

**COLLABORATIVE DRAMATURGY FOR STUDENT ACTIVISM:  
ENGAGING AND CHALLENGING ADVANCED 9TH GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS  
STUDENTS IN THE AGE OF COMMON CORE**

By

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**Dissertation**

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*Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism: Engaging and Challenging Advanced 9th Grade Language Arts Students in the Age of Common Core* Hunt, Angela C. (PhD, Department of Theatre and Dance, University of Colorado at Boulder)

Dissertation directed by Dr. Beth Osnes, PhD

### **Abstract**

Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism is a pedagogical method with a special focus on secondary student populations. This strategy combines traditional dramaturgical practices with various applied theatre techniques such as Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) and educational concepts grounded in Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed. This dissertation details the use of this pedagogical method with advanced and Talented and Gifted students in advanced 9th grade classrooms in which Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* was used as the dramaturgical focus. The use of this method began with the script analysis conducted by the student dramaturgy teams and culminated with student performances and student-led educational outreach workshops which utilized Theatre of the Oppressed strategies. Research conclusions found that Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism challenges advanced and Talented and Gifted (TAG) 9<sup>th</sup> grade language arts students in mastering Common Core State Standards (CCSS) while engaging in relevant social issues in their community.

## **Dedication**

To Adam, William, Ethan, and Benjamin.

## Acknowledgements

Thanks to Adam, William, Ethan, and Ben for being so supportive. I'm glad that we will soon have a lot more time together!

Thanks to Mom for always encouraging us to set our sights high and to never give up, and to Dad who taught me to always do my best to make this world a better place.

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Thanks to Dr. Oliver Gerland for introducing me to dramaturgy and *14* and for supervising my initial work using Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism.

Thanks to Dr. Bud Coleman for being so supportive and willing to let me experiment during *14*.

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## PROLOGUE

*“Theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it.”*

-- Augusto Boal

*“Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself. Arriving at one goal is the starting point to another.”*

--John Dewey

*“The teacher is of course an artist, but being an artist does not mean that he or she can make the profile, can shape the students. What the educator does in teaching is to make it possible for the students to become themselves.”*

--Paulo Freire

*“The encouragement of wisdom requires a special kind of education. It requires first of all recognition of one’s own intellectual limits and fallibilities—in a word, humility. This is perhaps the most conspicuously missing part of today’s education of the gifted. Many high-IQ students, especially those who avoid serious science and math, go from kindergarten through an advanced degree without ever having a teacher who is dissatisfied with their best work and without ever taking a course that forces them to say to themselves, “I can’t do this.” Humility requires that the gifted learn what it feels like to hit an intellectual wall, just as all of their less talented peers do, and that can come only from a curriculum and pedagogy designed especially for them. That level of demand cannot fairly be imposed on a classroom that includes children who do not have the ability to respond. The gifted need to have some classes with each other not to be coddled, but because that is the only setting in which their feet can be held to the fire.”*

-- Charles Murray

\*\*\*

*The subject is four-years old, sitting with her baby sister in the big blue arm chair. She's reading to her, and she feels skilled, magical even. She loves sharing stories with her, but she wants her to be able to enjoy the stories when she's not around. She's only four-years old, but she makes it her goal to teach her baby sister how to read. She knows her sister can't speak yet, but she won't let that stop them. She knows it'll be worth it. After all, why should she have all the power? Everyone should be able to read. The subject writes this goal down in her diary, determined.*

\*\*\*

*The subject is six-years old, sitting at the small table shared with three other first graders. It's exciting to be learning with others outside of her family. It's her first year going to "real" school-- the school that the other neighborhood kids attend. It's writing time, and the teacher has given each of them lined paper to show their work. The girl thinks this is fabulous. She loves writing. It's so lovely to be able to write her own stories, she can't wait to share one of her stories with the nice teacher lady and the children at her table. The teacher walks by, looks down at the girl's work and asks what she's doing. I'm writing a story, she says. It's called The Magic Place. Would you like to read it? You're writing in cursive, the teacher responds. You don't know cursive until third grade, she warns. But why? the girl says. The teacher doesn't answer, and the subject never writes in cursive again.*

\*\*\*

*The subject is eight-years old, holding the recently created Mickey Mouse-themed poster advertising the importance of dental hygiene. She is thrilled that she thought to use her favorite Mickey Mouse keychain as a model for her contest poster. The subject knows that it isn't a perfect piece of art, but she is satisfied. In the subject's mind, it's good work, and it will serve its purpose. She is confident her poster will convince her classmates to use a toothbrush. She wins the third grade dental hygiene art contest, but joy quickly disappears when her teacher accuses her of cheating. When she shows her Mickey Mouse keychain which was used as a model, offering it as some sort of proof of her innocence, she is allowed to keep the prize. The subject does not keep her confidence.*

\*\*\*

*The subject is nine years old, sitting on the steps of the state capitol again with her mother and her younger siblings. We have to fight to retain our homeschooling rights, the mother says. You must always fight, or they'll take you and your siblings away and they'll put you in the educational system. The subject remembers the two, brief moments in the educational system, and she does NOT want to go back. She's glad her mother brought them to fight for their rights. This is a significant moment for the subject.*

\*\*\*

*The subject is thirteen, sitting in a desk during her first college lecture. It's a privilege to be here. The other students have made it clear that she's a strange sight to behold, but she really, really doesn't want to stand out--she just wants to learn, and she wants to please her teacher. She's afraid to let her teacher down, and she's afraid to let her mother down. After all her mother did to help her get where she is today, she can't let her down. How many points is the first test going to be worth? the subject wonders. The subject believes she has to prove that she can do this. According to the subject, numbers don't lie.*

