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The Strawberry Grows Under the Nettle: How an Integrated Performance-Based Approach to the Teaching of Shakespeare at the Secondary Level Affects Critical Thinking Skills as Measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

“THE STRAWBERRY GROWS UNDER THE NETTLE”
HOW AN INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE-BASED APPROACH TO THE
TEACHING OF SHAKESPEARE AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL
AFFECTS CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS AS MEASURED
BY THE CALIFORNIA CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS TEST

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

PROGRAM IN CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

BY

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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ABSTRACT

Though Shakespeare remains the most taught author in American secondary school curriculum, and though there is growing evidence to suggest that the best practice for teaching the Bard is through a performance-based approach, there has been no empirical evidence to support one methodology over another.

This study utilized the California Critical Thinking Skills Test to measure the growth in critical thinking skills that students obtained through a traditional ‘seat-bound’ versus a ‘performance-based’ approach to the teaching of Shakespeare at the secondary level. Its purpose was to determine whether there would be a statistically significant difference between the two.

Subjects were selected based on their teacher’s methodological approach: one who had learned the performance-based approach through the Folger Shakespeare National Endowment for the Humanities’ Summer Institute on the teaching of Shakespeare through performance; and the second, a National Board Certified instructor who employed traditional seat-bound methods. Between the two classes there were ninety participants involved in a four-week unit on a particular Shakespeare play (n=90).

Four areas of analysis were identified: overall gains in critical thinking after studying Shakespeare, specific differences in critical thinking scores between the control and experimental groups, the impact on the specific critical thinking ability of Inferencing between a performance-based versus seat-bound approaches, and the role

gender plays in determining the growth of critical thinking skills between both groups. Control group students were taught Shakespeare in the traditional manner; experimental group students received the treatment of a performance-based approach. All subjects were given a pre and posttest.

Students who learn Shakespeare through a performance-based approach had a statistically significant gain in overall critical thinking skills. Boys in particular gained the most from this approach; the specific critical thinking skill of Inferencing, however, did not change. This study provides empirical evidence to the benefit of using a performance-based approach in the teaching of Shakespeare at the secondary level.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

Introduction

The play, *Henry V* in Act I, Scene I, reveals a rather precarious predicament for its protagonist: does one support the higher authority of a church that believes war is the best means for avoiding further taxation of the church's land, or does one follow one's own conscience in making decisions that have vast repercussions for a nation divided in its view of the "havoc of war"? Shakespeare's dilemma is timeless; one need look no further than the front page wars on Iraq and Afghanistan to discover that his metaphorical words capture the anxiety of untested leadership.

Teaching Shakespeare itself has many parallels, not the least of which is the multitude of options available to the instructor in how to actually teach the text. In many respects, the teaching of Shakespeare remains an area of untested leadership. What is the best approach to teaching the text? What impact does one approach have over another? Why do we teach only certain Shakespeare plays? Should all students be taught a Shakespeare play? These questions are compounded when one considers how to teach a text that contains archaic language, how to work within an enforced curriculum that often has predetermined assessments without teacher input, and how to help students make meaning from the text when so many only associate the plays with endless 'iambic pentameter' Shakespearian jargon. And yet, more than any other author, American high

schools still teach Shakespeare. Why? In this interconnected 21st century global world of untested leadership where international crisis begets continued intercontinental conflict, where students now perhaps more than ever need to utilize their critical thinking and entrepreneurial skills, why should we continue to teach 16th century play material from the quintessential icon of Western literature?

The time has come for some new work to be done on the benefits of teaching Shakespeare, particularly teaching Shakespeare through performance, not to discourage the teaching of one method over another, but rather reinforce why we ask these essential questions. For the *Henry V* within all teachers, the hero rises to the occasion, often challenging institutional authority in the process, for the sheer belief that what is truly beautiful about the story, about the poetry, about the purpose for reconnecting with these scripts written from the Stratford son of a tanner, is as timeless as Ben Johnson's paraphrased epitaph for the Bard exclaims: "Being men for all times."

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference regarding gains in critical thinking as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test between teaching Shakespeare at the secondary level utilizing performance-based or traditional seat-bound methods.

This study has four specific research questions regarding the impact teaching Shakespeare has on the student learner, primarily focusing on the impact teaching Shakespeare has on the development of critical thinking skills as measured by a specific critical thinking skills test: the California Critical Thinking Skills Test.

1. Does teaching Shakespeare to secondary (high school) language arts students help increase the development of critical thinking skills as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test?
2. Is there a difference in students' critical thinking skills development when performance based versus seat-bound methods are used to teach Shakespeare?
3. Is there a difference in students' inference ability development when performance based versus seat-bound methods are used to teach Shakespeare?
4. Is there an interactive effect on students' critical thinking skills development between gender and the performance versus seat-bound methods used to teach Shakespeare?

The null hypotheses for these four questions are:

1. Teaching Shakespeare to secondary (high school) language arts students does not help increase the development of critical thinking skills as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test.
2. There is no difference in students' critical thinking skills development when performance based versus seat-bound methods are used to teach Shakespeare.
3. There is no difference in students' inference ability development when performance based versus seat-bound methods are used to teach Shakespeare.
4. There is no interactive effect on students' critical thinking skills development between gender and the performance versus seat-bound methods used to teach Shakespeare.

Study Rational

In general, there is tremendous literature on the efficacy of teaching Shakespeare through performance, though how to measure such understanding remains elusive (Riggio, 1999; Rocklin, 1999; Seidel, 2000). This study begins with some working assumptions that stem from the landmark studies and subsequent publications of Peggy O'Brien who first began asking the important questions regarding the impact teaching Shakespeare through performance has on the secondary classroom. O'Brien initiated much of this research as Director of Education at the Folger Library, the world's largest repository of Shakespeare material, and a leading institution in the dissemination of scholarly and teaching materials. The first working assumption of this study is that students enjoy a performance-based approach to the learning of Shakespeare, as O'Brien (1995) noted in her initial study. Second, there is a growing interest in utilizing a performance-based approach in the secondary curriculum by practitioners and researchers alike in both the United States and the United Kingdom as illustrated through the proliferation of conferences, institutes, and books dedicated to performing Shakespeare. And third, many practitioners are guided primarily through qualitative data when making curriculum decisions regarding the teaching of Shakespeare as illustrated in the literature review.

This study therefore offers an extension of the work begun by O'Brien's (1995) who called for a quantitative measurement of the impact performing Shakespeare has on the secondary classroom.

Defining Terms

Given that this study wishes to understand the impact performing Shakespeare has on the high school learner, it is necessary to define ‘performance’ versus ‘seat-bound’ methods as well as ‘critical thinking.’ ‘Performing Shakespeare’ for this study means the performance of any of the plays attributed to William Shakespeare and not the performance of his other writings.

Critical Thinking is itself a highly debatable topic both in terms of its definition as well as its application. Measuring critical thinking can be highly controversial; in practice, the only assumption regarding critical thinking is that many educators utilize the term even if the term itself isn’t always understood or practiced.

What can be understood about the term critical thinking is the general idea that as a concept it involves both a process of thinking as well as an awareness of that process. Hence, this study proposes to accept the American Philosophical Association’s definition of critical thinking, comprised from a panel of 46 experts, including leading critical thinking scholars such as Ennis, Facione and Paul (1990), who defined critical thinking as:

We understand critical thinking to be purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which the judgment is based...The ideal critical thinker is habitually inquisitive, well-informed, trustful of reason, open-minded, flexible, fair-minded in evaluation, honest

in facing personal biases, prudent in making judgments, willing to reconsider...and persistent in seeking results which are as precise as the subject and the circumstances of inquiry permit. (Facione, 1990, p. 3)

This study embraces this critical thinking definition that Facione (1990) reports from the American Philosophical Association because in part, performing Shakespeare itself is a process of thinking both about the play from multiple perspectives as well as the process that went into the thinking about those multiple perspectives of the play.

This study is also utilizing one particular test to measure this definition of critical thinking, the California Critical Thinking Skills Test, a specific outgrowth from the work of Facione (1990) in conjunction with the American Philosophical Association.

Defining 'performance-based approach' to the teaching of Shakespeare is equally challenging, but dependent on one guiding principle: students are engaged in creating a theater space as both process and product to their study of Shakespeare (Rocklin, 1990). Defining the performance-based approach to the teaching of Shakespeare includes, therefore, asking participants to actively engage in the process of staging the play: the interpretation of text, the analysis of character interaction, the purposefulness of understanding an audience reaction. This study is relying upon the approach to teaching Shakespeare through performance as developed by the Folger Shakespeare Library from both its summer National Endowment for the Humanities' Institutes on the teaching of Shakespeare as well as the work of Peggy O'Brien as general editor of the Folger Library's highly successful *Shakespeare Set Free* publications that explore performance-based approaches to teaching a particular Shakespeare play. Though there remains some

debate as to what constitutes a ‘performance-based’ approach, the essential quality of the approach is as the name implies: student-driven interpretations of the text for a performance purpose.

‘Seat-bound’ can be defined as ‘stand-and-deliver’ or ‘traditional’ in that such an approach does not ask students to engage in the process of staging the play. Teachers who use this approach may employ theatrical games, watch interpretations of a play, have discussions and/or utilize other classroom approaches that any teacher would employ in studying any given text. These teachers do not, however, stage the play. Ultimately, these teachers treat the play as literary text, not afraid of exploring the genre of theater, but not embracing the staging of the text. Though the term ‘seat-bound,’ ‘stand-and-deliver’ and ‘traditional’ are used interchangeably, the negative connotations associated with the terms usually denote an inferior approach. However, despite the working assumption that students greatly enjoy the performance-based approach to the study of Shakespeare, this study’s purpose is to explore the curriculum decisions that a continuum of teaching Shakespeare provides, to note where the differences in the approach to teaching Shakespeare might affect a particular critical thinking score as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test, and not maintain a pejorative stance toward ‘traditional,’ ‘seat-bound,’ or ‘stand-and-deliver’ approaches. In fact, many teachers utilize as part of his or her approach to the play, ‘traditional,’ ‘seat-bound’ or ‘stand-and-deliver’ methods, such as playing theatrical games to familiarize oneself with the language, watching interpretations of the play, engaging in classroom discussions and/or utilizing other classroom approaches to help students ultimately perform the play. The

end result, however, is quite different between the two approaches: one performs the play, the other does not.

Teaching Shakespeare Through Performance Rational

Many teachers of Shakespeare are still influenced by some authors who argue that Shakespeare should not be taught using a performance-based approach (Bloom, 1996; Burkman, 1978; Evans, 1966). Furthermore, research indicates there are barriers to implementing a performance-based approach, even if an instructor wishes to change her curriculum. An older example from a 1980 study from the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) which commissioned a panel to identify models of good teaching, explains how none of the models included performance-based methodologies. In another example, Applebee (1992), who has done the largest study of secondary language arts classrooms, found that teacher-led discussions of plays takes place in 65% to 90% of all classrooms, but that of the ten techniques found by teachers to be most successful in the teaching of plays, none included performance-based methodology. How much has changed in 30 years, and yet, as some of the literature indicates, how little has the practice of teaching Shakespeare.

Although the use of drama means that students actively engage the text and interpret its meaning by verbalizing the material and by demonstrating the physical movements which accompany such verbalizations, not many empirical studies have been done to gauge its effect versus traditional 'seat-bound' or 'stand and deliver' methods (Mellor, 2000; O'Brien, 2008). In addition, even among the practitioners of a performance-based approach, there is great debate on what constitutes a 'performance-

based' approach to teaching Shakespeare, including whether memorization is essential, to what extent modernization hinders/helps student understanding, and how much teacher direction is necessary or detrimental to the staging of the text.

The literature does explore, however, some efficacy to performance-based teaching (Carson, 2003; Gardner, 1996; Hertzberg, 1998; Rocklin, 2005; Stibbs, 1998; Sugarman, 2005), but most of that literature assesses the former without denoting any correlation to the latter (O'Brien, 2008; Riggio, 1999; Rocklin, 1999; Seidel, 2000). Moreover, most of that literature, as O'Brien (1994, 2008) notes, is qualitative.

Gardner's (2000) "Project Zero" at Harvard University, for example, did find that within the language arts classroom the teaching of text as drama leads to a greater understanding of that text. "Understanding" in this context meant a simple T test of basic facts and did not consider other motivational considerations for improved scores. The study also did not focus just on teaching Shakespeare. Winner and Hetland (2000) also of Project Zero did report, "In all cases, students who enacted texts were compared to students who read the same texts but did not enact them. Drama not only helped children's verbal skills with respect to the texts enacted; it also helped children's verbal skills when applied to new, non-enacted texts" (p. 18).

The literature does also outline important qualitative benefits that stem from teaching Shakespeare through performance, impacts often relating to a better understanding of the Shakespeare text itself as well the theoretical significance of constructed meaning that arises from playing with the text in the classroom (Carson, 2003; Gardner, 1996; Rocklin, 2005; Stibbs, 1998; Sugarman, 2005). Beehler (1990)

explains the importance of how performance leads to a better understanding of the language: “The principle tenet of performance criticism is the epistemological claim that acting out uncovers interpretive choices—problematizes the text” (p. 197). This problematizing leads to a dialogic of discussion, one that as Bakhtin (1981) noted, ultimately yields a truth based on a consensus of dialogue that takes place when any language becomes performative after it has been uttered. In his landmark book, *The Dialogic Imagination*, Bakhtin asserts that part of the problem with literacy education stems from a refusal to see a fixed source—for him the novel—as actually having layers with and in constant interaction between the author and the reader. Sauer (1999) notes the need to understand Bakhtin’s claim, that in Shakespeare’s drama, “...the work is seen as being always in process, in the relation between author, actors and audience. Meaning is always in flux” (p. 34). Seidel (2000) concluded in his study that students in particular were able to identify the ambiguity of language more after having experienced Shakespeare in performance. Herold (1999) concurs, “A historicizing awareness of how wonder is manufactured in the theater seems a pedagogical purpose preferable to a kind of enthusiasm fabricated by rhetorical manipulation on display in the introduction to subtopics” (p. 133).

In many respects, the emphasis on the play of words reinforces not only the original Elizabethan attempt at double entendres, but also the more postmodern insistence that language consistently slips in meaning precisely because it is ever changing historically among the reader, his or her society, and that individual performative utterance. Everyday, then, the classroom that embraces Shakespeare in performance

yields an entirely different understanding and interpretation of the text, that there is no fixed, final means for being able to reproduce the exact same interpretation/meaning/effect in the future. Rocklin (1999) explains, “If the current paradigms in English often define themselves as teaching students to read either with or against the grain of that text, a performance-centered paradigm widens the curriculum by teaching students to read through the grain of the text” (p. 59). Montrose (1989) summarizes: “a primary task for the teacher of a new historical criticism must be to disabuse students of the notion that history is what is over and done with; to bring them to understand that they themselves live in history, and that they live history” (p. 25).

Another qualitative benefit to teaching Shakespeare through performance, according to the literature, is a revived sense of community within the classroom (Berg, 2003; Carson, 2003; Gardner, 1996; Rocklin, 2005; Stibbs, 1998; Sugarman, 2005). Marcus (1996) emphatically states, “By inviting Shakespeare into the classroom, my teaching has been transformed to care, concern and connection. An interactive approach to learning creates a healthy, and helping community, and for me, it is meaningful time spent with some special people” (p. 61). This sentiment is repeated throughout the literature (Anderson, 2003; Batho, 1998; Dessen, 1999; Duprez, 2002; Felske, 2005; Herold, 1995; McDonald, 1995; Mellor, 2000; Seidel, 2000). Much of these texts discusses the affective domain, though, and do not emphasize particular critical thinking skills. For example, these authors also point out that too often performance has been understood to be ‘videotape,’ instead of actual physical intonation, despite Herold’s (1995) claim that “critical and classroom practice that is based on a handful of videotapes

is not very likely to promote the pluralization of interpretation” (p. 12). Community, in effect, can only come from the process of doing the action, not receiving the action via another interpretation (McDonald, 1995; Seidel, 2000; Stibbs, 1998). McDonald (1995) claims that in his interviews with teachers, such a transformation demanded immediate attention in order to change perception of what determined success.

Bizzell (1987), Shrofel (1998), and Weltsek (2005) further the need for such a community to create an inventive environment precisely because of the creative energy that is extended when one teaches Shakespeare in performance. Sugarman (2005) found in his research of four highly successful programs that initiated a teaching of Shakespeare in performance that behind each program was committed leadership to establish that sense of community. For Sugarman, students must “inhabit the plays before they analyze them” (p. 6). In other words, without that leadership, students will be unable to fully function in that community, a prerequisite for what these authors believe is a successful understanding of the play.

Purpose and Significance

Since its broad acceptance in the early 1980s, studying Shakespeare through a performance perspective has blossomed as one of the key components to Shakespearean Studies (Blocksidge, 2003). Shakespearean Studies is an overly-generalized term that encompasses that body of research—the largest in the literary world—that focuses on all aspects of Shakespeare. Such efforts at studying Shakespeare through a performance perspective as being a part of the greater Shakespearean Studies establishment, culminated in the publication of Riggio’s text *Teaching Shakespeare through Performance* (1999).

The text does rely on case studies to argue its thesis. Stanley Wells (2003), himself head of the Shakespeare Birthplace and Trust, the government-sponsored depository of Shakespeare scholarship in the United Kingdom, and perhaps the most famous living Shakespeare scholar, now argues a section on performance history and performance criticism in his text. This emphasis is contrary to what Peggy O'Brien (1995) found in her research that in three volumes, each prior to 1995 and each titled *Teaching Shakespeare*, in which none of the essayists mentions teaching Shakespeare through performance.

Shakespeare scholarship, of course, abounds; the Bard remains the most written topic in literary studies today. Many other areas of Shakespeare scholarship include questions on the authenticity of Shakespeare, comparative reading of Shakespeare, the history of performance on Shakespeare, the life and times of Shakespeare, the cataloguing of the canon, quarto versus Folio comparisons, and of course all the 'isms' of literary theory: Feminism, Postmodernism, Marxism, Neo-colonialism, Psychoanalysis, Reader Response, Structuralism, Hermeneutics, etc. (Eagleton 1996). Essentially, though, a performance-based methodology is a return to the original intent of Shakespeare's work: "the play's the thing," as *Hamlet* suggests. As such, the principal purpose for pursuing this methodology is a reminder that no one authority figure holds the meaning of the text, that when separated into literal and figurative parts, a classroom ought to become a theater of actors. Unfortunately, as O'Brien (1995) examines, the teaching of Shakespeare has become an arduous task of either oversimplifying the

nuances of textual interpretation or else being bogged down in the literary cannon of fixed meaning from an authoritative source only.

This study's purpose, though, again, is not to consider the many reasons why one method may be utilized over another, or even what barriers prevent instructors from employing a performance-based approach, or why technology (video especially) does or does not enhance one's understanding of the text. This study's emphasis is on the given that some classrooms will utilize performance-based approaches and others will not. However, it is important, though, to understand the benefits in making curriculum decisions, specifically to the development of critical thinking skills that may occur when utilizing performance-based approaches.

Of special importance to the issue of teaching Shakespeare through performance is that since the publication of the Cambridge editions with Rex Gibson and Peggy O'Brien's *Shakespeare Set Free* series in the mid-1990s, there remains no quantitative studies done specifically on benefits of teaching Shakespeare through performance or 'traditional' methods at the secondary level. O'Brien's (1995) research does offer a statistically significant examination of why students enjoy learning Shakespeare in performance, but most studies as O'Brien (2008) points out, rely on qualitative measurements for how students better understand the text utilizing either 'traditional' or performance approaches.

As of 1992, the largest study regarding teaching secondary English had been collected by Arthur Applebee and Judith Langer, and their meta-analysis concluded that Shakespeare is still the most widely taught author in the secondary English classroom. In

addition, the most influential journal in Shakespeare studies, the *Shakespeare Quarterly*, has devoted several editions just to the scholarly work of understanding the plays through their performance (1978, 1993, 2001). However, most of the scholarly essays pertain to college-age students; very little exists for secondary education.

This study, therefore, supports what the critical advocates (Delpit, 1990; Freire, 1987, 1994; Giroux, 1983; 1998; hooks, 1994; McLaren, 1989; Montrose, 1989) claim—not to demonstrate one method as superior to another, though this study’s assumptions embrace a performance approach over ‘stand and deliver’ or traditional ‘seat-bound’ methods, but rather to discuss ramifications of one method over another, to allow for teachers, administrators and those responsible for curriculum at the secondary level to be provided quantitative information regarding the benefits of teaching Shakespeare in the secondary classroom based on particular methods.

Now is the time to add to the discussion that O’Brien (1995) originally called for but for whom few have responded: a quantitative assessment of how teaching Shakespeare through performance affects the secondary classroom. This study’s impact is to help provide another tool for how teachers can best approach their own practice, to provide a measurement of how curriculum decisions can and should better students. Given the need for stronger standards-based, accountability-driven structures that stem in the era of No Child Left Behind, now is perhaps the most appropriate time to measure skills independent of the self-referential understanding of the particular Shakespeare text or even of the shifting paradigms in literary analysis. Asking ourselves the benefit of

teaching Shakespeare allows for a better driven assessment of the skills students are obtaining and not just testing for factual recall of a texts' plot and characters.

Methodology

This study, therefore, is constructed around whether an integrated performance-based approach to teaching Shakespeare at the secondary level affects critical thinking as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test.

First, this study identifies how the California Critical Thinking Skills Test can be utilized as a quantitative measurement of student critical thinking ability. The test has no measurement for specific understanding of a Shakespeare text; this study's purpose is to seek clarification on the impact studying Shakespeare through performance will have on the outcome of the Test only. One would hypothesize that there should be an increase in the results precisely because one studied a Shakespeare play. What is interesting to note is to what degree of difference there is between those who study Shakespeare through performance and those who do not. In measuring critical thinking this study clearly defines the following variables: the independent variable is the sample of the population that experienced the teaching of Shakespeare through a performance-based approach; the dependent variable will be the results of the critical thinking score as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test. Using inferential statistics this study then measured the correlation between the two variables. This study also examined issues of gender to note whether that dependent variable had any impact on measuring critical thinking skills after learning Shakespeare using a particular methodology.

As a quantitative study, this study's hypothesis is that students who experience their study of Shakespeare through an integrated performance-based approach would score higher on the Critical Thinking Skills Test as a measurement of how their exposure to both Shakespeare and to performance has augmented their studies and thereby helped increase their critical thinking awareness.

Second, this study carefully controlled for what constituted an "integrated performance-based approach." To do this, this study utilized a treatment already designed and tested by the Folger Shakespeare Library as part of their ongoing National Endowment for the Humanities summer program for teachers. Differences in time allotted and the degree of minutes spent in instruction were carefully considered. Not all schools at the secondary level have the same scheduling programs; this study was fortunate to utilize schools who were ending their school year at the same time, both studying Shakespeare, but each a different play. This study also tried to examine classrooms of similar socio-economic background as well as students in the same homogenous level.

1. Does teaching Shakespeare to secondary (high school) language arts students help increase the development of critical thinking skills as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test?
2. Is there a difference in students' critical thinking skills development when performance based versus seat-bound methods are used to teach Shakespeare?
3. Is there a difference in students' inference ability development when performance based versus seat-bound methods are used to teach Shakespeare?

4. Is there an interactive effect on students' critical thinking skills development between gender and the performance versus seat-bound method are used to teach Shakespeare?

CHAPTER TWO

THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Since the publication of the First Folio in 1623, manuscript study of the Bard's works has been equally matched with an interest in how to perform them. Research, however, in the actual teaching of these texts is a rather new phenomenon in the world of Shakespearian discourse. Hence, this study: for those interested in illustrating the importance of teaching Shakespeare in the context the Bard most intended, are like explorers onto a new colony, or more precisely, like Miranda in the *Tempest*, who exclaims "O, Brave New World," when she herself unleashes her creative potential when no longer repressed by strict guidelines and formulaic curriculum guides. The question remains: what impact does teaching the Bard through performance have on those willing to explore such depths.

To fully appreciate the impact Shakespeare in performance has on critical thinking skills, it is first important to note the history of teaching Shakespeare before commenting on the many methods currently used to approach the text. Then, it will be necessary to review the literature in critical thinking itself so as better to understand both the impact constructivism has on the secondary language arts classroom, as well as the impact performance theory has on the teaching of Shakespeare. Each will then inform

the other as to the extent critical thinking skills stem directly from performance of Shakespeare.

The History of Teaching Shakespeare in America

Charles Frey (1984) outlines two approaches to teaching Shakespeare in America in particular: the first is summarized by studies done by Henry Simon while at Columbia in 1932 that essentially found the teaching of Shakespeare to be elitist, determined by the College Board, and ought to be replaced with more pragmatic text. The second, as summarized by Esther Dunn in her studies in 1940 while at Smith College, found Shakespeare's appeal to the masses essentially based on our need to appropriate, to have 'ownership' over a cultural, Elizabethan legacy. After all, it is very possible that John Harvard would have grown up thinking Shakespeare as an "old Stratford family friend of his mother's" (Dunn, 1940, p. 18). And, as Emerson himself called Shakespeare, "The Father of the Man," this appropriation of a legacy is an attempt to link American destiny with the synonymous greatness that came to be associated with "Shakespeare."

What Frey conveys is also a furtherance of the canon debate still held in American schools: to what degree are high schools responsible for teaching a body of literature usually associated with European white men, and to what end does literacy embrace peripheral texts not continuously encountered in textbooks and classroom instruction. Such debate came to fruition in the 1990s in what became known as the "culture wars." Anne Neal (2006) and the American Council of Trustees and Alumni surveyed in 1998 the top 70 public and private universities in America and found that only 23 schools required even English majors to study Shakespeare. James Russell

Lowell had argued in 1898 that students would readily embrace Shakespeare because Greek and Latin were no longer relevant to daily discourse. Little did he realize that 100 years later many would argue that Shakespeare was no longer relevant to daily discourse period.

Frey (1984) argues that in America Shakespeare was first introduced to students in the mid-19th century as a primer for elocution drills and as instructor in moral arguments. Crowl (1995) is mindful of how the McGuffey reader had pictures of Shakespeare and how de Toqueville had noticed Shakespeare being quoted in pioneer houses. Burton (2006) points out that the 1837 McGuffey reader had no indication that the Shakespeare text was in fact a play, but instead focused on individual speeches as if they were intended for print only. McGuffey readers for older students would have been introduced to longer excerpts of the play, but as Burton explains, most students did not attend school past the fifth grade, and most may never had realized that their introduction to the Bard remained an elocution exercise and never a play. After all, the Puritan viewpoint held strong sway in American education, a viewpoint that found theater itself to lead to moral decay.

