, which resulted in multiple treatments given. However, the strengths from Podlozny's (2000) meta-analysis override the weaknesses in Niedermeyer and Oliver's study.

Another pertinent finding was addressed in Smithrim and Upitis' (2005) study. Their study examined the effect of incorporating arts programs into an elementary school over a 3-year period. After analyzing the students' mathematical computation scores at the conclusion of the study, they found that the gains in the scores were evidence that the students' were highly engaged in school. The authors suggest that one possible reason they were highly engaged in school was due to their involvement in the arts program.

Duatepe-Paksu and Ubuz's (2009) study also examined the relationship between drama and mathematics. One significant finding was that through utilizing a dramatic-based instructional approach, they found that the students gleaned personal connection

with mathematics in which they had not before. “While studying the situations from real life, we understood when it is useful” (Duatepe-Paksu & Ubuz, p. 281). There were a few factors that threatened the internal validity of this study, such as low reliability coefficient values on one of the testing instruments utilized. It is also possible that the positive results found resulted because the drama-based instructional approach was novel instructional method. However, both Smithrim and Uptis (2005) and Duatepe-Paksu and Ubuz (2009) found that including drama-based instruction in the academic area of mathematics increased students’ engagement within that domain.

Kim and Hall’s (2002) study was significant because the findings suggest that role-play was an effective tool that aided the development of a second language. Overall, the findings from this section suggest that integrating the arts into other academic disciplines has a positive impact on the students’ ability to read, write, and speak (in either one’s native language or in a foreign language). While not explicitly addressed in any of the above studies, the overall findings support an argument for why the theatre arts should be part of the core curriculum in secondary education.

Cognitive Development

The arts are excellent vehicles for fostering thinking because they provide a sensory anchor (one can focus on a physical object as one thinks), they are instantly accessible (one can check one’s argument at any point by looking back at the work), they engage us and sustain our attention, and they encourage rich connections. (Moga, Burger, Hetland, & Winner, 2000, p. 91)

Are the arts “excellent vehicles for fostering thinking”? Are Moga et al. (2000) justified in their statement? Does involvement in the arts enhance cognitive development, and what evidence exists that supports this claim? In this section, I explore and analyze six such studies.

This section is broken down into three subsections: creative thinking, higher order thinking and constructing cognition. The first subsection consists of two studies (Luftig, 2000; Christie, 1983). Both Luftig (2000) and Christie (1983) utilized testing measures that examined the relationship between creative thinking and the arts. Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles's (2000) study stands alone in the second subsection. They examined whether or not cognitive skills, specifically higher order thinking, fostered through participation in the arts has an effect on cognition development. The final subsection is made up of three studies focused on how meaning and cognition are constructed. Gamwell (2005) examined how adolescents constructed meaning while exploring literature through artistic experiences. Similar to Gamwell (2005), Simon (2008) conducted a study to determine if various dramatic activities could be utilized to scaffold her students' understanding of complex texts. The final study in this section was by Ghiaci and Richardson (1980) in which they explored the effects of dramatic play on children's cognitive development.

Creative Thinking

Luftig (2000) conducted a quasi-experiment (pre-test/post-test control group design) to determine if there was a positive relationship between an arts infusion program, SPECTRA, and desirable educational outcomes, such as positive academic achievement, and creative thinking. He found that participation in the program had significant, positive effects on students' creative thinking and self-esteem.

Three groups from three different schools were researched and compared in this study – SPECTRA (experimental), a modified control group (participants received a new, innovative program unrelated to the arts), and a full control group (students received the standard curriculum offered by the school system).

Students who participated in the SPECTRA program engaged in a variety of activities (approached through interdisciplinary means), such as: making art, observing

art and the creative process, critiquing art, learning about art in a historical and cultural contexts, and learning about artistic materials.

Over a two-day period, participants in all three groups were tested (in a pretest/post-test design). On day 1, two tests were administered - *Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory* and *Appreciation of the Arts*. On day 2, the *Locus of Control Scale* and *Torrance Test for Creative Thinking* were administered. The students remained in their regular classes for the tests. The testing consisted of an experimenter reading the question aloud, and then students were instructed to answer only the current question (no going back or forward). The classroom teacher and at least one proctor remained in the room with the experimenter while the tests were administered. In each setting, the testing lasted between 30 – 45 minutes. To check for accuracy prior to conducting this study, Luftig (2000) performed a pilot study first with 77 students in three elementary grades over a 2-day period.

There were 615 elementary aged students, in grades 2, 4 and 5 who participated in this study. They were recruited from four elementary schools in two adjoining industrial and service economy cities in Southwest Ohio. Luftig (2000) only specified the racial demographic of African Americans in both school districts. No other racial/ethnicities or student demographics were mentioned.

The results from the testing suggest that participation in the SPECTRA program enhanced creativity, originality, and self-esteem. On the total creativity score, SPECTRA students scored significantly higher than two control groups ($p < .019$). For originality, SPECTRA students scored significantly higher than both control groups ($p < .0001$). These results indicate that creative thinking and originality were facilitated by involvement in the arts. The self-esteem test assessed social and parental self-esteem. The results were that SPECTRA students had higher social and parental self-esteem than the other two control groups (social: $p < .12$, parental: $p < .01$).

This study took place over a year, however in his study, Luftig (2000) only referred to the pre- and post-tests that occurred over a 2-day period. The lack of information as to what occurred over the whole year therefore complicates the internal validity. There was a pre- and post-test used in this study, but the researcher failed to state if the test utilized was the same in both instances. If it was the same test, there could be a complication to the internal validity due to the fact that the participants would know what to expect from the pre-test and therefore perform differently on the post-test. There also was no mention as to when during the school year the tests were administered. This factor could impact the results if they were administered at certain times of the year (for instance – during the first week of school, or right after students took a standardized test).

Another component that reflects a weak methodology is that participants were not randomly selected. In the full control group, the curriculum may or may not have included exposure to or use of the arts. This could be a complication if some of the students in the control group had prior access or exposure to the arts. The lack of thorough information and description clouds the validity of the full control group's results, as well as the researchers analyses of the findings.

The results of this study could be generalized to other settings similar to the one in which this study took place, in which the racial/ethnic and socio-economic demographic are comparable. The use of a modified control group controlled for the Hawthorne Effect. Luftig (2000) also provided thorough description of SPECTRA program, and was transparent to the various methods used. In addition, adequate information was given regarding each testing instrument utilized in the study.

Overall, the findings of Luftig's (2000) study suggests that an arts-infused program such as SPECTRA enhances students' ability to think creatively and originally, as well as has a positive impact on their social self-esteem.

Christie (1983) conducted two experimental treatments (play tutoring and skills tutoring) on four and five year olds to explore primarily the relationship between play tutoring and gains in cognitive performance, specifically on verbal intelligence and creativity. He found that when adults engaged with the children, both methods were effective and “resulted in stable gains in mental age and in ideational fluency” (Christie, p. 330).

Twenty participants were randomly chosen from two separate preschool classes, and then randomly assigned to either the experimental group (play tutoring) or the control group (skills tutoring). Both groups participated in 20-minute tutoring sessions over a nine-week period, with adult contact.

The school was located in a small, midwestern city. The participants were from predominantly low-income families; a majority was white, but there were also African Americans, Mexican-Americans and Native Americans distributed among the two treatment groups.

Each participant was tested prior to the treatment, immediately after the treatment, and three months after the treatment had been administered. Each participant was tested on three measures: play quality (Inventory adapted by researcher from Smilansky's *Sociodramatic Play six-element scale*), verbal intelligence (*Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test*) and creativity (*Torrance's -1981 - Thinking Creatively in Action and Movement test*). There were a total of five variables tested in each of the assessments: play quality, PPVT, TCAM-fluency, TCAM-originality and TCAM-imagination. The primary researcher, along with his two graduate research assistants, checked inter-rater reliability on the three different assessments (.84 – PPVT, .90 – TCAM, and .84 – test-retest). A graduate research assistant performed all the assessments, and another graduate assistant administered the treatment sessions. After each assessment, the

researcher and the assistant independently rated the play samples in order to check inter-rater reliability.

The play tutoring sessions were guided by Smilansky's methods on sociodramatic play and play tutoring. On Monday's, the play tutoring group was divided into two groups of five, and at different times, were taken to separate rooms that had various props or materials to aid them in their play sessions. These sessions consisted of the graduate assistant attempting to engage the students in sociodramatic play by providing themes and props. Four different themes were used: a grocery store, surgery at a hospital, a picnic in the country, and cooking a meal. The assistant observed the play sessions and would engage further if (according to Smilansky's play training procedures) any of the six sociodramatic play behaviors were missing. The two different strategies the assistant used were first, making comments and suggestions designed to encourage the use of specific play behaviors. If such suggestions were not successful with the students, the assistant would then actually take on a role in the play session, joining the children in the play and modeling the desired play behaviors.

The skills tutoring sessions were modeled after ones used in a Smith and Syddall study. Similar to the play tutoring group, on Wednesday's, the skills tutoring group was divided into two groups, and at different times, taken into separate rooms for their tutoring treatment. These treatments consisted of the graduate assistant engaging the children in specific activities that had a definite end in mind, such as art projects (making puppets) or games that taught concepts (front-back lotto). The focus and emphasis in these sessions was on making the objects in a certain, prescribed manner and on playing the games with a focus on winning. In these sessions, there was no attempt to engage the participants in make-believe or on enjoying the activities just for pleasure. The assistant attempted to engage these participants in the same amount and types of interactions as in the play tutoring treatments.

Christie (1983) found no significant differences between the two treatment groups, therefore signifying that both play tutoring and skills tutoring were effective methods in developing young children's cognition in intelligence and creativity. He also found that the gains in cognition appeared to be enhanced by the adult interaction in each treatment. He did find significant advances in both groups over the nine-week period on all the participants PPVT scores and TCAM-fluency scores ($p < .05$), and these gains still existed three months after the treatments had been given.

The two treatment groups were treated at different times – the experimental group had their sessions on Mondays and the control group's sessions occurred on Wednesdays. The fact that the participants were taken out of the classroom setting at different times throughout the nine-week study implies that the results could have been impacted by external variables not controlled for, such as the possibility of students conversing with each other about their various tutoring sessions.

Another factor to consider was that the researcher utilized the same tests for the pretest and both posttests. The testing methods were therefore a variable that could threaten the internal validity of this study. Experimental mortality was also a factor, as three participants left prior to completing the last posttest (which was administered three months after the study). The generalizability of the findings was extremely limited due to the small number of participants and that they all went to one preschool.

There was no control group used, even though researcher specified that the design of the study was in fact a control group design. This was a serious flaw in the presentation and the design of this study. Because there was no control group utilized, it is possible that any of the cognitive gains made during the study could have been influenced by variables not accounted for.

The findings from this study suggest that play tutoring was an effective strategy in developing young children's cognition, but that the traditional skills tutoring was also just as effective.

Higher Order Thinking

Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles (2000) examined whether or not cognitive skills, such as higher order thinking, developed through involvement in the arts have an effect on learning and cognition in general. Their design incorporated a broad spectrum of arts learning, and examined a diverse sample of arts programs and practices across a range of 12 different types of schools involving over 2000 children in grades 4, 5, 7 & 8.

The study consisted of 5 overlapping phases. During phase 1, the research team developed a preliminary taxonomy of learning in the arts to be the framework for their study. In phase 2, twelve elementary and middle schools were purposefully selected. Each school selected provided a mix of arts disciplines and approaches within those disciplines, were co-taught by their teacher and external specialists, and integrated arts into the general curriculum. Phase 3 consisted of interviews with teachers.

Phase 4 was the start of the quantitative investigation. The researchers utilized several standardized testing measures, as well as developing a few on their own. The students took two tests; one focused on creative thinking - *Torrance Test of Creative Thinking*, and the other was a self-concept test - *Self-Description Questionnaire-I*. In addition to the tests, each student completed a questionnaire describing their arts experiences. Classroom teachers also participated, responding to two questionnaires and to a rating scale that had been developed by the researchers - *Teacher Perception Scale* (reliability for the TPS scale was .94). The TPS scale examined the teachers' perceptions of students' imagination, risk-taking, expression, and cooperative learning. Principals and arts specialists were also interviewed during this phase.

Phase 5 was the start of the qualitative investigation. Of the 12 schools, 5 were selected. Data collection consisted of interviews with teachers, administrators and students, as well as observations and examination of children's artwork, performances and writing.

Lead researchers working within each school met weekly to compare data with the overall research team, which lead to preliminary qualitative conclusions. Researchers utilized qualitative analysis software that assisted them in numerically coding the interview transcripts and observational reports.