\*\*\*

*The subject is a thirty-four year old female public school teacher, standing in front of her advanced 9th grade language arts class, reviewing what needs to be accomplished for that day. Her students sit in their desks, looking at her attentively, nervous that they might miss something important. Hands go up. Is that assignment formative or summative? they ask. Will we have retake opportunities? How many points is the first test going to be worth? They want to prove to the teacher that they can do it. They believe that numbers--that grades--define their worth. They believe that this teacher has the ability to determine the value of their worth.*

\*\*\*

*I am the subject.*

\*\*\*

Throughout my life, both as a student and a teacher, I have often found comfort in prescribed ways of doing things: Common Core standards that I must cover as a teacher, an outline that I must use as a student, even, perhaps, a specific way to conduct research as a doctoral student at CU. But comfort is not always best. When I first encountered Dr. Tricia M. Kress's Critical Praxis Research strategies through reading *Critical Praxis Research: Breathing New Life into Research Methods*, I was initially wary. The methodology of Critical Praxis Research encourages scholar-practitioners to:

liberate themselves and others by developing a heightened awareness of what it could mean to be human and free in a world that is currently riddled with inequality and contradictions. By understanding more thoroughly themselves and others as complex social actors, and tailoring their research endeavors to address the contexts in which they work and their purposes for doing research, scholar-practitioners, with their unique positioning as simultaneously oppressor (scholar) and oppressed (practitioner), can begin to conceptualize educational research as a humanizing activity (8).

I have never felt comfortable saying I'm going to liberate myself from the confines of whatever it is that is oppressing me. Yet, in my work as a teacher and a scholar, I have felt the pull toward activist work, and an undeniable belief that one of my purposes in life is to liberate others, and to help them use their intelligence and strength to make the world a better place, not only for those living now, but for those still to come. Using Critical Praxis Research, I have observed that my childhood background as a gifted student, the reality that I am the mother of an identified Talented and Gifted son, and my current position as an educator of Talented and Gifted youth places me in a unique position to identify and address social problems that may not be as apparent to others; I am motivated *and* able to "address the context" in which I work and live. This dissertation is the story of my journey addressing problems found among my Talented and Gifted students using a pedagogical method I developed and adapted for them, called Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism.

## Chapter One

### Introduction

#### Research Overview

Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism (CDSA) is a pedagogical method grounded in the philosophies of critical pedagogy utilizing traditional techniques of production dramaturgy, Theatre of the Oppressed, and Writer's Workshop. The method of Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism was developed by this researcher over the course of five years as a way to provide an environment and curriculum which engages and challenges advanced and Talented and Gifted (TAG) students in language arts classrooms which use the national Common Core standards. This study was designed to determine how Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism challenges advanced high school students in mastering these Common Core standards while also engaging them in relevant social issues in their community. The working thesis throughout this research project has been that Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism challenges advanced and Talented and Gifted 9<sup>th</sup> grade language arts students in mastering Common Core State Standards while engaging in relevant social issues in their community. Two central research questions and connected sub questions were used throughout:

*Central Research Question #1:* How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism help advanced and Talented and Gifted 9th grade students engage with relevant social issues?

*Connected Question #1A:* How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism help advanced and Talented and Gifted 9<sup>th</sup> grade language arts students become more aware of relevant social issues in their community?

*Connected Question #1B:* How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project help motivate advanced and Talented and Gifted 9<sup>th</sup> grade language arts students to try to make their community a more positive and inclusive place?

Connected Question #1C: How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism help advanced and Talented and Gifted 9<sup>th</sup> grade students believe they can make a positive difference in their community?

Connected Question #1D: Is my classroom a positive and inclusive environment during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project?

*Central Research Question #2:* How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism appropriately challenge advanced and Talented and Gifted 9<sup>th</sup> grade students and increase their confidence and skill levels related to the Common Core State Standards for Language Arts?

Connected Question #2 A: How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism appropriately challenge advanced and Talented and Gifted learners in terms of the Common Core speaking, listening, reading, research, and writing skills?

Connected Question #2 B: Do the Common Core tasks found in the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project challenge advanced and Talented and Gifted learners more than the tasks provided in other classes (present or past)?

Connected Question #2 C: How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project help advanced and Talented and Gifted students feel more confident in terms of speaking and listening, reading, research and writing Common Core skills?

Connected Research Question #2 D: Does advanced and Talented and Gifted student participation in the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism help them feel more confident that they will be able to effectively use their speaking and listening, reading, writing and research skills in the future?

Connected Research Question #2 E: Does participation in Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism help advanced and Talented and Gifted 9<sup>th</sup> grade students feel like they grew as readers and writers, researchers, speakers and listeners?

Connected Research Question #2 F: Do advanced and Talented and Gifted students enjoy the Common Core tasks required during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project?

The research was conducted at Mountain View High School (not the real school's name) in a mid-sized Rocky Mountain region university town during April and May of 2016 with 40 advanced or Talented and Gifted students. These students were chosen for the study because of their designation as advanced or Talented and Gifted learners and because they were enrolled in Mountain View High School's Pre-International Baccalaureate (PIB) Language Arts 9 course, which requires students to study and perform Shakespeare as their culminating unit of study. Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* was used during the study because it was agreed by the Mountain View High School's Language Arts Department 9th grade teaching team that all 9th



grade advanced students would be required to study and perform this play during this school year.

The curriculum sequence of Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism used during this study consisted of following: student dramaturgy teams made up of 4-6 students were asked to develop a hypothetical Shakespeare in the School program to address a specific social issue. The target audience for each team was advanced 9th graders at Mountain View High School. Along with completing “typical” dramaturgical tasks, students were required to complete research regarding their target audience and social issues that exist among that population. Using this data gathered from the target audience to determine the most relevant social issue, students adapted Shakespeare’s comedy, *Much Ado About Nothing*, into a twenty-minute school-performance-friendly version, and created an accompanying outreach program to address that specific social issue. Student dramaturgy teams conducted follow-up research to try to determine the effectiveness of their program. Students participated in final summative assessment activities and reflective work to determine if Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism appropriately challenged them while helping them improve in their Common Core Language Arts Standards skills, and allowed them to engage in relevant social issues within their community.