Henry Norman Hudson's mid-1850s American publication of Shakespeare's plays were, by all accounts, abridged versions of the texts that contained several errors, and yet were widely-used, especially, as Frey (1984) notes, when the College Board began to use Shakespeare as a partial means-test for college entrance in 1901. How much the American landscape changed when, for example, in 1828, a Boston teacher had been fired for teaching Shakespeare as a play. By 1873 Harvard required knowledge of

Shakespeare to gain admittance. According to Peggy O'Brien (2006), it was the Committee of Ten that was most responsible, though, for the infusion of Shakespeare into the American high school curriculum. This group of Caucasian men conferring for several days behind closed doors in 1893 created a curriculum guide that is still widely implemented in teaching, choosing to recognize, for example, *Merchant of Venice*, *Macbeth* and *Julius Caesar*, as the most important Shakespeare texts for determining admittance to college. As Margaret Knapp (2006) noted, *Caesar* was the most popular play to teach from the late 1800s until the emergence of *Romeo and Juliet* (largely due to the popularity of the 1968 Zefferele film version of *Romeo and Juliet*). Knapp (2006) explains that *Caesar* has the least bawdy humor or innuendo of any of the plays in the Shakespeare canon, and that the speeches were often used in conjunction with the study of Latin. The 1968 film version of *Romeo and Juliet*, however, captured a youthful rebellion that was synonymous with then current cultural trends. *Merchant* was widely studied, says Cartelli (2006), probably because of its anti-semitic language as veiled critical acceptance of prejudice as high art (a misreading of the play entirely, Cartelli notes). And *Macbeth*, as the romantic writers like Emerson point out, was a resounding reminder of the power of democracy: too much lust for control can lead to bloody, tyrannical despotism.

In 1886, Crowl (1995) notes that Shakespeare dominated the top-ten reading list. Shakespeare was often quoted in letters written in the latter half of the 19th century, most prominently with many Civil War soldiers and then later veterans (Knapp, 2006). Ironically, Hudson himself—the publisher of the abridged versions of Shakespeare in the

mid-19th century—came from poverty and remained a staunch advocate for populist—not elitist—education. He wrote in 1906, “I suspect that our American parents have become somewhat absurdly, and not very innocently, ambitious of having their boys and girls all educated to be gentleman and ladies; which is, I take it, the same as having them educated to be good for nothing” (p. 545, as quoted in Frey, 1984). Prior to Hudson’s publications, few in America had access to the texts, and so the actual reading and study of the plays was mostly a parlor game of the upper-class.

Thus began a long-standing divide between a public knowledge of Shakespeare and an equally public skepticism as to its proper place in American society.

As Burton (2006) notes, these “Shakespeare societies” of the 19th century fueled the separation between Shakespeare as “high-brow” means of entering an academic, collegiate life, versus the “low-brow” entertainment value of public theater. Most of these societies, Knapp (2006) points out, were women’s clubs, and that 75% of public libraries today were founded by these women’s clubs. Such clubs regularly read Shakespeare, or had Shakespeare read to them, focusing especially on, as they had learned in their McGuffey readers, both elocution and moral indoctrination. As such, these societies often read abridged versions of the plays. Peggy O’Brien (2006) explains how this dichotomy of Shakespeare in America in the 19th century became most readily apparent when between 1840 and 1860 Shakespeare was actually quoted most often in clinical issues of psychology in textbooks and journals, not in public theaters. In other words, America was fascinated with the Bard, but as a fringe side show, a periphery to be explored through medical, distilled terminology, or the proper study of elocution, or the

often misappropriated means of moral indoctrination. Rarely was the text ever presented in its entirety or for its overall intended effect: the theatrical.

Despite the almost ubiquitous presence of Shakespeare in America throughout its history, the class distinction often associated with the Bard continued to permeate. In fact, as the literature suggests, those that taught Shakespeare throughout the 20th century articulated concerns ranging from how best to teach the text to whether the text should be taught at all. In many respects, as America changed, as the American school system evolved, the role Shakespeare would play ironically echoed the same issues that 19th century Americans posed regarding the role this iconic figure would play in American life.

The earliest formal appearance in high school for Shakespeare as part of the curriculum was the Boston high schools in 1877. Both *As You Like It* and *Macbeth* made the list (Simon, 1932). And as early as 1893, educators, like Maxcy in *The School Review*, volume 1, number 2, were arguing against elitist approaches to the teaching of Shakespeare. Frey (1984) discusses the differences that emerged in how best to teach Shakespeare, a difference that mirrored the two approaches to the roles of high school: a “Harvard,” critical approach which emphasized secondary education as preparing only those with the aptitude to enter college, with scholars like Lyman Kittridge (1860-1941) who taught the plays line-by-line, and the progressive approach as found in Leaflet N.7 of 1908 from the English Association which viewed secondary education as appropriate for all students who wish to participate in a democratic society: “There is serious danger in the classroom, with text books open before us, of our forgetting what drama really means,

and burying the poet [Shakespeare] beneath a mass of comments, conundrums, and morals” (p. 7, *Shakespeare in Education*, 2003).

Gavin Bolton (1984) explains how John Dewey was able to help change the perception of drama’s use in the classroom to be more of a pedagogical tool and not a commercial outcome. Dewey once claimed, “Allow [a student] to act out the idea and it becomes real to him.” However, not all educators readily embraced the progressive movement. Bolton (1984) notes two views of high school education in particular as it relates to the teaching of Shakespeare in the 20th century: the traditional view that had instructors providing knowledge to be acquired and the more child-centered progressive view that instructors facilitate scaffolding knowledge. Such a dichotomy came to a head at the turn of the century, when, for example a 1905 teacher’s handbook promoted that “the pieces are to be read with feeling and intelligence, but they are not to be acted” (p. 36). Most Puritan beliefs still had control over perceptions of theater at the turn of the century, centering on what John Wellesly had exclaimed: “he who plays as a child will play as a man” (p. 9). Too often drama itself had been relegated to the childish realm, and so few outside of those in the theater would listen to someone like the famous Caldwell Cooke who in 1917 claimed that Shakespeare was meant for acting, not studying. In the progressive era of education, Shakespeare was, for many educators with a progressive, or what would later be known as constructivist view, that performance was liberating, if not threatening to a general social order.

New versions of the text were printed at the turn of the century, including Alfred Harbage’s, whose Harvard interest in the Bard after replacing Kittridge was less on use of

language and more on interpretive study. It was in the 1930s and 1940s that New Criticism became the pervasive tool of literary analysis, and with that came the flowering of Shakespeare interpretation and the birth of modern Shakespeare studies—Stoll, Eliot, Empson, Knight, Spurgeon, Brooks, etc. What Frey (1984) argues, then, is that due to the influence of criticism, the emphasis on teaching the text for the most part, especially at the college level, became a close-reading of it, not its performance. Studying Shakespeare at the secondary level became synonymous with college-bound elitism.

Susan Leach (1992) argues that after World War I, the study of Shakespeare was viewed with suspicion because once again the upper class of aristocratic control so often associated with Shakespeare was, in her opinion, responsible for that nightmarish conflict. For Leach, there is a great difference between 19th and 20th century Shakespeare—the former more accessible than the latter. She posits that long before the College Board put Shakespeare on its entrance examination, there was great freedom in the reading of the Bard—Dickens and Twain characters openly understood Shakespeare, and Leach contends, the reader of either author would have likewise understood the allusions. She summarizes: “Certainly the appropriation of Shakespeare by the academic establishment, and the subsequent appearance in university English literature courses and examinations, and then in school examinations, has turned him and the perceptions of him, into something that would not have been recognized until the late 19th century” (p. 12). Though accessing Shakespeare may have changed with both progressive notions that drama isn’t childish and New Critic approaches that the Shakespeare text was meant

to be interpreted, the persistent issue of Shakespeare's relevancy never resolved itself in the greater social context.

In 1929, the *Peabody Journal of Education* published an article on "Shakespeare in the High School." Its author, C. L. Townsend, notes that he taught Shakespeare "very badly," and that he wanted future generations to benefit from his mistakes. Ironically, Townsend (1929) was taught *Merchant of Venice* by having to perform it at a progressively-minded, college preparatory high school, whereas in his own suggestions to the reader, he embodies how the new theories of understanding Shakespeare did not match its pedagogical approaches. In fact, he argues the best method for assessing student learning is student conversation after a "close reading." Such articles illustrate how Shakespeare would largely be approached over the next 80 years in the secondary classroom.

In 1928 *The English Journal*, published by the National Council of Teachers of English, the preeminent national organization for research in English education in the United States printed an article by L. B. Hessler that argues against the approach to Shakespeare that relies on too many annotations and explanations. His solution is particularly interesting as it calls for the student to make a model, fashion some costumes, and as an afterthought, even "put the play on" (p. 736). Again, the democratization allies who view the study of Shakespeare as a cultural barrier between those who hold the supremacy of the textual analysis as key to college entrance and those who believe the Bard accessible primarily in reaction to the over-indulgent need to annotate too much,

still did not hold in regard performance as a central approach, nor as benefit, to Shakespeare studies.

Even in 1938, Orson Welles writes in the *English Journal*, how students must feel when confronted with what they perceive to be difficult language. He does not, however, suggest performance as a means for students to better understand the text. Instead, he suggests audio-recordings and trips to the theater to augment a student's education. What is central, though, to Welles' (1938) understanding is how teachers themselves are ill-equipped to help students appreciate Shakespeare as "Everyman." Welles notes how with the changing times teachers need to be taught differently than the way they had learned. As Charles Frey (1988) noted, the line-by-line method was still the most popular approach to teaching and learning Shakespeare. Henry Simon, also writing in the *English Journal* in 1934, articulated a strong condemnation for the over-moralizing and often eulogizing approach to the Bard, yet does not offer drama as method for overcoming adversity. Instead, "Perhaps the technique for understanding this art is now also too difficult for many of our students" (p. 368). Overall, a performance approach to the teaching of Shakespeare was not a priority in the early literature on teaching Shakespeare.

In April 1937, Marguerite Malm of the Training School of State Teachers College in Minnesota published in the *English Journal* a rather unorthodox method for teaching Shakespeare at the time: actual performance. Using her own class as the basis for her article, she illustrated a 'page-to-stage' process that would 50 year later be duplicated by the Folger Shakespeare Library's successful series, *Shakespeare Set Free*. Malm (1937) illustrates an early division in the performance approach to the teaching of Shakespeare:

the difference between dramatic play and theatrical performance. What is most interesting about this article is how progressive teachers who may have reacted to the elitist canon-driven advocates for teaching Shakespeare in a particular method, began to align themselves with dramatic play. Bolton (1984) explains how dramatic play is based on expression, with an intent to be a play, but that performance mode is actual representation with an intent to describe. This pedagogical shift was made most dramatic with Dorothy Heathcote's work some forty years later in the 1970s. Her work centered on process drama—how text is accessed, not produced, how students are authority, not a teacher or a director when they encounter any text, dramatic or otherwise. In other words, dramatic play is a means, never an end; theater classes were meant to stage a play, whereas English classes were meant to play the stage.

Bolton (1984) summarizes this initial shift as evident in Malm's (1937) work in approaching English education at the secondary level regarding the teaching of Shakespeare: "process drama promotes holding two world in mind at the same time; detachment; reflection; double valence—open to other aesthetic or literal attention" (p. 136). Doing a performance, unlike processing a text, does not utilize what Bolton (1984) believes is an important pedagogical component of accessing Shakespeare through performance: the inherent reflective practice of making decisions about a text that a performance simply doesn't require because those decisions have already been made. This schism when approaching drama at the secondary level became the foundation for classification between school "departments," an "English" and "Theater" division. Textual study would be the purview of English, but performance would be the

responsibility of the Theater department. Dramatic play through process drama would become a tool of the English department, even if only a minority of practitioners at the secondary English classroom level would utilize such an approach, while a performance production became a school-wide effort and/or the goal of those who would call themselves the “Theater” department.

The word “performance” then has two meanings: those who advocate teaching Shakespeare as a play and not a poem (or even a novel) use the word “performance” to designate both dramatic play or process drama as well as rehearsal and production as the means by which the text is accessed. “Performance” also means a production of the play which may or may not have used process drama or dramatic play as a means of accomplishing its goal.

In the early 1940s, with America engrossed in fighting fascism, so too did the dialogue concerning how to teach Shakespeare reflect the antagonisms of whether the Bard should be dramatized or studied through seat-bound methods. Ben Renz in 1942 wrote how students didn’t understand Shakespeare because they didn’t know how to read Shakespeare (p. 56). Thus, he encouraged teachers to alter the text, revise the language, and allow for greater freedom in the translation of material. He notes how Schlegel translated Shakespeare into German so that generations of German students could appreciate the abridged, appropriated texts. In a stunning rebuke, Christine Gibson wrote also in 1942 how, “Nor is one made more confident by the reminder that Germans in the last century were widely exposed to immediately intelligible translations.....Would they [German youth] recognize the rise of a tyrant and the treachery of an arch-deceiver?” (p.

549). Gibson's answer lay with the refusal to believe that translations or abridgements were the best answer as to how to teach Shakespeare. In fact, by extension, she argues that such an approach actually led to fascist conformity. Though contextualized by a time of war, the struggle remained in American schools between those proponents of seat-bound approaches versus those who want to dramatize the text, between those who think Shakespeare ought to be accessible for all students and those who think it should be only for those entering college. Less than 20% of the population at this time would have entered college; only after the GI Bill did college become an option for many American families. Thus, with the changing of those entering post-secondary education came a stronger reaction as to how to approach the text at the secondary level.

Although entire decades cannot be adequately summarized in one or two paragraphs, teaching Shakespeare in American in the 1950s reflects yet again the polarity between those who espouse drama as the central means of accessing the text, and those who believe the text must be analyzed and interpreted through traditional seat-bound criticism. Richard Goldstone in 1952 explained a college course that utilized opera as a means of complementing the traditional seat-bound criticism. And Charles Hartung, writing in *The Journal of Higher Education* in 1958, espouses the need to separate literature between "intrinsic enjoyment of imaginative literature" and a "professional study of literature" (p. 439). Here, Hartung (1958) wants future teachers of English to realize that the personal enjoyment of literature is subservient to scholarly interpretation that the goal for an English class at the secondary level is to gently encourage the former while emphasizing the latter. Hartung explains how the English teacher must "determine

the author's probable intention in any work requir[ing] some training in the methods of literary research—the use of journals, letters and documentary sources” (p. 439).

Hartung privileges an approach to teaching that actually deemphasizes the imaginative quality of the writing. With regard to Shakespeare, Hartung would argue that Goldstone's (1952) example of using opera to help access the text would be the synthesis of the imaginative with the scholarly. However, as with much of the literature, Hartung (1958) reflects that doing drama belongs in a theater course, whereas future English teachers must learn how to utilize the correct “bibliographic techniques” (p. 439).

Two months prior to the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the *English Journal* published an article by preeminent Shakespeare expert, G. B. Harrison, who argues that the Bard was never intended to be read by students at the secondary level, for Shakespeare himself was writing for adults. Though he argues that the text is indeed a play, he analyzes more the construction of the play itself, as if it were a novel, using Aristotle's definition of plot: rising action, climax, and denouement. Harrison's (1963) views are echoed by Louis Marder, also a college instructor, who in 1964 argues the same method of analysis for future teachers of English at the secondary level. Both play down the bibliographic technique, yet both also expand on how good teaching requires a full appreciation of how the text unfolds, a literary analysis of an overall plot structure. Yet, there were other voices in the 1960s arguing, as does Lawrence McNamee (1962) that, “The simple truth is that Shakespeare's verbal magic works principally upon the ear. The printed page, the picture, the stage setting meant nothing to the Bard” (p. 584). His work stems from multiple visits to Germany in which he was impressed with how well

the German students could quote Shakespeare, even though they predominately did not speak English. He was informed that the German students rarely read Shakespeare, they listened instead. His advice for future English teachers is that they never neglect the power of theater to transform the human ear. Richard French in 1968 conducted several surveys of his students who were to be future English teachers. In his study, he explores how the most controversial aspect of teaching Shakespeare to these students was whether to perform the play, with half his students voicing strong objection to any memorization and half convinced that such methods were the only way for secondary students to understand the play. Although an entire decade cannot be summarized so quickly, once again, the dichotomy remains for how best to teach Shakespeare in the American school: to perform or not to perform.

The articles that appear in the 1970s on the teaching of Shakespeare reflect the continued discourse that has been at the heart of the overall discussion: to what end does progressive education embrace the teaching of Shakespeare, and to what end one best explores that teaching. Leo Rockas in 1978, writing from a post-secondary perspective, encourages the reader to listen to Shakespeare, that assessments based on “tests” are “pedagogically superior” (p. 106). He was writing in large part due to an entire issue in 1977 of *College English* that dedicated itself to the teaching of Shakespeare, where Zahorski and Krieger, both professors, endorse the teaching of Shakespeare as a core requirement to the Western canon, but do so through logical induction or the use of film and audio recordings. Zefferele’s 1968 production of *Romeo and Juliet* after all, had ushered in a new era of appreciating Shakespeare because of its commercial success.

One could argue that more students had greater access to Shakespeare than before, and that in many respects that film would forever alter the Shakespeare teaching landscape (in fact, the Zefferele film is still used in many high school classrooms, even with the Baz Lurman's 1996 rendition of *Romeo + Juliet*). Dorothy Moulton in 1979 wrote of how radical education in the 1970s almost abolished the need for literature, and how works like Shakespeare were important to reclaim before they became lost in the shifting curriculum of these turbulent times. With little accountability, secondary classrooms and post-secondary institutions were manipulating foundational approaches to the teaching of English, often abandoning the canon to explore texts that were "relevant" to students (Moulton, 1979, p. 64). She recalls actually the era when progressive education, as she described it, met its zenith during the Eight-Year Study and the subsequent Stanford Language Arts Investigation, not during the 1970s (the Eight-Year study was from 1933-1941; the Stanford investigation of 10,000 students from 1937-1940). The shifting focus had become less experimentation as illustrated in both studies and more abandonment of English as a "humanistic discipline—indispensable as a means of preserving human values in a technological society" (p. 66). Other writers, however, saw a 1970s that was positively changing the nature of the classroom: Albert Yoder in 1974 echoes earlier articles in *College English* that the classroom becomes a theater, that the texts, regardless of the genre, be presented as if it were staged. These opinions would correspond with the groundbreaking work of Dorothy Heathcote which began in the 1970s but would come to fruition with her 1984 work, *Expert in the Mantle*, where process drama—or the use of drama to process a text—became the means to an end in English instruction rather than

drama just as an end in itself. Experimentation certainly grew out the changing times in the 1970s.

Any discussion of methods in the Secondary English classroom in the last thirty years must first begin with Arthur Applebee and Judith Langer, directors for The Center for the Learning and Teaching of Literature at the State University of New York at Albany, in part because the quantitative size of their studies and in part because of their prolific writings on the subject. Applebee (1989) confirms that Shakespeare is the most commonly taught author at the secondary level. Four hundred eighty-eight schools participated in one of his studies, replicating a 1963 (Anderson, 1964) study that asked for the top ten book-length texts that were currently being taught. Shakespeare, Steinbeck and Dickens led the list. Whereas *Julius Caesar*, *Merchant of Venice* and *Macbeth* led the list at the beginning of the century (Applebee, 1989b; Tanner, 1907), *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* dominated the list at the end of the century (Applebee, 1992). Eighty-four percent of respondents listed the tragedy of two youth who commit suicide as one of the top ten texts they teach students. Ironically, “their [school teachers] responses reflected the central role that book-length works play: teachers reported an average of 31% of the time had been spent on novels and 20% on plays” (Applebee, 1992). That would entail that students were exposed only to one play, that it was probably Shakespeare, and that the time spent studying the play was far less than the time spent studying novels. In addition, 63% of the school teachers reported that an anthology was their “main source” of teaching selection (Applebee, 1992). For these

reasons Applebee surmises that “the curriculum as a whole remains relatively traditional in its emphasis” (p. 28).

Regarding specific methodology in the classroom, Applebee (1990) identified class discussion as the most common approach to literature teaching. In fact, in the teaching of plays, teacher-led discussion takes place in 65% to 90% of all classrooms (Applebee, 1990). At the time, Applebee found “creative dramatics” used in only 18% of the classrooms (Applebee, 1989a). Applebee in 2002 notes how in his research that the “most effective classrooms at all grade levels keep a clear focus on the disciplines underlying their subject and develop a web of discipline-based interconnections among the activities that students do” (p. 31). Interconnectedness, says Applebee, leads to an appreciation of differences, which he posits that the most effective classroom can utilize to enhance learning. “Students are more likely to learn and to argue and defend their own points of view when confronted with disagreement.... They must learn to listen and understand” (p. 32). Such difference—some would argue—is at the heart of teaching Shakespeare through performance. In 1990, however, only 3.5% [of the classrooms surveyed] actively involve creativity” (Applebee, 1991, p. 44).

The history of teaching Shakespeare in America was shaped in part by three important developments in the last 20 years. The first was the publication of Rex Gibbon’s *Cambridge Series* of Shakespeare’s plays that utilized drama resources as the primary means for exploring the text. Selling over one million copies, the series as well as the Cambridge Schools Project which he founded and ran until his death in 2005, deliberately emphasized the imaginative qualities of the text, encouraging role-play,

dramatic license, stage fighting and costuming as central to any reading of the text. In fact, most editions of Shakespeare's plays, like the Arden, have scholarly notes, or like the Folger, contain annotated translated notes for antiquated phrases. The Cambridge series has parallel to the text itself theater games, history, activities, a range of vocal and stage production to engage the student at what Gibson felt the Bard most intended: the theatrical. Gibson promoted a performance-based approach to the teaching of Shakespeare throughout his travels in England; his *Teaching Shakespeare* (1999) helped shape how many British and American teachers alike would approach the text.

The second revolutionary component to the teaching of Shakespeare in the last twenty years in America, is the work of the Folger Library in Washington D.C., specifically the work of Peggy O'Brien, who, as director of education at the Folger in the late 1980s through the late 1990s, ushered in National Endowment for the Humanities summer programs for American teachers to better learn how to teach Shakespeare through performance. O'Brien's *Shakespeare Set Free* series (beginning in 1994), in collaboration with teachers who attended the NEH summer programs on the teaching of Shakespeare, like the *Cambridge Series*, promoted a performance approach to the Bard. In addition, O'Brien's study (1995) remains the only quantitative study to date that measures the impact performance approaches has on the teaching of Shakespeare. For her study, O'Brien (1995) measured student enthusiasm, finding a statistically significant difference between those who learned Shakespeare through traditional "desk-bound" approaches and those who learned Shakespeare through the Folger's definition of "doing" Shakespeare through performance.

The publication of new materials in the last twenty years certainly has challenged perceptions of how to teach Shakespeare. Most notably was a 1984 edition of *Shakespeare Quarterly*, the most influential, scholarly journal of Shakespeare studies, which dedicated itself to teaching methods regarding the Bard. Although many secondary teachers may not have read the material, such scholarly debate did help usher in the publication of Shakespeare in performance texts, most notably, Rex Gibson's *Teaching Shakespeare* (1999), G. B. Shand's *Teaching Shakespeare: Pass it On* (2008) (a critical anthology of teaching Shakespeare at the college level), *Teaching Shakespeare through Performance* (ed. Rocklin, 2000), Milla Riggio's *Teaching Shakespeare through Performance* (1999), and David Bevington's *How To Read a Shakespeare Play* (2006)—the last of whom, along with other Shakespeare scholars—has fully embraced the performance approach to teaching Shakespeare. Even other editions are now publishing the plays with performance notes, like the Arden editions, because of the success of Gibson's *Cambridge* series.

Methods of Teaching Shakespeare

Although the use of drama means that students actively engage the text and interpret its meaning by verbalizing the material and by demonstrating the physical movements which accompany such verbalizations, not many empirical studies have been done to gauge its effect versus traditional 'seat-bound' or 'stand and deliver' methods (Mellor, 2000; O'Brien, 2008). In addition, even among the practitioners of a performance-based approach, there is great debate on what constitutes a 'performance-based' approach to teaching Shakespeare, including whether memorization is essential, to

what extent modernization hinders/helps student understanding, and how much teacher direction is necessary or detrimental to the staging of the text.

Teaching Shakespeare involves a continuum that often confronts pedagogical direction in the secondary English classroom: from seat-bound methods to that full interaction with students on their feet. Some educational theories would suggest that students should “construct” their learning, whether that takes place in “seat-bound” methods or doing projects outside the classroom. Other theories would suggest that classroom activities—no matter the method—directly “critique” the socio-economic, political and cultural boundaries that often delineate those who have and those that do not have power. Still other theories would maintain that the teacher is primarily responsible for passing along a “traditional” legacy of core content and information so that students become receptacles of past greatness. In some respects, the “why” of how one teaches does indeed tend to suggest the “how” one teaches—more often the “traditional” approach might yield seat-bound methods while the “constructivist” would engage with more active learning. However, not all theories lend themselves to this categorization. Some “critical” educators would teach utilizing seat-bound methods, while some “traditional” teachers might embrace, for example, performance approaches to the teaching of Shakespeare precisely because performance for them is a means to an end of strengthening one’s understanding of the “traditional” canon. Hence, when discussing the different methods for teaching Shakespeare, it is important to note first not the “why”, but rather the “how” various educators have approached the text, what has worked, and more succinctly, how that approach overall impacts critical thinking skills.

There is a continuum regarding the teaching of Shakespeare in the literature. One could imagine that on the far left is line-by-line close reading as advocated by the Harvard model of Kittridge in the 19th century. Later, the New Critics in the 1940s and 1950s would adopt this type of instruction as it became the foundation to literary scholarship regarding Shakespeare. To the far right of the continuum is the staging of Shakespeare through performance both as a means and as an end. Although utilized by many educators throughout the 20th century, this approach has become more widely accepted since the publication of the *Shakespeare Set Free* and the *Cambridge* edition in the mid 1990s.

Traditional Seat-Bound Approaches

Beginning on the left of the continuum, traditional seat-bound, line-by-line reading, there are few authors--given the propensity of literature in favor of performance approaches since Peggy O'Brien's groundbreaking work in the early 1990s that led to the publication of the *Shakespeare Set Free* series—who openly advocate for what had been utilized in the classroom for over 100 years. For example, one might have to turn back to the 1960s to find close-reading advocates like Bertrand Evans (1966) who wrote that teachers should “read the entire play to the class, line-by-line, with students following in their own texts” (p. 264). John Andrews in the 1984 teaching edition of *Shakespeare Quarterly* implicitly acknowledged that many instructors of Shakespeare would love to teach the Bard through turning their classrooms into theater spaces, but added how most instructors probably still rely on, or even enjoy more, traditional “seat-bound” methodology: “Is there still a place in the new pedagogy for such old-fashioned methods

as lecture and discussion, and for such time-honored concerns as source study, biographical and historical investigation, and analysis of image patterns?” (p. 515)

There are, however, writers who do support a non-performance approach to Shakespeare, especially noting the demands such an approach might have on the traditional secondary English classroom. In *Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare's King Lear* (1986), part of a series of books the Modern Language Association continually publishes, editor Robert Ray, for example examines how graphic organizers can help students better understand family relationships, how a formal debate can stimulate great discussion about the play's ambiguous final scene. What is interesting to note is how J. L. Styan, one of the early academic proponents of Shakespeare in performance wrote that, “getting the text off the page is the kindest thing a teacher can do to the play” (p. 111). The reviewer of the text, however, notes that, “[Styan's essay] raises good production questions but assumes a pretty sophisticated level of performance from the students and would benefit from more specific staging instructions for teachers unused to directing” (Cohen, 1989, p. 504). In other words, performance approaches are peripheral to the central approach to the teaching of Shakespeare, and then is often criticized, not for its intent, but rather its instruction.