Overall, the research team found that students that participated in schools that were considered "arts-rich" had higher levels of cognitive capacities, such as elaborative and creative thinking, originality, and focused perception. They also found that those higher order competencies were accompanied by many dispositions, such as risk-taking, persistence in a task, and ownership of learning. The combined quantitative and qualitative data and analysis also suggests that a variety of factors contributed to students higher order thinking. Those factors included encouraging and flexible administrators, teachers who invested in their own professional development, and a curriculum that incorporated opportunities for integrating the arts.

The research team utilized a complex design (in the variables examined, the instrumentation, and analysis). They incorporated and compared both quantitative results with qualitative analysis, in order to determine the possible avenues through which cognitive capacities, such as elaborative and creative thinking, imagination and risk-taking, were impacted by arts learning.

The broad scope, both of the design and the participant sample, of this study lend itself to generalizable results. There was no mention in the study of an outside party's analysis of the data. Rather, there were numerable times the researchers mentioned the ways in which they collaborated to assess and analyze the data. The

researchers were transparent in the design and methodology used, the way they presented their data, and the means through which it was analyzed, therefore strengthening the credibility of their study.

Their qualitative design was not experimental, and therefore they based their results off their own theoretical view of how the world of public school and teaching operate. This was subject to personal and individual biases, even though they stated that they based their views on preexisting literature.

Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles (2000) suggested that it is not solely through integrating the arts into the academic curriculum that cognitive capacities and disciplines are expanded. They argue that each discipline (from science to math to history to drama) contributes in their distinctive ways to higher ways of thinking. They designed their study in response to numerable studies done in the 1980's and 1990's that were "framed by a unidirectional and linear model of learning in which certain capacities engendered in the arts are thought to travel to other subject disciplines and to be 'causal' in supporting enhanced learning" (Burton, Horowitz, & Abeles, p. 228). Their findings suggest that it is not through merely incorporating arts into other academic disciplines that cognition will be expanded, but rather that it requires expansive and flexible pedagogy, as well as a supportive administration.

Constructing Cognition

Gamwell (2005) conducted a phenomenological case study on how adolescents constructed meaning as they explored literature through a variety of artistic experiences. The findings of his study suggest that learning through the arts was a successful vehicle through which students could become actively engaged in the construction of their own learning.

Gamwell (2005) described his investigation as classroom action research in which he incorporated arts-based activities into his 8th grade language and literature

class (26 students). As a means of preparing his students for the study, Gamwell introduced them to a variety of exercises incorporating movement, visualization, drama, and conversation.

Throughout the course of the class, he provided structured activities alongside student art projects, in which the students were encouraged to represent their understanding of the literature through different art forms. Over the course of the class, artistic performance was also emphasized. Some examples of literature used in the classroom were: "In Flanders Field," "Six Blind Men and an Elephant," and several scenes from *Julius Caesar*. Some artistic activities he incorporated were integrating poetry with movement or dance, dramatizing an interpretation of a short story, or using dance as a stimulus for creative writing. In addition to these activities, participants completed two projects, one of which had to be completed as a group collaboration. The first was a soundtrack story in which the students selected a short classical music piece to interpret any way they chose. The second project was left up to the students to decide.

Throughout the study, he utilized a triangular approach of collecting data to determine how the students generated meaning and constructed their own learning. Data collection consisted of students' reflective journals, video and audio recordings, artifacts, observations, and interviews. Gamwell (2005) then analyzed the data against the backdrop of his theoretical framework, looking for themes that emerged from the experiences of the students in the arts-based classroom, and then compared those findings across the participants.

What he found was that through actively engaging in the creation of works of art, the students were able to explore their connection to the literature in new and creative ways. Also, since the participants were given flexibility and freedom to control their own artistic expressions, they were able to personalize their meaning making.

When examining this study, the existing relationship between the researcher and his students is something to consider. Their prior relationship and shared experiences limit the transferability of the findings onto other settings. The participant sample size was very small, and Gamwell (2005) provided no information or description of who his students were. He also made no mention of member checking his analysis with his participants, or utilizing a peer to debrief his conclusions. It is therefore highly plausible that personal bias existed within this study. The researcher also did not provide specific information as to the duration of the study, merely stating that it occurred over an extended period of time. It therefore was up to the reader to determine exactly what that means.

What this study did accomplish, however, was the presentation and perspective of adolescent voices. This study provided a window into the ways in which the arts activities enabled them to become actively engaged in the construction of their own learning, and also personally examine the ways in which their own cognition developed.

Simon (2008) conducted a case study similar to Gamwell's (2005), in which she examined the role of drama as a means to scaffold her students' engagement with complex texts. She found that the use of certain dramatic strategies enhanced her students' comprehension and engagement with a challenging text.

Simon (2008) developed and directed three different activities (guided role-play, points of contact, and collaborative reenactments) that she presented to her class as a means of scaffolding their understanding and connection with a complex text, Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*. The goal of these activities was to help the students have access to, as well as critically connect and reflect on the complicated themes presented in the text. Two of the three activities she developed utilized dramatic pedagogy – guided role-play and collaborative reenactments – therefore those activities are the ones I will focus on in my description and analysis.

The participants of this study were enrolled at a public university in New York City. This university had a strong history of serving the local community, particularly African American, Latino/a, first generation citizens, and those who had come to New York from all over the world; and the participants in her class reflected that diversity. The activities mentioned in the article were first developed and refined in high schools, but the specific case study focused on the experience of college students.

Simon (2008) utilized the role-play sessions as a pre-reading activity. Prior to conducting the role-play sessions, she asked her students to read the introductory paragraph of the text and share their responses. She then engaged her students in the guided-role play sessions, which were improvised and consisted of dramatizations and interactions relevant to those in the text. To scaffold this process, Simon provided prompts for her students that were similar to situations in the text, prompts that related to their current experience, as a way to connect their world with the text's world. Once the participants had engaged in the role-plays, she asked them to reread the introductory paragraph, with a discussion following.

Simon (2008) also employed the collaborative reenactment activity - first developed by Wilhelm, as a means to further deepen participants understanding. In this activity, Simon read aloud scenes and volunteer actors pantomimed his or her character's movements and interactions. After the performance, the students remained in character and were interviewed by the audience (the rest of the class).

Through discussions, and written reflections, Simon (2008) found that the role-play sessions gave her students a foundation they could use to make sense of the textual clues. Through the use of collaborative reenactments, she found that the story and characters came alive for the students, and that they valued the collaborative and inclusive nature of the activity. She also discovered that many of her students initially found the activity intimidating, and through gradual participation in the improvisations,

became more comfortable. She also found that, despite students' demonstrated understanding of the novel, certain critical components were missing in her pedagogy that could have enabled them to push beyond the text's surface level to a more critical examination and personal connection with the themes.

Similar to Gamwell's (2005) study, certain aspects of the design and methodology in Simon's (2008) study limit the transferability of the findings onto other settings and populations. Simon's role was as a participant observer, and as such, the relationship she had with her students is a variable that would be impossible to duplicate. She also provided no reference to member checks, therefore calling into question the confirmability of this study.

The researcher did provide an adequate description of the theoretical perspectives and research that informed her study. She presented the ways in which her pedagogical methods met the learning needs of her students, but also reflected on how those strategies could be embellished further to ensure greater student engagement. She was objective about her own strategies, and also transparent to her methods, therefore enhancing the trustworthiness of her study.

Overall, the findings of Simon's (2008) study highlight the complexity of stretching students' cognition in the classroom setting. She acknowledged that the use of her pedagogical choices engaged her students, and assisted in the development of their understanding the complex text. She also acknowledged that there were ways in which she didn't stretch the students enough, therefore suggesting that aiding students' cognitive development is a multilayered, multifaceted process, in which there is always room to grow.

Ghiaci and Richardson (1980) conducted a true experiment on the effects of dramatic play on young children's cognitive development. They found that participation

in intensive dramatic play sessions significantly improved in the number of constructs elicited by the students.

In order to detect the changes in the children's cognitive structure, researchers utilized the instrument of repertory grids on both groups. The participants were tested using these repertory grids immediately before the treatment, immediately after, and a follow up test one month after the treatment had been administered. The grids were elicited by asking each participant to categorize photographs of each of the children in his/her group (including a photograph of the individual participant). The child was then asked to sort the photographs into two piles and then to share the reason for their categorization. This sorting was repeated until the participant could think of no new distinctions.

Twelve children, between the ages 3 and 5, participated in this study. They all attended a nursery in Cambridge and had previously been acquainted with each other. Participants were assigned randomly to two groups, an experimental group (dramatic play) with three boys and three girls, and a control group (no special treatment) with four boys and two girls.

Ghiaci (1980) facilitated the dramatic treatment sessions, and they were based on the principles of child drama as outlined by Slade. The sessions lasted approximately one hour and were held on six successive weekdays. Each dramatic session was made up of five stages:

1. Participant independently acting out an event in a group setting – ex: pretend to be the sun rising
2. Participants divided themselves into pairs for a cooperative dramatic activity – ex: pretending to be sitting on a seesaw
3. Participants divided themselves into groups of three for a cooperative activity – ex: helping each other over an imaginary bridge

4. Participants divided themselves into two groups of two and enacted a short drama – ex: scenes involving children and parents
5. Same as Stage 1 – individual enacting an event in a group setting

The control group received no special treatment.

Overall, the experimental group showed a mean increase of 3.0 constructs from before the treatment to after the treatment. They showed an additional increase of 2.3 constructs on the follow-up test given one-month after treatment had been administered. This was significantly different from the control group, who actually showed a mean decrease of .6 constructs between the pretest and post-test immediately after treatment. There was an additional decrease of .6 in the follow up repertory grid.

Due to the small participant size, inadequate information and description provided about the participants, and the short duration of the study, the generalizability of the findings are extremely limited. There also was no reference as to whether or not participants had engaged in dramatic play prior to this study. The positive findings might be due to the use of a new treatment (dramatic activity) merely because it was a novel experience for the participants. The researchers also gave no description as to what occurred in the control group's treatment. The reader is therefore left to infer. Experimental mortality was not controlled, and therefore threatens the internal validity. Two participants were unable to participate in the third grid, and another refused to produce a second grid.

The researchers did provide an adequate description of the experimental treatment given. The use of random participant designation strengthened their methodology, in addition to the way they controlled for the testing. There also were no formal tests given during the study so there was no opportunity for the participants to become test wise.

Ghiaci and Richardson's (1980) findings indicate a significant improvement in the number of constructs elicited from the experimental group as a result of an intensive period of dramatic play, therefore suggesting that it is a successful pedagogical strategy that could aid in student cognitive development.

Each study analyzed in this section has findings significant to this paper. Luftig (2000) and Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles (2000) explored the impact of participation in arts programs on creative thinking. The findings from both studies suggest those students that participated in the arts programs had higher levels of cognitive capacities, such as creative thinking and originality. Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles also found that these higher order cognitive competencies were accompanied by dispositions such as ownership of learning and persistence in a task.

The last three studies in this section examined how students' constructed their own cognition. Gamwell (2005) found that when the students' were given the freedom to create their own works of art, they were able to personalize their meaning making. This finding supports Dewey's (1938) claim of the "importance of the participation of the learning in the formation of the purposes which direct his activities in the learning process" (p. 67). Gamwell's study provided a window into the ways in which the arts activities enabled the students to actively engage and construct their own learning.

Simon (2008) found that utilizing improvised role-play gave her students a foundation on which they could begin to make sense of challenging text. She also discovered that many of her students were initially intimidated by the task of improvising, and it was only through gradual participation that they became more comfortable. I mention this finding here because it is important to note that involvement in the theatre arts does challenge students to take risks and step out of their comfort zone. Some students, regardless of age, may not be open to certain demands of this domain. Ghiaci and Richardson (1980) had a similar finding to Simon, and they found that intensive

periods of dramatic play significantly improved the number of verbal constructs elicited by the students.

The three sections explored so far in this chapter examined the ways in which participation in dramatic arts impacted students' social, academic and cognitive development. The fourth and final section examines various theatre-based pedagogical strategies that have been implemented in the classroom setting.

Pedagogical Strategies

While each of the studies explored so far in this chapter addressed various pedagogical choices incorporating drama, or some form of the arts, this final section examines thirteen studies that explore methods through which those pedagogies were administered. The first subsection is made up of five studies that explore engagement (Stinson, 1997; Warner, 1997; Thomas, 2007; Barry, Taylor, & Walls, 1990; Dolezal, Mohan Welsh, Pressley, & Vincent, 2003), while the second examines imaginative teaching methods (Nielsen, 2006). The third subsection consists of four studies that examine the effect collaboration amongst educators has on student learning (Betts, 2005; Catterall, Dreyfus, & DeJarnette, 1995; Flynn, 1997; Nelson, Colby, & McIlrath, 2000). The fourth subsection has one study analyzing performance-based assessment measures (Oreck, Baum, & Owen, 2004); and the last subsection focuses on democratic methods and student choice (Gonzalez, 1999; McLauchlan, 2000).