Because Critical Praxis Research strategies are used throughout this dissertation, I acknowledge that this work will be both political and personal, because a teacher’s worldview will always influence curriculum. Detailed descriptions of Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism in my classroom with advanced 9<sup>th</sup> grade students will be provided to demonstrate that Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism as a critical pedagogy method can effectively challenge advanced and Talented and Gifted students and can boost confidence levels in the Common Core language arts areas of speaking and listening, reading, and writing. This work

will also show that Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism provides opportunities for student empowerment as they become active citizens, engaging with relevant social issues, taking responsibility for building their future, and for transforming their society.

## Chapter One Overview

In this chapter, I discuss the origins of Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism, beginning with my work as a production dramaturg developing what I called Collaborative Dramaturgy for Social Activism during the University of Colorado-Boulder's production of John Cameron's *14*. I then provide a description of my initial attempts utilizing Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism during the 2014 and 2015 school years in regular-level secondary classroom environments, and my realization that I should reconsider my target audience for my research. The need for this study will be provided, as well as a list of commonly used terms and accompanying definitions and explanations.

## The Origins of Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism

### *Discovering Theatre of the Oppressed*

When I became a public school teacher, Paulo Freire's seminal text, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, always found a place on my bookshelf, my desk, or in my backpack. I'd heard the criticism of teachers living in affluent communities, applying Freire's words to a "privileged" population of students who do not "know" oppression. To them I would say, *You do not know my students*. Every student needs liberating, rich or poor. I did not feel accountable to these critics; I knew that my purpose—my reason for waking up each day— was to reach out to each and every student and help *free* them to become the intelligent and engaged citizens that exist within.

Richard Shaull summarizes much of my teaching philosophy in the “Foreword” to Paulo Freire’s text, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*:

There is no such thing as a neutral educational process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it or it becomes the “practice of freedom”—the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world (13-14).

It was a struggle to be a teacher within public school systems, especially coming from my homeschooled background where my mother did her very best to help me keep and foster my love of learning. I observed that many students had been trained by a system that forced them to conform, to be quiet, to receive irrelevant information only to spit it back out on multiple choice tests. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire frequently uses a “banking” concept of education to describe this, in which “students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor” (72). Rather than authentically communicating with students, the teacher “makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize and repeat” (Freire 72). I did not want to simply “deposit” information, but my students had been trained to be passive learners, unsure of what to do when a teacher provides freedom to question the world around them. It was during these first few years of teaching that I realized the power of using Boal’s *Theatre of the Oppressed* (TO) within the classroom.

I did not know that *Theatre of the Oppressed* existed until 2010, when I came across Boal’s text, which he named out of respect for Freire. Coming from a theatre background, Boal’s philosophies fit perfectly with what I had already been attempting to do within my

classroom. I read all of his work, and my students loved participating in activities such as Forum Theatre and Image Theatre. During my first experiences years ago using these strategies in my classroom, small but transformational steps were taking place. Boal's saying—*Theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it*—was placed above the whiteboard in our classroom. I loved what was happening in my classroom, but I knew I could be doing more. I would walk down the hallways of the school, and when I would peer into other classrooms, I would see the “deposit” after “deposit” occurring. I wondered, how can I use theatre as a *form of knowledge* to help teachers and students transform society and build their futures? How might I combine my professional fields of theatre and education to provide opportunities for young people to “deal critically and creatively” with their own “reality” while activating their desire to “participate in the transformation of their world” (Freire 15)?

### Developing Collaborative Dramaturgy for Social Activism

I grew up performing in the theatre, my undergraduate degree is in theatre, and yet, I must admit that I did not know much about dramaturgy before attending the University of Colorado-Boulder (CU). I never intended to study dramaturgy or to become a dramaturg. It was my interest in learning more about Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed and my desire to make public education classrooms better that first led to me to Dr. Beth Osnes' work and my acceptance into a doctoral studies theatre program at CU. During my first visit to campus, and during a chance conversation with Dr. Oliver Gerland, I learned that graduate students often serve as dramaturgs on university productions, and that CU would be presenting John Cameron's *14* in the fall.

John Cameron's play is set in the 70's on the campus of Brigham Young University, an LDS (Mormon) private university, and it explores electro-shock aversion therapy as a way to "cure" homosexuality and the tragedies that occur when this "method" is used. After reading the play, I knew I had to be the dramaturg on this production. I still didn't know what that would entail, but it seemed like fate. I read all the dramaturgy books I could lay my hands on, and I began to see that I dramaturg is a bit like a living, breathing Wikipedia related to the play. Well, no, that's not quite right. A dramaturg is more like a living Wikipedia that must interact effectively with all those on the production team, predicting what they might need before they need it, and being able to answer questions and dig deeper into research if the questions are tough to find.

I was also very interested to learn that many dramaturgs do work with audience outreach, seeking to find ways to connect the audience to the play production. It seemed that this interaction was often limited to a lobby display about topics related to the play, a program note written by the dramaturg, a discussion led by the dramaturg after the play performance, but it seemed like there were so many possibilities to more. I wondered how I could combine my belief in critical pedagogy to enhance my dramaturgical work? How could I avoid replicating Freire's "banking system" system of education during my dramaturgy practice?

The answer was to treat my dramaturgy work as I treated me work in the public school classroom: I needed to find ways to make sure that along with providing useful information to the production family (the cast, the production team, etc.) I was also providing opportunities for relevant engagement with the social issues. In Chapter Two I define a dramaturg-activist as "one who uses their work as a dramaturg to bring about social change," and this is what I hoped to do with *14*. I also wondered, how might dramaturgy become collaborative? Could the *14*

production family, and perhaps the local community, bond through collaborative dramaturgy tasks?