Holmer (1990) uses the same questions posed by Andrews (1984) in the *Shakespeare Quarterly* to answer emphatically that “yes” there is still room for traditional “seat-bound” methodologies in teaching Shakespeare. Holmer's (1990) work included questionnaires and workshops with actual practitioners at a National Council of English Teacher conference in the late 1980s to emphasize how the theory of

Shakespeare in performance—even in its best intentions—was not utilized much in the classroom. “Even though the current pedagogical trend seems to favor a ‘theatrical’ over a purely ‘literary’ criticism of Shakespeare’s drama, only about a third of our workshop indicated they involved their students in actual acting and production assignments” (p. 189). As Holmer notes, the plays themselves were never meant for the classroom. Why, in essence, should we try to duplicate in the classroom what was never intended? And, hasn’t the sophistication of educational practice with traditional “seat-bound” approaches become more sophisticated than Renaissance Horn-book didactic single-sex almost Puritanical classrooms?

Holmer (1990) further explains how the teachers themselves in the workshop noted how language barriers were the most difficult obstacles for students to overcome, and hence the teacher need to explain to students Elizabethan dramatic conventions, Petrarchan tropes, even basic biblical allusions. David Bergeron (1997) also echoes the difficulty of language when he writes of his own college students: “Teaching literature involves teaching a set of reading skills....I confront a wildly divergent range of skills....as each year passes, the students seem less able to read difficult literary texts” (p. 460). Reading the text alone as a traditional “seat-bound” method furthers the notion that the role of educator is not to update Shakespeare to our world, but for us as learners to fully appreciate Shakespeare’s world. “The role of teacher as explainer, one who imparts a body of knowledge gained through years of study and experience, has not changed much” (Holmer, 1990, p. 190). Khan (1997), writing in response to Georgetown University’s dropping of a Shakespeare requirement as part of the ongoing cultural wars,

insists that close reading is the only way for students to come to a better understanding of the text. She also teaches introductory college courses on Shakespeare. Close reading “gets them [students] to realize that Shakespeare generates drama not simply out of characters in conflict, but at a deeper level, of ideological contradictions” (p. 457). In fact, with new developments in contemporary literary theory—structuralism, deconstruction, cultural materialism, new historicism and feminism—perhaps now more than ever, the role of discussion/lecture becomes paramount to student comprehension.

Sally Rothenberg and Susan Watts (1997) explore how using a scaffolded reading experience, a technique for those teachers who employ seat-bound methods, helps students at the secondary level who have been diagnosed with learning difficulties better understand Shakespeare. They cite Graves (1994) who’s Scaffolding Reading Experience (SRE) includes a “set of pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading activities specifically designed to assist a particular group of students” (p. 5). The SRE model is based on the model of explicit instruction and is grounded in the Vygotsky’s (1978) theory that gaps in proximal development can be closed with support. For Rothenberg and Watts (1997), “The role of the teacher as a decision-maker is paramount in the implementation of an SRE” (p. 533). In other words, the teacher’s role is to determine the outcome of what a student is to know and then plan activities that will lead to that outcome. In Graves’ (1994) book, drama is a post-reading activity akin to artistic or written expression and not the central focus in understanding a text. Rothenberg and Watts (1997) conclude from their study with their own class that “students’ comments during discussion reflected what has been described as meta-literacy or critical literacy”

(p. 538). This reading “seat-bound” method helped students with a strong aversion to Shakespeare better understand the themes of the text as outlined prior to the unit by the instructors.

Holmer (1990), a professor at Georgetown at the height of the cultural wars when Shakespeare was removed from the mandatory reading lists for college graduation at many American campuses, again warns that “those who use performance-oriented methods to teach a play by enacting only several pivotal scenes or particularly dramatic moments may risk the danger of reducing a student’s awareness of the play to only those mosaic pieces, perhaps losing sight of the whole for some of its parts” (p. 191). This fragmentation, Holmer suggests, derails and undermines the study of a play as a series of events that connect various themes together. Furthermore, Holmer argues that performance-oriented methods might alienate a teacher who is uncomfortable with such methodologies: “We should encourage teachers to adopt a style of teaching most comfortable for them, to use whatever methods...that work well in their particular teaching situations” (p. 193). Without that sense of comfort in how we teach Shakespeare, then the relevancy for why we teach Shakespeare is lost on the students. And for Holmer, the relevancy for why we teach Shakespeare, according to her secondary English teacher workshop participants, has become the most critical issue for Shakespeare pedagogy in the last 20 years.

Michael Collins (1990), writing in the *Shakespeare Quarterly* teaching edition (yet another sign of the growing popularity of staging Shakespeare in the classroom that would lead to the seminal work of Peggy O’Brien), argues that understanding metaphor is

at the heart of making meaning out a Shakespeare text, and that drama itself is not a prelude, nor even a means to understanding metaphor. “While students often believe that the goal of reading or performance is to arrive at one correct interpretation, that belief impedes their ability not only to respond imaginatively and personally to the play but also to understand that a performance is really only another reading of the play” (p. 254). In other words, the dramatic excitement that stems from making choices about a text often precludes students from seeing themselves as constructors of the knowledge within the text. Art supplants life. Milburn (2002) concurs, adding that as a teacher of a secondary English class, “The plays must be reread, glossaries consulted, and a good teacher permitted to guide one to gradual understanding” (p. 78). Focusing on bringing the plays to life, for Milburn, often means failing to capture the students’ appreciation of the Bard for life. His own work with metaphor and Shakespeare led him to believe that exciting students about the language itself is the best way to “spark passion” (p. 78).

Citing E. D. Hirsch (1967) and studies done on the role of metaphor in the secondary language arts classroom (Czerny et al., 1977), Collins (1990) argues the teacher’s role is to lead students through discussion on how the process of interpretation and metaphor are often intertwined. Specifically, the teacher’s role is to resist any final interpretation that might stem from a production or performance-based approach of Shakespeare. In fact, Collins, in response to the tremendous impact New Historicists have on Shakespeare criticism, argues that students would do well to survey the source material Shakespeare might have used for this plays, or to do some comparative reading of other Elizabethan texts to fully appreciate how the audience of Shakespeare’s day

would have responded to some of the arcane language and ideas that often are lost in translation, adaptation and performance. The impact of such an approach is two-fold: first, new historicism helps students embrace the “otherness” of the play, an “otherness” that helps egocentric adolescents appreciate the multiplicity of voices that are imbued in a text, that the decentering of the author (in this case, Shakespeare), will eventually lead to a greater appreciation for why directors make the choices that they do. Such an approach, though, first requires a close reading and discussion of the play from this new historical perspective. Second, students will “realize that contextual readings neither foreclose other lines of inquiry nor of themselves claim greater authority.....to encourage students to trust their own responses” (p. 258). In other words, teaching through the lens of new historicism should help students further see the play as the play itself and not as a vehicle for a modern political or cultural divide that proponents who may appropriate Shakespeare may use.

Mellor’s (2000) International Reading Association study also examined how to teach Shakespeare to a diverse audience when sensitive issues of race and gender are at the heart of the text. The study assumed that reading is a shared process, a construction of knowledge; texts, the author surmises, are never timeless, but rather fixed within a particular social context. The study never specified how many students were examined, but did conclude that the students involved in “desk-bound” approaches that focused on discussion of race and gender responded to characters as real people, and that student discussion of the plays were lively, interesting and surprisingly sophisticated. Mellor (2000) reflects Downing’s (2002) own experience as a college instructor of English when

she writes, “I am not saying that we have to give up on close readings, I’m saying that we need to acknowledge how easily our close readings can become closed readings based on our own agendas—no matter how enlightened we believe them to be” (p. 120). The emphasis for both Mellor (2000) and Downing (2002) is on how we read the text, not on how to perform it.

Niels Herold (1995), Shakespeare scholar, also promotes traditional “seat-bound” approaches to the teaching of Shakespeare from an entirely different perspective: the privileging of dramatic discourse itself is problematic in the study of the Bard. He argues that the dichotomy created between literary study and performance is a false one, invented by those like Swander and Styan (1985), two champions of performance approaches to Shakespeare. “It is important, then, to see the literary/dramatic opposition as the fabrication of historical conflicts internal to modern literary criticism, an opposition that can be deconstructed and historicized by recognizing the extraordinary diversity of resources that dynamized the Elizabethan theater. The claim that the literary is not properly a context in which Shakespeare ought to be studied is a misrepresentation of the historical mingling of cultural energies in which the literary indeed played its important part” (p. 128). Two key theories then emerge from Herold (1995) as to why traditional “seat-bound” methods should not be considered inferior to performance-based methods: the first is how historiography changed the nature of performance, that what emerged following the growing enthusiasm (Swander & Styan, O’Brien et al.) in staging the text became a dialogue about deconstructing the text instead of performing it. Hence, Herold (1995) argues, we do a disservice in performing Shakespeare by privileging

theater's epistemological power. Or, in other words, the 'play is no longer the thing' as much as the subtext 'is the thing.' The second theory that emerges from Herold's (1995) critique is how performance criticism is essentially highly overrated because it assumes that characters are centered selves that can be physically demonstrated. As a New Historicist, he argues that the very nature of the self cannot be founded, that personality studies alone should never drive a critical understanding of the text.

Performing a text becomes a kind of manipulation engendered by the instructor; what is viewed is not Shakespeare, but rather the instructor. "If performance criticism has asked how the proper medium of Shakespearean textuality works to generate wonder, political criticism now urges us to see how theatrical wonder is used in the service of power" (p. 126). Herold further questions how the performance approach to the teaching of Shakespeare may in part be manufactured by the Royal Shakespeare Company or the Folger Library to create sales of texts and videotapes, adding that "critical and classroom practice that is based on a handful of [instructional aids] is not very likely to promote the pluralization of interpretation" (p. 127). Herold ends his critique with a resounding criticism of Swander (1985):

The "awe" referred to [by Swander] is the calculated production of anxiety in students that makes them serviceable consumers in a highly particular culture. Students ought to be charged rather with learning to distinguish between the claims of epistemology and those of rhetoric; then, they may perhaps teach themselves to recognize an argument for what it really is. [Swander claims] that the consumption of Shakespeare is as bottomless as

the essential genius of his work.....Should it not be worth the effort to present those who are lost [those that Swander argues do not have a chance to experience Shakespeare in performance] with the proposition that their boredom is the other side of the kind of exuberance on display in this discourse of teaching Shakespeare? (p. 134)

Variations on Seat-Bound Approaches

If the traditional seat-bound method of teaching Shakespeare is a close reading of the text as advocated by New Historicist and other proponents who either pragmatically or philosophically disagree with implementing a performance-based approach, there are many who argue a variation on the seat-bound methodology, especially given the propensity for audio-visual and technological assistance.

Victor Jaccarino (1993) through his several years of classroom teaching found that collaborative learning is the best approach to the teaching of Shakespeare, furthering the idea that realistically, proponents of traditional “seat-bound” methods of instruction can vary such methods, that in fact, lecturing, or teacher-dominated instruction does not reflect all “seat-bound” approaches.

Rebecca Burnett and Elizabeth Foster (1993), writing in the *English Journal*, posit that traditional seat-bound methods to approaching Shakespeare can still be imaginative. They suggest an approach wherein students try to adapt a persona, speaking and writing as if they were in that persona. Citing earlier research (Carosso & Foster, 1985), the approach contrasts sharply with typical writing assignments, for example, because adopting a persona permits the students to explore the text without feeling

constrained through traditional rhetorical modes. For them, imagining oneself as a different character “regains some authority for [student] learning” (p. 33).

The Center of Multimedia Performance History in the United Kingdom in 2003 conducted a survey based on two workshops that were held with several hundred teachers. The report indicated that a new focus be given to the use of digital media in the classroom, since most respondents felt that using such media best benefited their students. The report did indicate that many classrooms still did not have access to computers and other media devices to adequately allow all students the same viewing opportunities.

Like many others who advocate the use of film, Felter (1993) provides multiple screenings of the same scene from a Shakespeare play so that students can appreciate varied choices made by directors. Felter took students to live performances after processing various film approaches, noting how vastly more sophisticated his students were in the viewing of the play after having been taught the Bard through film interpretation.

Collins (1995), writing in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, concurs that using media, specifically film, to teach Shakespeare may in fact be the best approach at accessing the Bard. As a college instructor, he promotes the use of film in part because it engenders an interest in performance choices even if such choices are not made by the students themselves. He goes on to note how comparative film can be used to examine the themes of a Shakespeare play, even if the film itself is not the play (e.g., the use of *Fatal Attraction* to *Othello's* tragedy, or *When Harry Met Sally* to teach any of the comedies).

The use of media also includes computer-aided technology in the teaching of Shakespeare. MIT, for example, had a very successful *Complete Works* of Shakespeare interactive online program, with videos of its professors downloadable and free to the public (Donaldson, 1999). The same type of “Shakespeare Project” was conducted at Stanford (Friedlander, 1999). Michael Best (1997) examines many CD-ROM series that provide alternative staging of the scenes in a Shakespeare play, concluding that, “At the same time, the contrast between productions will spark a lively debate about the text itself and give the teacher an opportunity to open the book and get students to read the words on the page” (p. 14). For Best, the most difficult component for teachers today regarding the teaching of Shakespeare is how to have students access the text, that allowing students to control where to brows, click, follow links in a hypertext environment, the students themselves can then overcome the language barrier.

Bowman and Pieters (2002) argue that the creativity of teacher and student alike is brought out as choices are made regarding backgrounds, visual effect and links that students find in WebQuests, culminating in creating designs for many Shakespeare plays.

Many texts regarding the teaching of Shakespeare have chapters designated for technological approaches, like *Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare’s Hamlet* (2001), the Modern Language Association’s series that is often written for college instructors. This particular publication has both chapters on “*Hamlet Online*,” as well as “An Interdisciplinary Approach to *Hamlet* in a Distance-Learning Classroom.” Both Donaldson (2001) and Gatherwood (2001) in the text offer descriptions of media-aided devices in the teaching of Shakespeare, the former writing about videoconferencing

between students at MIT and Stanford, while the latter describes use of collaborative writing via email, “epistolary novels” constructed from imaginary letters written from Shakespeare characters from one school to the next, and a “Dear Shakespeare” column to teachers.

In most of these chapters, as with many distance-learning opportunities, students are paired in email exchanges with other students to allow for more voices to be heard in the discussion of the text. Such approaches were made popular in the 1990s through programs like BreadNet, the BreadLoaf School of English internet exchange program that paired, for example, Alaskan Native-American students with rural Appalachian ones. A notable specific example comes from Desmet and Bailey (2009) who conducted a discussion between college and high school students regarding *The Tempest*. As they note, most discussions are asynchronous and teacher directed (p. 122). They believe that, “virtual communication could go some distance toward disseminating important information about how Shakespeare is viewed, taught, and consumed, particularly in educational institutions” (p. 122). Desmet and Bailey conclude from their study of the transcripts that took place between students that, “as local ethnography, [the project between 25 high school students and college students over four weeks] describe an intellectual experience that exists outside or beside the larger ‘cultural wars’ in which Shakespeare is enlisted to support various radical, conservative and progressive ideologies” (p. 124).

Process Drama Methodology

Returning to the overall spectrum of approaches to teaching Shakespeare, if on the far left there is a focus on seat-bound methodologies as demonstrated through various techniques—collaboration, persona adoption, new historicist’ use of parallel readings, metaphorical discussion, scaffolded reading, line-by-line analysis—the far right is performance-based approaches that reflect both the *Cambridge* series as well as the *Shakespeare Set Free* texts: using drama as the primary means for accessing meaning in text. In the middle are other approaches to the teaching of Shakespeare that do not fully embrace drama as both a means and an end, like those advocates of process drama who use drama as a means of accessing the text, even if the text itself is not utilized. The idea, for example, is to have students on their feet completing a *tableaux* as a pre or post reading activity based on the play. Still others prefer seat-bound methods of vocalizing the text, assigning roles and having students read a Shakespeare scene aloud if not fully embodying the action. Finally, there are those who advocate that given the nature of secondary learners today with a strong emphasis on media and digital culture that Shakespeare ought to be taught using both film and the computer.

Yet another group of practitioners utilize drama as a process of understanding the text, even if the text itself is never dramatized. This group of teachers utilizes a method known as process drama, made famous by Dorothy Heathcote in her *Expert and the Mantle* (1984), from her work in the United Kingdom in the 1970s. Cecily O’Neill in *Drama Worlds* (1995) explains how process drama works:

The term process drama usefully distinguishes the particular kind of complex improvised dramatic event...from that designed to generate or culminate in a theatrical performance, but the difficulty is that it may suggest an opposition to product and perpetuate the sterile separation of this improvised approach from its dramatic roots. In fact, both process and product are part of the same domain. (p. xvi)

Willhlem and Edmiston (1999) concur, writing that process drama “is not about performance, but exploration” (p. xx). Wagner (2000) cites a study done at the secondary level where students engaged a text using process drama instead of a “traditional approach involving close textual study, research papers, lectures and passage memorization,” resulting in a noteworthy change in “the students’ attitude toward literature” (p. 184). Manley (2001) summarizes, writing, “participants cooperate to deepen understanding as they explore issues that are relevant to personal, social and academic concerns” (p. 5). Essentially, in teaching a scene from *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, the instructor might have the students imagine themselves living in the town and then amble about the room, creating gossip based on their observations of the text, completely improvising their reaction to other students in the room—whether they be pro Capulet or Montague, how they view the harshness of the prince, and other questions germane to the scene. As such, afterwards the class can discuss their own high school experience: who are the Capulets? Montagues? Are they really different? Is the administration/prince too harsh? The process, however, does not include the actual reproduction of the scene, for as O’Neill intones, the use of drama as a means must

incorporate the entire class as part of the experience and as part of the discussion and not just highlight a select few students willing to participate.

Reisin (1993) describes her work with *Macbeth* utilizing a component of process drama: “Text rendering is a kind of oral/aural reading that engages students in a ‘conversation’ about the text, using only the words of the text” (p. 52). Reisin reports how student ambled around the room in her class, speaking to each other using lines from the play that they had memorized to gauge their feelings about a particular scene. The author included a multicultural perspective, having students imagine themselves from a different culture as they interacted with each other. The experience ended with students compiling a scrapbook as if they were foreign tourists visiting Scotland in the 12th century.

A writing component is usually combined with some part of process drama. Baines (1997) explains how translating and manipulating Shakespeare’s language can lead to expanding vocabulary and a stronger appreciation for word choice in writing. His class utilizes the adaptive quality of process drama—literally transposing the text and exploring the transcription for its inherent themes rather than only examining the text itself. For O’Neill (1995), drama transports the participant to a world that is easily understandable to him/her. Hence, the ‘process’ of doing an activity becomes the end product. Baines (1997) couples his approach to performing Shakespeare through transcriptions with allowances for implementing Gardner’s multiple intelligences: having students dance, write a summary, create a short story, innovate a board game, draw and/or paint the major ideas the students found through their discovery from

transcribing the text. Transcription is often used in ability-grouping classes, especially those classes where students struggle. Several editions of Shakespeare's texts include a complete rewriting of the words, with Shakespeare's language on the left (which would have been on the right side of the page) and the transcription on the right.

Schneider and Jackson (2000) found that process drama in particular helped students in one elementary classroom better write because of the imaginative qualities of the drama. For six months, researchers chronicled how the teacher through observation and teacher response guided students through two units that incorporated process drama. At the end of each unit students wrote responses; those responses were also analyzed by the researchers. The researchers concluded that overall, student writing was more imaginative after the second unit, that "process drama led the students into other places, spaces and times" (p. 50). Rosler (2005) likewise found content area improvement through the use of process drama. Based on a landmark study by Goodlad (1984) who found after surveying 1,000 schools that textbook and stand and deliver approaches to teaching predominated, Rosler (2005) wanted to use process drama to help students better comprehend material in the textbook. Rosler's elementary classroom was characterized as lower socio-economic status. After a year of teacher journaling, Rosler found that writing had improved based on the Checklist for Expository Written Language Skills, published by the National Education Association in 2002, in comparison to classes she had previously taught without using process drama techniques. Wagner (1986) found in a counterbalanced 4 way randomized group design study that role playing significantly

impacted student persuasive writing above standard instruction. Essays were scored on a 7-interval scale by two trained scorers.

Brinda (2008) also found that theater experiences can make reading meaningful, attainable and enjoyable for reluctant readers. Brinda's four-month study was conducted in one suburban high school and focused on several English classrooms that utilized process drama to approach a class novel. Brinda found that after observation and teacher journaling that the more students had exposure to drama, the more students could engage with the text. The teacher reported how tests measuring reading comprehension of the novel had increased from prior years because of the enthusiasm students displayed as they engaged in process drama. Brinda summarizes: "Participants [teachers] discovered how reading for reluctant readers works best as a group activity....through the implementation of theater experiences" (p. 496).

Ruggieri (1999) explains how she used process drama in her own classroom, citing how humor can and should be used more often for students to understand the text. Again, the emphasis is on the process. For her students, they created a humorous classroom greeting card company to understand the tragic events of *King Lear*. As she noted, when the students finally began reading the play (they created the cards prior to reading, emphasizing process drama's importance of pre-reading activities), "they felt more confident and more comfortable, many of them adding exaggerated gestures and facial expressions in an attempt to communicate their interpretations of the puns as well as the rest of the text" (p. 55). Ruggieri posits that joy is often lacking in an approach to

the teaching of Shakespeare, and through process drama, students can understand the significance of drama without feeling threatened with actual performance of drama.

Toepfer and Hass (2003) found that overcoming language barriers is the most difficult component to teaching Shakespeare today, adding that process drama allows for students to overcome this obstacle precisely because the process does not focus on the text itself but rather the world the text inhabits. “By finding ways to transform *Macbeth* and *Othello*, for example, so that the main characters became contemporary teenagers with major decisions to make, we brought the stories closer to our students, who otherwise might not have identified with a king or military leader and the responsibility such positions carry” (p. 30). In other words, proponents of process drama approach the teaching of Shakespeare with a general understanding of the individual student as learner, not with the demands of the play itself. The ‘text’ is the learner, not Shakespeare. Toepfer and Hass utilized tableau, a frozen moment of action, throughout their teaching of the text to have students access the image world for which they were most familiar. For example, using an internal monologue of Iago, students positioned themselves around the room to show the range of emotions and issues that were in the text. Thus, students were able to visualize the spectrum of thoughts, even sympathizing with Iago at points, whereas a general reading might have rendered him a hopeless villain. “Not only did we initially notice our students reading Shakespeare’s works more confidently and with more enthusiasm, but we also noticed other benefits...improved reading comprehension, enhanced enjoyment and retention of a piece of literature, and greater student motivation to read and participate in class” (p. 33).

Performance-Based Methodology

At the far end of the spectrum is the performance-based approach to teaching Shakespeare. Such an approach as outlined in the *Shakespeare Set Free* and *Cambridge* editions, edited by O'Brien and Gibson, vary as to length of study, comprehensiveness of memorization, and audience expectation. They have in common, however, the student approaching the text from a non-traditional, non-desk-bound means. And, unlike the use of media, or even process drama, the emphasis is on performing the text as a play: using one's entire body and vocal range to convey the words as printed on the page within a theater space, whether that space be an actual stage or the re-imagining of the classroom itself.

Several studies have shown the impact drama has had across the curriculum. The use of drama in the classroom, for example, has been found to improve oral language (Paley, 1978; Pellegrini, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1987; Steiwig & Vail, 1985; Vitz, 1984; Podlozy, 2000; etc.). Podlozy in her meta-analysis of 80 studies concluded that, "Clearly, drama is an effective tool for increasing achievement in story understanding, reading achievement, reading readiness, and writing" (p. 268). Furthermore, Podlozy found that there was a significant positive relationship between effect sizes and fewer minutes of treatment. In other words, the quality of using drama across the curriculum was just as important as the actual use of dramatic activities in the classroom.

Those practitioners who advocate a performance approach to the teaching of Shakespeare—whether at the college, secondary or elementary levels—often begin with the theory that Shakespeare was meant to be interpreted, as all texts are, under a

postmodern paradigm that came to fruition in academia in the 1990s. At the same time, teaching Shakespeare through performance was being promoted in academic journals, conferences, and government-funded grants. The conflation of performance with postmodernism became self evident: a positing that structured knowledge, or Grand Narratives, as Lyotard calls any 'ism' of literary or historical importance, must be questioned as an essential truth. Eagleton (1995) summarizes:

Our Shakespeare is not identical with that of his contemporary; it is rather that different historical periods have constructed a 'different' Shakespeare for their own purposes and found in these texts elements to value or develop, though not necessarily. All literary works, in other words, are 're-written,' if only unnecessarily, by the societies which read them; indeed there is no reading of a work which is not also a 're-writing.' (p. 10)

The emphasis on play, chance, inverting traditional hierarchical structures, are all components associated with this postmodern paradigm. Performance became a way for scholars to play and to invert traditional structures; performance itself was viewed—perhaps ironically since Shakespeare intended for the plays to be performed—as an inversion of the traditional classroom approach to close reading of the text.

One of the earliest publication proponents of the performance approach as advocated by O'Brien and Gibson is the *Shakespeare Quarterly* 1980 interview with J. L. Styan, who said, "The difference [between seat-bound and performance approaches to teaching Shakespeare] is between learning and being told. I believe students can hear the

most brilliant sequence of lectures on Shakespeare and then, when they have left college, never pick them up or seek him out again” (p. 146). Styan (1980) discusses the importance of how to approach the text as a play and not as literature, a move that differentiated himself from many New Critics who celebrated the text as a poem to be analyzed. Styan further criticizes the use of video to access the text, for then the course becomes a study on “production history” rather than “doing it yourself” (p. 149). Such opinions challenged many common assumptions of both the text as well as teaching the text because, as Styan notes, a Shakespearean play is a dialogue between the actor and the audience, with Shakespeare “conducting the discussion, so to speak” (p. 150). The traditional seat-bound approach adherents claim that the instructor is necessary to guide students through the discussion, for ultimately, that instructor’s prior knowledge is based upon an epistemological relevance in accordance to canonical thinking: whether the outcome is more literary with a study of a particular critical approach, dramatic with an homage to a director’s style and choices, or poetic with a close attention to the writing craft. In 1980, Styan begins the discussion that “drama is never analyzing, but always synthesizing” (p. 151). The instructor, like the text itself, is constantly shifting meaning as the play unfolds; the educational process that utilizes performance-based approaches embraces the inversion of the hierarchical structure precisely because such a structure is antithetical to the kind of text being studied.