Engagement

Educators come to their classrooms with unique backgrounds and experiences, and with diverse certifications and endorsements. Regardless of those differences, the vast amount of research on the topic suggests that all educators strive for their students to be engaged in learning. "For decades, educators, social scientists and researchers over the years have studied what aspects of schools and classrooms engage and disengage generations of youth" (Yonezawa, Jones, & Joselowsky, 2009, p. 192). These

authors go on to state “the amount of energy devoted to studying engagement makes sense given that many believe engagement is critical to academic success” (Yonezawa et al., p. 192). If engagement in the classroom environment is the necessary component to succeeding academically, and hopefully to learning, what research has been done on engagement within the public school classrooms? Following are descriptions and analysis of five studies that examine the nature of student engagement within various arts classroom environments.

Stinson (1997) conducted an ethnographic study to examine student engagement in three different middle school dance classrooms. She defined her research method as interpretive, stating that it is “concerned with questions of meaning rather than truth, with developing a language rather than proving or disproving a hypothesis” (Stinson, p. 51). Through her study, Stinson found that students were engaged in three different dimensions, and that whether or not the class was “fun” was a factor that contributed to their level of engagement.

For the duration of one full term in three different middle schools, Stinson (1997) interacted as participant observer with two dance courses per school. She purposefully selected the three schools and was well associated with each teacher prior to conducting her research. Each middle school consisted of different student demographics and class sizes (ranging from relatively large and crowded classes to smaller, more intimate class sizes); one was an alternative private school with a relatively wealthy population, another was a public school with middle class to welfare population; and the last was a public school with a more rural and somewhat less affluent population than the other public middle school.

Her data collection reflected triangulation; consisting of field notes, documents such as examinations and class handouts, and transcripts of interviews. At the conclusion of the term, she interviewed all students that were willing to participate, and

that had also returned the parental consent form. She interviewed a total of 52 students from the three schools, and the primary analysis in her study stemmed from these interviews. In each school, even though dance was an elective course, a number of the students were placed in the class because their other elective choices were full. In one of the three middle schools, Stinson observed a noticeable lack of student engagement (a large number of the students sat out during a part of the class, or other students appeared to go through some of the motions without much investment). In this particular school, her interview questions focused on what affected the students participation, or lack thereof.

From her observations and interviews, Stinson (1997) found that the students were engaged in three different dimensions. She utilized a triangular model of engaged experiences, as first described by Elizabeth Hirschman, as “aesthetic,” “escapist,” and “agentic.” Stinson addressed that a number of students found dance to be challenging, engaging and personally meaningful – an aesthetic engagement. Some other students approached dance class as an opportunity to goof off or “play around” – an escapist engagement. In this group, the students would participate as long as they felt like it. Other students found dance to be boring and no fun – an agentic engagement. These students were not intrinsically motivated to participate in dance, due to the fact that the class was an elective course, and not a required one.

More than these varying degrees of engagement, however, Stinson (1997) found that a factor that contributed to their connection with the class was whether or not they viewed it as “fun.” When prompted to explain what they meant, student responses ranged from dance class as a place to be social with friends; to having freedom – “making stuff up for yourself instead of doing what the teacher says to do” (Stinson, p. 54); to the degree of focus and concentration that was required – “it was fun to work hard: ‘I feel good about myself, to say that worked really hard on this” (Stinson, p. 58).

When prompted to define what they meant by the class not being fun, the responses ranged from the class not being relevant to their lives, they were just not interested in participating, or that they didn't value what the teacher was teaching.

Stinson (1997) acknowledged a variety of external variables that might have affected the outcomes of her study, and included statements from the students that supported them. For instance, in the middle school in which a majority of the students appeared to lack engagement, she addressed variables such as students not getting enough sleep and therefore being too tired to participate, or that they were so focused on personal concerns that participation in school courses was irrelevant. Stinson also acknowledged the limits of her study, and that her interpretive research methods were untraditional. She was consistent and transparent throughout her study that her focus was on understanding what factors contributed to student engagement, and throughout the process, the meaning of this was constantly in the process of being created, rather than a fixed entity. Therefore, she did not standardize the interviews, but allowed them to be fluid, determined by the individual student she was interviewing. She provided sample questions in an Appendix at the conclusion of the study, another reflection of her transparency. Stinson also provided various theoretical perspectives to support her conclusions as to the varying degrees of student engagement, and why it would be defined as "fun".

Stinson's (1997) student participant sample did reflect socio-economic and gender diversity, however she did not provide any other descriptions of the participants. She ensured student anonymity, however there was no mention that she checked with the participants as to the accuracy of her observations or the patterns she concluded from those observations. These factors show the lack of confirmability in her study, and therefore it is plausible that personal bias existed in the conclusions reached. Stinson

even stated that her conclusions on student engagement came from “her years of experience in the field of teaching dance, rather than from this particular study” (p. 65).

Stinson’s (1997) experience as a dance educator informed her research and the conclusions she reached. The design of her study was not traditional, in the sense that it involved personal reflection as a component of the methodology. Her research, though limited in scope and transferability, does shed light on the degree to which students engage with an activity with whether or not they perceive the activity as fun. These findings support Piaget’s theory of play, that it is a “valuable aspect of the child’s cognitive, social, and emotional development” (Singer & Revenson, 1996, p. 52).

Warner (1997) conducted a case study on student engagement in drama in which she observed seventh-grade students in their language arts classroom for the duration of a 15-week period. Her focus was to examine the process of student engagement in drama, and not merely the outcome of that engagement. From her observations, Warner identified four ways students’ engaged in the drama: talkers, processors, participant observers, and listeners/outsideers.

Warner’s (1997) role was as a participant observer, and she conducted her study in two phases. Phase 1 lasted a total of 12 weeks, and during that time she observed three different language arts classrooms; video recorded the participants in class, and took field notes. She developed the circle of engagement (a two-sided and colored circle placed on the students desks, which they turned over to signal their first moment of engagement in the activity) as a way to identify the moment they became engaged in the dramatic activity. During the first two weeks of her study, she carefully monitored the students in the classes, and based off the varied patterns of engagement, she selected 6 students to participate in a more detailed study – which involved making journal entries and completing written tasks. The journal entries were a way for students to record and reflect on their own internal engagement patterns. In Phase 2, she conducted personal

interviews of the selected participants, which took place 6 months after the 12-week observation period. Of the 6 students previously selected by Warner, only 4 were able to participate in the interviews. During this phase, she presented the video recordings from Phase 1, and gained insights from the participants as to their engagement experience with a reflective eye.

Warner (1997) utilized the Taxonomy of Personal Engagement (as defined by Morgan & Saxton) as a framework for her analysis. Through her observation however, she found that the categories of engagement defined by Morgan and Saxton applied only to students who were verbally or physically involved. Through her triangular research methods, she found that students engaged with the drama in four different ways: talking, processing, observing, and listening, but remaining on the outside. Her findings extend Morgan and Saxton's theory, in that the nature of engagement in drama does not solely exist with verbal or physical engagement. "Participants can be deeply engaged prior to appearance of physical and/or verbal evidence" (Warner, p. 38).

Warner's (1997) findings are to be taken with caution because there are a number of complications with this particular study. The method she developed (the circle of engagement) to determine the students first moment of engagement, is questionable. There also was no mention as to how Warner gained access to participants. This limits the transferability of this study. If she had previous relations with the teachers, or students, this might have impacted the students' level of engagement in the dramatic process and practices. She also provided no in depth information about the participants. She referred to each individually in her description of the four categories of student engagement, but only in the ways in which each participant engaged and fulfilled each particular engagement criteria. There also was no mention as to any member checks. In the study, she questions whether her interpretation of the data was accurate, but made no reference to checking with the participants for accuracy. This weakens the credibility

of this study, and of the findings. With no member checks, there is no guarantee that the researcher's personal bias was not a factor in her analysis.

Another complication was that there were a very small number of participants. Warner (1997) asked 6 students to participate in the interview portion of the study, however only 4 were able to do so. This fact suggests that the patterns of engagement she identified could only really apply to the participants of this study, and might not transfer to other settings or individuals. Also, due to the small number of participants, other kinds of engagement may not have been observed and therefore identified and categorized. Warner also provided very limited information as to the dramatic activities the students' engaged in. The lack of this information limits the confirmability of this study, as there was not enough information given so that if the study were to be replicated, there would not be enough information in order for it to be attempted.

Warner (1997) sought to explore the nature of engagement in drama, and though her findings were limited to the few participants she studied, they were still significant because they suggest that students' engage on many levels, whether it is visually apparent to an observer or not.

Thomas (2007) conducted a case study in which she examined the learning experiences and engagement that occurred in male adolescents who lived in a temporary shelter, and volunteered to participate in a printmaking workshop one evening a week for 10 weeks. She found that students' actively engaged in the printmaking because it was an authentic experience, and this engagement enhanced the ways they dialogued with their peers and instructors about being an artist, as well as about the artistic process.

Thomas (2007) was engaged with the printmaking workshop for two years, however the focus and analysis of this particular study was on one semester, lasting 10 weeks. Her role was as participant observer during these workshops, and she gathered

field notes, collected interviews with audio taped recordings of the workshop. She utilized interpretive and discourse analysis procedures, including “preliminary coding of field notes drawn from observations and interviews as well as beginning the process of identifying patterns within the data” (Thomas, p. 777). She transcribed her audio taped interviews utilizing the methods of Gumperz. After the data collection ended, she organized and analyzed her transcriptions and codings.

Thomas (2007) found that students were engaged when they were able to participate in authentic learning experiences, and when they were able to have positive relationships and connections with peers and adults. From her observations, Thomas identified that these positive relationships were the foundation on which a community of printmaking practitioners could be built, and that the discourse that existed in this community impacted the degree to which the students would engage.

She utilized a triangular method of research (combining field notes based on participant observation and interviews with audio taped recordings of the printmaking workshops). Through her prolonged engagement with the workshop (over two years) – she was able to test and retest of her assumptions and possible biases.

Similar to other studies, Thomas (2007) had a small number of participants, and only one community workshop space was observed. Due to the specificity the participants (disenfranchised African American young men living in a temporary shelter), as well as the setting of this study, the transferability of the findings onto other populations and locations is limited. The biggest complication to this study however was that there was no reference to member checking with the participants of the study. This lack of checking for accuracy limits the credibility of this study.

Even though this study was limited in its scope by economic and organizational contexts, it does offer strategies for educators interested in developing student ownership in a classroom setting, regardless of the specific domain.

While the practices reported here are unlike the routines in many classrooms, they are consistent with previous research suggesting that people learn best when thinking is shared aloud, when hidden processes are made visible, and when even unskilled participants have access to information about how all the parts work together. (Thomas, 2007, p. 790)

Thomas' observations of the social interaction and discourse between the teachers and students, and the degree to which that impacted their level of engagement, supports Dewey's theory of educative experiences as a social process, "in which all individuals have an opportunity to contribute and to which all feel a responsibility" (Dewey, 1938, p. 56). Overall, Thomas' findings suggest that when students are encouraged to be actively involved in an artistic community of practice, which embraces respectful discourse and interactions with peers and instructors, engagement and an internal motivation to participate are likely to result.

Barry, Taylor, and Walls (1990) conducted an ethnographic study to examine if involvement in arts courses (including drama, dance, music, and visual art) is associated with lowered high school dropout rates. They found that participation in the arts had an impact upon many students' decisions to remain in school.

The researchers conducted their study in three phases. During phase 1, they reviewed recent literature to define criteria for the at-risk student and to identify implications for the arts in dropout prevention programs. In phase 2, they interviewed and surveyed Florida high school administrators (N = 28), teachers (N = 85), and at-risk students (N = 40) to identify aspects of arts courses that seemed to be the most effective in motivating students to remain in school. Phase 3 consisted of observing at-risk students, both in arts and non-arts courses, at seven selected high schools. The schools were purposefully selected on the basis of: recommendation by teachers, administrators and state department officials and/or successful performance at arts events and

festivals. Programs designated as “arts schools”, such as magnet schools or special arts academies, were also included in the study.

Through a series of interviews conducted during phase 2 of the study, 70% of administrators reported cases in which student participation in the arts influenced them to stay in school. 89% of teachers stated that they were aware of specific instances that impacted a student’s attendance in school due to their participation in arts programs. The at-risk students who responded to the interview questions supported the administrator and teacher perspectives. Observations of at-risk students in the school environment supported the above claims, 83.9% of students were more consistent with staying on-task during arts classes, compared with 73.3% during their non-arts courses.