Dr. Bud Coleman, the director of *I4*, was incredibly supportive as I experimented with potential methods for collaborative dramaturgy for social activism. As the dramaturg on *I4*, every activity I developed was designed to provide my actors with ways to be active participants who each bring their individual knowledge and background to the stage (and the larger “stage” outside of the theatre). I knew I had done my job when my students/production team/cast members/audience began researching topics on their own, presented new ideas to those around them, and searched for solutions to problems that had been presented. I felt success when I could inspire others to become active and informed citizens who were engaged in the world around them. It was wonderful to see a production family work hard, not just for the glory of the limelight, but also because they understood that their work could matter, would matter, and could make the world a better place.

It was during this experience that I first used the term Collaborative Dramaturgy for Social Activism, and I won the dramaturgy award at our regional Kennedy Center for the American College Theatre Festival. I was invited to participate in the 2012 national LMDA/KCACTF student dramaturgy program in Washington D.C. and the 2012 American Theatre in Higher Education Dramaturgy Debut Panel, also held in D.C. When discussing Collaborative Dramaturgy for Social Activism with those unfamiliar with my work, I explained that it is a method the dramaturg-activist may use when seeking to promote collaborative opportunities among both the production family and the wider local community to address social issues illuminated by a particular theatre production and to encourage positive social change. These experiences in Washington, D.C. helped me to connect with five other early-career

dramaturgs (Wendy Fullmer Gourley, Austin Bolay, Anne Burke Flemming, Julia Chinock Howze, and Abby Robb) who have used various strategies to address social issues through their work, and we continue to ask each other how we might use dramaturgy for social change, or be dramaturg-activists in our communities.

### Modifying Collaborative Dramaturgy for Social Activism to Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism

In the summer of 2013, I was hired as a teacher in Mountain View High School's language arts department as a 9<sup>th</sup> grade teacher.

This hiring date came three years after the Colorado State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) which occurred in December of 2010 (Colorado Department of Education). Therefore, the Common Core Standards of Language Arts were used to guide curricular choices. The Common Core skills I was required to teach my students included those connected to speaking, listening, reading, and writing. As I began to plan units of study for the year, I reflected on my work using Collaborative Dramaturgy for Social Activism and the conversations that I continued to have with my fellow dramaturg-activists. It dawned on me that a modified version of Collaborative Dramaturgy for Social Activism adapted for a Common Core classroom might serve as the perfect pedagogical method which would cover required skills while also encouraging authentic learning experiences to help students engage with local community issues.

Major modifications of Collaborative Dramaturgy for *Social* Activism to Collaborative Dramaturgy for *Student* Activism included the following:

- The collaborative portion, in which the original *Social Activism* form consisted of the production team family and the larger community, now was revised for the *Student Activism* form to consist of a dramaturgy team of 4-6 students, and the dramaturgy team's target audience, which consisted of students also enrolled in the same class period.
- An emphasis on connecting dramaturg-activist activities to the Common Core was added to the *Student Activism* form.

### Using Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism in my Classroom

When I was growing up, education and politics always seemed tied together in some way. I remember my mother fighting our state's education system to help me and my siblings have what Henry Giroux calls the "conditions that expand the capacities of students to think critically and teach them how to take risks" and to "act in a socially responsible way" (6). My mother had repeated to me over and over again, "Fight for your rights, or they will be taken away." Was I willing to take my own risks to "act in a socially responsible way" and to provide my students with learning projects that would prepare them for the challenges they would face someday?

I was motivated to start the 2015-2016 school year being honest with myself and what I wanted to accomplish with my research. I would refuse to view my own students as mere subjects and I would embrace the philosophies and values that led me to teaching in the first place. I wanted to liberate myself and my advanced and Talented and Gifted students from the binds of perfectionism that I had witnessed in my classroom. I hoped that together, my students and I would embrace challenge and the beauty and necessity of failure on the road to growth.



As I started the initial phases of my research with the focus population of my advanced and Talented and Gifted students, I became aware of new focus problems to address during my research: I observed significant issues with perfectionism and fear of failure among my advanced and Talented and Gifted students. I also observed that these students were not being challenged or were not embracing challenges appropriate to their intellectual ability levels, often because of the fear of grades. With my original research questions and these new observed problems in mind, I prepared to start the 2015-2016 school year, with new students and new hope.

### Need for the Study

In this age of education accountability in the United States, advanced and Talented and Gifted students' needs are often overlooked because they tend to show advanced mastery of skills assessed on state and national standardized tests, and because their G.P.A.s also reflect high understanding of content material. Although findings based on quantitative data can be useful to all parties involved in the public school education process, this data should not be used as the only means of analysis regarding student need and risk.

As a public school teacher and applied theatre practitioner, I have taken Freire's and Boal's statements as a challenge to my own work. Indeed, how can I use theatre as a *form of knowledge* to help my students to transform society and build their futures? Common Core Standards are a reality that must be addressed in the classroom, but I wondered how might I combine my professional fields of theatre and education to provide opportunities for young people to "deal critically and creatively" with their own "reality" and activate their desire to "participate in the transformation of their world" (Freire 15)? The use of Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism within my advanced language arts classroom allows students a

“practice of freedom” as they take responsibility for building their future and transforming their society.

Research regarding student dramaturgy as a pedagogical strategy has focused almost entirely within the university environment. During this study, I explored the value of Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism with my advanced and Talented and Gifted students because I believe that using traditional techniques of dramaturgy and the ideals of dramaturg-activism and critical pedagogy could help create an ideal learning environment to help advanced and Talented and Gifted students master Common Core Standards of Language Arts and to engage with relevant social issues in a safe space.

Research related to the methods and strategies of using dramaturgy work for social activism consist mostly of accounts regarding the work of professional companies and some university theatre departments. I created Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism as a pedagogical strategy, so the research regarding this method is limited to my dramaturgy debut panel presentation at ATHE in 2012. There have been some cases where high school teachers have partnered with university programs to bring dramaturgy to the classroom (Richard Pettengill, Dawn Abt-Perkins, Shannon Buckley, and Katherine Babcock 2010), but none that I found where dramaturgy and Theatre of the Oppressed strategies are combined and used specifically within secondary classrooms to help students master Common Core Standards and engage with social issues.