In 1993, Peggy O’Brien published in *The English Journal* her own research that would later lead to the *Shakespeare Set Free* series that would influence those who advocate teaching Shakespeare through performance. O’Brien’s research at this time

(1993) was based on her work with the Folger Library as head of the Education Department. After several institutes with visiting secondary teachers, O'Brien concluded that traditional seat-bound approaches were limiting to students, a limitation that resulted in boredom and confusion (p. 41). O'Brien then advocates that all students of all ability levels can have access to Shakespeare through the performance methodology that "we need to stop talking and arrange the connections between our students and Shakespeare so that they can make their own discoveries" (p. 42). O'Brien further articulates that the performance approach is not based on acting ability, but rather the *process* of doing the acting is paramount to any final outcome. As a practical guide to practitioners at the secondary level, O'Brien asserts that the classroom can be changed if only the instructor is willing to relinquish his or her dominance through traditional seat-bound approaches.

McDonald (1995) was queried in the *Shakespeare Quarterly* regarding the teaching of Shakespeare at the secondary level. His essay/interview with four high school teachers is again cited as the bridge between the scholarly interest in the teaching of Shakespeare, and the practical pedagogical practices actually in use. McDonald found that those teachers he interviewed reported how there was more variety of texts to choose from in American schools in particular in the last fifteen years, and that each teacher reported the benefits of how teaching Shakespeare in performance impacted other areas of study. All four teachers were recipients of a teacher grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to study Shakespeare at the Folger Library, directly examining the work of Peggy O'Brien, the work that would become the *Shakespeare Set Free* series. All four teachers discussed both successes and failures that time allotted for

teaching Shakespeare through performance is the most difficult obstacle to overcome. All four teachers also concluded that the academic focus on performance criticism as evident in journals like *Shakespeare Quarterly* is actually changing the practice of teaching Shakespeare at the secondary level.

One of the most recent and important qualitative texts for those who advocate teaching Shakespeare through performance is Edward L. Rocklin's *Performance Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare* (2005). His editorial decisions reflect a study of Shakespeare that emphasizes the text as literature in addition to theatrical plays. Hence, many of the essays also reflect writing and project activities that can accompany the performance approaches. Rocklin's foundational assumption is that teachers should engage the Bard with question of "doing," rather than of "meaning." Instead of asking students what does Tybalt's slaying of Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* posit, the instructor should begin with how does Tybalt slay Mercutio. After all, the Shakespeare text is ambiguous as to whether it was malicious or an accident, and the subsequent question of meaning radically changes when first confronted with directorial decisions for how to stage the scene. Such an approach is at the heart of those proponents of teaching Shakespeare through performance because ultimately "meaning-making" is the property of the student/actor, and not the classroom teacher. Foster's (2006) review of the text concludes, "In-class performance is not only pedagogically sound, it is also fun, as Rocklin's book amply demonstrates" (p. 244).

Rocklin (2005) posits that what is missing in secondary English classroom is more "learning through doing" (p. 352). He recounts the division between English and

Theater classroom that arose when Shakespeare was viewed from the New Critical lens as a text to be closely read instead of the directorial decisions that are made when producing the text as a play. For Rocklin, such a split was a chief obstacle to teaching Shakespeare's plays, because the secondary English classroom mirrored the critical literary theories rather than the performances approaches. This dichotomy furthered such a division—somehow performance questions could never yield to literary discussion, or that literary discussion could not inform performance choices. Rocklin surmises, "Using the term performing texts also emphasizes that the double existence of drama is irreducible" (p. 69). It is as if there is a reductive student-teacher relationship between those who choose performance as students rebelling against traditional seat-bound methods and those who advocate that the instructor alone possesses the knowledge of what can only be discovered through traditional seat-bound methods. Rocklin seeks to reverse this circuitous epistemological stance:

Stated in simplest terms, what the performance approach seeks to do directly for students is what employing the approach can and is likely to do indirectly for teachers....The relation of theory to production and practice is mutual, not hierarchic; reciprocal, not unidirectional. Theory does indeed shape production and practice, but production and practice in turn demand that we revise theory. Teachers designing their classes can be thought of as revising their theories based on the results of production and practice. (p. 362)

Rocklin (2005) provides six premises for why one should teach Shakespeare in performance based on his life-long experience teaching at the high school and college levels: the temporal need to understand theater and text as an event, the ability to move from page to stage, the potential for exploration of multiple meanings in a text, the discernment between which literary elements are able to be understood as an audience and which only as a reader, the satisfaction that stems from the finality of making decisions regarding text as it is finally performed, and the ability to judge different performances against each other to further illuminate the text.

Sugarman's (2005) short text, *Performing Shakespeare: A Way to Learn*, also examines how performance enhances student understanding of a Shakespeare text, highlighting what makes instructors who use this process particularly successful. The book is based on four questionnaires to four distinct teachers who use performance in their classroom: the Hamlet School in Stratford, Ontario; the Real People Theater in Brooklyn, New York; the Hobart School in South Central, Los Angeles; and the professional repertoire outside of Boston—Shakespeare and Company—that works with various Massachusetts school districts. The book concludes that there are various necessities in order for performance to be sustained in a classroom setting: space, improvisation, limited hierarchies, ability to shorten the text, safe conditions, and an overall awareness of student uniqueness. What is interesting to note is how Sugarman chose such vastly different locations with broad socio-economic conditions to inform his book. As a whole, given such differences, each acknowledged that there are difficulties in approaching the teaching of Shakespeare through performance, and yet each

emphatically endorses its benefits. The other essential summary to the book is that behind each successful program is a committed leadership: each of the programs highlighted had training specifically with how to approach text through performance.

In *Teaching with Shakespeare* (1994), editor Bruce McIver foreshadows the work of Rocklin (2005), Sugarman (2005) and O'Brien (1995) by once again asking scholars of Shakespeare to attest to various approaches to teaching the text. John Wilders (1994) writes, "to take part in the play, is, of course, by far the best way to understand them in detail and in the form—performance in a theater before an audience—for which they were originally designed" (p. 143). And as most proponents of teaching Shakespeare in performance point out, Shakespeare himself never used the words "Acts" or "Scenes." These were added in the First Folio (1623) by Shakespeare's editors. McIver (1994) examines how throughout history this little known fact has had an impact on the division between theater and literature because the use of the word "Act" or "Scene" automatically denotes a genre. McIver's therefore argues that teaching Shakespeare ought to return to a pre-genre era to analyze the text as it is, and not, perhaps ironically, as a theatrical text for which students automatically associate a particular kind of reading simply because of exposure to the theatrical genre. McIver points out that in the 19th century Shakespeare was actually read more as a novel and that in the 20th century, but because of New Criticism, the Shakespeare canon became fodder for poetic polemics. Such a turn has rendered the text bound to conventions that teachers then interpret to mean easily divisible units (i.e., five acts, an overall plot arc, scene adaptation) rather than a longer textual experience—like a novel—whose genre unfolds itself in a different

direction than a modern theatrical production (i.e., character development, devolution of plot, narrative force).

Performance-based approaches have influenced pedagogical practice through an acknowledgement of the emotional connection such performance-based approaches have in the classroom. Glazer and Williams (1979) both identified the need for emotional involvement in, for example, studying literature in order for students to begin the process of “truly understanding and internalizing” major themes (p. 519). Frye (1964) notes that all reading, regardless of the specific subject matter, involves both a literal reading of a text as well as the “conscious critical response that we make after we’ve finished reading” (p. 104). Frye adds that such a conscious critical response is tantamount to performance because it involves actively recreating, redirecting the material into a schema that the learner can thereby process. Making apparent what is an unconscious act, says Frye, can only lead to an enriched literacy experience.

Sowder (1993) posits, “Shakespeare was meant to be performed, to be seen and heard, not to be read from a page” (p. 65). He assigns students a scene from *Hamlet* whereby each group rehearses it and then presents it to the class. He was influenced by the Bread Loaf School of English at Middlebury College whose summer study always includes a “page to stage” course for graduate students that culminates in a production for the entire school. Sowder recalls how, “It was easier to teach Shakespeare in the old days, when I taught his plays as literature. We discussed diction, character, conventions, Freud, themes, and images. I took few risks. I learned little from my students. We always understood the text by the end of the unit, but we never lived through the

experience. The thing is the play. I used to teach Shakespeare; now Shakespeare and my students teach me” (p. 67). Such accounts summarize those practitioners and theorists who utilize performance as the best practice in approaching the Bard: the feeling that performance frees traditional seat-bound approaches so that new meaning can be created through social interaction, the reliance on some guidance to inspire the instructor to attempt such an approach, and the immense satisfaction associated with allowing students to have ownership over their own learning.

The Fall 2009 edition of the *English Journal* continues the discussion regarding teaching Shakespeare through performance by featuring several prominent qualitative articles dedicated to teaching Shakespeare through performance, including Rocklin and Peggy O’Brien, the latter who recounts her early experience as she inaugurated the Folger Library’s institutes on teaching the Bard. Biondo-Hench (2009) recounts how she developed student excitement over a 20 year practice of teaching Shakespeare through performance, noting how she began by first attending those institutes at the Folger library. Biondo-Hench, like other proponents of this approach, discovered how the physicality of enacting the text led to the best close reading of the text in her classroom. Biondo-Hench has her students, for example, move around the room at every punctuation mark to note the change in emotion, direction, and even passive activity of the particular character. For Biondo-Hench, issues of quarto versus folio editions, or of editorial decisions, instead of hindering her approach, has actually liberated her students to feel more empowered to try something new in their performances.

Most of the supporters for a performance approach in the last twenty years are writing from a qualitative perspective, noting many benefits that such an approach has on a variety of learners. Porter (2009), for example, writes how a performance approach to teaching Shakespeare can help English Language Learners (ELL) better understand the text. Based on her experience, including her own professional development as an attendee at the Folger Institute, she notes how experimenting with language is actually quite natural for ELLs who must do so everyday as they confront making meaning from the English language. As with other proponents of teaching Shakespeare through performance, Porter argues that correct pronunciation of the word can hinder the fluid understanding of the words in context and so accordingly does not stress its importance. Using the physical body to display the meaning of the word helps the ELL student understand both the word as well as its dramatic effect on stage.

Renino (2009) writes how teaching Shakespeare through performance is even able to help autistic kids because acting itself can lend meaning to a chaotic view of reality. Marcus (1996) focuses specifically on how teaching Shakespeare in a special education classroom benefits students beyond academic enrichment. Marcus explores how students at the secondary level came to terms with issues of anxiety and depression because of dramatic license. Using observation and interview protocols, Marcus followed two classrooms of students, noting how student grades increased, even attendance became better. Johnson (1998) also noted how teaching Shakespeare specifically in a learning-disabled secondary classroom over the course of one unit yielded a greater sense of community among its participants. Johnson noted how collaborative problem solving

became an important component, that drama had an experiential quality that grounded issues in “real life” (p. 48).

Morrison (2002) works extensively with “at-risk” students and has found that teaching Shakespeare through performance created “a community of learners united by the infectious excitement” (p. 48). Realizing her particular students, Morrison theorizes that utilizing film helps assuage student concerns about live audience performance. Accordingly, her students read the plays, discuss the themes inherent within the text, then perform for the camera the various interpretations the class themselves derived. In addition, Morrison deliberately paid close attention to issues of race in the casting of each scene. Initially, she thought these “at-risk” students would respond more to non-traditional casting (i.e., a white student as Othello), but soon discovered that “color-blind is not the best way to be” (p. 51). The more the students performed and understood the text, the less barriers they encountered as part of the classroom experience.

Yogev (1995) found that in teaching Shakespeare in a multicultural venue (for him, it was Israel, and his college student population consisted of many Muslims) a performance approach “transcended national, historic, and linguistic boundaries” to speak to “elemental human truths” (p. 163). It was precisely that he allowed for this approach in the classroom that students felt comfortable becoming a character they did not easily associate with. And yet, for Yogev, he gained great insight into the many cultures of his classroom because of the choices the students were making in their performance. Furthermore, as part of *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Yogev’s performance analysis was being

made legitimate at a time when performance approaches to the teaching of Shakespeare were just becoming popular.

Breen (1993) also attended O'Brien's Folger Library's summer institute on teaching Shakespeare, and radically changed her approach to teaching the Bard as a result. "As intimidated as students often are at first by the complexity of Shakespeare's language, they soon discover they can interpret and make meaning once they are on their feet" (p. 46). She has everyone participate on the stage; no student is permitted to "work behind the scenes" (p. 47). She allows for students to transform the scene to any time period as long as they maintain the integrity of the scene. And for Breen (1993), she argues that students ought to perform for each other. Her school puts on a Shakespeare Festival in conjunction with the Kentucky Shakespeare Festival. "It does help to supplement the text with other materials, but the more freedom I give my students to play with Shakespeare's text, the less I see the need to add companion readings" (p. 48). The result of such an approach for her is how the students themselves make connections to modern life precisely because they focus on the words themselves in the text as a performed play.

Sauer (1995), like Breen (1993), emphasizes the teaching of Shakespeare through performance as a means of empowering students. For him, making choices in the English classroom allows for students to avoid a theater director who has already made the choices for the student. Sauer (1995) recognizes that the "selection of scenes to be staged in class requires that the problems posed for students be commensurate with their level of understanding" (p. 173). The greatness of Shakespeare in teaching the Bard through

performance is how the text itself has built-in stage directions that help the student better understand the scene through the action involved with the scene.

The literature on potential barriers to teaching Shakespeare through performance varies from those who support such an approach, but recognize its limitations (Applebee, 1997; LoMinoco, 2009; O'Brien, 2009), to those who critique the language of performance criticism as a privileging epistemological stance unfair to traditional literary criticism (Worthen, 1989). Either proponents of or detractors to the approach concur that such barriers to teaching Shakespeare through performance means an alternative approach ought to reflect both the pragmatic and theoretical concerns inherent in a traditional secondary classroom setting.

In a recent Folger Library survey of secondary English instructors, 75% of the respondents said that they themselves were their own teachers of Shakespeare, that methods courses had little to no impact on how to approach this particular author, or even this particular genre (p. 22). The survey supports how most writers in the literature of those proponents of teaching Shakespeare through performance were themselves active participants in a workshop, seminar or institute that developed their skills with teaching both this author and this genre. LoMonico (2009) himself had learned from O'Brien; prior to his work with the Folger, he had taught Shakespeare primarily through traditional seat-bound methods. Today, he is now a professor of future English teachers, and an instructor in the Shakespeare summer institute sponsored by the Folger library. Shakespeare and Company in New Lenox, Massachusetts, also has a similar program for teachers; part of Young's (2009) vision as the new head of the education department at

the Folger Library is to sponsor pod-casts that can potentially reach many more teachers and to sponsor more 'mini-institutes' throughout the country rather than just in Washington, DC.

LoMonico (2009) also posits that a barrier to approaching the teaching of Shakespeare through performance is the continued emphasis by teachers on mastering content, a focus more on character, plot and theme. LoMonico argues that it is more important for students to like Shakespeare than to understand Shakespeare that standardized tests focus on critical thinking skills, not plot details. Rocklin (2009) furthers LoMonico's assertion, claiming that performance leads to better readers, more creative inventors and more alert spectators. The real barrier, says LoMonico, is the overall lack of instructional time to approach teaching the Bard through performance. Over half the respondents to the Folger survey (2009) indicated that they relied on traditional analysis of the play because of the time standards imposed on them due to standardized testing.

Batho (1998) in a survey of 45 United Kingdom school instructional leaders outlines how testing and choice of plays limits teacher approaches to the text, and thereby diminishes the enjoyment of Shakespeare for the students. Although performance approaches were overwhelmingly positive—over 70% of respondents used such an approach—90% agreed that such approaches were limited because of the type of assessment required, a nationalized Key Stage 3 multiple-choice exam. Batho included implications that a growing number of teachers might not teach Shakespeare in

performance because of a lack of teacher preparation that would enable them to effectively engage the students.

Metzger (2002), herself influenced by the Folger series on teaching Shakespeare, laments that based on her classroom observations of teachers who utilize a performance approach to teaching Shakespeare and who also teach Advanced Placement (AP) courses, often limit their approach because of the standardized testing associated with the AP program. Metzger notes, “So teachers, such as the one I observed, move extremely quickly. And by this I don’t mean necessarily through the text, but rather through activities aimed at generating the skills required by the exam” (p. 24). Essentially, either by choice or circumstance, Metzger argues that standardized testing curtails both the scope of the performance approach as well as the assessment of such an approach. Sadly, most students in the courses Metzger observed were more concerned with themes, tropes and central characters that might be fodder for the AP exam than with the apparent juvenile activity of creating multiple interpretations of a particular scene. “Too often AP English Literature, with its emphasis on deducing the most likely answer among four possibilities and the value of quick, pointed essays, diminishes the likelihood of teachers and students engaging in the slow and uncertain work of holding each other accountable to the lives and art at hand” (p. 27). As a barrier to approaching Shakespeare through performance, standardized exams might influence even the most gifted of students to avoid trying to construct meaning through non-traditional, non-seat bound methods.

Regarding the impact New Historicism has on the text and how that theoretical perspective may hinder a performance-based approach to the teaching of Shakespeare,

Sauer (1995) argues that understanding historical references happens naturally as students discuss and perform the text rather than having the instructor provide such information, that in fact allowing students to consider differences between Folio and Quarto editions lends itself to greater awareness of the ambivalences within the texts and between historical time periods. Sauer notes that based on his teaching at the college level, the quality of the performances became secondary to the process, an important component to the pedagogical theory of performance.

Time, financial and physical space limitations may also affect a performance-based approach in the classroom. In *Teaching Shakespeare into the Twenty-First Century* (1997), editors Ronald Salomone and James Davis, provide several qualitative essays focused more for college instructors that argue a variety approaches to the teaching of Shakespeare, with most dedicated toward using film and technology as a means for accessing the text. However, Charles Frey (1997), himself a noted Shakespeare scholar and proponent of Shakespeare in performance, writes an essay that concludes, “After about twenty-five years of teaching Shakespeare intensively, I see no better way than to create student Performance Groups who will edit a scene or act, divide and double parts, assign roles, memorize lines, work out the stage movements, and perform for the rest of the class” (p. 102). As the editors note, such advice makes teaching Shakespeare in school entirely possible with the slenderest of budgets, limited time, and even the smallest of spaces.

Langley (1994) discusses how the drama teacher must incorporate how a “full-body” experience of Shakespeare includes the performance of the text, that such

physicality should not limit a performance-based approach in the classroom (p. 13). Although Langley notes the difference between English and Theater departments in many secondary institutions, she is quick to note that teaching Shakespeare occurs in both classroom situations. Langley was influenced through workshops conducted by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and discusses another common theme among those who advocate performance approaches to the teaching of Shakespeare: “We are sophisticated in a completely different way from the Elizabethans—they were oral and aural, we are visual” (p. 13). Using the exercises developed at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Langley advocates that students embrace the language as an oral tradition, using image symphony for example to utilize one’s “full-body” to express the idea behind the word before it is translated into an oral rendition. Langley also suggests other drama activities, but the essence of her claim, as with others who advocate teaching Shakespeare through performance, is that students “own” Shakespeare, that through the performance he/she embodies what the text intended (p. 16).

Paquette (2007) is one of the few advocates for teaching Shakespeare through performance who suggests that such an approach can be an effective preparation for successful standardized testing, often cited as a reason why practitioners will not employ a performance-based approach. Paquette, again like many others who are on the end of the spectrum in approaching the teaching of Shakespeare through performance, attended the National Endowment for the Humanities summer institute for teachers conducted by Shakespeare and Company in New Lenox, Massachusetts. Paquette believes that, “Our school culture encourages children in their formative years to develop active

imaginations through recess and role playing, but the structured world of high school with all of its bells and exams does not leave much room for the imaginative activity needed to help teens transition from childhood to adulthood” (p. 41). In fact, Paquette furthers the need for performance approaches to the teaching of Shakespeare as a means not only for overcoming the rigid structures of the secondary setting and for enhancing preparation for successful standardized testing, she explains how child psychologists Kindlon and Thomsson (1999) found that boys in particular learn well through bodily-kinesthetic learning styles that are essential to the performance approach, an approach that is often neglected to the detriment of those boys in particular. Through her experience with memorized scenes and monologues, she has found that boys in particular paid closer attention to the text which in turn kept them more focused in preparation for the standardized assessments in Massachusetts. In her own teaching experience, Paquette (2007) found that students responded more to her exams when the questions featured the scenes the students had performed in class. Hence, Paquette summarizes: “The ability for teenagers to name and express with their whole selves (mind, body, spirit) real, deep emotion is what playing Shakespeare is all about” (p. 44). For boys, that means access to emotions which may not be displayed in traditional seat-bound methods for teaching Shakespeare. And for all students, that means greater potential for doing well on standardized exams precisely because students are no longer “humiliated for mispronunciations,” freeing up one’s self-esteem to achieve (p. 44).

Meyer (1999), reporting on his own classroom experience, like most of the literature that supports teaching Shakespeare through performance, argues that

Shakespeare was meant to be performed precisely because traditional seat-bound methods leave students “empty and uninvolved” (p. 58). Influenced by the Folger Library’s program on teaching Shakespeare through performance, the emphasis is on the process and not the outcome. Meyer has his students then paraphrase the text into their own words and perform the paraphrased version first before returning to the text to perform the Shakespeare dialogue. This intervening technique of utilizing student-written translations makes Meyer’s approach to the teaching of Shakespeare unique.

Graham (2002) was also taught by O’Brien through the Folger Library Educational Institute Program. She found that, “I’ve been teaching Shakespeare using performance-based methods for over ten years to a diverse population of ninth graders. Because year after year after year even these would-be evaders become absorbed and enlivened by activities centered around Shakespeare’s text. I would never teach Shakespeare any other way” (p. 80). Graham divides her unit between ‘academic’ and ‘play,’ having students create graphic organizers to keep track of characters, culminating in a standard test on plot. She then has her students perform scenes from the play, adding that “performance approach validates my philosophy and encourages me to look for opportunities to balance my rigorous reading and writing curriculum with opportunities for dynamic expression” (p. 81). As the Folger Library program suggests, Graham found that warm-up activities prior to actual memorization and performance was pivotal in diffusing student anxiety. Some of these activities include emphasis on the iambic pentameter, reading for punctuation, physically enacting words, and playing theater games that help students embody expression as they utilize theater space. Another

component to successful teaching of Shakespeare through performance, Graham argues, is to have students create their own prompt books, an idea that stems from the *Shakespeare Set Free* series. These prompt books allow students to enlarge their lines for better memorization and to write-in specific blocking, or movement cues as they say their lines. Her article, published in the *English Journal*, contains an advice list for teachers approaching a performance unit for the first time. What is interesting to note is how Graham assumes that teachers have greater flexibility in allowing for rehearsal space and time when utilizing a performance approach to teaching Shakespeare. Graham notes that in her experience, rarely do students abuse the privilege of working together to get their scene performances ready.

In addition, the following are the most prominent teacher-action research conducted on issues pertaining to teaching Shakespeare through performance specifically. As such, they help further identify the need for quantitative research on the impact this approach has on students at the secondary level.

In one such study, Margaret Shaeffer (2005) studied the impact integrating drama techniques had on the study of Shakespeare in her high school English class. Shaeffer used a research log, audio and visual tape, student journals and interviews to conclude that the integration of drama techniques into the study of Shakespeare helped students become engaged, such engagement leading to a high-level of analysis.

Chunxia Wang (2007) also examined his own classroom in an ethnographic study as they prepared for and studied Shakespeare at the secondary level. Wang was interested in the impact performance approaches had on English Language Learners in

particular in an environment that he called “sheltered.” Wang found that through performing *The Tempest*, his ELL students had an entirely different perspective on Shakespeare and on learning English. His results from his own classroom indicated that perhaps instruction in ELL ought to include more dramatic opportunities.

William Heller (2005) also used his own classroom—a fifth grade inner-city class—to show how drama and theatrical production could impact student understanding of *Macbeth*. Heller found that as a reflective practitioner he could indeed bring what he called “high culture” to any classroom, offering specific techniques and results that confirmed student engagement, interest, and understanding of Shakespeare. Heller does argue against quantitative measurement of understanding Shakespeare because it detracts from the purpose of doing Shakespeare: enjoyment of the language and of the story.

Kara Haas (2004) conducted a study that included observational data, journals and essays of two high school classes studying *Othello* using a process-drama design. Haas found that indeed student expression had developed more because of the process drama component, although she did not provide a comparison.

In an action research study, Linda Allen Hardisty (2002) conducted through her own classroom a research project that focused on best practices for teaching Shakespeare. Hardisty found through journals, questionnaires and interviews that using effective reading strategies that include the use of drama impacted her students’ understanding of Shakespeare overall.

In a similar study, James Carpenter (1994) found through a phenomenological study of his own classroom, that students had greatest difficulty with the language of

Shakespeare. Utilizing journal writings and interviews, Carpenter concluded that there needed to be more acting involved in the classroom, offering a juxtaposition between the Stanislavki acting method and reading theories of Rosenblatt.

In one of the most comprehensive teacher-action studies, Francene Kirk (1998) had a panel of English teachers evaluate both student journals and student acting scenes after a month-long, performance-based approach to the teaching of *Midsummer's Nights Dream*. Kirk used a modified evaluation guide from the *Shakespeare Set Free* series (edited by O'Brien) as part of her analysis. According to the panel of English teachers, over three-fourths of the students demonstrated superior understanding of the text as reflected in both the actual performance as well as the student written work. The study also included a positive attitudinal response from its participants. Finally, the Kirk study concluded that since much of the work was independent from the teacher, that a performance-based approach had created more internal motivation among its participants than other teacher-perceived group projects.

A tangential and slightly larger study was conducted by Peggy Strickland (1992) to compare the responses of three college freshman classes to either reading or viewing a Shakespeare script. Through written responses and interviews, Strickland concluded that there was an overwhelmingly positive response to the viewing of a Shakespeare play as opposed to a reading of the play. The data also suggested that student prior exposure to theater influenced one's positive response to viewing a play as opposed to reading it.

David Rapaport (1994) conducted a study with freshman from an ethnically diverse high school, measuring whether direct instruction or performance approaches

were the best means for helping students understand the humor of a Shakespeare play. Measuring only four days of instruction, Rapaport concluded that performance approaches were the best means for having students understand the humor of a Shakespeare play, and that low-aptitude students who were provided the treatment of understanding Shakespeare through performance scored higher than high-aptitude students in both the control and experimental groups. Rapaport concluded that instructional intervention had to consider performance approaches for the lowest-level achievers, which, he notes, are those students who often need the most instructional intervention.