Without exception, the arts teachers and the administrators agreed that for the majority of their at-risk students, involvement in the arts had played, and is playing a big role in delaying (and perhaps eliminating) the student’s decision to leave school. The observation team noted that many times the at-risk student excelled in an art area, and in all these instances the students gained considerable self-confidence, which sometimes seemed to spill over into other classes and the school in general. (Barry, Taylor, & Walls, 1990, p. 28)

The patterns Barry, Taylor, and Walls (1990) addressed and analyzed came from three different perspectives, those of administrators, teachers and the students themselves. The researchers use of this triangular approach was an effective means for checking the accuracy of the patterns deduced from their observations. According to the teachers, the at-risk students remained in school because of the social interaction, camaraderie and performance expectations that come from being identified as part of an arts group or performance ensemble. There appeared to be an agreement between what the teachers observed and what the students experienced. From the student perspectives, specific factors that contributed to student motivation and engagement in

arts classes were: keen interest in the arts, social interactions, and creative satisfaction. Another factor highlighted was the discipline that was required to participate in the various arts courses. When asked about the effect of a drama class on motivation, one student shared “I had parts in plays, so I couldn’t drop out and disappoint everyone, especially the teacher. Plus, theatre will help me later in life, so I decided to get as much as possible” (Barry, Taylor, & Walls, p. 14).

This particular study was an abridged version of a larger report, and due to this fact, there were components missing such as the identifiable characteristics of the participants (such as gender and socio-economic status), and whether or not any participants dropped out during the research. The students in this study represented an extreme participant sample, therefore limiting the transferability of the findings onto other populations. The results might be dramatically different or influenced if they were applied to other participant demographics.

The researchers did adequately acknowledge the limitations of their research and specifically stated that “the results should not be generalized to all schools in Florida; however, they can be interpreted as data which can direct the design of future research in this important area” (Barry, Taylor, & Walls, 1990, p. 29). The authors also provided a thorough Appendix, depicting verbal and survey responses from students, which supported the conclusions reached and aided in the credibility of the research.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not there was a relationship between participation in arts courses and retention of high school students at risk, and the findings suggest that there is. The researchers made no reference as to why that might be the case, suggesting for further research to be done in that area. Overall, the conclusions made were appropriate to the participant sample, the type and duration of the study, and the findings. Therefore, this study suggests that participation

in arts courses does have the potential to motivate at-risk students to remain and engage in their high school experience.

Dolezal, Mohan Welsh, Pressley, and Vincent (2003) conducted a qualitative study during which they sought to develop a grounded theory on how third grade teachers motivate their students. What they found was that engaging teachers do much to motivate their students, and utilize many strategies and mechanisms to do so.

This study took place over the course of one academic year, and the research team observed nine third grade teachers. 8 different elementary schools participated, and they were all Catholic schools. The schools were located in two towns in Indiana and encompassed a broad range of socio-economic levels in the region, from poverty to upper-middle class.

The third-grade teachers that agreed to participate were nine women, most having some graduate units in teaching beyond the bachelor's degree. The years of teaching ranged from 5 to 23, and the class size ranged from 10 to 28 students. The racial demographic of the students consisted mainly of white students, with a few minority students. There was one classroom in particular that had mainly minority students.

The researchers observed each teachers classroom three times per month, for approximately one hour per session, and typically, there were 2 or 3 researchers in the classroom at once. They visited each classroom until no new insights came about. During the field observations, they tried to take verbatim notes of what the teachers and students were saying in regards to motivation. Also, to ensure accountability, every 10 – 15 minutes each researcher noted the time and what students were doing, in addition to individually determining whether students were on-task, and calculating the percentage of students actively and appropriately doing academic work at that time.

As they documented teachers' practices, they spent more time in the classrooms where the students were the most engaged. Data was collected through field notes from these observations, teacher interviews, and student work samples.

Throughout their observations, they noticed three clusters of teachers, those with low, moderate and high levels of engagement in their classrooms.

The low engaging classrooms consistently showed low on-task behavior, in addition to low cognitive task demand. The researchers also noticed that in these classrooms, the teachers had classroom management problems, poor instructional methods, and negative classroom atmospheres.

The moderately engaging classrooms showed better on-task behavior, but provided low cognitive tasks. The research team noted that the teachers in these classes utilized more effective classroom management techniques, along with focused instructional methods and positive classroom atmospheres.

The highly engaging classrooms showed consistent on task behavior, as well as provided cognitively challenging tasks. The teachers did more than motivate their students, they were competent classroom managers, were able to balance a variety of curriculum and instructional approaches, and were able to connect to the larger communities, especially to parents. What the research team found was that the highly engaging classes were attributed to many mechanisms and practices that supported motivation. Some of these observed practices were: accountability and high expectations, appropriate homework, classroom adult volunteers, clear goals/directions, connections across the curriculum, drama, and many, many more. (Researchers provided an Appendix with specific examples and descriptions of each of these practices).

Through observing, and later categorizing the engagement levels of the classrooms, the researchers defined engaged students as enthusiastic about

participating in class (raising hands to volunteer and answer questions). They also noticed that students in the highly engaging classes frequently went above and beyond the teacher's expectations, and exhibited pride in their work. Students in these classrooms also engaged in the classroom routines and procedures without being prompted by the teachers to do so.

The researcher team was very transparent as to their methodology. By utilizing multiple observers in each classroom, as well as in the analysis process, individual bias was eliminated and the findings were confirmable. The researchers came to a complete agreement on how the observed instructional practices could be categorized, as well as how they would describe the motivational practices. They also decided that no conclusion would be made about a teacher until all the researchers agreed on it. There was prolonged observation in this study, which supporting the credibility of the findings. In addition, due to the prolonged observation, what was observed in the classroom was natural interaction between teacher and students.

Researchers also created summaries of their interviews with the teachers and presented those summaries to the teachers for their comments, critiques or confirmations. This proves that the motivational practices they observed were consistent with the teachers' own interpretations.

It is questionable if the findings of this study would be transferable to other settings, mainly because the settings were solely in elementary Catholic schools.

The significant findings of this study suggest that in order for students to be wholly engaged in the classroom environment, the classroom teacher must incorporate a variety of strategies, practices and mechanisms to aid them in this process. Incorporating drama appeared to be one successful pedagogical practice, however, it was one of many.

Imaginative Teaching Methods

Nielsen (2006) conducted an ethnographical and hermeneutic phenomenological case study to examine the pedagogical approach of imaginative teaching, as developed by Steiner. He found that the use of this pedagogy engaged the participants in an imaginative 'mode', seemingly bridging their daily consciousness with learning objectives and inner significances.

Over the duration of nine weeks, Nielsen (2006) observed 83 elementary aged students (in grades 3, 4 and 5), in three different schools. Teachers who had been trained in the Steiner 'imaginative' teaching method taught each classroom. The three primary schools were purposefully selected, and were located in Australia; one was in a rural setting, another the inner city, and the last was in the suburbs. The participants of this study were mainly Anglo-Saxon, and the socioeconomic demographics ranged from lower to middle class.

Nielsen's (2006) role was as participant observer, and the primary source of his data was through observing the imaginative teaching method in the three classroom environments. His analysis was also based off interviews with teachers, in which he utilized the 'constant comparative method'.

From his observations, Nielsen (2006) identified seven imaginative teaching methods: drama, exploration, storytelling, routine, arts, discussion, and empathy. He introduced each of the methods with a phenomenological 'moment' he observed in the classrooms, followed by a short analysis.

For the purposes of this paper, the findings presented here were from the 'moment' identified by Nielsen (2006) in which the teacher utilized drama to engage students. Nielsen did state that throughout the course of his study, he observed each teacher incorporate a variety of the imaginative teaching methods. However, he did not

provide any further examples of which he observed the incorporation of drama, so it is the one particular lesson that I will focus on.

During the lesson, the teacher presented a dramatic imaginative activity to expand her students understanding of nouns. The students volunteered to sit in front of the class, as an astronaut just landing on an unknown planet, and describe to the rest of the class what they saw, without using nouns. One by one, students attempted to provide a description of what they observed without using nouns, with each attempt heightening laughter, curiosity and engagement from the rest of the class. After several unsuccessful attempts, the teacher then provided a description of why the activity was so challenging. She then had the students go through the same activity, but the second time, with the use of nouns.

From this observation, Nielsen (2006) found that one component of dramatic imagination was that it engaged the participants in a “feeling charged experience” (p. 253) of the specific learning content.

One of the biggest challenges in analyzing this study was due to the methodology used. The findings and analysis were all based off observations (no triangulation) of determining when children’s imaginations were engaged. This does not appear to be something easily observed from an outside perspective. Nielsen (2006) did identify various physical behaviors that enabled him to make inferences about student imagination.

One way in which the design and methodology might have been strengthened to greater support Nielsen’s (2006) findings would have been to include interviews with the students. That might have been one way to actually verify if his observations and analysis were accurate. Another complication to this study was that there was no mention of member checking with the participants, which seriously threatens the credibility.

The study was peer debriefed, therefore limiting the existence of personal bias in the conclusions reached. The researcher was transparent in his presentation of his methods and data collection. He stated that he remained in each classroom environment until he had conceptual saturation, in which no new information or concepts emerged from the data. He also provided an adequate description of the theory and existing research supporting his study. While the participant sample size was moderate and the specific focus on imaginative teaching limits this study's transferability, the incorporation of three different settings, providing a socioeconomic range of participants, enhances the transferability of the findings onto other settings.

Only the specific findings from one observation and classroom environment were presented. From that one situation, however, it appears that the pedagogical choice of incorporating an imaginative dramatic activity challenged and engaged the students in that individual classroom.

Collaboration between Educators

Betts (2005) conducted a formative multiyear study to examine the long-term and residual effects of incorporating the arts in one middle school's English and Social Studies classrooms. He found that the drama activities were well received by the cooperating teachers, and that they found including drama to be an effective strategy to aid in students literary development.

Betts (2005) studied the collaboration between an experienced theatre-teaching artist and four participating teachers in a middle school in Arizona. The theatre-teaching artist had over 20 years experience of working with teachers in classrooms and teaching creative drama and theatre arts to all ages. The middle school was located in a part of town characterized as low socio-economic status, and the student demographic make up was predominantly Mexican/Latin American.

The school had implemented a program called 6+1 Traits Writing Program, which the theatre-teaching artist adapted to become an interdisciplinary program incorporating drama. This adapted program incorporated process-oriented theatre exercises, such as physical and verbal warm-ups, as well as a variety of drama games, as an alternative approach to assist students writing. Another large component of the collaborative work between the participating teachers and the theatre-artist in this study regarded the school's anti-bullying program. The arts council chose to sponsor an anti-bullying play to be performed by a professional children's theatre company at the school in the spring. Once the script became available, the cooperating teachers worked with their students on reading and understanding the play. The theatre-artist then worked with the classes on acting out different scenes of the play, in addition to dialoguing about and creating a written rubric for evaluating the performance.

During the course of the school year, Betts (2005) observed the theatre-teaching artist, following him into different classrooms. He also dialogued with the participating classroom teachers. Classroom documents and artifacts produced by the students (ex: writing samples and posters) were also collected and examined for signs of the programs influence.

In regards to the dramatic pedagogy's impact on the students writing, no significant increases in the students written test scores were found. At the end of the study, however, three of the four participating teachers chose to continue with the Writing Through Drama Program. They suggested that drama appeared to be a successful way to engage the students in the writing process. One of the teachers also stated, in reference to the theatre-teaching artists involvement, "He was able to encourage my students to participate in the learning process by using both their mind and body" (Betts, 2005, p. 28). In addition, at the conclusion of the study, the three teachers that chose to continue with the program stated that they felt empowered to use

some of the drama activities with their classes independently of the teaching artist. This suggests that the collaboration and interaction with the theatre-teacher was one that benefited their pedagogy.

Betts (2005) clearly described his theoretical positioning, and used a triangular approach in gathering data. His study reflected prolonged and substantial engagement, as well as persistent observation, therefore strengthening the credibility. He made no specific reference to checking his findings with the participants, however throughout the study, he stated “our analysis”, “our research”, and “this study allowed us (this researcher, the classroom teachers, and the teaching artist)” (Betts, p. 18). This terminology therefore suggests that the writing and analysis of the study was a collaborative effort between Betts and the teacher participants.

The use of one school, as well as the small participant sample size does limit the transferability of the findings onto other settings.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that collaboration between teachers and an artist-in-residence, as well as the incorporation of dramatic activities into core academic curriculum, has the potential to engage students in new and challenging ways, as well as aid the development of their literary capabilities.