There are many resources related to the use of Shakespeare’s work within the English/language arts classroom. The Folger Shakespeare Library’s *Shakespeare Set Free* program deserves to be noted. The Folger curriculum’s use of live performance, and its effectiveness as a pedagogical strategy, demonstrates that Shakespeare can indeed come to life

within the secondary environment. What I hope to show is that Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism can also help students effectively engage with Shakespeare's work, with a focus on dramaturgical rather than performance based methodologies.

What also makes my research original is the focus on Shakespeare and student activism solely within the secondary environment (without outside support from professional theatre companies). Several professional Shakespeare companies (for example, the Colorado Shakespeare Festival) are beginning to focus on Shakespearean performance and social activism, and I used their work as "mentor texts" within my classroom. A "mentor text" is a term commonly used within the English classroom to describe a work that exemplifies a specific writing strategy or skill. Within my classroom (especially when using collaborative dramaturgy for social activism) I expand the definition of this term to include director's concepts, dramaturgy outreach programs, etc. It is incredibly helpful for students to see what professional companies can do in terms of social justice outreach work. Because my research will examine Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism in terms of its pedagogical value within the secondary language arts classroom, I will be addressing an area of research that has not been specifically covered within both of my professional fields of theatre and education.

As more states adopt the Common Core Standards, there is a need for teachers to identify ways to help advanced and Talented and Gifted students reach mastery of these standards while also providing them with ways to engage with relevant social issues. In "Bridging the Gap 10 Years Later: A Tool and Technique to Analyze and Evaluate Advanced Academic Curricular Units," by Beasley, Briggs, and Pennington, which was published in *Gifted Child Today*, the authors argue that there is a "need for a shared vision concerning exemplary curricula for academically advanced learners must be a priority in the field of education," and "with the

advent of the Common Core State Standards adoption in many states, a new conversation has been ignited over meeting the needs of students with gifts and talents for whom the ‘standard’ curriculum is not a good fit.” I believe that Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism as a pedagogical method can serve as a tool which addresses the “advanced academic needs of students with gifts and talents.”

My research demonstrates the value of Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism in the advanced secondary language arts classroom, and I hope that this work may act as a resource for public school teachers and other practitioners interested in using this strategy not only to help challenge advanced and Talented and Gifted students as they complete state and federal requirements, but also to promote a high level of student social activism and engagement in local community issues.

### Definition and Explanation of Terms

Because I will be using a variety of terms throughout this dissertation, many of which are not common knowledge, this section will serve to provide my readers with a basic introduction to the vocabulary relevant to Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism.

#### *Dramaturgy*

According to Mark Bly, the former chair of the Dramaturgy and Playwriting program at Yale University, the art of dramaturgy often refers to the *aesthetic architecture* of a dramatic piece (structure, goals, themes, and conventions) and the *practical philosophy* of theatre practice employed to create a full performance. In a sense, “dramaturgy is the very blood coursing through the theatre company’s veins” (Chemers 3). The dramaturg traditionally completes the

following tasks during a typical dramaturgical process:

1. Determine what the aesthetic architecture of a piece of dramatic literature actually *is* (analysis)
2. Discover everything needed to transform the inert script into a living piece of theatre (research)
3. Apply that knowledge in a way that makes sense to a living audience at this time in this place (practical application)

The field of dramaturgy is constantly changing, and although most dramaturgs follow the steps of the dramaturgical process listed above, the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of America organization frequently uses their website to adjust their answer to the question, *What is a dramaturg?* This is their current working definition of the dramaturg:

Dramaturgs contextualize the world of a play; establish connections among the text, actors, and audience; offer opportunities for playwrights; generate projects and programs; and create conversations about plays in their communities. In the ecology of theatre-making, dramaturgs and literary managers forge a critical link between artists and institutions, and institutions and their communities. They work with their other artistic collaborators to hone their vision, focus their goals and find outlets for their creative work on new and classical plays and dance piece (“What is Dramaturgy?”).

The production dramaturg takes on many different roles during a theatre production, but the tasks can range from cutting or revising the performance script to developing pre-and post-production activities for the audience, such as talkbacks or educational outreach workshops.

*Dramaturg-Activist* - A dramaturg-activist is one who uses their work as a dramaturg to bring about social change.

*Dramaturgy Teams* - Dramaturgy teams consist of two or more students working together to complete traditional dramaturgical work

### *Theatre of the Oppressed*

Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) consists of interactive theatre forms developed by Brazilian theatre practitioner Augusto Boal, who was strongly influenced by critical pedagogue Paulo Freire. Theatre of the Oppressed serves as a “rehearsal theatre designed for people who want to learn ways of fighting back against oppression in their daily lives” (“Brecht Forum”). Although there are many different forms within Theatre of the Oppressed, the focus forms used during the research include the following:

#### *Forum Theatre*

This form begins with a scene or short play that presents an example of oppressive force(s) in action, ending with a lack of satisfactory resolution. A facilitator known as the “joker” invites audience members to become “spect-actors” who can replace the actors and can choose to change the scene. This activity allows audience members to rehearse how to take action in the “real world” to prevent or stop oppressive forces.

#### *Image Theatre*

Like Forum Theatre, Image Theatre invites spect-actors to participate, but

rather than presenting a prepared script, the spect-actors are asked to create a tableau of frozen poses to represent an oppressive situation. The audience is invited to reflect on the image, and the spect-actors may choose to develop transitional images which represent liberation from oppression, or perhaps other viewpoints connected to the focus issue.