Thomas Batho (1999), whose literature review had been published and who has previously been referenced on the history of teaching Shakespeare in the United Kingdom, conducted a survey of fifty secondary schools in the United Kingdom with follow-up interviews with five teachers and one-fourth of the students in the five classrooms. Batho concluded that the compulsory examinations in Britain were having an adverse effect on the teaching of Shakespeare, especially at the Key Stage 3 level (or early high school in America). Batho further concluded that students and teachers alike both responded enthusiastically to performance methods of teaching Shakespeare, but that classroom practice had been curtailed by the nationalized examinations.

Lynne Murray (2009) conducted a survey of 20 secondary teachers who participated in a professional development program that featured teaching Shakespeare through performance that all of the teachers had transformed their pedagogical practice because of the experience. Using survey data, digitally-recorded interviews and artifacts

from the teachers' classrooms, Murray also concluded that such an approach had a direct application to transformative learning theory, an experience that even transformed personally two of its participants.

In perhaps the second largest study conducted on teaching Shakespeare through performance, Carol Philips (2000), as part of her work with Harvard's Project Zero program, conducted a longitudinal study of 40 middle and high school English teachers who received professional development in a month-long National Institute on Teaching Shakespeare sponsored by the Shakespeare and Company, a professional theater company in New Lenox, Massachusetts. Philips, however, was interested in the impact the Institute had on professional development, 45 months after participants had been involved. Philips found that indeed, even after such an extended time from the initial impact of the Institute, that teachers were still employing a performance-based approach to the teaching of Shakespeare because they saw its impact in their classrooms. Philips concludes that unlike most professional development programs that may feature teachers themselves supporting other teachers, that professionals in the field—much like a professional actor—can more readily impact a teacher's professional development over a longer period of time than many teacher-sponsored professional development programs that may easily be forgotten.

Constructivist Theory and Performance

Bakhtin, the Russian linguist who gave rise to term "diologic" as it applies to meaning construction through language, is often cited by postmodern, poststructuralists whose project often undermines any determinancy that language might provide when

ascertaining “meaning.” His point, though, is not to critique inherent power struggles that exist between an object and referent, a speaker and a respondent, but rather to inscribe the power of language as an ever-changing dynamic that embraces multiplicity of interpretation as a dialectic method for arriving at “truth”:

All languages of heteroglossia are specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings and values. As such they all may be juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement one another, contradict one another and be interrelated dialogically. As such, they encounter one another and co-exist in the consciousness of real people—first and foremost in the creative consciousness of people who write.

(Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 291-92)

For those advocates of teaching Shakespeare in performance, whether guided by critical, humanist or structuralist theories, the belief that the system of learning itself ought to be questioned, or that student potential ought to be embraced precisely because there is a system of learning, or that the system of learning has a responsibility to instruct future generations a canon of beliefs and values in order to maintain future systems of learning, few can deny Bakhtin’s claim as it relates to a pedagogy of teaching Shakespeare through performance: how language of the 16th century speaks to itself, yet informs our own world as we engage in world-view dialogues, creating parallel and yet contradictory readings of the text, of ourselves as respondents, to arrive at a new consciousness of our world and of Shakespeare’s creative genius. Though Bakhtin never

identified himself as a constructivist, unlike critical, humanist or structuralist theories, constructivists do, through the process of understanding the dialogic of speaking/responding, object/referent, self/other, create meaning, a “heteroglossia” of the classroom where that meaning is never destabilized, but always derived.

There are many definitions of constructivism; in fact, the current overgeneralization of the definition demands critical testing of how individuals construct reality (Harlow, Cummings, & Aberasturi, 2006). Bruning (2004) delineates between constructivists who believe that an independent reality exists outside of one’s construction of meaning versus those who like an existentialist, believe that all meaning is constructed even the logic of math. Murphy (2002) summarizes the importance of understanding constructivism for educators today: “The epistemology forwarded by constructivists, which is reminiscent of existential philosophy and exhibits many of the central tenants of postmodernist philosophy, has immeasurable potential for influencing the future course of educational practice” (p. 43). Accordingly, Brooks and Brooks (1999) refer to constructivism as a “deep understanding,” that “we look not for what students can repeat, but for what they can generate, demonstrate and exhibit....[they] are led by their own ideas and informed by the ideas of others” (p. 16). Brooks and Brooks, like Matthews (1993) explain that our “knowledge does not tell us about the world at all; it tells us about our experiences and how they are organized” (p. 362).

Perkins (1999) suggests that constructivists are really pragmatists: “Troublesome knowledge of various kinds invites constructivists’ responses to fit the difficulties—not one standard constructivist fix” (p. 11). Hence, the claim that what works best is what is

necessary in the teaching moment. Perkins (1999) reinforces Geelan (1997) who surmised that constructivism can be seen as a post-epistemological position, an abandonment of traditional forms of discussing epistemological functions, a model useful in particular contexts rather than speaking in universal truths.

Slavin (1997) believes that constructivism is the theory that students learn by individually or socially transforming information. For Slavin there are three assumptions inherent within constructivist theory: first, that reality is dependent upon the perceiver and is thus constructed; second, that reason and logic is only a partial means of understanding reality; and third, that knowledge and truth is subjective and relative to the individual or community. Fosnot (1996) summarizes the impact of Slavin's interpretation of constructivism: "Teachers must give learners the opportunity to search for patterns, construct their own models, identify concepts, and develop strategies. Learning proceeds toward the development of structures" (pp. 29-30) and not an imposition of structures on the individual learner.

Constructivists trace their modern origins to the work of Karl Popper, Dewey, Henry James and Piaget. Bruner (1996) explains of Popper's influence on philosophy and Piaget's impact on psychology, "Revisability is not to be confused with free-for-all relativism....Open theories rest on a process of submitting assumptions and logical arguments to empirical testing and critical evaluation to determine their accuracy and predictability" (p. 61). The process of assimilation and accommodation results in a reconstitution of prior knowledge.

Bowers (2005) traces the impact Dewey (1938) has had on constructivism, noting how the act of “doing” became synonymous with the act of “thinking.” However, Bowers (2005) criticizes this notion of the “ideal of autonomous, critically reflective individual[s]” who propagate a “missionary zeal to globally promote a more progressive and emancipatory way of thinking” (p. 87). In other words, independent thinking has led to a constructivist dilemma: who determines if one has learned? Or is learning just a political act? For Bowers, Dewey’s impact on constructivism has been to promote a Western hegemonic lifestyle of independent thinking, an unfortunate political act that has left other forms of knowledge marginalized precisely because such forms are labeled as not promoting a type of learning. Bowers implores the need for teachers to shed “romantic notions about being a facilitator of the student’s self-creation” (p. 97) in order to awaken to the global impact constructivism has had on perceived notions of knowledge acquisition.

Harlow, Cummings and Aberasturi (2006), however, note that the problem with the current definitions of constructivism is that they tend to consider only assimilation of new information (p. 46). Hence, the proclivity of many who attempt to define Constructivism as lacking benchmarks or accountability in the classroom precisely because those who advocate a Constructivist approach often fail to accommodate knowledge in correlation with an already established social construct of reality, whether that reality has an external existence or not.

Brown (2006) articulates how constructivist learning has expanded to include social constructivism, where learning results from participation in ‘community,’

knowledge is the result of consensus (Gruender, 1996; Savery & Duffy, 1995). Brown (2006) argues how this expansion is a natural progression in educational theory that ought to shift from knowledge management toward sense making, or, how in light of the rapid expansion of knowledge, the future learner must wrestle less with questions of epistemology and more with ethics of acquiring knowledge. “While the world’s codified knowledge base (i.e., all historical information in printed books and electronic files) doubled every 30 years in the earlier part of this century, it was doubling every seven years by the 1970s. Information library researchers say that by the year 2010, the world’s codified knowledge will double every 11 hours” (Bontis, 2002, p. 22). Hence, Brown (2006) argues the need to explore beyond constructivism toward navigationism, from the teacher as facilitator to the teacher as fellow navigator of information, from creation of knowledge to exploring knowledge schemas, from essentially the traditional classroom to the problem solving of a global institution with or without walls. As Brown argues, constructivism itself might be a relic of the pedagogical past if it fails to understand the impact technology is having on the individual student learner.

Edward Rocklin’s text, *Teaching Shakespeare Through Performance* (2005), has a chapter dedicated to theory, a chapter that embraces constructivism and even parallels, though not directly stated, the goals of navigationalism. In some respects, teaching Shakespeare through performance might be the cutting edge for secondary language arts classroom as it enters the 21st century. Rocklin’s Performance Model Theory is based on three assumptions: first, that Shakespeare is in fact a text with rhetorical devices that as Kenneth Burke claims can be discerned as an act of persuasion, a movement between

author and respondent that elicits a direct response to the “performative utterance” (to use Austin’s terminology); second, that drama “directly represents human beings engaged in action” (p. 71), and as such is the best means for studying the persuasion inherent in rhetoric; and third, performance itself allows for the participant to place him or herself within the realm of the persuasive rhetorical moment to act as an agent for deciphering intent between author and respondent. In other words, unlike traditional seat-bound approaches, there is a medium between author and respondent who recreates the rhetorical persuasive process as it interprets the rhetorical persuasive process rather than just accepting a particular persuasive claim. For Rocklin, often what is done onstage outside of the text can be just as meaningful as what is said in the text. Students of traditional rhetoric fail to see the absence as much as the presence within a text; performance, in essence, forces the participant to engage in such deconstructive play.

Rocklin (2005) then articulates five premises for teaching Shakespeare through performance that are based on both constructivists’ claims that are evolving into a more navigational approach to meaning making and a performance theory that is primarily based on text as rhetoric. Rocklin argues that a performance-framed model enables students to explore drama and the theater as an event, deliberately delineating between the types of genre reading that students are introduced to. For Rocklin, the use of process drama to enter the text confuses the learner as to the specific genre that is studied. Rocklin asserts that Shakespeare is writing a play, not an encyclopedia entry. Second, Rocklin argues that students are able to move between a variety of roles as they conceive, enact and deliver an interpretation of the text. This diversified approach enables students

to move beyond merely the enactor of information into one who actively constructs meaning within the text. Third, a performance approach enables students to employ multiple meanings of the most basic ideas inherent in the text, a line that would go unnoticed in a traditional seat-bound approach to the study of the text, primarily because students must interact with other students who are also in the performance space.

Rocklin fourthly argues that a performance approach enhances a traditional literary seat-bound approach because such tools must be distinguished when considering what the audience does or does not understand about what is being performed. In other words, performers must make choices that for Rocklin can only happen after a close-reading of the text. Fifth, Rocklin's performance theory argues that as the multiplicity of possible meanings is explored in the process of understanding the text, ultimately choices must be made for clarity and continuity in the final performance, necessitating some editorial decisions that create coherence from deconstructive play. This community of meaning-making does extend beyond a constructivist claim into a navigational world where shared inquiry becomes the foundation for consensus.

Defining Critical Thinking

As an integral part of this study, it is necessary to review the many approaches to Critical Thinking (CT) in order to understand how performing Shakespeare specifically can impact one measurement of this concept as illustrated by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test, itself an outgrowth from the literature on Critical Thinking. In practice, the only assumption regarding CT is that many educators utilize the term even if the term itself isn't always understood or practiced.

The American Philosophical Association panel of 46 experts, including leading CT scholars such as Ennis, Facione and Paul (1990), defined critical thinking as: We understand critical thinking to be purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which the judgment is based...The ideal critical thinker is habitually inquisitive, well-informed, trustful of reason, open-minded, flexible, fair-minded in evaluation, honest in facing personal biases, prudent in making judgments, willing to reconsider...and persistent in seeking results which are as precise as the subject and the circumstances of inquiry permit” (Facione, 1990, p. 3).

Dewey (1909) proposed early that CT involved the suspension of judgment and healthy skepticism; Mead (1934) identified CT as “taking the role of the other.” Glaser (1941) in a landmark study, *An Experiment in the Development of Critical Thinking*, had a rather long definition of CT that included recognizing problems, assumptions, values; comprehending and using language accurately; interpreting data; appraising evidence and arguments; recognizing logical relationships between propositions; and reconstructing patterns of beliefs. A number of researchers have put forth their own definitions and theories regarding critical thinking (e.g., Boostrum, 1994; Brookfield, 1987; Ennis, 1985; Facione, 1984; Halpern, 1996; Kurfiss, 1988; McPeck, 1981; Paul, 1982; Siegel, 1991; Watson & Glaser, 1980). Almost for every survey or study compiled, the authors have defined anew the term.

Some of the more prominent definitions stem from, for example, Bloom (1964) whose taxonomy has highly influenced instruction in the past forty years (i.e., knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation). Halpern (2003), another prominent researcher, defines CT as possessing the “cognitive skills and strategies that increase the likelihood of a desired outcome...thinking that is purposeful, reasoned, and goal-directed—the kind of thinking involved in solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions” (p. 6). And Scriven (2007) defines CT as “the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action” (p. 1). Abrami et al. (2008), perhaps suggests the best definition with his succinct belief that CT is the “ability to engage in purposeful, self-regulatory judgment” (p. 1102).

Bailin and Siegel (2003) argue that “critical thinking is often regarded as a fundamental aim and an overriding ideal of education” (p. 188). Many educational researchers have addressed the issue of how to help students gain CT skills (e.g., Brown & Campione, 1990; Browne & Keeley, 2001; Ennis, 1987; Henderson, 2001; O’Tuel & Bullard, 1993; Perkins, 1993; Pogrow, 1990). In addition, many educational researchers argue that CT-oriented activities are essential to an optimal educational practice (e.g., Browne & Keeley, 2001; Ennis, 1987; Halpern, 2003; Henderson, 2001; Kuhn, 1999; Resnick, 1987; Torff, 2003). Historically, notes Rothstein (2007), CT has been a focus of the education community because an informed citizenry is the best defense against anti-

democratic positions. Moreover, the business community has long desired an educated workforce in order to increase productivity. Specifically regarding the instruction of CT, both Clement (1979) and Norman (1981) were early proponents that the goal of an educator is to be teaching students specifically how to think, not what to think. It should be noted that these emerging researchers and theorists coincided with both the increase in constructivist pedagogical practice as well as the highly influential *Nation at Risk* (1983) report that cited how students were unable to perform essential CT tasks. In one study that partially prompted President Bush's *Goals 2000* initiative, Kuhn (1991) concluded that the majority of the population could not reliably produce genuine evidence necessary for CT. In the United States, "a national survey of employers, policymakers, and educators found consensus that the dispositional as well as the skills dimension of critical thinking should be considered an essential outcome of an education" (Tsui, 2002, pp. 740-741).

The increase in the use of the term itself has galvanized innumerable studies (over three thousand "hits" on the ERIC database in a ten year period from 1999 to 2009 for empirical studies alone). Most research on CT is done in the classroom (Abrami et al., 2008) because research rarely involves randomization. In practice, the term has come under intense scrutiny in the last ten years as the SAT and ACT tests now include an analytical essay to measure CT, a task posing greater challenges than a multiple-choice assessment. AP exams, Regent tests and other forms of assessment have what many consider "open-ended" portions of the test for students to demonstrate CT skills, whether that is demonstrated through an essay or writing mathematical equations. Numerous

researchers have found that CT skills are a predictor for college success (e.g., Gadzella, 1996, 1997; Holmgren, 1984; Kooker, 1971; McCutcheon, 1992; McMammon, 1988; Scott & Markert, 1994; Spaulding, 1992; Stewart, 1989).

According to Snyder (2008), instruction that supports CT uses questioning techniques that require students to analyze, synthesize and evaluate information to solve problems to make decisions. The implementation of higher-order thinking skills, notes researchers, leads to improved critical thinking skills (e.g., Duplass, 2002; Hemming, 2000; Snyder, 2008; Wong, 2007). Bailin and Siegel (2003) argue, though, that psychological conceptions of CT—an emphasis on the metacognitive process and not on outcome—are problematic for modern educators trying to implement those questioning techniques. Essentially, Bailin and Siegel argue that CT ought to be a normative concept that requires mastery of context-specific knowledge to evaluate specific beliefs, claims and action. Otherwise, the CT skill itself is a separate entity removed from practical implementation as it merely addresses the question and never any outcome.

Abrami et al. (2008) points out that few would argue with how CT is applicable across disciplines, but there is little consensus as to whether CT is dependent upon content (Ennis, 1989; Halliday, 2000; Smith, 2002) or is a generalized subject matter entirely of its own (Royalty, 1991; Siegel, 1988; Stanovich, 1999). Again, in the former, often referred to as the “specifist” position (Abrami et al., 2008), “It makes no sense to talk about critical thinking as a distinct subject matter and therefore cannot profitably be taught as such....Without specific subject X, [CT] is both conceptually and practically empty” (McPeck, 1981, p. 5). In the latter—how CT is entirely a subject of its own—or

the “generalist” position (Abrami et al., 2008), the teaching of reasoning fallacies can, and should, says Siegel (1988), be entirely independent of context so that the learner can identify how a fallacy can be present under any given context. Ruggiero (1988) argues that the explicit teaching of higher-level reasoning and CT does not depend on what is taught, but how it is taught. Snyder (2008) likewise argues that integrating CT is dependent upon modeling, questioning and guiding student practice, noting Broadbear’s (2003) own analysis that CT ought to include “ill-structured problems, criteria for assessing thinking, student assessment of thinking, and improvement of thinking” (p. 7). Hence, though there is disagreement between the “specifist” versus “generalist” approach to CT, both are concerned with thinking skills and not necessarily a critique of thinking skills.

Brown and Kelley (1986) argue that at the heart of CT is the understanding of alternative solutions based upon the reflection of feelings, assumptions and comparisons. What is equally noteworthy to this text is the role the instructor plays in making sure that the learner is involved in the CT process. In other words, for Brown and Kelly (2006), as well Broadbear (2003), Abrami et al. (2008), Scriven (2007), and other writers who opine on issues of CT the skills are transferable from instructor to recipient and is often not the product from recipient to recipient. Roe, Stoodt-Hill and Burns (2004), authors of *Secondary School Literacy Instruction: The Content Areas*, acknowledge that many teachers may believe that teaching a student how to read, or how to think about reading, may limit exposure to content. However, according to Roe, Stoodt-Hill and Burns, teachers will invariably change their perceptions once they learn valuable techniques for

teaching students how to read and how to think about reading because students experience greater understanding of the content area material.

Abrami et al. (2008) identifies four approaches to teaching CT which rely on either the “specifist” or “generalists” positions regarding how best to approach the instruction and measurement of CT on the learner. Abrami et al. calls one approach the “general,” (not to be confused with ‘generalist’) or an approach to teaching CT that doesn’t explicitly denote or make itself aware of the need to be teaching or measuring CT based on specific content. Utilizing this approach, Ebel (1991) found that among fourth and fifth grade students who were taught various roles within cooperative learning groups, such students outperformed (based on a posttest for CT) other groups who did not learn specific roles when forming their own groups. Essentially, what was necessary was structure to be in place for students to better think critically. Ebel’s research correlates with Ladyshevky’s (2006) own studies that use the IDEALS (Identity, Define, Enumerate, Analyze, List, and Self Correct) approach to CT with clearly defined roles among participants involved in each step of the process. Collaborative learning has been found to increase both comprehension of material as well as the positive attitudes of participants (e.g., Dudley, 2001; Ngai, 2007; Yazici, 2004). Moreover, practitioners of problem-based learning (PBL) often utilize the collaborative approach found in this general approach to teaching CT.

In the “infusion” approach, both a concentration of content knowledge and critical thinking skills are taught explicitly. Again, using instruments that measure CT, students in one biology study of secondary students who were taught using the “infusion”

approach did better than those students who did not (Zohar, 1994). Essentially, the studies that focus on measuring CT indicate that teaching to the specific test of CT yields better results than CT skills as a byproduct of instruction (Abrami et al., 2008). In a meta-analysis reviewing the impact of improving public speaking skills, for example, those involved directly in forensics activity demonstrated the largest positive impact on CT improvement (Allen, 1999). Essentially, being able to use the theory in practice benefits students' understanding of both the theory and the practice. Boud and Walker (1993), Joseph et al. (2007) have argued this approach to teaching CT—that education should depend not only on the application of theory but also knowledge based on the context of the experience—revealing through their research higher levels of CT using service-learning projects that applied just such an “infusion” approach.

In the “immersion” approach, students are taught content but not specific CT skills. O’Sullivan (2002) found in his college study of using video discussions regarding sociological problems students scored better on measuring CT skills when provided with a transcript as opposed to just listening to and viewing the particular sociological problem. The study hypothesized that the “immersion” approach is not as effective because participants in effect did better with a more formal structure through written documentation than those who passively watched. Essentially, some theorists believe CT is a cognitive process grounded in reflection, the type of reflection found in reading text and responding through, for example, journal writing (e.g., Connor-Green, 2000; Jones & Brown, 1993; Mayo, 2003; Raingruber & Haffer, 2001; Seshachari, 1994). In fact, journals themselves as an “immersion” technique results in student perception of

increased understanding of CT skills (e.g., Hettich, 1990; Tsui, 2002). Burbach (2004) found in his study of college students who engaged in active learning techniques in a leadership course that featured extensive use of journaling, that higher levels of CT were obtainable in comparison to those students who didn't take the course. Even in a science course, Roles (2005) argues that "thinking at a higher level can be taught in the classroom using course content material alone" (p. 37). Roles found that though his students didn't always understand the "jargon" associated with CT, they did measure remarkable gains in CT when faced with direct questioning from the instructor (p. 37). Advocates of the "immersion" approach would readily argue that CT has become too much a course unto itself.

The "mixed" approach has simultaneous studies of CT and content, purposefully not interrelating the two. Made popular by Ennis (1989), McCarthy (1989) found among secondary English students in one study that students performed better than those students who did not have a separate approach to learning CT skills apart from content knowledge. McCarthy surmised that for younger students (his study focused on freshman in high school), the "infusion" approach might be too overwhelming because it requires an abstract application and synthesis of content knowledge when many students perform better with acquiring content knowledge first before being asked to evaluate. Non-traditional students in a community college setting, for example, benefited from the "mixed" approach in a community health course (Sandor, 1998). Both content regarding public health was provided as was a separate unit on solving problems. Gadzella (1989) found that CT increased in this type of "mixed" approach precisely because those

students considered as having an “average” intelligence felt more positive about interacting with group situations only after first feeling confident about the content that would be applied to problem-solving scenarios.

Measuring CT can be equally problematic. Carpenter and Doig (1988) argued that CT can be measured accurately only if the concept is clearly defined. The most common standardized measures of CT include the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal (1980), the Cornell Critical Thinking Test (1985), the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (1990) and the California Critical Thinking Dispositions Inventory (1992).

The California Critical Thinking Skills Test is the choice for this study because it measures analysis, evaluation, inference, inductive and deductive reasoning, all skills that stem from what the literature explains is a benefit of teaching Shakespeare through performance, especially the inference skill. It is a 34 item multiple choice exam with a .68 to .69 reliability (Facione, 1992). Utilized more for college-age students, this tool addresses similar concepts found in the WGCTA (Brunt, 2005). O’Sullivan, Blevins-Stephens, Smith and Vaughan-Wrobel (1997) and Stone, Davidson, Evan and Hansen (2001) have outlined numerous published studies that have used the California Critical Thinking Skills Test to measure context-independent CT skills.

As the literature indicates, though there has been much discussion about performing Shakespeare in the secondary classroom, much of that literature is qualitative despite the growing demands for quantitative analysis of why teaching Shakespeare is important and more succinctly, why a performance-based approach may impact the

learner beyond just the benefits mentioned in this review. This study in the next few chapters explores how a performance-based approach to the teaching of Shakespeare impacts a specific critical thinking score as measured by one particular scale: The California Critical Thinking Skills Test. As such, it pays homage to the work that has preceded it by acknowledging the political/historical/philosophical/pragmatic divide between practitioners who teach Shakespeare utilizing a performance-based approach or some other method.

CHAPTER THREE

PROCEDURES

Purpose

There have been a few key studies done on the impact performing Shakespeare has had on its participants, studies that range from elementary to college age students, from the impact of large educational initiatives sponsored through Harvard's Ground Zero (Howard Gardner's think tank) to individual teachers who wish to explore how their own classrooms have been transformed through this experience. Most of the studies are qualitative; a few utilize mixed method approaches, while only a couple, are strictly quantitative. None of the studies have measured the impact performing Shakespeare has on critical thinking skills.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference regarding gains in critical thinking as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test between teaching Shakespeare at the secondary level utilizing performance-based or traditional seat-bound methods.

Research Questions

The study addressed the following questions:

1. Does teaching Shakespeare to secondary (high school) language arts students help increase the development of critical thinking skills as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test?

2. Is there a difference in students' critical thinking skills development when performance based versus seat-bound methods are used to teach Shakespeare?
3. Is there a difference in students' inference ability development when performance based versus seat-bound methods are used to teach Shakespeare?
4. Is there an interactive effect on students' critical thinking skills development between gender and the performance versus seat-bound methods used to teach Shakespeare?

Sample

The sample used for this study included two groups, a control and experimental one. The control group instructor was an acquaintance of the researcher; the experimental group instructor was recruited through the Folger Library, specifically the Education Department in a mass email to summer institute participants.

The experimental group consisted of 46 student participants (n=46) were sophomore students at the secondary level enrolled in a suburban school approximately thirty miles outside a large, Pacific Northwest city; 44 (n=44) students in the control group were freshman enrolled in a suburban high school approximately 20 miles outside a large, Midwestern city. There were a total of 90 participants (n=90). All of these participants were randomly assigned to this particular English class based on their schools' scheduling. All the students were required to take the course; none of the students opted out of taking the pretest or posttest. One student in the experimental group was suspended and forfeited his opportunity to take the posttest. Two other students in the experimental group failed to take the posttest. There were 49 (n=49) participants in

the pretest; only 46 (n= 46) were used in conjunction with the posttest in the experimental group because of the three who were not able to complete the post-test.

The freshman school, or control group, was identified as having an upper class population with a 95% Caucasian ethnicity rate. One percent of students qualified for a free or reduced lunch program as identified by the school's State Report Card (a public dissemination of information relative to school population size, teacher quality statistics, and state test scores). Eighty-seven percent of teachers had a master's degree and the average class size ratio was 22 to 1. Ninety-nine percent of students attend college; the campus has 1,000 students for freshman, 3,000 for sophomores through seniors housed in a different building. Students consistently score well-above the state average for testing (a 27.1 on the ACT versus a state-wide 21 ACT score). The graduation rate is also 99%. These 44 students were enrolled in a year-long required course. Specifically, these students studied Shakespeare at the end of their second semester at the end of the year. They were enrolled in two morning classes. According to the instructor, these were highly motivated, college-bound students.

The experimental group came from the Pacific Northwest in a suburban area that is predominantly Caucasian. The school was identified as having a middle-class population with 23% of the population receiving free or reduced lunches. The school's State Report Card indicated 64% of the teachers have obtained their master's degree. According to their state-tests, students scored in the 86th percentile for successful reading evaluation, but only in the 54th percentile for math. This particular State Report Card was not as extensive as the Midwestern state, but it did indicate an 88% graduation rate. The

school had 1,500 students; there was no indication on the Report Card for average class size. Specifically, these students were enrolled in a year-long course and studied Shakespeare at the end of their year. The state did not report an ACT or SAT score, only a state-driven assessment that had no identifiable verification for rigorousness or nationally-tested validity. The two selected sections were also taught in the morning and according to the instructor, these students were also highly motivated, college-bound participants.