Catterall, Dreyfus, and DeJarnette (1995) conducted an evaluation study on the impact of an integrated, interdisciplinary curriculum and teacher development program on student learning. They found that the program had lasting positive effects on student content knowledge and engagement.

The program investigated was titled Different Ways of Knowing (DWoK), and it existed within the Rosemead School District in southern California. There were four elementary schools in the District, with a total of 3050 students, 91 teachers, and 4 principals. Two thirds of the students were from economically disadvantaged families,

and about a third were considered to possess limited English proficiency. In addition, 28 different home languages were represented in the student body.

As part of DWoK, all teachers in the district participated in professional development activities that included four district-wide learning days, ongoing guidance and assistance, and support study groups where teachers were able to connect with and dialogue with other teachers in their same grade levels. These professional development activities served to equip the teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary in order to implement an integrated and inter-disciplinary curriculum.

In order to determine the effect of the professional development activities and whether or not they resulted in changes in instructional practices, teachers and administrators were interviewed and surveyed. The research team found that 92% of teachers had changed the quality and content of their curriculum in ways that increased students' levels of engagement.

To assess whether or not the professional development contributed to gains in student content knowledge, the researchers gave Rosemead and comparison-group students opportunities to demonstrate social studies content knowledge through written problem solving exercises. They found that the Rosemead students consistently outperformed the comparison students in social studies content knowledge. Another finding was that students' in the Rosemead district demonstrated a consistent increase in content knowledge over the three years of participation in the DWoK program.

The research team also observed 146 lessons over the course of the study. What they found was that 96% of observed teachers and students engaged in some activities that fell within interdisciplinary learning. Specifically in regards to my paper, they observed social studies being integrated with the performing and visual arts in 28% of the lessons.

While this is not a critique of the study, it is important to note that what was reviewed was an executive summary of the whole report. Therefore, vast information was not accessible, and open to critique. Most importantly, the design and methodology of the study was not included. In addition, there was no mention of member checking. The summary only presented the highlights of the full evaluation report. Other information not included in the summary included descriptions of the various activities engaged in during the course of the study, examples of the student work that had been produced for various assessments, as well as samples of teacher and administrator comments.

The findings presented in this summary suggest that adequate time and training, especially in regards to teachers connecting with and learning from each other, is beneficial, and that collaboration has the potential to have a positive impact on student learning. The findings also suggest that an interdisciplinary approach that is inclusive of the artistic disciplines has the potential to increase students' levels of engagement.

Flynn (1997) conducted a case study on the process and effects of collaboration between a classroom teacher and a drama specialist and the implementation of creative drama on a reading/language arts curriculum. She found that the collaboration produced a valuable, motivational tool – creative drama strategies that could be interwoven within curricular guidelines in reading/language arts instruction.

Over the course of seven months, Flynn (1997) (the drama specialist/participant observer) and the collaborating teacher worked together in the teacher's fifth-grade classroom. They developed and facilitated 19 creative drama activities designed to meet the reading/language arts curriculum objectives. Some of the creative drama strategies utilized were: freeze frames, group role, improvisation, mime, role drama, panel discussions, tableau/still image and teacher-in-role. These strategies were used in conjunction with a variety of novels, such as *The Sign of the Beaver* (Speare 1983) and

From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler (Konigsburg 1967), as well as vocabulary list words, poetry, persuasive writing, and oral speaking and listening.

The collaborating teacher was beginning her eighth year of teaching elementary, and prior to the study, had taken no drama or theatre courses or workshops. In order to prepare her for using creative drama in her pedagogy, Flynn (1997) conducted a three-hour tutorial on creative drama four weeks prior to the start of the school year.

Students were not the focus of this study, and therefore limited information was provided. The fifth-grade class consisted of 27 students, 15 boys, and 12 girls. Four students were Asian-American, four students were African American, and two were hearing-impaired and required an interpreter. The school was located in an upper-middle class suburban neighborhood.

Flynn (1997) gathered data in a variety of ways. She utilized her field notes, self-reflections (by both herself and the cooperating teacher), interviews with the cooperating teacher (which were later transcribed), as well as audio and video tapes of seven of the creative drama sessions. Once collected, all the data was analyzed, interpreted, and organized into key coding categories.

Overall, Flynn (1997) found that the 19 creative drama sessions were productive and motivating. She also found (based on her and the cooperating teacher's reflections), that the collaboration allowed both individuals to gain from each other's fortes and experiences, therefore strengthening their individual pedagogies. Specifically, the collaborating teacher gained new insights into creating curriculum that integrated creative drama strategies, in addition to the ways in which incorporating creative drama prompted dialogue and discussion that had instructional value. Flynn learned that the incorporation of visuals, such as lists, charts, and diagrams, into creative drama work, aided in the students comprehension of the material. She also learned that preparing the students for their roles in the creative drama, through discussions, and composing and

answering questions, was worthwhile and helped the students gain a greater understanding of their roles.

When analyzing this study, there was much to take into consideration. First, the study began by stating that the students were not a focus of this research. However, to determine the effectiveness of their collaboration, they depended on reactions and responses from the students. There appears then to be a wide gap between the focus of the study (on collaboration between teacher and specialist) and the conclusions reached (which required student input and response). This gap is significant and threatens the credibility of this study.

There also was no mention of how the researcher gained access to the participants, or how the collaborating teacher was chosen to participate. Nor was there any information on how the collaborators decided who was going to lead what activity. In addition, the source of data, being one classroom and one collaborative inquiry, limits the transferability of the findings onto other settings.

Flynn (1997) did utilize a triangular approach to gather data. She also provided thorough descriptions of each of the creative drama strategies, as well as a descriptive display of the 19 sessions. This display included the date of each session, the curriculum components, the session leader and what the dramatic action consisted of. This thorough description supports confirmability. Also, the cooperating teacher examined all the data collected over the course of this study, as well as the analysis, in order to ensure accuracy. This also eliminated the existence of personal bias in the conclusions reached.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that incorporation and collaboration between a drama specialist and a collaborating teacher, in which they utilized the strategy of creative drama and playable dramatic action, did in fact contribute to strengthening their individual pedagogies.

Nelson, Colby, and McIlrath (2000) conducted an ethnographic study on the effects of using role in classroom drama lessons with underachieving urban middle school students. They found that the drama lessons had a positive impact on the students' overall behavior, as well as on their engagement levels throughout the process.

The research team was made up of two ethnographers, a drama specialist and a Language Arts teacher. The teacher collaborated with the researchers in the planning of the drama lessons, and also participated in the role-play the students engaged in. There was frequent discussion and analysis between the research team throughout the study.

The research team created five drama lessons, each lasting one hour, and they were specifically created with student interest and competence at handling the drama experiences in mind. These lessons were interventions, and were conducted separately from the Language Arts curriculum. They were brought in for one hour a day for five days over three weeks. In creating the lessons, the research team focused on the social and emotional issues that were to be addressed. Any academic curriculum concerns were secondary in the development of the lessons.

Each drama lesson involved the "mantle of expert" strategy (first developed by Morgan and Saxton, 1987). This strategy conferred authority onto the students, and in their role, they were the experts. It was also designed to foster higher order problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

The mantle of expert strategy was purposefully selected due to the nature of this class. There were regular fights, and the researchers stated that the biggest behavioral problems the school had were from students in this class. There were a total of 17 students, 14 males and 3 females. They were from a variety of backgrounds including African American, Dominican, Haitian and Jamaican, and ranged in academic abilities, from non-readers (as classified in school system) to reading and writing at grade level.

According to state standards, the majority of the students were significantly below expected proficiency. These students also faced a variety of social problems, including students in foster care, living with grandparents, or were homeless.

The drama sessions the students engaged in consisted of first selecting their own roles. They were then presented with real world problems through which they would interact with each other and the teacher in role. Through this improvisation and interaction, they would come up with a solution to the problem.

The roles selected by the students for the five dramas were: faculty members of an alternative school, college students, grand jurors, family therapists and social workers, and army personnel. The students solved problems that involved discrimination in one form or another. The dramas introduced real-life situations that the students were familiar with, such as “school-based discrimination, racial discrimination, the court system, foster care and peer “capping” (making harsh jokes to put each other down)” (Nelson, Colby, & McIlrath, 2000, p. 62).

The researchers chose to use the “mantle of the expert” drama strategy as a way to reverse the negative expectation and achievement motivation that the students experienced. Through their lessons, they also incorporated the concept of cooperative, rather than competitive, learning structures as a means to improve student academic achievement and interpersonal relationships.

One week after the last drama lesson was conducted, the researchers interviewed all participating students, either individually or in small groups, as a way to assess what they learned, how the dynamic of the class was impacted and why they thought the dramas worked the way they did. They also interviewed the classroom teacher.

The analysis of the findings presented in study consisted of observations of the two ethnographers, the perceptions of the drama specialist and the classroom teacher,

and the students' self-reports on the experience. From this analysis, the research team identified four themes that emerged as a result of using the "mantle of the expert" drama strategy with the students. Each theme highlighted the engaging and empowering impact the intervention (drama strategy) had on the students.

Over the course of the lessons, the social dynamics of the class progressively changed, and there was a significant shift in student behavior (from playing with paper cell phones the day before the first lesson to committed, focused, cooperative work with fellow classmates). The mantle of expert strategy also gave the students freedom to express their individual perspective, and they then showed heightened engagement in the drama lessons. In addition, the lessons provided those students with lower reading levels to express their cognitive process – through verbalizing their thoughts. The lessons also gave students a certain amount of choice, which impacted their engagement in the lessons. "They were allowed to vote on whether or not they wished to participate in the dramas and they were allowed to define their own roles within the parameters of the situation" (Nelson, Colby, & McIlrath, 2000, p. 65). Finally, because the drama lessons were each based in a real-life situation to which the students could relate, such as school-based discrimination or child custody issues, they were more motivated and willing to participate in the lessons.

The use of only one classroom, in addition to the students representing an extreme population, limits the transferability of the findings from this study onto other settings. There also was no mention of how the researchers gained access to the school or the particular teacher. All that was provided was that they approached the teacher and asked her if she would participate in the study.

The researchers did provide an adequate description of the theoretical perspectives, as well as the existing research, that supported their study. The findings from this study are also credible, and appear to be the effect of the methodology used. In

addition, both the process and the product of the data collection and analysis were auditable by an outside party, therefore strengthening the confirmability.

The findings from this study suggest that the collaboration between educators, as well as the implementation of the mantle of expert intervention, was successful in dramatically shifting the learning behavior of one particularly challenged group of students.

Performance-Based Assessment

Oreck, Baum, and Owen (2004) conducted a quasi-experiment on the reliability and possibilities of talent-based assessments. Over the course of their study, they found that some form of artistic talent existed within virtually every student, regardless of previously identified talent or experience.

Over the course of three years, the researchers examined the Theater Talent Assessment Process (TTAP), which was designed to assess the potential theatre talent of all students, as well as identify those students ready for advanced instruction. Their definition of talent was founded on Renzulli's Three Ring Conception of Giftedness.

The three schools chosen for this study underwent an extensive application and interview process. The research was approved under the Javits grant and had to abide by its guidelines – the schools must represent areas of low socio-economic status, with an under-identified gifted population. One fourth-grade class in a public elementary school in Queens, New York, was selected as the site of the initial test. Only theater talent was assessed in the initial test. Two elementary schools in Cleveland and Hamilton, Ohio were selected as the sites of the expansion study, and one third and one fourth grade class were assessed in dance, music and theater.

To prepare classroom teachers for the talent-based assessments, the research team provided a two-hour training workshop, in addition to assessor discussions immediately following the five testing sessions.

The testing procedure focused on talent in acting, directing and playwriting. Each class as a whole engaged in four assessment sessions developed and led by two trained teaching artists. Each session lasted 30 – 45 minutes and consisted of two primary activities. The first activity was a warm-up exercise to encourage spontaneity, and the second was a structured improvisation with a focus on acting, directing or playwriting. The teaching artists had two main roles in these sessions, actively leading activities and filling out observation forms. They alternated between these two roles, therefore ensuring that students were observed at all times. Three assessors (two teaching artists and one classroom teacher/specialist) rated all the students on the testing instrument, the Observation Tally Sheet. (On the initial test conducted in New York, interrater reliability among the three assessors ranged from .55 to .74. Over the course of the study, reliability coefficients between assessors improved, with a .87 interrater reliability on the expansion study.) The final scores for each student were computed from the total of all assessors for all sessions, and then the top student from each classroom got invited back for another callback session.