### *Writing Workshop*

Writing Workshop, also known as Writer's Workshop, is a pedagogical method for the instruction of writing in which emphasizes having students write for specific purposes and audiences. Characteristics of Writing Workshop include offering a large amount of student choice, in terms of both writing topic and style, a teacher serving as a mentor to provide examples of writing techniques as well as one who conferences with the student writers, the use of mentor texts which serve as examples of various writing pieces, and frequent sharing of student work. Four principles to guide Writing Workshops was developed by Lucy Calkins and presented in her book, *A Guide to The Writing Workshop*:

- 1) Students will write about their own lives
- 2) They will use a consistent writing process
- 3) They will work in authentic ways
- 4) They will develop independence as writers

### *Student ePortfolio*

At the beginning of every school year I help my students build an ePortfolio (which stands for electronic portfolio), and I explain that they will be gathering pieces of "evidence" to demonstrate their growth and mastery of the Common Core State Standards for Language Arts.

Students can choose what artifacts of learning to include within their ePortfolio, but typical additions include written reflections, video footage of student presentations, polished writing pieces, photographs of annotation work, etc. Students refer to the body of evidence found in their ePortfolio when they attend their Grade Defense Meeting at the end of each semester.

### *Grade Defense Meeting*

Grade Defense Meetings are opportunities for me to sit down one-on-one with my students to reflect on their learning progress throughout the semester and to listen to their oral grade defense. In this defense, my students are asked to state their growth and mastery in the Common Core State Standards of Language Arts, and to refer to evidence within their ePortfolio to demonstrate this learning.

### *Talented and Gifted (TAG)*

According to Boulder Valley School District's policy IGBB-R which was adopted on September 27th, 2006, and the most recent revision occurring on September 7, 2016, talented and gifted (TAG) students are "defined as those from kindergarten through twelfth grade whose demonstrated or potential abilities are so outstanding that it becomes essential to provide them with qualitatively different educational programming."

### *Advanced Student*

A person who is studying at a higher level; a student who, because of qualifications obtained at a former place of study, is admitted to a more advanced course than normal ("Advanced Student").



### *Critical Pedagogy*

Critical pedagogy is a teaching approach which attempts to help students question and challenge posited "domination", and to undermine the beliefs and practices that are alleged to dominate. One of the central tenets of critical pedagogy, especially as it is outlined by education scholar Paulo Freire, is the establishment of classrooms in which teachers and students learn together. Critical pedagogy allows students to speak with greater authority because they are drawing on knowledge they already possess ("Critical Pedagogy"). Throughout this dissertation, I will be drawing upon Henry Giroux's view of critical pedagogy, which is provided below:

My view of critical pedagogy developed out of a recognition that education was important not only for gainful employment but also for creating the formative culture of beliefs, practices, and social relations that enable individuals to wield power, learn how to govern, and nurture a democratic society that takes equality, justice, shared values, and freedom seriously. I began to see how pedagogy is central to politics in that it is involved in the construction of critical agents and provides the formative culture that is indispensable to a democratic society (4).

### *Student Activism*

Student activism is work by students to cause political, environmental, economic, or social change which often focuses on schools and curriculum (Fletcher).

### *Critical Praxis Research*

Critical Praxis Research (CPR) is a teacher research methodology which applies the tenets of critical pedagogy to research. It is designed to bridge the divide between practitioner and scholar, drawing together many strands to explain the research process not just as something teacher researchers do, but as a fundamental part of who teacher researchers are. Emphasizing the researcher over the method, CPR embraces and amplifies the skills and passions teachers naturally bring to their research endeavors (“Critical Praxis Research”).

### *Common Core State Standards (CCSS)*

Common Core State Standards, commonly known as The Common Core or just Common Core, is a set of high-quality academic standards in mathematics and English language arts/literacy (ELA). These learning goals outline what a student should know and can do at the end of each grade. The standards were created to ensure that all students graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in college, career, and life, regardless of where they live. Forty-two states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) have voluntarily adopted and are moving forward with the Common Core (“About the Standards”).

### Chapter One Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the origins of Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism, and I detailed the failures of attempting to use this pedagogical method with a student population not served effectively by this work. I also detailed my renewed desire to embrace research as a humanizing activity, and my revised research goals to use Collaborative

Dramaturgy for Student Activism with a new target population of advanced and Talented and Gifted students. I explained the need for this study, and I also provided a list of terms and explanations for those terms that will be used frequently throughout Chapters Two through Five.

### Overview of Dissertation Chapters

In the next chapter, I will provide a review of relevant literature such as research connected dramaturgy, Theatre of the Oppressed, advanced and Talented and Gifted student populations, student engagement and activism, and the Common Core. In Chapter Three, I will provide a detailed description of the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism pedagogical sequence as used with my advanced and Talented and Gifted students during the 2016 study. Chapter Four will present the data collected through pre-and post-Likert questionnaires, student grade defense meetings, ePortfolios, and other classroom observations and student work. Chapter Five will include conclusions drawn from the data presented in Chapter 4, recommendations for future research, and a reflection on the research project as a whole.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### Chapter Overview

Because Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism (CDSA) is grounded in the philosophies and practices of critical pedagogy, I will begin my literature review discussing the seminal works of Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux, followed by relevant critical pedagogy research. Because of the strong connection between Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed*, I will next discuss some of Boal's texts that serve as a foundation for Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism. I will also discuss research regarding the use of Theatre of the Oppressed with youth and young adults. Next, I will explore research regarding the field of dramaturgy, such as collaborative dramaturgy, dramaturgy in educational settings, and dramaturgy as activism. I will also explore relevant research connected to playwriting and activism in educational settings with youth and young adults. Then, I will present a basic overview of the Writing Workshop or Writer's Workshop model, and related research, ending the section with an overview of research regarding the use of "mentor texts" in the classroom. Finally, my literature review will conclude with research connected to the Common Core State Standards, including topics related to language arts teachers and Talented and Gifted students.