Although both schools were different in both school size and socio-economic status, both were suburban districts that promote a college-bound curriculum that emphasizes the need for critical thinking. In addition, each teacher selected was a highly qualified and highly motivated having participated in either an NEH grant or obtaining certification as a National Board instructor. The teacher in the control group taught for 15 years; the teacher in the experimental group had taught for 18 years. Both had master's degrees in English. Both were acknowledged by their department chairs to be outstanding teachers in their department.

Intervention

Both the control and experimental groups spent four weeks on their unit of Shakespeare study, each spending approximately 47 minutes per day. Each studied a different play of Shakespeare. The instrument used for both pre-test and post-test, however, was only interested in measuring critical thinking skills, not the specific content of a specific Shakespeare play. Hence, it did not matter the particular Shakespeare play that was studied, nor is this study concerned with evaluating one Shakespeare play or

another. Both plays, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Midsummer Night's Dream* are similar, even though one is tragedy and one is comedy. There are other differences, but both plays offer tales of young lovers caught in society's entrapment. Both plays are often utilized in freshman and sophomore years in high school because the themes of the play appeal to that age group (more so perhaps than for example a war play like *Henry V*). The control group studied the former, the experimental group the latter.

The inspiration for choosing the experimental participant comes from the seminal work of Peggy O'Brien (1995) whose study included 30 teachers with well over 600 students. She identified 15 teachers who had been recipients of National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grants, but who, through questionnaire, did not teach Shakespeare through performance. The other 15 teachers had likewise been granted the National Endowment for the Humanities grant—but the grant was for learning how to teach Shakespeare through performance held at the Folger Library. Hence, she was able to control for one critical threat to internal validity—teacher excellence—by arguing that all thirty teachers had been through a highly selective process, that all 30 teachers must have been enthusiastic about their teaching precisely because they were willing to give up three or four weeks of their summer in order to enrich their learning through the various summer institutes the NEH sponsors.

This study wanted to carefully control for what constitutes an “integrated performance-based approach.” To do this, the study utilized a treatment already designed and tested by the Folger Shakespeare Library as part of their ongoing National Endowment for the Humanities summer program for teachers for the experimental group.

One of the two participant teachers had been given extensive training (spent four weeks living and studying in Washington, DC) on how to approach teaching the text using a performance-based approach.

Specifically, this instructor had the following plans for her unit on *Midsummer Night's Dream*. First, she introduced her students to Shakespeare's language through the use of Shakespearean insults, getting students comfortable with the language as well as the inherent fun at verbal wordplay. Each day of the first two weeks had a component in which students were standing on their feet—either practicing an interpretation of a line, learning how to choreograph a fight scene, or expanding on a host of vocal exercises that are enumerated in the Institute as well as available in the *Shakespeare Set Free* series. Each day for the first two weeks also featured time for discussion of the text, pausing to note specific metaphors that helped students better appreciate the language. Each Act unfolded over the course of two days, with some scenes specifically highlighted through the use of movie version of the play. The instructor was quick to note that the entirety of the movie version was never shown. The last two weeks were devoted to small group time to prepare for final scenes that were then rehearsed and shown to an audience of other students in the school. Each group was responsible for one scene in the play; the instructor worked as coach when students had difficulties understanding a word, or asked for technical assistance on entrance and exits of characters. However, during the process, according to the instructor, students had complete autonomy for the interpretation of their scene, the casting of roles, the memorization of lines, and the procurement of costumes.

The instructor did ask for feedback from students as the unit came to its conclusion, feedback that was more formal both immediately before and after the production.

The control group was taught by the other participant teacher who is a Nationally-Board Certified instructor (the National Board Certification program is a rigorous two-year program of teacher evaluation that uses teacher observation, reflection and analysis of teacher-provided artifacts of one's teaching by outside sources to determine Certification eligibility). This instructor indicated that traditional "stand and deliver" practices were utilized.

Specifically, this instructor had the following plans for his unit on *Romeo and Juliet*. He likewise used theatrical games at the beginning to have students become accustomed to the Elizabethan language. He then had students utilize a graphic organizer to help identify which characters belonged to which households as the reading and discussion of the play ensued. He averaged an Act every three days, pausing to write critical reflections on certain images that routinely were displayed in the text (like day and night). Students often were assigned roles to read the text aloud on any given day; often the instructor would volunteer his own voice to add dramatic intensity to their reading and discussion. One fight scene was staged in the class to show how Mercutio dies. Students also viewed the entirety of the Lurham rendition of *Romeo and Juliet*. The culminating projects were student choices that ranged from artistic renderings of certain scenes, to newspaper articles imagining the conflict before the play began, to modern-day texting interpretations of the exchanges among Verona's teenagers. Students spent the last two days of the unit presenting these projects.

Both groups experienced the same experience that the teacher had already designed for them. The control group instructor as indicated utilized a number of reading strategies that encompass “stand and deliver” approaches to the text, including the use of reading aloud, clips from a movie version, discussion, and reading quizzes. The experimental group used the performance-based approach as outlined by the Folger Library’s summer institute on the teaching of Shakespeare. The curriculum emphasizes students standing on their feet, memorizing and rehearsing lines from the text. The teacher directed students for the first half of the unit, including the use of some of the techniques described in the “stand and deliver” approach. However, the number of performance-based techniques varied significantly. The second half of the course, again, or roughly two weeks, was spent on student-directed scenes wherein students took what they had learned in the first half and applied it to their own constructions, their own interpretations of the text. This curriculum was created in part by Peggy O’Brien at the Folger Library and is used in many current secondary English classrooms.

The pretest and posttest were administered in a computer lab in both schools at the school site with the teacher present. The pretest was given the day before the unit began; the posttest the day after the unit ended. Through agreement with both teachers, an assessment of the unit was held after the posttest in order to help students focus as they took the posttest.

Both the pretest and posttest took approximately 45 minutes to complete. Each student worked at his or her own pace. No student needed additional time because of individual needs, including those mandated by special education laws. However, there

were five students (two in the experimental, three in the control), who, because of absence, took the posttest at a later time than the rest of the students. Before the pre-test began, the teacher read the following instructions:

Good morning. The test you are about to take is called the California Critical Thinking Skills Test. It is a test designed to measure critical thinking skills. It does not require any background information. Please do your best as you answer the questions. Your score will not be used in any part in determining your grade for the course. I cannot answer any specific questions regarding material, however, please raise your hand if you have any technical difficulties. During the test, please remain quiet. Each student will be working at his or her own pace. At the end of the test you may sit quietly and read.

Before the posttest, the teacher read the exact instructions. In order to participate, the students signed an assent form and had their parents sign a permission form. Finally, the individual school administrator also signed a consent form acknowledging that the school name or individual data relating to a particular student was utilized for this study.

When students logged on to the secure website sponsored by Insight Assessments, the company that produces the California Critical Thinking Skills Test, they were prompted for a name and login number. Each student was randomly assigned a number by the teacher as he or she entered the room. Students did not enter their name, only their randomly assigned number. Each group was assigned a name: the control

group was “Juliet,” the experimental group was “Romeo.” As the test was taken, the teacher roamed the room to ensure that students were taking the test seriously.

Instrumentation

The California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTS), itself a landmark outcome of the *Delphi Report*, is a compilation of over 30 experts who met intermittently for two years to discuss both the definition and assessment of critical thinking for the 21st century. Ranging from philosophy to science to education, the report, published in 1990 by Peter Facione, who also helped write the questions for the CCTS for the California Academic Press and who was later dean at Loyola University, Chicago, indicates a strong need to infuse the secondary curricula in American schools with more critical thinking (p. 1). The American Philosophical Association took up the challenge and created a consensus statement that in part reads, “The ideal critical thinker is habitually inquisitive, well-informed, trustful of reason, open-minded, flexible, fair-minded in evaluation, honest in facing personal biases, prudent in making judgments, willing to reconsider, clear about issues, orderly in complex matters, diligent in seeking relevant information, reasonable in the selection of criteria, focused in inquiry, and persistent in seeking results” (p. 2). Failure to cultivate these skills, according to the committee, would mean an undermining of democratic principles in the 21st century.

The *Delphi Report* outlines 15 specific recommendations that address the consensus statement drafted by the participants over a two-year period. One of the recommendations was that current educational assessment strategies utilized by professional educators not distort or truncate instruction in CT. In other words, the

committee felt it necessary to argue that educators not simply rely on current measurements to answer the question as to whether instruction in CT was occurring in the classroom. Rather, a new instrument, a new assessment would help teachers recognize whether they were or were not offering those skills in the classroom.

One critical difference the authors of the *Delphi Report* point to is that CT is not a separate body of knowledge, but rather ought to be a part of the curriculum. In fact, “While CT skills themselves transcend specific subjects or disciplines, exercising them successfully in certain contexts demands domain-specific knowledge, some of which may concern specific methods and techniques used to make reasonable judgments in those specific contexts” (p. 5). In other words, CT in science may need to rely on the terminology of the scientific method, even if CT in history may not. However, in general, “Too much of value is lost if CT is conceived of simply as a list of logical operations and domain-specific knowledge is conceived of simply as an aggregation of information” (p. 5).

The *Delphi Report* argues for six skills to constitute effective CT, with several sub-skills that lead toward those overall skills. Table 1 illustrates the *Delphi Report* findings:

Table 1

Delphi Report's Critical Thinking Sub-skills

<i>Skill</i>	<i>Sub-Skill</i>
Interpretation	Categorization, Decoding Significance, Clarifying Meaning
Analysis	Examining Ideas, Identifying Arguments, Analyzing Arguments
Evaluation	Assessing Claims, Assessing Arguments
Inference	Querying Evidence, Conjecturing Alternatives, Drawing Conclusions
Explanation	Stating Results, Justifying Procedures, Presenting Arguments
Self-Regulation	Self-examination, Self-correction

Most of the teacher-action research studies regarding teaching Shakespeare through performance discussed in particular how this approach helped students with Inferencing skills. Upon completion of the post-test, as part of the sub-set of data, this study clearly distinguished scores regarding this particular CT skill since the literature directly explores how conjecturing alternatives, querying evidence and drawing conclusions, are all part of the process instructors who experience the Folger Institute's program for training teachers in teaching Shakespeare utilize in the classroom.

The *Delphi Report's* examination of the inference CT skill reflects how with querying evidence it is necessary to, "in general, judge the information relevant to deciding the acceptability, plausibility or relative merits of a given alternative" (p. 9). In its example, the *Report* uses a judge making a decision. Under conjecturing alternatives, the *Report* examines how the CT skill would involve "formulating multiple alternatives for resolving a problem....to develop a variety of different plans to achieve some goal"

(p. 9). The example is a political leader having to balance multiple demands when making a decision. Finally, the *Report* argues that the specific CT skill of drawing conclusions include the ability “to determine which of several possible conclusions is most strongly warranted or supported by the evidence at hand, or which should be rejected or regarded as less plausible by the information given” (p. 9). The report uses a scientist as its example.

Ideally, one ought to use teaching Shakespeare through performance as the example for all three of these CT sub-skills. When enacting the script, students must judge information that is relevant as to what the actual text references, to whom is a line spoken, and to what purpose is the action directed. In applying an interpretation to the scene, students must conjecture alternatives, often playing the scene multiple times to determine the range of possible consequences, how a particular emotion from an actor alters the response from a recipient actor. Finally, rejecting or accepting plausible theories corresponds with how an interpretation of the scene is greeted by the audience—how the setting, choices, evidence and alternatives is ultimately judged, the third major component of Aristotle’s rhetorical triangle.

Following the *Delphi Report*, Facione, in consultation with those members of the committee who created the *Report*, created the CCST. Used primarily at the college level, the CCST has now devised examinations for the secondary level. In addition, the company which writes, administers and scores the assessment—Insight—also exams critical thinking inventories, or the propensity of an individual toward obtaining CT skills. Used extensively in both public and private settings, the CCST has most notably

been used in the health care industry, primarily nursing, to help evaluate successful practitioners before entering the field. According to Insight, the nursing field is one of the most progressive in implementing and maintaining professional development opportunities that relate to direct instruction of CT skills (Bartlett, 2002, p. 64).

As a discipline-neutral, multiple-choice test with an internal consistency of .70 to .71, the CCST has 34 items that test the five subscales. The CCST has been used among those who practice, for example, physical therapy (Cox, 2002). In nursing, there have been at least two longitudinal studies done with the CCST (Leppa, 1997; Thompson, 1999) to indicate the impact of programs over an extended amount of time. The test has also been used to determine cultural biases (Ip, 2000), clinical competence (May, 1999), professional development effectiveness (Kintgen, 1991; Pless, 1993; Vaughan, 1997), and for screening applications (Wilson, 1999). Lampert (2006) also, for example, used the CCST in her study comparing the impact of students who were exposed to fine arts curriculum versus non-arts undergraduates.

Statistical Procedure

This study assessed through a quasi-experimental design the impact performing Shakespeare had on 90 students, 44 of whom studied Shakespeare without performance, or who were taught through what has been called “stand and deliver” practice. This population was the independent variable, or what might be constituted the “norm” of the general population of high school students in America. As the literature indicates, even though there is growing interest in teaching Shakespeare through performance, most classrooms still employ seat-bound methods in approaching the Bard (Applebee, 2003).

Insight Assessment, the company that runs the California Critical Thinking Skills Test, provided technical support as part of their overall fee. That technical support included test administration via the secured, on-line web source as well as an initial statistical analysis of the data. Both the mean and the median were identified as well as the trimmed median, or the mean of the middle ninety percent of the data, to remove any outlier effect. The standard deviation, standard error of the mean, both the minimum and maximum as well the first and third quartiles were analyzed (the median is the second quartile, thus splitting the data into four groups with 25% of the data in each group).

Using these inferential statistics, this study identified specifically the subset of scores used to indicate inferential thinking as it relates to the general critical thinking skills. In fact, each subset of the test was identifiable and analyzed using this approach. The *t*-test is one type of inferential statistics used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the means of two groups. In fact, this study utilized the Pair-difference *t*-test (a.k.a. *t*-test for dependent groups, correlated *t*-test) $df = n$ (number of pairs) - 1 since it was concerned with the difference between the average scores of a single sample of individuals who are assessed at two different times (with a before and after treatment score). The hypothesis is a one-tailed directional question for it asks if students who experience Shakespeare through performance obtain a higher critical thinking skill score than those students who do not (H_0 : Performance does not score significantly higher than non-performance with respect to critical thinking; H_A : Performance scores significantly higher than non-performance with respect to critical thinking). With all inferential statistics, the dependent variable fits a normal distribution.

With this assumption of a normal distribution, the study identified the probability of a particular outcome. That level of probability was specified (alpha level, level of significance, p) before data was collected ($p < .05$ is a common value that was used).

It will be possible therefore to reject the null hypothesis if $p < .05$ and conclude that performance of Shakespeare does indeed have an effect on overall critical thinking skills.

Threats to Validity

Internal threats of validity to participants in the study include the four week time span from the pretest to the posttest, especially considering that the unit on Shakespeare was conducted at the end of the year. Providing a posttest shortly before students dismiss for the summer can result in students not taking the posttest as seriously as one might hope. In addition, the students from the control group generally test higher than those in the experimental group, even though there is a year difference between the two. The students in the control group had previous access to on-line test forms than those students in the experimental group. As illustrated on the school report card, students in the control group generally perform in the top two percent of the nation based on the standardized ACT test whereas those students from the experimental group, according to the school report card from that state, generally score in the top 15% of students based on a state standardized assessment not labeled specifically. The exposure to that method of assessment may have hindered some of the results since students were unable to mark the test as they were reading it, or return to a question if the student had been given a paper multiple choice test. In addition, the test specifically was not used as an assessment or

grade for the course, and each individual teacher approached the reward for taking the test differently—the control group had candy bars to celebrate while the experimental group had a pizza party. In addition, the classrooms for both instructors were never visited nor were there observations performed as to test-taking environments. Finally, both compensatory rivalry and resentful demoralization might have occurred because the permission forms clearly indicated that one group would be receiving a performance-based approach to the teaching of Shakespeare while the other would not. The rivalry may also have been geographical.

Threats to the procedure of the study include the testing itself. Even though a different form of the test was used from the pretest, participants certainly were more aware of and hence more familiar with the style of the question which asked students to think critically about a particular scenario.

Threats to external validity include the interaction of setting, history and the treatment. Both units took place at the end of the school year; both teachers were never observed to ensure that the specific treatment was being utilized (although phone conversations and personal emails do attest to the types of activities each teacher promoted and which have already been defined). Both schools, though somewhat similar, do have some particular differences, especially in the high achievement scores of the control group. And, it is difficult to control for past exposure to Shakespeare learning that each group received. Furthermore, both groups studied different Shakespeare plays, one a tragedy and one a comedy.

In the control group, although they are freshman and have never had a Shakespeare unit at the high school level, many students had been introduced to Shakespeare through some highly competitive middle school and junior highs which often push students into early readings of high school material. The experimental group, according to the instructor, had read one Shakespeare play their freshman year and those prior instructors employed traditional stand and deliver approaches. According to the instructor for the experimental group, prior exposure to Shakespeare would not have occurred at the middle school and/or junior high level.

Hypotheses and Null Hypotheses

As a quantitative study, this study's hypothesis is that students who experience their study of Shakespeare through an integrated performance-based approach will score higher on the Critical Thinking Skills Test as a measurement of critical thinking skills obtained through such an approach to teaching the Bard. Furthermore, this study believes that students who experience the independent variable regarding teaching methodology will score higher on the subset of data relating specifically to inferencing since the literature review and theoretical presuppositions all correspond to how textual meaning and interpretation when performing the play may open up the student to new methods for and a better understanding of how to approach any particular problem. The hypotheses and null hypotheses for these four questions are:

1. Does teaching Shakespeare to secondary (high school) language arts students help increase the development of critical thinking skills as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test?

2. Is there a difference in students' critical thinking skills development when performance based versus seat-bound methods are used to teach Shakespeare?
3. Is there a difference in students' inference ability development when performance based versus seat-bound methods are used to teach Shakespeare?
4. Is there an interactive effect on students' critical thinking skills development between gender and the performance versus seat-bound methods used to teach Shakespeare?

The null hypotheses for these four questions are:

1. Teaching Shakespeare to secondary (high school) language arts students does not help increase the development of critical thinking skills as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test.
2. There is no difference in students' critical thinking skills development when performance based versus seat-bound methods are used to teach Shakespeare.
3. There is no difference in students' inference ability development when performance based versus seat-bound methods are used to teach Shakespeare.
4. There is no interactive effect on students' critical thinking skills development between gender and the performance versus seat-bound methods used to teach Shakespeare.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Research Questions, Null and Alternative Hypotheses

This study had four research questions regarding the impact teaching Shakespeare has on critical thinking skills as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test:

1. Does teaching Shakespeare to secondary (high school) language arts students help increase the development of critical thinking skills as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test?
2. Is there a difference in students' critical thinking skills development when performance based versus seat-bound methods are used to teach Shakespeare?
3. Is there a difference in students' inference ability development when performance based versus seat-bound methods are used to teach Shakespeare?
4. Is there an interactive effect on students' critical thinking skills development between gender and the performance versus seat-bound methods used to teach Shakespeare?

The null hypotheses for these four questions are:

1. Teaching Shakespeare to secondary (high school) language arts students does not help increase the development of critical thinking skills as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test.

2. There is no difference in students' critical thinking skills development when performance based versus seat-bound methods are used to teach Shakespeare.
3. There is no difference in students' inference ability development when performance based versus seat-bound methods are used to teach Shakespeare.
4. There is no interactive effect on students' critical thinking skills development between gender and the performance versus seat-bound methods used to teach Shakespeare.

Our alternative hypotheses are:

1. Teaching Shakespeare to secondary (high school) language arts students does help increase the development of critical thinking skills as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test.
2. There is a difference in students' critical thinking skills development when performance based versus seat-bound methods are used to teach Shakespeare.
3. There is a difference in students' inference ability development when performance based versus seat-bound methods are used to teach Shakespeare.
4. There is an interactive effect on students' critical thinking skills development between gender and the performance versus seat-bound methods used to teach Shakespeare.

Pretest Results – Experimental Group

The following results establish the comparability between the Control and the Experimental groups before testing the four hypotheses. All histograms are evidence of normally distributed data, a necessary condition for running the t-tests.

The initial response of those students in the experimental group with a normal distribution curve to indicate prevalence had an average score of 18.18.

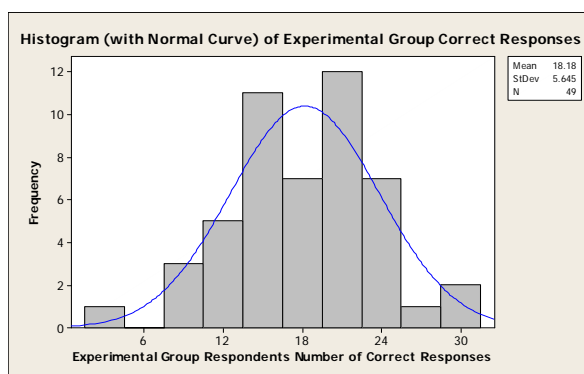


Figure 1. Histogram of Experimental Group Overall Correct Responses

However, three students did not complete the posttest and so were not included in the pretest analysis. The new mean (n=46) is 17.61.

Similar normal curve analysis was done for the distributions of samples in the table below. These can be found in the Appendix B.

Overall, Table 2 is a summary of the pretest results for the experimental group:¹

¹It is important to note that three respondents in the experimental group chose not to indicate a gender.

Table 2

Experimental Group Pretest Results for Overall Responses, Specific Questions Regarding Inferencing, Male/Female Overall Responses and Specific Questions Regarding Inferencing

<i>Experimental Pretest Results Category</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Overall	46	17.61
Overall Inferencing	46	7.889
Overall Male	24	19.04
Male Inferencing	24	8.375
Overall Female	22	17.14
Female Inferencing	22	7.5

Pretest Results – Control Group

All histograms are evidence of normally distributed data, a necessary condition for running the t-tests. The initial response of those students in the control group with a normal distribution curve to indicate prevalence had an average score of 23.05.

Overall, Table 3 is a summary of the pretest results for the experimental group:²

²It is important to note that four respondents in the control group chose not to indicate a gender.

Table 3

Control Group Pretest Results for Overall Responses, Specific Questions Regarding Inferencing, Male/Female Overall Responses and Specific Questions Regarding Inferencing

<i>Control Group Pretest Results Category</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Overall	44	23.05
Overall Inferencing	44	10.33
Overall Male	26	22.27
Male Inferencing	26	10.08
Overall Female	14	23.93
Overall Inferencing	14	10.71

Analysis of Pretest Results

As previously indicated, the control group, though a year younger, scored much higher on the pretest overall, an almost five point difference. This result may highlight differences between standardized test scores that the school reports based on student scores obtained their junior year. The result may also reduce the internal validity of the results, although *t* values indicate that an equivalency can be established as indicated in Table 4.

Table 4

Experimental Versus Control Group t Test of Means to Determine Compatibility for Overall, Specific Questions of Inferencing, and Male/Female Responses to both Overall and Inferencing Questions on the Pretest

<i>Group</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>
Overall Control	23.05	.524	1.357	.1772
Overall Experimental	17.61	.383	1.357	.1772
Inference Control	10.33	.424	.747	.4564
Inference Experimental	7.889	.377	.747	.4564
Overall Male Control	22.27	.5	.811	.3798
Overall Male Experimental	19.04	.493	.811	.3798
Inference Male Control	10.08	.42	.552	.5834
Inference Male Experimental	8.375	.386	.552	.5834
Overall Female Control	23.93	.401	2.154	.0111
Overall Female Experimental	16.48	.426	2.154	.0111
Inference Female Control	10.71	.424	2.753	.0101
Inference Female Experimental	7.190	.475	2.753	.0101

Control group pretest means were compared with experimental group pretests means by *t* tests of independent means.

The results indicate t values that establish equivalency of groups prior to intervention in overall scores to the California Critical Thinking Skills Test, in the specific portion of the test directly corresponding to the skills of Inferencing, and in the responses the males in both the control and experimental groups had to both the overall CCTST scores as well as questions pertaining to the skill of Inference. However, the pretest does not indicate that an equivalency can be determined with the female response from both the control and experimental groups to the overall CCTST scores or for the specific scores on Inferencing. At $n=35$, with only 14 responses from the female experimental group, the t score and p values indicate that it is a good probability there is a statistically significant error in showing any comparison between these two groups on both overall responses as well as responses to the critical thinking skill of Inferencing. Accordingly, there will be no analysis of the posttest that includes the female response because not enough data can be provided to either accept or reject the null hypothesis.

Posttest Results – Experimental Group

The posttest response of those students in the experimental group with a normal distribution curve to indicate prevalence had an average score of 18.33. Again, all histograms are evidence of normally distributed data which is a necessary condition for running t -tests and can be found in the Appendix B.

Overall, Table 5 is a summary of the posttest results for the experimental group in comparison to the pretest:

Table 5

Summary of Pretest/Posttest Means Experimental Group

<i>Experimental Pretest</i>	<i>Experimental Posttest</i>	<i>(+) (-) Difference</i>
Overall (n=46) 17.61	Overall (n=46) 18.33	+.72
Overall Inferencing (n=46) 7.889	Overall Inferencing (n=46) 7.543	-.346
Overall Male (n=24) 19.04	Overall Male (n=24) 20.13	+1.09
Male Inferencing (n=24) 8.375	Male Inferencing (n=24) 8.375	0.0

Posttest Analysis– Experimental Group

As the numbers indicate, there was an overall gain as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test, a gain despite the overall Inferencing score which actually decreased. In addition, the Inferencing score for the males in the experimental group remained the same, but there was an overall score increase for males on the entire test. Table 6 summarizes the results of the other subset of questions asked on the California Critical Thinking Skills Test, indicating which areas were responsible for an overall increase in scores since Inferencing was not the overall reason for an increased score, despite the original hypothesis (n=46):

Table 6

*Summary of all Critical Thinking Subscores on the California Critical Thinking Skills**Test Pretest/Posttest for the Experimental Group*

<i>Category</i>	<i>Pretest Experimental Group</i>	<i>Posttest Experimental Group</i>	<i>(+)(-)Change</i>
Inductive Reasoning	8.800	8.822	+.022
Deductive Reasoning	9.067	9.4	+.333
Analysis	4.822	5.089	+.267
Evaluation	5.156	5.6	+.444

Posttest Results – Control Group

The overall posttest mean score was 23.55 for those students in the Control group. Similar normal curved analysis was done for the distributions of samples in the table below. These can be found in the Appendix B.