Over the duration of the performance-based assessment process, the researchers found some form of talented behavior in almost every student. They then suggest that utilizing a performance-based talent assessment could result in a variety of positive effects. “Students can become aware of their own strengths and interests, teachers can observe and tap into the creative and artistic abilities of their students, and parents can become more motivated to pursue arts instruction for their children” (Oreck, Baum, & Owen, 2004, p. 161).

Oreck, Baum, and Owen (2004) provided adequate information of the underlying theories and research supporting their study. They also provided thorough descriptions of the participants in both testing sites, including socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnicities

and gender. The events in this study were under public observation, and therefore the findings were reached objectively.

This study did utilize a weak methodology. There was no random designation of participants, and there was also no control group included. Experimental mortality was a factor (10% of students left the program over the course of the study), and therefore threatened the internal validity. Also, even though there was a large participant sample size, the use of only three schools limits generalizability of the findings onto other settings.

The findings from this study suggest that the active participation required in a performance-based assessment gave students an opportunity to explore and express their ideas and feelings. Another relevant finding was that over the course of the assessment sessions, almost every student exhibited some form of talented behavior.

Democratic Methods and Student Choice

Gonzalez (1999) conducted an ethnographic study to examine how “democratic” directing methods might help high school students collectively become empowered in the artistic process during after school play rehearsals. She found that while the concept of a complete “democratic” rehearsal process seemed possible, that in fact, in the traditional high school setting, it was unattainable. “Directors must recognize that a play rehearsal process structured with a director and a cast of actors is an arena in which ideal democracy probably can never occur” (Gonzalez, p. 19). She also found that the use of certain pedagogical strategies aided in student ownership of the rehearsal process and production.

Gonzalez (1999), in her third year of teaching drama at the school, selected Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew* for her after school production in which she would examine the possibility of a “democratic” rehearsal process, in which students would be more empowered than in a “traditional” rehearsal process. Prior to the process

beginning, and as a means to involve the students as thoroughly as possible, she predetermined that she must utilize empowerment strategies and unconventional staging techniques in order to achieve some form of a “democratic” rehearsal process.

The student empowerment strategies she incorporated were:

- Students would cast themselves – she planned to cast any student who could commit to the rehearsal process, regardless of experience
- Students would reflect on their experience by writing in journals throughout the process
- Students would share their own perspectives and opinions in the note sessions – this would not be solely a director providing notes experience

The unconventional staging techniques were:

- Students would “triple” each character role, and three different casts would perform the play simultaneously (that way each student that wanted a role would receive one)
- No stage manager would be used – Gonzalez (1999) called the technical elements for the performances, while the actors assumed the other roles; such as maintaining blocking notes, organizing actors, observing the production development, and orchestrating actors before and during the technical rehearsals and performances
- Students would overlap lines of dialogue as a means of transitioning from one actor to another
- Students could participate in the design elements by choosing slides and background music to reinforce themes they chose to emphasize

The rehearsals for the play took place in either Gonzalez’s (1999) classroom or the local junior high school auditorium (the high school had no auditorium), and lasted a total of 6 weeks.

The high school was located in a suburban area in Ohio, with a large university close by. Roughly 30% of students lived in a rural area. There were 27 students cast in the play, and they differed mostly in age and class rank.

Gonzalez (1999) gathered data from a variety of sources. She videotaped ten hours of rehearsal (by setting up the camera and letting it run), wrote in a personal journal after every rehearsal, asked students to write in a journal on specific topics either before or after every rehearsal, and hired a graduate student to conduct a post-production interview with student actors. Both the interview tapes and the student journals were transcribed to preserve student anonymity.

Five months after the production had closed, Gonzalez (1999) independently reviewed all data, and did not rely on an outside perspective to assist her in the analysis.

What she found was that her use of more “democratic” practices, both the student empowerment strategies in conjunction with the unconventional staging techniques, created a rehearsal process and production with unique characteristics. One of those being that the students learned how to manage themselves. Also, the use of the reflective journals gave the students a space to independently process ideas for the production, as well as establish their own standards for discipline. The last “democratic” strategy Gonzalez (1999) utilized was in the note-sharing after each rehearsal. These sessions encouraged notes to be shared from both actors and director, and Gonzalez found that the notes from actors reinforced her own notes, and vice versa.

Through her analysis of student journals and her own observations, Gonzalez (1999) found that student age and experience level were factors that played into their engagement and reactions to the “democratic” rehearsal process. The older students and those experienced actors had a harder time “empowering” themselves throughout the process – with prior experience informing them that the director makes artistic decisions.

She also found that at the beginning of the rehearsal process, it was easy for her to relinquish tasks or decisions to the students. However, as time progressed and the performance dates came closer, she found herself stepping in, becoming the “authoritative” director that she was trying to avoid. Gonzalez (1999) found that “deciding which decisions the actors should make that might empower them while maintaining for the director an atmosphere conducive to serious theater work” (p. 12) was a continuous struggle during her rehearsals.

Transferability was limited due to the small number of participants in the study and that they were voluntary participants in the after-school process (not a mandatory or required class). In addition, the researchers prior relationship with the students was a factor. The specificity of this particular study (of the setting and the nature of the study’s inquiry – the democratic directing and rehearsal process) also limits how transferable the findings were. Results would likely be different if all participants were either theatre novices or experts, or if casting had been done in a more traditional sense (of director auditioning and casting one student per role).

The participant selection strategy ensured that personal bias of the researcher was not a variable in the study. No students were excluded from the inquiry, and the researcher was open to character roles gender-switching that would occur in the production. Gonzalez (1999) provided adequate description about the characteristics of the participants, as to their gender, race and socio-economic status. The participant sample size was small, only 27 participants. However, intimacy of the production and inquiry, allowed the researcher to connect with participants and therefore make recommendations that would be useful for her community.

The researcher provided adequate description of her process (who she received approval from, what information she provided to her students about her study – how the study would involve them, that they could withdraw at any time, that their anonymity

would be ensured, and that she gained permission from minor's parents/guardians). In addition, the teacher variable and presence was not a factor in the post-production interviews with the students (a grad student conducted the interviews).

Gonzalez (1999) acknowledged the limitations of her research, and provided enough description of the study and methodology so that an independent researcher could replicate the study. The interpretations and analysis of the findings were appropriate to the participants, the type of study, the duration of the study and the findings.

The researcher's role was as a participant observer, and she utilized no "outside eye" to check her analysis, therefore personal bias might have existed in her analysis and the conclusions reached. In addition, her analysis of the performance did not include any student perspectives – the only perspectives referred to and analyzed were from audience members. Gonzalez (1999) also did not provide any mention of member checking with the participants as to the accuracy of her analysis or conclusions.

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of a "democratic" approach to the directing process in a high school setting might be more effective if it was already part of the school culture. Regardless, she found that there were components of her "democratic" approach that enabled student actors to acquire ownership of the production in ways that more "traditional" approach might not have.

McLauchlan (2000) conducted a case study to examine the educational benefits of collaborative creativity with her children's theatre course. She found that (even within the specific setting of her study) there were certain factors that positively affected the collaborative culture of the classroom, as well as the students' engagement throughout the process.

The high school was located in a semi-rural community, and had rigorous academic standards, as well as a reputation for excellent artistic performances, notably

drama and music. A majority of the students took advance placement courses and continue on to post-secondary education. The student population was primarily white.

McLauchlan (2000) was the head of the drama program, had initiated and taught the children's theatre course (the specific setting of this study). In order to participate in the children's theatre course, students must have had successful completion of 2 previous drama courses. The class that was the focus of this study was the third year of the children's theatre course. McLauchlan purposely selected 6 senior students in her children's theatre class to be the focus of her study. She went into great detail as to who each of the 6 participants were, and the reasons for why she chose them to be the focus of her study. Her class was racially homogeneous, so therefore cultural background was not part of her participant selection. Gender did play a part in her selection process. She chose 3 girls and 3 boys, each with a different age, academic ability, previous theatrical experience, and future educational and career goals.

Her children's theatre course was divided into three separate units. The first unit was script development, in which the students brainstormed, edited and summarized their ideas as to what the script would look like. During this process, both positive and negative roles emerged as the students collaborated with each other, and eventually a story line was created. The student activities that led to the story line were small group improvisations, large group synthesis, peer coaching and note taking. The second unit consisted of rehearsal and pre-production. The productions this class participated in was very specific "During performance, they would be sharing roles and production duties according to a 5 day rotation, and many would play different characters on different days of the week" (McLauchlan, 2000, p. 48). The last unit was the production – which consisted of a daily pattern of events "including pre-performance preparation and warm-ups, performance, audience discussion sessions, and clean-up" (McLauchlan, p. 49). The performance unit lasted a total of six weeks.

Over the course of the study, McLauchlan (2000) collected data from many sources; she recorded daily classroom observations, collected student journals and written assignments, as well as peer- and self-evaluations. Once the course was completed, she interviewed the students individually. She conducted the first interview and had a student teacher carry out the second interview. Prior to the first interview, McLauchlan provided the students with certain instructions as to what the purpose of the interview was, as well as what she hoped would guide their answers – honesty and complete accounts of their experiences. After conducting the first interview, McLauchlan analyzed her findings, and the result of that analysis formed the basis of individualized questions for each student in the second interview. After analyzing the second set of student interview responses, a drama expert (a colleague of McLauchlan's) led a forum discussion with the six participants of the study – McLauchlan did not attend this discussion.

As identified by the participants, McLauchlan's (2000) found that over the course of the class, many components contributed to their collaborative environment, as well as their engagement with the process.

They were:

- A shared point of departure – each participant had participated in at least two drama courses prior to joining the children's theatre class
- The working environment – the factors identified by the students that contributed to their working environment were: a strong work ethic; an atmosphere of acceptance and tolerance; a high energy level; a focus on cooperation; and experiences of frustration and stress
- Student engagement – dedication was a factor that contributed to the engagement level of the participants. It looked like: ownership of the play and the process “they controlled the creative process right from the beginning” (p. 51);

shared accountability between the classmates “we loved it like a baby...because it was ours” (McLauchlan, p. 51)

- Classroom rules and rituals – in children’s theatre, the students regarded the success of the process and the product to be a social phenomenon; “motivation was linked to affective factors: affiliation with peers; emotional attachment to the project; and a desire to please the teacher” (McLauchlan, p. 53); the role of the teacher was different from other, more traditional classroom environments “students viewed the teacher’s roles as structuring classroom activities, devising student groupings, modeling approaches to social problem-solving, determining individual student learning needs and goals, and participating in the learning process” (McLauchlan, p. 53)

McLauchlan (2000) also presented the factors (from her perspective) that affected a collaborative culture (these were suggested and supported by both her observations and the students’ individual and collective reports). They were:

- Membership selection for group tasks – one of McLauchlan’s most important duties was the assignment of group membership
- Balancing student freedom and teacher-imposed structure – reports from the students suggested that the freedom of choice was necessary in order for creativity to emerge, while at the same time, a structure provided by McLauchlan was a beneficial framework wherein their creative process and product could develop
- Student conflict and competitiveness – “dissent of ideas often sparked ingenuity, while competitiveness tested the boundaries of complacency and drove students to their highest potential. In contrast, cooperation attained through acquiescence often yielded results that seemed predictable, commonplace, even boring” (McLauchlan, p. 55).

- Shared student identity – came from having a common goal, daily routines and organized activities, performance over a prolonged period of time, and a classroom culture that developed over the course that separated the students from the rest of the school
- Routine stages in the collaborative process – included brainstorming, synthesis, reflective evaluation, rehearsed improvisation, and an evolving performed product
- Productive group environment – students identified the most productive working groups to be heterogeneous, fluid and democratic

These findings suggest that creating a collaborative culture within a classroom environment has the potential to heighten student engagement and participation in the content.

The transferability of this study is questionable due to a variety of factors. One being that the researcher had worked with each of the 6 participants well prior to the study – they had each taken at least two of her other drama courses. This relationship history is something that must be taken into account, and the findings of the study would be very different if the researcher had no or very little prior connection with the participants.

Each participant was also a self-selected student, by this I mean that they had willingly volunteered to participate in this dramatic course. The findings therefore represent those perspectives of students who engaged and participated in this course by choice – an elective course, and not one that is academically required by the school, such as math, science or English. This is another factor that prohibits the transferability of the findings (of successful creative collaboration) onto all other high school classrooms.

Another reason the transferability is questionable is because the situation in this particular classroom is very specific. The culture of the class had been developed over time, and the situations of this study are very specific to the particular classroom.

Both the process and the product of McLauchlan's (2000) data and analysis were auditable by an outside party. McLauchlan also provided adequate description of her participants and the reasons why she chose them. She was very transparent of the methods utilized in this study, and the triangulation (field observations, collecting student work and conducting two separate student interviews with herself as one conductor and a student teacher as the other).