#### Critical Pedagogy

##### *Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism and Freire's Influence*

Because my pedagogical approach to Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism is grounded in the educational philosophies of critical pedagogy, I will begin this literature review

with one of the foundational texts, Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, in which he first refers to traditional pedagogy as a "banking model" of education. In this approach, students are empty receptacles into which teachers deposit the required information, only to have that information regurgitated by students on quizzes and tests. Because of my personal background as a previous homeschooler, it was difficult at first for me as a new teacher to interact with students who had been trained by this "banking" system. It seemed like students preferred to be spoon-fed information rather than be challenged to seek out and discover subjects on their own. In my first few years of teaching in public schools, I almost wanted to force upon my students a desire to learn, and to force a love of learning. But intrinsic motivation cannot be forced.

This realization was solidified by this quote from Paulo Freire, found in the book, *We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change*, in which he states, "The teacher is of course an artist, but being an artist does not mean that he or she can make the profile, can shape the students. What the educator does in teaching is to make it possible for the students to become themselves (Horton and Freire). Much of my Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism has been inspired by these very words. Later on in my teaching career, when I moved from struggling learners in poverty-stricken classrooms of Appalachia to classes filled with Talented and Gifted and advanced students, I was struck by my observation that my students at Mountain View High School seemed to be even more strongly affected and motivated by the "banking" system of education." Most my students wanted know how many points every task was worth, and they wanted to know the exact answers for every question in case I might quiz them (some points) or give them an exam (which they viewed as *a lot* of points). I needed to move my students away from this extrinsic motivation of points. It was through Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism that I hoped to provide an opportunity for my

students to be challenged, and engaged, and to “become themselves” in a way that may not have been offered to them before in a public school learning environment.

### *Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism and Giroux’s Influence*

In his 1988 book, *Teachers as Intellectuals: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Learning*, the foreword of which was written by Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux calls for empowerment and transformation in American public schools, and he encourages teachers and other school personnel to understand the positive, political role they should play in this transformation. As I mentioned in Chapter One, my instinct is to avoid confrontation or conflict, and even the idea of liberation makes me nervous. When Giroux discusses the political role teachers can and should play, he acknowledges that for many, the political has a negative connotation. Henry Giroux has inspired me to break free from my own limits and bounds, to take my place next to other teachers who seek and will fight for positive transformation of our nation’s schools.

The text by Giroux’s that has played the most significant role as a motivating force in my life as a teacher-scholar is his 2011 *On Critical Pedagogy*. In this book, Giroux states that pedagogy should foster creative thinking and should be a “fundamentally political act” (40), and he calls for teacher-scholars to “work in their respective roles to develop pedagogical theories and methods that link self-reflection and understanding with a commitment to change the nature of larger society” (42). Indeed, I am attempting to do just that with my research using Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism. I believe that this pedagogical method I have developed does help students “link self-reflection and understanding with a commitment to change the nature of larger society.”

Another Giroux text that has strongly influenced Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism is his 2014, "When Schools Become Dead Zones of the Imagination: A Critical Pedagogy Manifesto," in which he discusses his view of the "active citizen." One of the purposes of Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism is to help students become "active citizens" who believe that they can transform their societies for the better. Encouraging my students to believe in themselves and helping to build their confidence levels was something that we (my students and me) reflected on throughout the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, even on the very last day of their class.

### *Other Relevant Critical Pedagogy Research*

In his 1993 book, *Raising Curtains on Education: Drama as a Site for Critical Pedagogy*, Clar Doyle argues that there is a vital connection between critical pedagogy and drama, and he suggests techniques and methods educators may use to help students engage with social issues and bring about positive change within themselves and the larger world around them. Like Doyle, I hope that my Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism can serve as a method of critical pedagogy that other educators can use in the future to help their own students engage with social issues while engaging with dramatic texts.

In her 2014 "The Critical Pedagogy of Mentoring," Kimberly Pyne explored Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR), which is a type of research method rooted in Freire's work on praxis-critical reflection and action which provides young people with the opportunity to identify social problems in their lives and then determine the best ways to address these problems. This article provides a comprehensive look at various YPAR projects conducted by

youth. Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism work is similar to YPAR since student dramaturgy teams conduct target audience research to determine the most relevant social problem and then they use dramaturgical research, performance, and outreach to address the chosen issue.

## Theatre of the Oppressed

### *Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism and Boal's Influence*

The influence of critical pedagogy is found in Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed (TO), and so it is to Boal's work that we now transition our discussion. During the creation and development of Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism (CDSA) four of Boal's texts were used. First, his seminal text, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, first published in 1973, inspired me seven years ago to begin practicing Theatre of the Oppressed strategies with my language arts, oral communications and theatre students. This text helped me question the relationship between actor and audience, similar to what I had previously done with teacher and student dynamics after reading Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. I became committed as a teacher and theatre artist to help audience members/ students interact and engage with drama, using Theatre of the Oppressed, to encourage them to identify social problems, propose solutions, and rehearse these solutions to become more prepared to serve as critical citizens.

Boal's *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, provided me with useful and practical information, especially in regards to the techniques of Image Theatre and Forum Theatre. Many of the games, exercises, and methods discussed in this text were integrated into the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism pedagogical sequence described in Chapter Three of this dissertation. *Rainbow of Desire: The Boal Method of Theatre and Therapy*, which is another



handbook of exercises developed by Boal, was incredibly useful when working with my students during my research, because many of them did not initially view themselves as oppressed. In their minds, oppressed people were those who were not allowed to go to school, or were homeless, or were not able to practice specific religions freely. Practicing these exercises allowed my students to identify internalized oppressions, and helped them to address identified social and emotional issues. Boal's later text, *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed*, published in 2006, helps readers to better understand the principles of Theatre of the Oppressed and the theoretical foundation of TO. I appreciated Boal's choice as a writer to use a mixture of essays, theory, descriptions of his experiences and personal stories within this book, and I used *Aesthetics of the Oppressed* as one of my "mentor texts" as I constructed this dissertation.