Overall, Table 7 shows the summary of the posttest results for the control group in comparison to the pretest:

Table 7

Control Group Summary of Pretest/Posttest Means for the Overall, Inferencing, and Male Responses for the Overall and Inferencing Score on the California Critical Thinking Skills Test

<i>Control Group Pretest</i>	<i>Control Group Posttest</i>	<i>(+) (-) Difference</i>
Overall (n=44) 23.05	Overall (n=44) 23.55	+.5
Overall Inferencing (n=44) 10.33	Overall Inferencing (n=44) 10.52	+.19
Overall Male (n=26) 22.27	Overall Male (n=26) 22.846	+.576
Male Inferencing (n=26) 10.08	Male Inferencing (n=26) 10.15	+.07

Posttest Analysis – Control Group

Overall, the score gain for the control group was .5; the overall score gain for the experimental group was .72, a difference of .22. Both groups, therefore, benefited from studying Shakespeare, especially noting that the posttest test took place shortly before summer and had no immediate impact on classroom achievement (as an assessment, for example). It is important to remember that the CTST did not ask questions regarding Shakespeare.

Table 8

*Summary of all Critical Thinking Subscores on the California Critical Thinking Skills**Test Pretest/Posttest for the Control Group*

<i>Category</i>	<i>Pretest Control Group</i>	<i>Posttest Control Group</i>	<i>(+)(-)Change</i>
Inductive Reasoning	11.022	11.068	+.046
Deductive Reasoning	11.413	12.477	+1.064
Analysis	5.826	6.386	+.56
Evaluation	6.478	6.636	+.158

Unlike the experimental group, the control group gained the most in the subscore regarding Deductive Reasoning, or that skill which directly relates to understanding how the whole relates to the particular, a common thread in literary studies, especially regarding concepts that students may not have been exposed to, like a first-time study of Shakespeare. The *Delphi Report* analyzes Deductive Reasoning to be: “the overall structure of the argument or intended chain of reasoning” (p. 20). The score was almost a .7 difference, perhaps indicating a strong focus in this approach to teaching, using traditional stand and deliver or “seat-bound” methods, versus a performance-based approach to teaching Shakespeare whose greatest gain was actually in Evaluation, not Inferencing, as had been hypothesized in the literature.

Research Question One

The first hypothesis dealt with the overall question of whether or not studying Shakespeare would improve the overall critical thinking score as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test. A paired *t*-test was used to calculate the *t* value which was then tested for its significance against a *p* value.

Table 9

Hypothesis One: t Test of Means to Determine Statistical Significance of the Impact Studying Shakespeare has on the Increase in Critical Thinking Skills as Measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test

<i>Group</i>	<i>Posttest</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Absolute t</i>	<i>P</i>
Control (n=46)	23.55	4.100	38.957	0.000
Experimental (n=40)	18.33	5.300	21.8374	0.000

P value < .05

This hypothesis was tested by examining the posttest result gains for both groups to determine that indeed studying Shakespeare did result in a statistically significant gain in critical thinking as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. There was a statistically significant increase in scores from pre-test to post-test for students who studied Shakespeare using either traditional ‘seat-bound’ methods or a performance-based approach over a four-week time period as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test.

Research Question Two

The second hypothesis dealt with the specific difference between one method of teaching Shakespeare over another, specifically traditional stand and deliver (or ‘seat bound’) methods versus the performance-based approach as outlined by the Folger Shakespeare Library. This hypothesis was tested by examining control and experimental group gains from the pretest to posttest on the California Critical Thinking Skills Test. A paired *t*-test was used to calculate the *t* value which was then tested for its significance against a *p* value. Comparison of the means differences by *t* test yielded the results in Table 10:

Table 10

Hypothesis Two: t Test of Means to Determine Statistical Significance Between a Performance-Based Approach and Traditional Stand and Deliver Methods When Studying Shakespeare as Measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test

<i>Group (n=90)</i>	<i>Mean Difference Pretest to Posttest</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Absolute t</i>	<i>P</i>
Control	.5	.5	2.193	.031
Experimental	.72	.449		

P value < .05

Comparison of these posttest means from the gains obtained from post-test to pre-test through a *t* test yielded that the experimental group mean gains from the post-test to pre-test is greater than the control group mean gains from the pre-test to post-test, and the relevant *t* statistic is significantly greater than 1.96, establishing that this difference

between the experimental and control group means gains from the pre-test to post-test is statistically significant at the .05 level. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. While both control and experimental posttest gains in comparison to pretest initial responses were positive, experimental posttest means gains were significantly greater than those of the control group.

Research Question Three

The third hypothesis centered on the specific subset of scores provided by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test that examined a critical thinker's ability to utilize Inferencing, or more succinctly, to imagine multiple scenarios of a particular problem and the ability to implement several possible outcomes.

Table 11

Hypothesis Three: t Test of Means to Determine Statistical Significance Regarding the Specific Skill of Inferencing Between a Performance-Based Approach and Traditional Stand and Deliver Methods When Studying Shakespeare as Measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test

<i>Group (n=90)</i>	<i>Mean Difference Pretest to Posttest</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Absolute t</i>	<i>P</i>
Control	.19	.392	6.4843	.0624
Experimental	-.346	.392		

P value < .05

As previously indicated, the experimental group did not have any gains in this particular category; in fact, as Table 11 indicates, there was an overall negative response on the posttest. A *t* test comparison of the control and experimental pretest to posttest

means found no statistical significance between them and in fact no gain at all in comparison between the two groups. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted indicating that students who learn through performance-based methodology have no greater skill of Inferencing than those who did not learn Shakespeare through performance.

As previously discussed, because there was no direct observation, and because the girls in the experimental group were directly responsible for the decrease in score (boys had a 0.0. gain), one could hypothesize that the boys might have been more dominant in discussion, activities and overall performance regarding those components important to a performance approach to teaching Shakespeare: multiple scenarios of the same scene and the ability to implement varied approaches. Perhaps the boys might have been more dominant than the girls, although there were not enough girls who recorded responses to the test to determine comparability between control and experimental groups. Girls (n=11) in the control group did increase their score for Inferencing ability.

A paired *t*-test was used to calculate the *t* value which was then tested for its significance against a *p* value. As the table indicates, the *p* value is not statistically significant and therefore the null hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Research Question Four

The fourth hypothesis had two components and asked to what effect gender, the only question answered by students on the pretest and posttest (even though some left it blank) of a personal nature, had on both the critical thinking skill overall as well as the specific Inferencing score. Due to insufficient sample size, it was not possible to determine any compatibility between the groups based on female gender. It was,

however, possible to do so with the males. Analysis by means of a *t* test yielded the results as shown in Tables 12 and 13. The first is for the overall male response; the second is for the particular Inferencing subscore.

Table 12

Hypothesis Four t Test of Means to Determine Statistical Significance Between a Performance-Based Approach and Traditional Stand and Deliver Methods for Boys When Studying Shakespeare as Measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test

<i>Male Group (n=50)</i>	<i>Mean Difference Pretest to Posttest Overall</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Absolute t</i>	<i>P</i>
Control	.576	.494	5.013	.000
Experimental	1.09	.208		

P value < .05

The *t* test for the overall critical thinking score as indicated in the mean difference from pretest to posttest resulted in a *t* value of 5.013, thus determining a statistical significance (a *p* value at .000). This portion of the null hypothesis is rejected. Boys who experience a performance based approach to the learning of Shakespeare overall score higher on the California Critical Thinking Skills Test than do boys who learned Shakespeare through traditional stand and deliver or ‘seat-bound’ methods.

Table 13

Hypothesis Four: t Test of Means to Determine Statistical Significance Regarding the Specific Skill of Inferencing Between a Performance-Based Approach and Traditional Stand and Deliver Methods for Boys When Studying Shakespeare as Measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test

<i>Male Group (n=50)</i>	<i>Mean Difference Pretest to Posttest Inferencing</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Absolute t</i>	<i>P</i>
Control	.07	.255	1.399	.192
Experimental	0.0	0		

P value < .05

A paired *t*-test was used to calculate the *t* value which was then tested for its significance against a *p* value. With regard to the specific score for Inferencing, this study accepts the null hypothesis since the *t* score is below 1.96 and there is no statistically significant reason to believe that studying Shakespeare through performance for boys would result in a higher level Inferencing score as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Purpose

There have been a few key studies done on the impact performing Shakespeare has had on its participants, studies that range from elementary to college age students, from the impact of large educational initiatives sponsored through Harvard's Ground Zero (Howard Gardner's think tank) to individual teachers who wish to explore how their own classrooms have been transformed through this experience. Most of the studies are qualitative; a few utilize mixed method approaches, while only a couple, are strictly quantitative. None of the studies have measured the impact performing Shakespeare has on critical thinking skills. As the literature review indicated, there is a need to identify a quantitative measurement for why practitioners ought to consider a particular method of teaching the most-read author in American high schools today.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference regarding gains in critical thinking as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test between teaching Shakespeare at the secondary level utilizing performance-based or traditional seat-bound methods. The research questions were:

1. Does teaching Shakespeare to secondary (high school) language arts students help increase the development of critical thinking skills as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test?
2. Is there a difference in students' critical thinking skills development when performance based versus seat-bound methods are used to teach Shakespeare?
3. Is there a difference in students' inference ability development when performance based versus seat-bound methods are used to teach Shakespeare?
4. Is there an interactive effect on students' critical thinking skills development between gender and the performance versus seat-bound methods used to teach Shakespeare?

Two schools were chosen to participate in this study based on two faculty members who teach respectfully in each district. The schools were representative of two regions in the United States: the Pacific Northwest and the Midwest. Both schools featured college preparatory curriculums with a mostly Caucasian student body. The first was a participant in the Folger Library's National Endowment for the Humanities summer institute on the teaching of Shakespeare. She employed the teaching methods in her classroom that she learned at the Institute, specifically a performance-based approach that embraced student performance of the text. The instructor believed in the process of exploring inflection and subtext; speaking aloud the Shakespeare text with multiple interpretations; acting the text to understand character motivation; having students direct each other in the process; rehearsing a scene to ensure fluidity; and finally producing a scene to explore the impact an audience has on the student interpretation. This process,

as underscored by the Folger Library approach, is widely disseminated in the *Shakespeare Set Free* series, and is the framework for the many games, activities, discussions and projects that are suggested to augment the essential quality of this pedagogical approach to the Bard: standing up, participating, performing.

The second participant was chosen because he is a Nationally-Board Certified Instructor who spent several years earning this highly qualified endorsement. The National Board is a rigorous program of writing, reflection, observation and portfolio analysis, to determine a participant's standing as a Nationally-Board Certified Instructor. Unlike the experimental group, the control group relied on what the instructor had likewise already planned for his unit on Shakespeare: utilizing traditional seat-bound methods. His students did read the text aloud, watched scenes of the play in a movie version, held discussions, and even participated in a few theatrical games as interlude to the textual analysis. However, the approach to the text was not based on performance: students never chose roles, interpreted, used process drama, rehearsed, or memorized lines that would lead to an overall production.

The pretest and posttest, both different versions of the same California Critical Thinking Skills test, were taken anonymously using a secure website run by Insight Assessments, the company responsible for the CCST. Students were told of their voluntary participation in the study; none of the students opted not to participate. Some students failed to mark their gender, which may have altered some of the conclusions with regard to analyzing the data using gender identification.

The first step in the analysis of data was the calculation of means for both the control and experimental groups to establish the comparability between groups. The second step involved a series of *t* tests to determine, based on the gains in the score between groups, whether the null hypothesis should be accepted or rejected. Each hypothesis was tested to the .05 level of significance.

Findings and Conclusions

The null hypothesis was rejected for questions one, two, and four. In the third question, relating to the Inferencing skill specifically, the null hypothesis was accepted. O'Brien (1995) study rendered that students enjoy Shakespeare more through performance; students understand the language better through performance; and that student perception of competence increases due to performance. This study now confirms that students gain important critical thinking skills as a benefit from this approach to teaching Shakespeare. This study also finds that classrooms guided by a gifted teacher as recognized by the National Board also benefit from a study of Shakespeare using traditional seat-bound methods, but that the gains were significantly greater for those who experienced the performance-based approach, particularly for male students.

Research Question One

The first hypothesis dealt with the overall question of whether or not studying Shakespeare would improve the overall critical thinking score as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test. A one-paired *t*-test was used to calculate the *p* value. This hypothesis was tested by examining the posttest result gains for both groups

to determine that indeed studying Shakespeare did result in a statistically significant gain in critical thinking as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

As the most read author in the secondary language arts curriculum in both the United States and in the United Kingdom, these results should be a quantitative reassurance that studying the Bard increases critical thinking skills for secondary students. Regardless of how Shakespeare is taught, these findings indicate that after a four-week examination Shakespeare's relevance to the classroom is more than just an ontological discussion of cultural relevance. There is a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) for both traditional seat-bound and performance-based approaches.

Research Question Two

The second hypothesis dealt with the specific difference between one method of teaching Shakespeare over another, specifically traditional stand and deliver (or 'seat bound') methods versus the performance-based approach as outlined by the Folger Shakespeare Library. This hypothesis was tested by examining control and experimental group gains from the pretest to posttest. Comparison of these posttest means by a t test yielded that the experimental group mean is greater than the control group mean, and the relevant t statistic is substantially greater than 1.96, establishing that this difference between the experimental and control group means is statistically significant at the .05 level. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. While both control and experimental posttest gains in comparison to pretest initial responses were positive, experimental posttest means gains were significantly more positive than those of the control group.

As the literature indicated, approaching the teaching of Shakespeare through performance has many benefits. However, now educators and school administrators can consider how this quantitative measurement can impact curriculum decisions. Both units were four weeks in length, both emphasized the teaching of Shakespeare. Both units saw gains in critical thinking as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test. However, the experimental group did improve more than the control group, an indication that the performance approach does yield some quantifiable justification for its implantation due to an increase in critical thinking skills. Again, there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between those studied Shakespeare through performance and those who learned the Bard through traditional seat-bound methods.

O'Brien's (1995) seminal work explored how students ($n=670$) after a two-week unit on Shakespeare better appreciate the Bard because of a performance approach versus those students who learned of Shakespeare through traditional stand and deliver or 'seat-bound' methods. As one of the few quantifiable measurements of the impact performance has on students, this study can also conclude with a smaller population ($n=90$) that students did gain an overall greater critical thinking score as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test as a byproduct of their experience with a performance-based approach.

The results further inform the debate, begun by O'Brien (1995), that studying Shakespeare at the secondary level through performance has been an important component of the curriculum and to the stated outcomes of any language arts classroom that embraces the importance of teaching critical thinking skills. Coupled with the

qualitative benefits as outlined in the literature review, these results enhance the argument that a performance-based approach is an asset to the curriculum decisions made at the secondary level.

Research Question Three

The third hypothesis centered on the specific subset of scores provided by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test that examined a critical thinker's ability to utilize Inferencing, or more succinctly, to imagine multiple scenarios of a particular problem and the ability to implement several possible outcomes. As previously indicated, the experimental group did not have any gains in this particular category; in fact, there was an overall negative response on the posttest. A *t* test comparison of the control and experimental pretest to posttest means found no statistical significance between them and in fact no gain at all in comparison between the two groups. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted indicating that students who learn through performance-based methodology have no greater skill of Inferencing than those who did not learn Shakespeare through performance.

As previously discussed, because there was no direct observation, and because the girls in the experimental group were directly responsible for the decrease in score (boys had a 0.0. gain), one could hypothesize that the boys might have been more dominant in discussion, activities and overall performance regarding those components important to a performance approach to teaching Shakespeare: multiple scenarios of the same scene and the ability to implement varied approaches. Perhaps the boys might have been more dominant than the girls, although there were not enough girls who recorded responses to

the test to determine comparability between control and experimental groups. Girls (n=11) in the control group did increase their score for Inferencing ability.

The null hypothesis was accepted regarding the specific critical thinking skill of Inferencing, thereby altering the initial assumptions of what might constitute a “performance-based” approach to teaching Shakespeare and whether or not there was a critical display of alternative positions regarding the text to warrant the discussions necessary to experience this aspect of critical thinking. Some of the opponents of a performance-based approach argue that the classroom which employs a performance-based approach becomes too much a theater with a teacher who acts a dictatorial director that in fact very little critical thinking occurs when students are told how to perform the text. The results of this study confirm the validity of these concerns; in fact, with regard to Inferencing skills, there might be a detriment to this critical thinking skill if the teacher or some group members become too directorial in their approach, thereby preventing the acquisition of potential divergent thinking skills.

These numbers regarding Inferencing skills lead to further questions, many of which cannot be answered in this study, but whose questions nonetheless help analyze the data. For example, were the boys in the class particularly dominating in the creative, critical process of shaping the text into a performance? Both Navigationalism and Rocklin’s (2005) approach to teaching Shakespeare, posit a need for all participants to share in the process of interpreting the text rather than have a dominant member—like a director, teacher, or perhaps dominant male figure(s)—control the conversation and hence the critical thinking. No class observations were performed, so one conclusion

might be that females in the class might not have participated to the full extent of the shared classroom experience, nor might gender have been a particular factor in the instructor's awareness of events unfolding in the classroom.

In fact, unlike the hypothesis and the research which indicated that Inferencing skills would be the area most affected through a performance-based approach to the teaching of Shakespeare, the greatest gain was evident in Evaluation. The *Delphi Report* (1990) which was the foundation to the California Critical Thinking Skills Test, determined the Evaluation component of critical thinking to mean: "To assess the credibility of statements or other representations which are accounts or descriptions of a person's perception, experience, situation, judgment, belief, or opinion; and to assess the logical strength of the actual or intend inferential relationships among statements, descriptions, questions or other forms of representation" (p. 19). In other words, the *Delphi Report* argues that Evaluation means determining the reliability of an argument, the extent to which certain evidence does or does not support a claim. The *Delphi Report* argues that such a critical thinking skill is necessary to decide between the relevance of any given argument and the likelihood of mere conjecturing.

With regard to Shakespeare in performance, this result regarding Inferencing intensifies the ongoing debate about what determines "performance." One possible interpretation is that students in the experimental group might have been more concerned with creating the most accurate portrayal of a perceived interpretation of Shakespeare than of trying to obtain or understand multiple perspectives of any given scene. Without observation, it is difficult to determine how much consensus was rewarded versus how

much the teacher supported an approach that embraced multiple meanings. Moreover, if there were dominating males present in the group, perhaps the greatest increase in Evaluation means that students overall were more guided in the process than what the literature says should have happened.

However, the numbers also indicate that perhaps a better understanding of how performance affects critical thinking ought to be considered, how the power of Deductive Reasoning, hypothesizing from the general to the specific, in combination with Evaluation, or the ability to discern needed information, is a stronger byproduct of student critical thinking skills when engaged in a performance process in part because of both the classroom setting as well as the age of the participants. Since there has been no quantitative study on how performing Shakespeare impacts critical thinking, perhaps re-examining the term “performance” is necessary to the overall instruction of the play since an emphasis on multiple interpretations of a scene may be too much for a student to manipulate given the other demands of understanding language; of how the whole construct of the play relates to the particulars of any given scene; of how one must make decisions to make the scene sound as logical as possible; especially when one has never encountered a Shakespeare play through performance before.

Finally, these results further underscore a need to redefine for other reasons what constitutes a performance-based approach to the teaching of Shakespeare since the multiplicity of responses to any given scenario was a limited outcome on the subscores regarding critical thinking as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test. Only one other category—Inductive Reasoning--was a lower gain for the control group

which would not have emphasized performance; the category was either a zero gain (when considering boys only) or actually negative when one considers the overall experimental group. Another consideration of the Inference category is to consider the age of the participants in general and whether from a cognitive and social/emotional perspective, students in the early high school years have the maturity to see such multiplicity in the text. In either scenario, clearly the Inference skill component of critical thinking as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test, is not the strongest outcome from studying Shakespeare from a performance-based perspective and a limited outcome from studying Shakespeare utilizing stand and deliver or 'seat-bound' methods.

Research Question Four

The fourth hypothesis had two components and asked to what effect gender, the only question answered by students on the pretest and posttest (even though some left it blank) of a personal nature, had on both the critical thinking skill overall as well as the specific Inferencing score. Due to the insufficient sample size of female responses, it was not possible to determine any compatibility between the groups based on female gender. It was, however, possible to do so with the males. Based on the first step in analyzing the data, there were not a sufficient number of respondents to compare the female gender between groups. The t test for the overall critical thinking score as indicated in the mean difference from pretest to posttest resulted in a t value of 5.013, thus determining a statistical significance (a p value at .000). This portion of the null hypothesis is rejected. Boys who experience a performance based approach to the learning of Shakespeare

overall score higher on the California Critical Thinking Skills Test than do boys who learned Shakespeare through traditional stand and deliver or 'seat-bound' methods. With regard to the specific score for Inferencing, this study accepts the null hypothesis since the t score is below 1.96 and there is no statistically significant reason to believe that studying Shakespeare through performance for boys would result in a higher level Inferencing score as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test.

The score for Inferencing for boys did increase nominally, unlike the zero gain for boys in the experimental group. Though already determined not to be a statistically viable comparison, the girls in the control group ($n=14$) increased their score .4 from 10.6 to 11, perhaps another indication that the boys in the experimental group might have been more dominating since girls in the control group successfully gained in this aspect of critical thinking as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test.

In addition, most of the literature on teaching Shakespeare through performance does not address issues of gender specifically. However, the literature (Kindlan & Thompson, 1999) does indicate on a qualitative basis how boys in particular become more engaged because of active learning that performance engenders. In general, there is much literature on how boys in particular do better with more active learning experiences. Of all the results from this study, this one in particular shows the largest difference between the two groups, a strong recommendation that for boys in particular, a performance-based approach to the learning of Shakespeare helps a student develop critical thinking skills as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test. There

is a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) for boys who learn Shakespeare through performance versus seat-bound methods.

Based upon the overall Inferencing score, however, it also points to the need for an instructor to ensure gender equity in the classroom for fear of gender intimidation or other issue that may not allow for females in the classroom to have the same opportunity to experience the skills through performance that might lead to a stronger overall score on the California Critical Thinking Skills Test.

Recommendations for Teaching

The history of teaching Shakespeare in America is replete with the constant dialogue of 'to perform' or 'not to perform, that is the question.' It is not a new debate. Though the literature points out specific barriers to the teaching of Shakespeare through performance, it also indicates substantial qualitative benefits to the classroom. There are also many workshops, institutes and publications to help teachers become practitioners of the performance-based approach. This study helps confirm the need espoused by advocates of quantitative data to address verifiable benefits for both studying Shakespeare in general and of studying Shakespeare through performance in particular.

The purpose for this study was to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference regarding gains in critical thinking as measured by the California Critical Thinking Skills Test between teaching Shakespeare at the secondary level utilizing performance-based or traditional seat-bound methods. This study found that there was a statistically significant difference, and as such, practitioners, administrators, parents, employers, the government, and all other interested parties in the discussion

regarding the need for a 21st century America that can employ critical thinking skills ought to take note as to the impact this approach has on the secondary English classroom. In addition, with an increased emphasis on standardized testing that evaluates student critical thinking; this study supports the performance-based methodology as affecting the outcomes of other assessments, like the ACT or SAT.

It is hoped that practitioners who already employ a performance-based approach to teaching Shakespeare would share their qualitative experiences with other instructors in order to encourage more participation. It is highly unlikely that those who do not utilize this approach will, through this study, suddenly decide to try a performance approach to *Midsummer Night's Dream*. However, as a defense against an administrator or school board or even parent who questions the time commitment, the theatrical process, or the interpersonal group demands of such an approach, this study offers a quantitative benefit that can be gained by those students who are exposed to this process, a gain that is not specific just to language arts, but to all academic, and indeed, all life skills: the ability to think critically.

In addition, this study confirms the need for boys in particular to be critically engaged in the classroom through the use of a performance-based method. Too often, teaching can and does overlook the impact gender has on a particular method of teaching. This study confirms that boys in particular had a statistically significant gain as an outcome of their participation with a performance-based approach to the teaching of Shakespeare. For those practitioners who hear of boys' dreaded expressions of futility in approaching the language of the Bard for fear perhaps that anything 'theatrical' is

antithetical to a masculine world, this study provides an encouraging tool to help boys become better engaged in the process of their learning.

Young Puck need no longer say, “If these shadows have offended/ think but this and all is mended/That you have but slumbered here/ while these visions did appear.”

Limitations

There were limitations to the study, including teacher preparation. To partially control for teacher preparation, this study relied on comparing National Board Certification status versus National Endowment for the Humanities grant recipient.

A second limitation was the size of the study with only ninety participants. The primary reason for limiting the number of students participating in the study was cost. Utilizing both a pre-test, post-test quasi-experimental design, it was necessary to complete one hundred and eighty measurements of critical thinking. Using the California Critical Thinking Test, even the on-line version, cost over two thousand dollars. Peggy O’Brien’s (1995) research did not focus on critical thinking. Instead, she measured attitudinal differences only.

A third limitation was the duration of the study at only four weeks. O’Brien (1995) did find a statistically significant difference among six questions relating to enthusiasm and appreciation of Shakespeare through performance between her two survey populations: those who learned Shakespeare traditionally and those who learned Shakespeare through performance. What O’Brien’s (1995) study did not account for was whether the enthusiasm and appreciation among students was for studying Shakespeare through performance, or merely change from the normal classroom routine. However,

student attitudes concerning their own ability to understand Shakespeare's language in the treatment group—those who learned Shakespeare through performance—resulted in a higher score than those who did not experience Shakespeare through performance (O'Brien, 1995). However, this study was double the duration of O'Brien's (1995) two-week unit, in part to help offset whether enthusiasm for performance was merely a variation from the normal classroom routine.

A fourth area of concern regarding limitations to the study is that Schrofel (1998) found that institutional academic policies of the school ironically precluded student achievement precisely because students were never allowed to be assessed for their understanding of Shakespeare in performance. This study further perpetuated this concern, even though it was not measuring achievement. The study did, however, not focus on the qualitative benefits of performing Shakespeare. Batho (1998) found that standardization by administration meant less choice in the selection of plays, that 85% of the respondents lamented that if assessment is only through writing, then teaching a Shakespeare text would be limiting. Some teachers are just unable to realize that "At its most basic, performance theory insists on the primacy of the stage; the Shakespeare text is not a poem to be interrogated for its themes" (Sauer, 1995, p. 35). Bevington (1999) found that he was unable to entice many of his students to come to additional class sessions that emphasized Shakespeare in performance, because such class sessions were not a requirement of the course. Those who did attend, though, found, "Temporarily stripped of the framework of a literary analysis, which tends to enforce the fictional environment of the characters and lets us understand them entirely within that world,

performance of these lines threw into stark relief the self-conscious process by which the play itself was working on its spectators” (p. 175). Batho (1998) found that resentment among teachers toward continued written examinations of Shakespeare rose from 70% to 90% over the course of three years.