The study was credible due to a variety of factors. The researcher observed her students over a prolonged period of time, conducted member checks with her participants, and monitored her influence over student responses by incorporating others into the research process (student teacher leading one interview set, and a drama expert colleague facilitating the participant forum discussion – in both instances the researcher was not present). These two strategies were an effective way to minimize the effect of McLauchlan's (2000) influence or presence on the students' responses.

This section was divided into five parts, each focusing on a specific method of instruction. The first subsection focused on Engagement, either examining various ways students are engaged or instructional strategies teachers can implement to hopefully foster engagement. At first glance, Stinson's (1997) study might not appear to be relevant to this paper, given that she examined student engagement in three middle school dance classrooms. However, one relevant finding was that students engaged more in the class if they perceived it as "fun." While Stinson does not advocate that educators solely provide "fun" experiences within the classroom, the findings suggest that if educators hope to motivate their students, they might be more successful if they provide learning opportunities that are relevant to the students' own lives. Nelson, Colby,

and McIlrath's (2000) study produced a similar finding. They utilized the mantle of expert strategy, which incorporated role-play with real-life situations. This particular strategy also conferred authority and ownership to the students. Nelson, Colby, and McIlrath found that because the drama lessons were based in experiences in which the students could relate, they were more motivated and willing to engage in the lessons. Dolezal, Mohan Welsh, Pressley, and Vincent's (2003) study also found that students had heightened engagement when the teacher made connections with their lives outside of school. Another finding presented by Dolezal, Mohan Welsh, Pressley, and Vincent suggests that incorporating drama-based activities or games/play also appeared to have a positive impact on students' engagement in the classroom.

Warner (1997) utilized a unique approach to explore the various levels of engagement in drama. The findings presented in her study are to be taken with caution due to a number of complications. She developed her own method to determine the first moment students became engaged in the dramatic activity, and this method is questionable. The number of participants was extremely small, and therefore her findings are limited to those few that participated in her study. Her findings did suggest however that students engage on many levels (through talking, processing, observing as a participant, or listening), whether it is visually apparent to an observer or not.

Thomas's (2007) study sought to identify components that engage male adolescents in a printmaking workshop. The findings most relevant to this paper are that the ability to discourse with peers and adults about artistic choices impacted the degree to which the participants would engage. These findings support those in the Social Development section, specifically that when students are encouraged to be active participants within an artistic community of practice that embraces respectful social interaction with peers and adults, engagement is likely to result (Thomas, 2007; McNaughton, 2004; Hughes & Wilson, 2004).

After conducting a one-year research study on the role of fine and performing arts in high school dropout prevention, Barry, Taylor, and Walls (1990) found that participation in the arts had a positive impact upon many students' decisions to stay in school. This finding is significant because it suggests that if the artistic domains are part of the core curriculum in secondary education, it may increase the likelihood of students' completing their high school education.

The one study in the second subsection within Pedagogical Strategies focused on imaginative teaching methods (Nielsen, 2006). While the weak methodology threatened the validity of the findings, Nielsen found that incorporating imaginative dramatic activity appeared to challenge and engage the students in the individual classroom setting.

In the subsection of Collaboration between Educators, there were a few findings relevant to this paper. Catterall, Dreyfus, and DeJarnette (1995) found that due to engaging in professional development activities with other educators, 92% of the teachers surveyed in their study changed the quality and content of the curriculum in ways that had a positive impact on student engagement. The research team fully acknowledged that while it may be extremely beneficial for educators to engage in professional development workshops, they do require adequate time and training beyond the normal school day (Catterall, Dreyfus, & DeJarnette, 1995). Betts's (2005) study examined the collaboration between teachers also, but on a more intimate level, specifically between one artist-in-residence and four cooperating teachers. Betts found that three of the four teachers chose to continue with the collaboration program, which therefore suggests that the interaction with the artist-in-residence benefited their instructional approach. Flynn (1997) had similar findings in her study of collaboration between one classroom teacher and a drama specialist. Specifically, she found that the

collaboration allowed both individuals to gain from the other's strengths, therefore having a positive impact on their own individual pedagogies.

The relevant findings from the subsection Performance-Based Assessment were that the researchers found some form of talented behavior in every single student (Oreck, Baum, & Owen, 2004). The results also suggest that the active participation required in a performance-based assessment gave students an opportunity to explore and express their own ideas and feelings in new ways. According to the findings presented Oreck et al's study, it appears that participation in the theatre arts provide "new perspectives on the lived world" (Greene, 1995, p. 4).

The last two studies examined in this section utilized democratic methods of instruction within two different theatre classrooms. Both Gonzalez (1999) and McLauchlan (2000) found that utilizing more "democratic" and constructivist pedagogical strategies aided in students' taking active ownership of their own learning, as well in the collaboration that was created throughout the process.

Summary

Chapter 3 was divided into four sections. The first three sections examined the role drama, or the arts, played in students' social, academic, cognitive development. The final section focused on various ways drama was implemented as a pedagogical tool.

Of the three studies examined in regards to drama and social development, the findings indicate that the use of drama as a pedagogical strategy does in fact aid student social development. "Many of the accounts provided by young people clearly show that they feel the skills and capacities developed within youth theatre transfer to an increased sense of competence in other aspects of their lives, in particular, in their ability to successfully interact with peers, teachers and other adults" (Hughes & Wilson, 2004, p. 63). Popular theatre (and its focus on bringing students outside lives into the classroom, thereby bridging the home life and school life), as well as improvisation and role-play

techniques, also appeared to enhance the participants' social development and ability to interact with and relate to others (Leard & Lashua, 2006; McNaughton, 2004).

Drama-based instruction was also utilized in conjunction with other academic domains, and each of the studies reviewed in the Academic Development section found that the use of those strategies enhanced the participants' engagement, knowledge or skill in that particular discipline. Eisner (1998) hypothesized

Perhaps it is not skills at all that the arts courses develop, perhaps it's the promotion of certain kinds of attitudes, attitudes that promote risk-taking and hard work. Perhaps the effects – if effects there are – of arts courses on academic achievement are due to the motivational effects of arts courses; perhaps students in arts courses enjoy school more and therefore attend more regularly.

(p.12)

Perhaps Eisner is correct in his hypothesis, that involvement in the arts impacts the motivation behind academic achievement. Regardless of the various theories, perspectives and opinions on this issue, however, findings suggest that there is a positive correlation between involvement in the arts and academic achievement (Pelligrini, 1984; Podlozny, 2000; Smithrim & Upitis, 2005).

There also appears to be many avenues through which educators expand their students' cognition, and according to the research, dramatic pedagogy seems to be one effective avenue that can be utilized in many unique ways (Luftig, 2000). While some studies, in relation to cognitive development, examined "the arts" (including drama, dance, music, and visual art), and others focused specifically on drama, each study examining cognitive development addressed how exposure and participation in arts related disciplines positively impacted participants cognitive capabilities, such as creativity and originality, as well as higher order thinking (Burton, Horowitz, & Abeles, 2000).

In the final section, Pedagogical Strategies, findings indicate that there are numerous dramatic strategies educators can utilize to administer a lesson in order to engage their students in the content, in addition to assess what their students have learned through active, participatory means (Oreck, Baum, & Owen, 2004).

The present research also suggests that engagement occurs on different levels for every single student, and that what might engage one individual, might not motivate another (Thomas, 2007; Warner, 1997). One study also addressed the many components that make up engagement; it involves physical, emotional, intellectual, and social commitment (Stinson, 1997). For an educator to create a learning environment that is engaging to all students', therefore is no small task. Collaboration amongst educators also appears to be beneficial in strengthening an individual teacher's pedagogy, in addition to having a positive impact on student learning (Betts, 2005; Flynn, 1997).

Chapter four provides a summary of the findings from this chapter within each section: Social Development, Academic Development, Cognitive Development, and Pedagogical Strategies; draws conclusions from the research; makes recommendations that will inform teaching practice, and addresses areas for further research.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

Introduction

Chapter one provided an introduction to the purpose of this research paper, to discover whether or not theatre arts should be part of the core curriculum within secondary education. It also shed light on the rationale behind my research question, as well as the controversies that exist within the educational community in regards to the role arts should play in the curriculum. Chapter two explained the historical background of the question. While the primary purpose of this paper was to determine whether or not the theatre arts should be part of the core curriculum, an underlying problem exists if there is no federal support or financial backing to keep the arts in the public school setting. Therefore, chapter two was divided into two sections: the first addressed the impact the federal government has had on art in education, and the second provided a discussion, based on professional literature, of possible reasons as to why there has been such a large focus on the integration of artistic disciplines into other academic areas. Chapter three critically examined the research on drama in public education. This chapter was divided into four of sections: Social Development, Academic Development, Cognitive Development, and pedagogical strategies. The first three sections were organized according to the type of social, academic or cognitive development that occurred due to participation in/education through various art forms (primarily the dramatic domain). The largest section was the fourth and final section, Pedagogical Strategies. It concluded chapter three with studies that explicitly addressed various instructional choices utilized in teaching the theatre arts. Each empirical study in chapter three was analyzed and summarized, and the research was reviewed to examine if theatre arts should be a core content in secondary education. Chapter four concludes this paper with a summary of the relevant findings from chapter three, organized by section: Social Development, Academic Development, Cognitive Development and

Pedagogical Strategies. This final chapter also shares implications for teaching, as well as suggestions for further research.

Summary of the Findings

Chapter three was divided into sections, and began with the role drama, or the arts, played in students' social, academic, cognitive development. The fourth and final section focused on various ways drama was implemented as a pedagogical tool.

Following is a brief summary of the relevant findings from each section.

Social Development

The three studies analyzed in this section suggest that the use of various dramatic techniques, such as "Process Drama," "Popular Theatre," and youth theatre, can have a positive impact on students social development and the way they interact in society. As Hughes and Wilson (2004) found, participants in youth theatre reported "improved confidence, improved ability to make friends" (p. 66). McNaughton's (2004) and Leard and Lashua's (2006) also found that not only did their participants' confidence increase, but that they also became "better at asking questions and better at standing up for something" (McNaughton, 2004, p. 151). The findings from these studies, in conjunction with each other, suggests that through engagement in the theatre arts (and specifically in utilizing drama to tackle real world issues), students gained the skills, qualities and resources that would assist them in becoming more self-assure, as well as empowered to make a difference in their community.

It is important to point out that there were some trends that reflected weaker designs, therefore limiting the transferability of the findings onto other settings or populations. For instance, two of the three studies presented in this section lasted only a few months, as well as had a small number of participants (Leard & Lashua, 2006; McNaughton, 2004).

Academic Development

The studies analyzed in this section presented some relevant findings in regard to this paper. Even though the focus of these studies was on the effect of integrating drama-based instruction with other academic disciplines, the findings still suggest that participation in the theatre arts has a positive impact on students' ability to read, write and verbally communicate. Literacy (reading, writing and speaking) is a life-long skill, and is not solely used in more traditional academic classroom; therefore the many of the findings in this section are extremely relevant to the purpose of this paper. Greene (1995) suggested "literacy is and must be a social undertaking...where persons come together in speech and in action to create something common among themselves" (p. 121).

Pelligrini (1984) found that when the students discoursed with each other in the dramatic play, the language expressed was more explicit than in either the drawing or discussion group. Moore and Caldwell (1993) utilized the same three variables and found that the participants in the drama condition achieved the highest overall mean score at the conclusion of their study, suggesting that engagement in the dramatic activities had the most significant positive impact on children's writing quality.

Podlozny's (2000) found that drama instruction appeared to be an effective means of instruction for the desired verbal outcomes, regardless of age (K – 12). This is a significant finding relevant to this paper because while I have incorporated many studies in which drama-based instruction was utilized in the primary grades, my focus is on secondary education. Niedermeyer and Oliver (1972) conducted the other study that explored the relationship between drama-based instruction and students' verbal skills. Their study had numerous flaws, such as each teacher administering the dramatic instruction differently, which resulted in multiple treatments given. However, the

strengths from Podlozny's (2000) meta-analysis override the weaknesses in Niedermeyer and Oliver's study.

Another pertinent finding was addressed in Smithrim and Upitis' (2005) study. Their study examined the effect of incorporating arts programs into an elementary school over a 3-year period. After analyzing the students' mathematical computation scores at the conclusion of the study, they found that the gains in the scores were evidence that the students' were highly engaged in school. The authors suggest that one possible reason they were highly engaged in school was due to their involvement in the arts program, therefore strengthening an argument as to why the theatre arts should be part of the core curriculum. Kim and Hall's (2002) study was significant because the findings suggest that role-play was an effective tool that aided the development of a second language.

Overall, the findings from this section suggest that integrating the arts into other academic disciplines has a positive impact on the students' ability to read, write, and speak (in either one's native language or in a foreign language). While not explicitly addressed in any of the above studies, the overall findings support an argument for why the theatre arts should be part of the core curriculum in secondary education.

Moore and Caldwell (1983) and Rose, Parks, Androes, and McMahon (2000) utilized strong designs, provided explicit descriptions of their treatment process, and controlled a variety of external and internal variables. These methods therefore strengthened the credibility of their findings. Kim and Hall (2002) utilized unconventional methods, specifically that the treatment session was conducted at the home of one of the researchers. This condition, along with the small participant size (4), was so specialized that the generalizability of their findings onto other settings is questionable.

Cognitive Development

Each study analyzed in this section has findings significant to this paper. Luftig (2000) and Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles (2000) explored the impact of participation in arts programs on creative thinking. The findings from both studies suggest those students that participated in the arts programs had higher levels of cognitive capacities, such as creative thinking and originality. Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles also found that these higher order cognitive competencies were accompanied by dispositions such as ownership of learning and persistence in a task. Christie's (1983) most significant finding was that the cognitive gains that took place over the nine-week treatment still existed three months after the treatment had been given. This finding is note-worthy, especially in regards to the question presented in this paper because it is evidence that the cognitive competencies (such as intelligence and creative thinking) fostered by engagement with play tutoring have a lasting effect.

The last three studies in this section examined how students' constructed their own cognition. Gamwell (2005) found that when the students' were given the freedom to create their own works of art, they were able to personalize their meaning making. This finding supports Dewey's (1938) claim of the "importance of the participation of the learning in the formation of the purposes which direct his activities in the learning process" (p. 67). Gamwell's study provided a window into the ways in which the arts activities enabled the students to actively engage and construct their own learning.

Simon (2008) found that utilizing improvised role-play gave her students a foundation on which they could begin to make sense of challenging text. She also discovered that many of her students were initially intimidated by the task of improvising, and it was only through gradual participation that they became more comfortable. I mention this finding here because it is important to note that involvement in the theatre arts does challenge students to take risks and step out of their comfort zone. Some

students, regardless of age, may not be open to certain demands of this domain. Ghiaci and Richardson (1980) had a similar finding to Simon, and they found that intensive periods of dramatic play significantly improved the number of verbal constructs elicited by the students.

Both Gamwell (2005) and Simon (2008) utilized weaker design methods that limited the credibility of their findings. In addition, both provided no reference to member checks, therefore calling into question the confirmability of their studies. Another trend noted in this section is the small number of participants (Christie, 1983; Simon, 2008), which therefore limits the transferability of the findings onto other populations.

Pedagogical Strategies

This section was divided into five parts, each focusing on a specific method of instruction. The first subsection focused on engagement, either examining various ways students are engaged or instructional strategies teachers can implement to hopefully foster engagement. At first glance, Stinson's (1997) study might not appear to be relevant to this paper, given that she examined student engagement in middle school dance. However, one relevant finding was that students engaged more in the class if they perceived it as "fun." While Stinson does not advocate that educators solely provide "fun" experiences within the classroom, the findings suggest that if educators hope to engage their students, they might be more successful if they provide learning opportunities that are relevant to the students' own lives. Nelson, Colby, and McIlrath's (2000) study produced a similar finding. They utilized the mantle of expert strategy, which incorporated role-play with real-life situations. This particular strategy also conferred authority and ownership to the students. Nelson, Colby, and McIlrath found that because the drama lessons were based in experiences in which the students could relate, they were more motivated and willing to engage in the lessons. Dolezal, Mohan Welsh, Pressley, and Vincent's (2003) study also found that students had heightened

engagement when the teacher connected with their lives outside of school. Another finding relevant to this paper suggests that incorporating drama-based activities or games/play appeared to have a positive impact on students' engagement in the classroom.

Warner (1997) utilized a unique approach to explore the various levels of engagement in drama. The findings presented in her study are to be taken with caution due to a number of complications. She developed her own method to determine the students first moment of engagement in the dramatic activity, and this method is questionable. The number of participants was extremely small, and therefore her findings are limited to those few that participated in her study. Her findings did suggest however that students engage on many levels (through talking, processing, observing as a participant, or listening), whether it is visually apparent to an observer or not.

Thomas's (2007) study sought to identify components that engage male adolescents in a printmaking workshop. The findings most relevant to this paper are that the ability to discourse with peers and adults about artistic choices impacted the degree to which the participants would engage. These findings support those in the Social Development chapter, specifically that when students are encouraged to be active participants within an artistic community of practice that embraces respectful social interaction with peers and adults, engagement is likely to result (Thomas, 2007; McNaughton, 2004; Hughes & Wilson, 2004).

After conducting a one-year research study on the role of fine and performing arts in high school dropout prevention, Barry, Taylor, and Walls (1990) found that participation in the arts had a positive impact upon many students' decisions to stay in school. This finding is significant because it suggests that if the artistic domains are part of the core curriculum in secondary education, it may increase the likelihood of students' completing their high school education.

The one study in the second subsection within Pedagogical Strategies focused on imaginative teaching methods (Nielsen, 2006). While the weak methodology threatened the validity of the findings, Nielsen found that incorporating imaginative dramatic activity appeared to challenge and engage the students in the individual classroom setting.

In the subsection of Collaboration between Educators, there were a few findings relevant to this paper. Catterall, Dreyfus, and DeJarnette (1995) found that due to engaging in professional development activities with other educators, 92% of the teachers surveyed in their study changed the quality and content of the curriculum in ways that had a positive impact on student engagement levels. The research team fully acknowledged that while it may be extremely beneficial for educators to engage in professional development workshops, they do require adequate time and training beyond the normal school day (Catterall, Dreyfus, & DeJarnette). Betts's (2005) study examined the collaboration between teachers also, but on a more intimate level, specifically between one artist-in-residence and four cooperating teachers. Betts found that three of the four teachers chose to continue with the collaboration program, which therefore suggests that the interaction with the artist-in-residence benefited their instructional approach. Flynn (1997) had similar findings in her study of collaboration between one classroom teacher and a drama specialist. Specifically, she found that the collaboration allowed both individuals to gain from the other's strengths, therefore having a positive impact on their own individual pedagogies.

The relevant findings from the subsection Performance-Based Assessment were that the researchers found some form of talented behavior in every single student (Oreck, Baum, & Owen, 2004). The results also suggest that the active participation required in a performance-based assessment gave students an opportunity to explore and express their own ideas and feelings in new ways. According to the findings

presented Oreck, Baum, and Owen's study, it appears that participation in the theatre arts provide "new perspectives on the lived world" (Greene, 1995, p. 4).

The last two studies examined in this section utilized democratic methods of instruction within two different theatre classrooms. Both Gonzalez (1999) and McLauchlan (2000) found that utilizing more "democratic" and constructivist pedagogical strategies aided in students' taking active ownership of their own learning, as well in the collaboration that was created throughout the process.

Implications for Teaching

The implications for the classroom regarding the involvement of drama as a means to develop students' socially, academically and cognitively are supportive. That said, each study utilized drama in a certain capacity with a certain end goal in mind. Through the findings from her meta-analysis, Podlozny (2000) presented that the type of plot, structured (script based) or unstructured (improvisational based), seemed to influence the effectiveness of the lesson. This suggests that certain types of dramatic activities and exercises (such as guided role-play, improvisation, etc.) may be more effective than others, and that the most successful strategy to implement depends on the overall learning objective.

Another implication for the classroom addressed in a handful of studies was on the success of incorporating a drama specialist to collaborate and work alongside a classroom teacher. While the focus of this paper is on determining whether or not the theatre arts should be part of the core curriculum in secondary education, the current trend in education is shifting towards more and more integrated curriculum, and as a future educator, I believe it would be in my best interest if I progressed with this trend. For example, the collaborating teacher who worked alongside Flynn (1997) observed her students eagerly engaged in the creative dramatic lessons, which convinced her that these activities were an effective way to involve her students in her language arts

curriculum. Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles (2000) agree and expand on this topic. "When students have teachers who collaborate with other arts providers and integrate the arts, they are more likely to have higher creativity scores, higher expression, risk-taking, imagination-creativity, and cooperation learning scores" (p. 254).

In addition, as stated by Duatepe-Paksu and Ubuz (2009) "To use drama-based instruction effectively and efficiently in the classroom requires necessary training" (p. 276). For that reason, in their study, one of the researchers taught the experimental group's lesson because he had the necessary training. These examples therefore imply that a collaborative effort with a dramatic specialist, or engaging in the necessary training, would strengthen the success of the dramatic lesson and the students' engagement.

Suggestions for Further Research

While the focus of my paper was on whether or not the theatre arts should be part of the core curriculum in secondary education, I fully recognize that half of the dramatic domain was not even mentioned in either my paper or in the research studies examined. The missing half that I am referring to is the technical side of the theatre arts, including stage management, set construction and design, lighting design, costuming and makeup, and much more. Apart from Gonzalez's (1999) study in which she utilized democratic directing methods, I found little to no research on the technical side of theatre. The dramatic arts are an extremely large artistic domain with multiple facets. The arguments presented in this paper would have received greater credibility if each facet of the theatrical domain had been analyzed and researched. Therefore, further research is needed in which many technical components of the dramatic arts are analyzed for their impact on student learning and development. In order to fairly determine what role the theatre arts should have in the curriculum in secondary education, all parts of the dramatic arts should be presented.

Hetland and Winner (2001) provided another suggestion for further research. “Researchers should try to make sense of the claim frequently made by schools that when the arts are given a serious role in the curriculum, academic achievement improves” (p. 5). After analyzing the breadth of research for this paper, I found that I agree with Hetland and Winner. Over half of the studies examined in my research focused on the ways in which the theatre arts were integrated within other academic disciplines. Research needs to be carried out on “exemplary schools that grant the arts a serious role in the curriculum” (Hetland & Winner, p. 6), and of what effects this serious role has on student development and engagement. Further research is also needed on whether or not all students would benefit from arts-integrated approach, even those who are high achievers to begin with.

In Nielsen’s (2006) study, no triangulation was used. His findings and analysis were all based off his own observations of determining when children’s imaginations were engaged. This does not appear to be something easily observed from an outside perspective. Nielsen’s design and methodology might have been strengthened if in addition to observing his participants, he had interviewed them as well. He then could have utilized those interviews to verify if his observations and analysis were accurate.

Warner (1997) designed her own testing method in order to determine the first instant students became engaged in the dramatic activity. This method was not tested by any other researcher or on any other participants prior to her conducting this study, therefore calling into question the credibility of her methods, as well as the findings she presented based on these methods. If Warner had chosen to utilize a proven, credible testing measurement, the findings presented in her study would have had greater validity.

Much of the research examined in regards to drama and student engagement took place over one academic year or less. Therefore, the question remains as to

whether or not the positive impact of drama on students' social, academic or cognitive development could be sustained over future years. Therefore, further research is needed that incorporates a longer duration of the dramatic treatment. In addition, a majority of the research utilized for this paper had relatively small participant sizes that were primarily Caucasian, and were also conducted by a participant observer. Further research is needed which studies multiple ethnicities, as well as is conducted through credible, unbiased perspectives.

In regards to the research done on engagement, what has been explored (which the studies explored addressed) has focused more on the individual behavioral or cognitive components of engagement, rather than a more multidimensional approach. Yonezawa (2009) expressed "the past decade of work in engagement . . . has been a mix of studies that examine individual dimensions of the term . . . But they are limited in how well they capture all the facets of engagement" (p. 194). Therefore, further research examining the many facets of engagement, as well as the methodologies used to enrich them, might shed new light on this topic.

Conclusion

Chapter one introduced to the purpose of this research paper: Should theatre arts be part of the core curriculum in secondary education? It also provided the rationale behind this question, in addition to the controversies that exist between intellectualists and researchers on the role artistic domains should play in the public school setting. Chapter two explained specific historical instances that gave rise to arts role in education today, briefly explaining the slow progression of art into the academic curriculum, as well as the history of arts being integrated into other academic disciplines. Chapter three critically examined the research on drama in public education. This chapter is divided into four of sections: social development, academic development, cognitive development, and pedagogical strategies. The first three sections are organized

according to the type of social, academic or cognitive development that occurred due to participation in/education through various art forms (primarily the dramatic domain). The largest section is the fourth and final section, pedagogical strategies. It concluded this chapter with studies that explicitly address various instructional choices utilized in teaching the theatre arts. Each empirical study in this section was analyzed and summarized, and the research was reviewed to examine if theatre arts should be a core content in secondary education. Chapter four included a summary of the relevant findings from chapter three, provided implications for teaching, as well as suggestions for further research.

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