A fifth area of limitation was the time of the study: the last four weeks of the year. Often students are preoccupied with the excitement of summer and busy with preparations for examinations. In cooperation with the instructors in this study, no formative assessment was attached with either the pre or post-test. In other words, students voluntarily gave their best efforts in taking the California Critical Thinking Skills Test. Internal threats of validity to participants in the study include the four week time span from the pretest to the posttest. Providing a posttest shortly before students dismiss for the summer can result in students not taking the posttest as seriously as one might hope. In addition, the students from the control group generally test higher than those in the experimental group, even though there is a year difference between the two. The students in the control group had previous access to on-line test forms than those students in the experimental group. As illustrated on the school report card, students in the control group generally perform in the top two percent of the nation based on the standardized ACT test whereas those students from the experimental group, according to the school report card from that state, generally score in the top fifteen percent of students based on a state standardized assessment not labeled specifically. The exposure to that method of assessment may have hindered some of the results since students were unable to mark the test as they were reading it, or return to a question if the student had been

given a paper multiple choice test. In addition, each individual teacher approached the reward for taking the test differently—the control group had candy bars to celebrate while the experimental group had a pizza party. In addition, the classrooms for both instructors were never visited nor were there observations performed as to test-taking environments. Finally, both compensatory rivalry and resentful demoralization might have occurred because the permission forms clearly indicated that one group would be receiving a performance-based approach to the teaching of Shakespeare while the other would not. The rivalry may also have been geographical. Remarkably, scores on the post-test did not indicate that students were overly preoccupied with these concerns.

A sixth limitation to the study includes the testing itself. Even though a different form of the test was used from the pretest, participants certainly were more aware of and hence more familiar with the style of the question which asked students to think critically about a particular scenario.

A final limitation to the study includes the difficulty of controlling for past exposure to Shakespeare instruction that each group received. In the control group, although they are freshman and have never had a Shakespeare unit at the high school level, many students had been introduced to Shakespeare through some highly competitive middle school and junior highs which often push students into early readings of high school material. The experimental group, according to the instructor, had read one Shakespeare play their freshman year and those prior instructors employed traditional stand and deliver approaches. According to the instructor for the experimental group,

prior exposure to Shakespeare would not have occurred at the middle school and/or junior high level.

Recommendations for Future Research

First, future research ought to include more instructors to help control for teacher variance. In other words, even though a specific methodology was employed, would several classes who employ the same methodology end up with the same result?

Secondly, Peggy O'Brien's (1995) landmark study had 670 participants as it surveyed attitudinal differences between those who experienced learning Shakespeare through performance and those who did not. With only 90 participants in this study, future research would do well to replicate the study with a larger population. It would also be beneficial to consider different types of classrooms since this study had such an unanticipated difference between the schools. Perhaps also diversifying the populations in terms of socio-economic status would also be fruitful for future researchers. Is this a method only for college preparatory environments, or would non-college bound students likewise benefit from this approach? And, although not the exclusive test on critical thinking, there is research to be done on more cost-effective means of measuring critical thinking skills that may not rely on the California Critical Thinking Skills Test.

Thirdly, in the future it will be necessary to compare these gains to another four week unit to determine the intensity of that increase in critical thinking. Would, for example, those who argue for more multicultural literature find solace in their argument that studying a non-Western text for four weeks resulted in a greater gain in critical thinking? O'Brien (1995) asked in her recommendations for future research whether

students were “really learning anything” by doing Shakespeare through performance. The study helps answer that question, but future research might also consider whether there is anything inherent within the play genre or a specific author that lends itself to the task of developing those critical thinking skills?

Fourthly, utilizing a mixed-method approach would be particularly helpful to future researchers so that students could be interviewed to develop how the qualitative components of their experience readily cross apply to those specific subset of critical thinking skills relating to, for example, Inferencing, to determine what factors might have led to an overall decrease in that score. Direct observation would also help a future researcher measure the behavior of boys in particular, and whether they were far more enthusiastic because of the performance-based approach. Certainly the results indicate that boys in particular benefited more in the experimental than in the control group.

Fifthly, a longitudinal study to help assess whether students retain those skills might also address the quality of the impact a performance-based approach might have. Since Shakespeare is the most taught author in the curriculum, it would be feasible to do a several-year compendium of scores for each unit of Shakespeare, charting growth from one year to the next, and not just relying on one four-week assessment at the end of the school year. In fact, replicating this study for groups who study Shakespeare at the beginning or the middle of the year might yield some interesting questions: Is the language of Shakespeare too difficult to overcome at the beginning of the year, when students, especially freshman, are just acclimating to high school life?

In addition, future research could examine just freshman who were never exposed to a Shakespeare play, to see if the preconceived notions of the Bard's language interferes with the performance approach. Studying just freshman or just seniors might also make a strong argument for compatibility between groups. One could also study how the maturity of the students may factor into the overall results, especially noting how other measurements for critical thinking might be more appropriately age-sensitive. Would a particularly challenging tool for measuring that critical thinking preclude non-college preparatory students from participating in the assessment?

Finally, it would be good in future research to triangulate some of these findings between qualitative and quantitative research and best practice in the classroom, to see if a performance-based approach might be a future prerequisite for determining such licensing as the National Board Certification, for helping to regulate student teacher training, or for helping to determine such language arts benchmarks that individual state standards require. A comprehensive study should be done on the barriers that teachers face in implementing this approach to see if licensing, regulations, and/or standards might actually be preventing teachers from utilizing this approach.

APPENDIX A
SAMPLE OF QUESTIONS FROM THE CALIFORNIA CRITICAL
THINKING SKILLS TEST

For Sample Items 1, 2 and 3, consider this information:

A scientific study compared two matched groups of college women. The women in both groups were presented with information about the benefits of a healthy diet and regular exercise. The women in one group were paired up with one another and encouraged to work as two-person teams to help each other stick with the recommended healthy regimen of smart eating and regular vigorous exercise. The women in the other group were encouraged to use the same recommended regimen, but they were also advised to work at it individually, rather than with a partner or teammate. After 50 days the physical health and the well-being of all the women in both groups were evaluated. On average the women in the first group (with teammates) showed a 26 point improvement in measures of cardiopulmonary capacity, body strength, body fat reduction, and sense of well-being. On average the women in the other group (encouraged to work as individuals) showed a 17 point improvement on those same measures. Using statistical analyses the researchers determined that the probability that a difference of this size had occurred by chance was less than one in 1000.

Sample Item 1. If true, these research findings would tend to support which of the following assertions?

- A = A college woman cannot achieve optimal health functioning without a teammate.
- B = Universities should require all students living in campus residence halls to participate in a health regime of smart eating and regular vigorous exercise.
- C = A healthy diet will cause one to have better mental health and physical strength.
- D = This research study was funded by a corporation that makes exercise apparel.
- E = A regimen of smart eating and regular exercise is related to better health.

Sample Item 2. If the information given in the case above were true, which of the following hypotheses would **not** need to be ruled out in order to confidently claim that for the majority of young adults a regimen of smart eating and regular vigorous exercise will result in significant improvements in one's overall health.

- A = This study was about women, the findings cannot be generalized to include men.
- B = Since the study began to solicit willing participants before the Research Ethics Review Committee of the college gave the research project its formal approval to gather data, the findings are invalid.
- C = Some women in the study over-reported their compliance with the eating and exercise regimen, which led the researchers to underestimate the full impact of the regimen.
- D = Since many of those studied described themselves as overweight or out of shape

when the study began, a similar regimen will not benefit people who are healthier to start with.

E = The measures of health and well-being used to evaluate the women students may not be appropriate for evaluating the health and well-being of male students.

Sample Item 3. Consider the claim, "Working with a teammate or partners on a health regimen is better than working individually." Which of the following additional pieces of information would **not** weaken that claim?

A = Most of the women in the group that was encouraged to work individually actually worked with friends and partners who were not part of the study.

B = Most of the pairings and teams created in the first group (with teammates) fell apart after a few days and the women in that group actually worked individually.

C = There was something about the women in the first group (with teammates) that the researchers overlooked, thus invalidating the intended matching of the two groups.

D = Men are more likely to work alone, so any recommendation that men find a teammate or partner to support them in sticking with the regimen will be ignored.

E = The study was undertaken when there were no exams or major projects due, thus the results about working with a teammate do not apply to more stressful times of the year.

Sample Item #4: Three graduate school friends, Anna, Barbara, and Carol, graduated successfully. Being in the same program, the three often worked as a team on group assignments. Anna earned the special recognition of "pass with distinction" when she graduated. Carol and Barbara, although receiving their degrees, did not earn this special honor. A fourth student in the same graduate program, Deirdre, often said that the graduate program was poorly designed and not difficult at all. Deirdre did not graduate, instead she was advised by the faculty to withdraw from the program because her work was below acceptable standards. Given this information only, it follows that

A = Carol and Barbara deserved to receive "pass with distinction" like Anna.

B = Barbara's work in the program was superior to Carol's.

C = Barbara was jealous of the academic success her friend, Anna, enjoyed.

D = Deirdre's work in the program was below the quality of Carol's work.

E = Anna, being successful, will decide to enroll in another advanced graduate program.

Sample Item #5: "I've heard many reasons why our nation should reduce its reliance on petroleum vehicle fuels. One is that relying on imported oil makes our economy dependent on the political whims of foreign rulers. Another is that other energy sources, like the possibility of hydrogen based fuels, are less harmful to the environment. And a third is that petroleum is not a renewable resource so when we've used it all up, it will be gone! But I don't think we're likely to use it all up for at least another fifty years. And by then we'll have invented new and better fuels and more

fuel-efficient vehicles too. So that argument doesn't worry me. And I don't really believe the stuff about how foreign leaders can force our nation to change its policies simply by decreasing their oil production. Oil companies like Exxon have made record profits precisely in those times when the supply of foreign oil was reduced. I don't see the big oil companies being very interested in policy change when the money is rolling in. And for another, our nation has demonstrated that it is willing to wage war rather than to permit foreign leaders to push us around. So this whole thing about how we have to reduce our reliance on petroleum based gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel is bogus." The speaker's reasoning is best evaluated as

- A = strong. It shows the arguments for reducing petroleum vehicle fuels are weak
- B = strong. The speaker is very clear about what he believes and why he believes it.
- C = weak. The speaker probably owns stock in Exxon or some other oil company.
- D = weak. The speaker ignored the environmental argument entirely.

Sample Item #6: Using the phone at her desk, Sylvia in Corporate Sales consistently generates a very steady \$1500 per hour in gross revenue for her firm. After all of her firm's costs have been subtracted, Sylvia's sales amount to \$100 in bottom line (net) profits every 15 minutes. At 10:00 a.m. one day the desk phone Sylvia uses to make her sales calls breaks. Without the phone Sylvia cannot make any sales. Assume that Sylvia's regular schedule is to begin making sales calls at 8:00 a.m. Assume she works the phone for four hours, takes a one hour lunch exactly at noon, and then returns promptly to her desk for four more hours of afternoon sales. Sylvia loves her work and the broken phone is keeping her from it. If necessary she will try to repair the phone herself. Which of the following options would be in the best interest of Sylvia's firm to remedy the broken phone problem?

- A = Use Ed's Phone Repair Shop down the street. Ed can replace Sylvia's phone by 10:30 a.m. Ed will charge the firm \$500.
- B = Assign Sylvia to a different project until her phone can be replaced with one from the firm's current inventory. Replacing the phone is handled by the night shift.
- C = Authorize Sylvia to buy a new phone during her lunch hour for \$75 knowing she can plug it in and have it working within a few minutes after she gets back to her desk at 1:00 p.m.
- D = Ask Sylvia to try to repair her phone herself. She will probably complete the repair by 2:00 p.m.; or maybe later.

APPENDIX B
HISTOGRAMS OF PRETEST AND POSTTEST RESULTS

Specifically, to test for the skill of Inferencing, a histogram was used to arrive at an overall mean for this subset of critical thinking skills. Figure 2 reveals a normal curved response to the questions relating specifically to Inferencing on the pre-test:

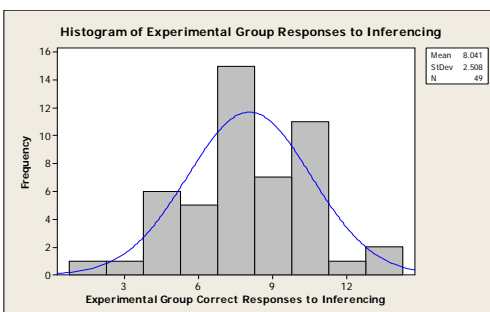


Figure 2. Histogram of Experimental Group Responses to Inferencing Pretest

The mean response is 8.041 to specific questions of Inferencing. Deducting those three scores for students who did not complete the posttest, the mean response is 7.889.

The same process was followed for determining the pretest results based on gender for the experimental group. The male response to the overall score of the pretest is 19.04 (n=24).

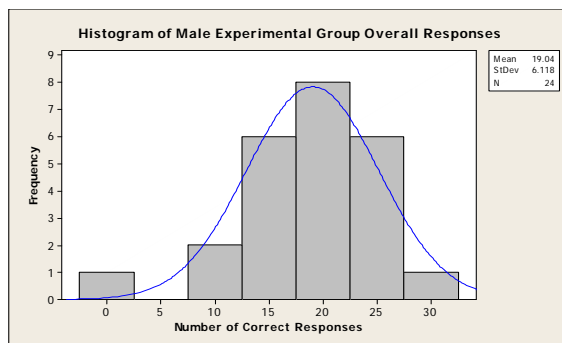


Figure 3. Histogram of Male Experimental Group Overall Responses Pretest

All 24 male respondents completed the posttest.

In addition, a normal curved response to the questions relating specifically to Inferencing from the males who were tested in the experimental group revealed an overall response (n=24) at 8.375.

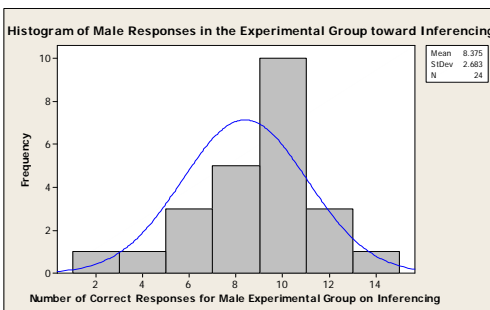


Figure 4. Histogram of Male Responses in the Experimental Group Toward Inferencing Pretest

The same process was followed for determining the pretest results based on gender for females in the experimental group. That particular response to the overall score of the pretest is 17.14 (n=22).

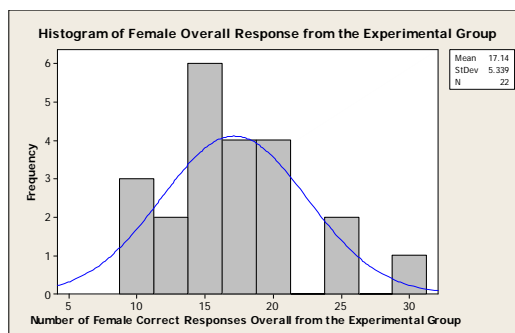


Figure 5. Histogram of Female Experimental Group Overall Responses Pretest

The overall female response (n=22) for the experimental group on Inferencing questions was 7.5.

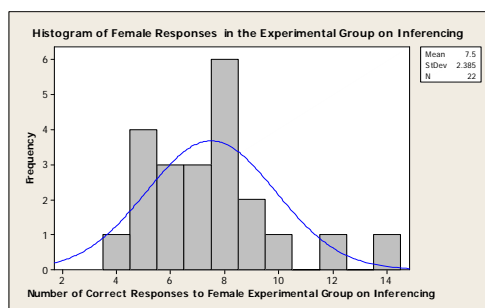


Figure 6. Histogram of Female Responses in the Experimental Group on Inferencing Pretest

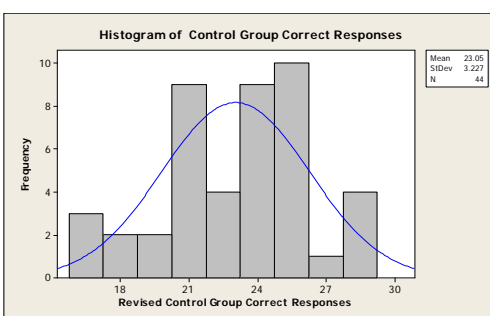


Figure 7. Histogram of Control Group Overall Correct Pretest Responses

The overall response for the Control group responses to specific question of Inferencing is 10.33.

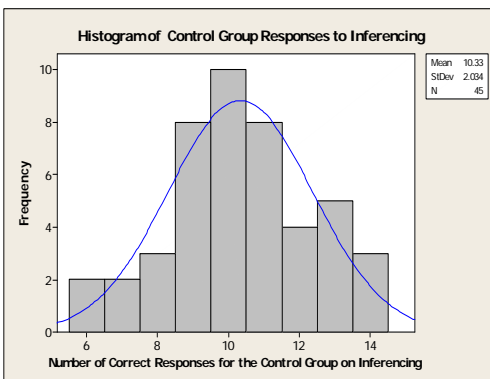


Figure 8. Histogram of Control Group Responses to Pretest Inferencing

The same process was used for determining the pretest results based on gender for the control group. The male response to the overall score of the pretest is 22.27 (n=26).

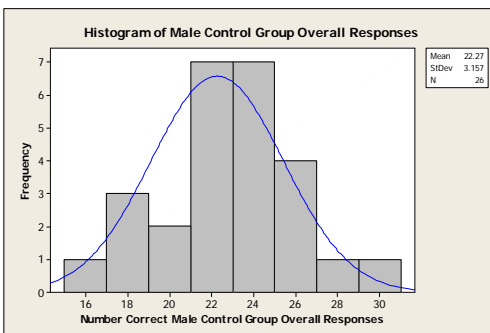


Figure 9. Histogram of Male Control Group Overall Pretest Responses

The pretest mean is 10.08 to help determine the validity of comparing pretest to posttest for questions relating specifically to Inferencing from the males who were tested in the control group (n=26):

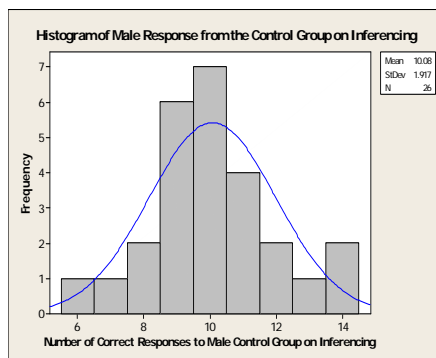


Figure 10. Histogram of Male Responses in the Control Group Toward Pretest Inferencing

The same information helps determine the pretest results based on gender for females in the experimental group. That particular response to the overall score of the pretest is 23.93 (n=14).

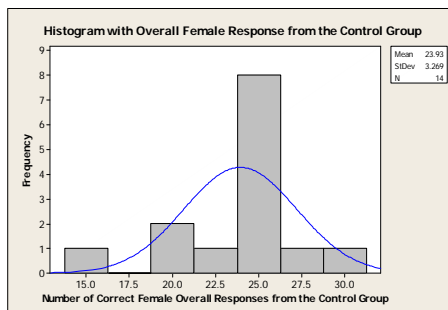


Figure 11. Histogram of Female Control Group Overall Pretest Responses

The overall female response (n=14) for the control group on Inferencing questions was 10.71.

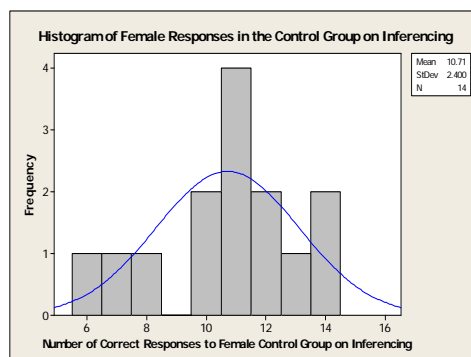


Figure 12. Histogram of Female Responses in the Control Group on Pretest Inferencing

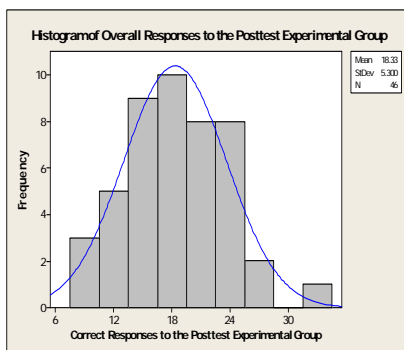


Figure 13. Histogram of Experimental Group Overall Pretest Responses

The mean response is 7.543 to specific questions of Inferencing.

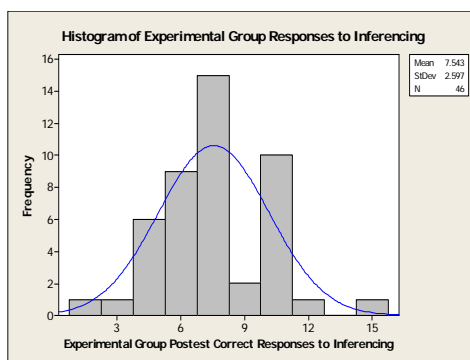


Figure 14. Histogram of Experimental Group Responses to Pretest Inferencing

The same process can show the posttest results based on male gender response for the experimental group. The male response to the overall score of the posttest is 20.13 (n=24).

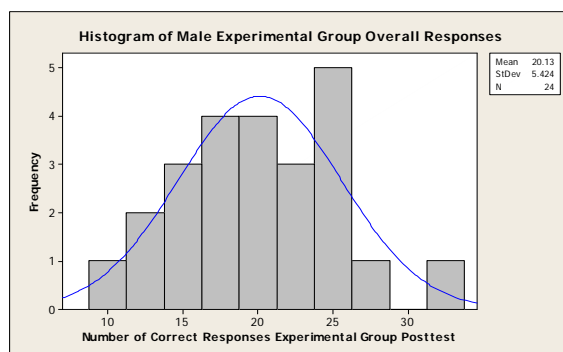


Figure 15. Histogram of Male Experimental Group Overall Posttest Responses

The overall male response ($n=24$) for the experimental group on Inferencing questions for the posttest was 8.375.

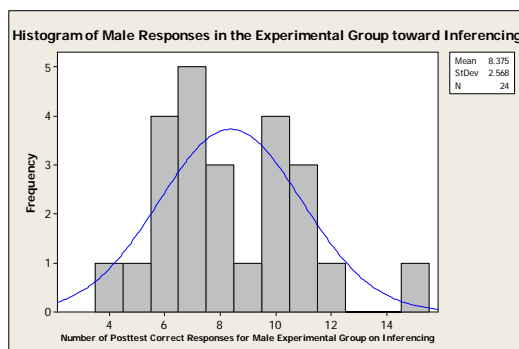


Figure 16. Histogram of Male Responses in the Experimental Group Toward Posttest Inferencing

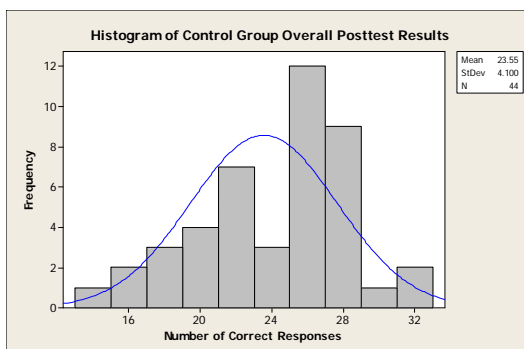


Figure 17. Histogram of Control Group Overall Posttest Responses

The mean response is 10.52 to specific questions of Inferencing.

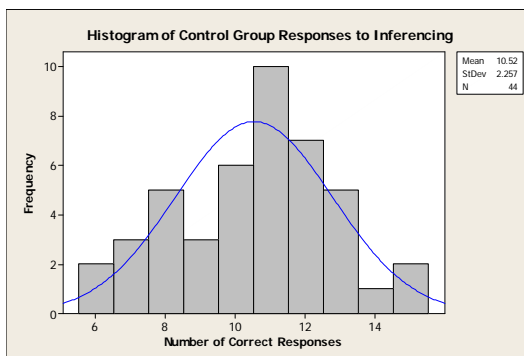


Figure 18. Histogram of Control Group Responses to Posttest Inferencing

The same process help determine the posttest results based on male gender response for the control group. The male response to the overall score of the posttest is 22.846 (n=26). The pretest (n=26) was 22.27.

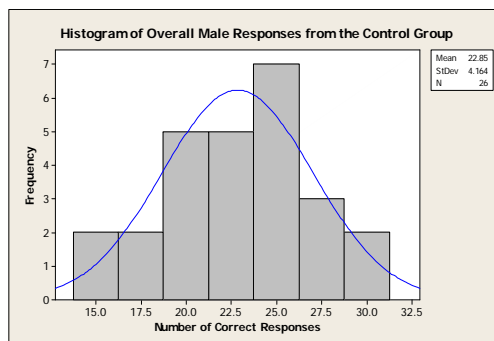


Figure 19. Histogram of Male Control Group Overall Posttest Responses

The overall male response (n=26) for the experimental group on Inferencing questions for the posttest was 10.15.

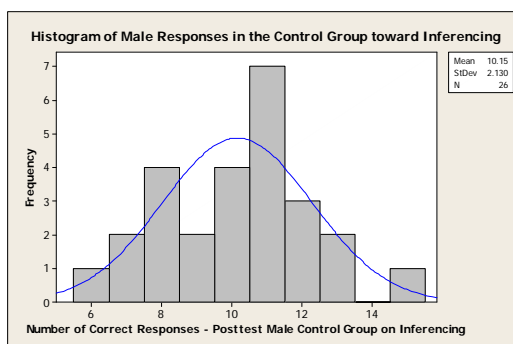


Figure 20. Histogram of Male Responses in the Control Group Responses Toward Posttest Inferencing

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VITA

Brent Strom attended both suburban and rural public schools in Ohio. He graduated from Judson College with a Bachelor of Arts double major in Secondary English Education and Political Science. He then spent some time working in Washington, DC before returning to Illinois to earn a Master of Education degree from the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. He specialized in the teaching of writing. He also earned a Master of Arts degree from the Bread Loaf School of English at Middlebury College, attending Lincoln College, Oxford, as part of his thesis on Shakespeare in Performance. Brent Strom was fortunate to work with the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Shakespeare Birthplace and Trust, as well as the Shakespeare Institute, all in Stratford, England. He has also earned a Master of Arts degree from Northeastern University in Educational Administration and received a Type 75 School Administrative Certificate.

Brent Strom has worked in the field of education for the past 17 years. He began his career as an instructor of rhetoric to university students and then as teacher of English, Social Studies, Speech, Debate, and Theater, to both public high school students and to students of all ages attending summer dramatic arts camps. In his many roles he has supervised student government organizations; been the Director of Forensics for a large suburban high school; led students on annual theater trips to Stratford, Canada; taught evening courses at a community college; and worked as a mentor for new teachers. He

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Brent Strom is recipient of both Fulbright (to study Japanese education) and National Endowment for the Humanities grants (to study Chicano and Native American cultures of the Southwest).

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