#### *Theatre of the Oppressed with Youth and Young Adults*

Michael Sanders' 2004 article "Urban Odyssey: Theatre of the Oppressed and Talented Minority Youth" details his pedagogical and theatrical project called Urban Odyssey, a free summer program for talented and gifted teenagers. As participants in this program, youth were given the opportunity to discuss and perform relevant social issues found in their community. Sanders' research has been of particular interest to me and my research using Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism because of the following reasons: 1) the participants were all identified as Talented and Gifted, 2) Sanders' describes how he used Boal's Forum Theatre with these youth, and 3) the participants were asked to identify and address relevant social issues found in their own lives and in their local community.

In 2005, Ryan Caitlein's dissertation research titled *Shaking Up Identity: Using Theatre of the Oppressed Techniques to Examine Cultural Identity and the Importance of Shakespeare in*

*a Secondary School* examined how high school students form their cultural identities when rehearsing and performing Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Theatre of the Oppressed techniques were used throughout the project to help students analyze their own identities and make connections to Shakespeare's work. I've included Caitlein's work in my literature review because his choice of first-person vignettes combined with some more traditional subchapters throughout his dissertation was intriguing, and I also used his dissertation as a "mentor text" for my own dissertation writing. His research is also relevant to my own because of his use of Theatre of the Oppressed with a Shakespeare project involving high school students, as well as his focus to help his students reshape Shakespeare's script to amplify their own identities.

Another relevant doctoral study is Dani Snyder's 2008 *The Rules that Rule their Worlds: Urban Youth Deconstruct their Antagonists through Theatre of the Oppressed*, in which she investigated how urban youth make sense of their relationships with authority, such as teachers, parents, and peers, when participating in Theatre of the Oppressed work. I was particularly interested in this study because of how Snyder helped her students examine and engage with self-oppressions and feelings of powerlessness and then encouraged them to find ways to create positive social change in their community.

Katelyn Sadler's 2010 "Art As Activism and Education: Creating Venues for Student Involvement and Social Justice Education Utilizing Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed," examines how Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) engages University of Arizona students in social justice dialogues. Students used TO as a form of activism, self-expression, and self-exploration to create a transformative experience for all participants. Similarities between Sadler's work and my own are found in the discussion of university learning outcomes in

connection to TO, since I encourage my student dramaturgy teams to use Theatre of the Oppressed strategies in dramaturgy educational outreach work.

In 2011, Toby Emert and Ellie Friedland's book, *Come Closer: Perspectives on Theatre of the Oppressed* was published. The authors provide first-person accounts regarding their practice of Theatre of the Oppressed using theoretical frameworks grounded in Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Also conducted in 2011 was Julianne Gale's dissertation research titled *youthink in Action: Transforming Homophobic School Culture through Participatory Action Research and Theatre of the Oppressed*. Gale's research describes her collaboration with a group of teenagers at the social justice organization youThink, in which they developed a theatrical performance designed to help teachers learn how to intervene when they are witness to homophobic bullying. Although the setting of Gale's research differs from my own, the goal to develop a theatrical performance utilizing Theatre of the Oppressed to address social problems found in the school environment mirrors some of my own research goals.

R.A. Belknap's 2013 "A Theater Intervention to Prevent Teen Dating Violence for Mexican-American Middle School Students" details the researcher's work with Youth Justice Coalition in Los Angeles, which seeks to connect and promote social activism through arts, such as interactive theatre using Theatre of the Oppressed techniques. The research focused on the collaboration with Free LA High School, in which a four-month introduction to Theatre of the Oppressed course was piloted. The study found that the learning environment using Theatre of the Oppressed helped to create a safe setting in which participants felt comfortable reflecting on the social issues found in their own lives and rehearsing ways to improve their community. Also published in 2013 was Dani Snyder-Young's book, *Theatre of Good Intentions: Challenges and Hopes for Theatre and Social Change*, which examines why achieving positive social change can

be hard, and details what she believes theatre can and can't do to improve social problems. Although she does critique theatre's weaknesses, the overall tone of the book is positive and encouraging, and the included case studies helped me to think more strategically about my own work using Theatre of the Oppressed with Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism in the classroom environment.

In 2014, an article written by Dr. Beth Osnes and me, titled "Solar-Powered Shadow Puppetry in a High School Science Classroom 'Illuminates' a Navajo Student Energy Forum" was published by *Applied Theatre Research*. Our article detailed our experience using solar power-illuminated shadow puppets in a modified version of Forum Theatre to actively engaging Navajo students in understanding the applicability and relevance of alternative energy in their lives and their communities. The relevance of this 2014 study to my dissertation research using Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism is found both in the use of Forum Theatre within the high school setting, but also in the way both projects seek to satisfy academic standards through the theatrical activities. For example, the work on the 2014 study attempted to make strong connections to the National Science Education Standards for scientific literacy, whereas my current research explores the use of Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism to help students master Common Core Standards in Language Arts. It was in preparation for our 2014 outreach project in New Mexico that first helped me to see connections between Theatre of the Oppressed work in the classroom and state and nationally mandated education standards.

A decade after Michael Sanders' 2004 research using Theatre of the Oppressed with Talented and Gifted youth, Foram Bhukhanwala's "Theater of the Oppressed in an After-School Program: Middle School Students' Perspectives on Bullying and Prevention," returned Theatre of the Oppressed research focus to the gifted youth population. The school's gifted services

coordinator and school counselors assisted the researcher in choosing study participants who would be served by engaging with social issues through Theatre of the Oppressed in an after-school theatre club. Students reflected on their experiences as gifted students who were bullied, and were able to rehearse actions to take when witnessing bullying or when being bullied.

In 2016, several studies were published focusing on Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) and the exploration of student and teacher dynamics. In Beth Powers and Peter Duffy's "Making Invisible Intersectionality Visible through Theater of the Oppressed in Teacher Education," student and teacher identities found within classrooms were discussed and embodied using TO forms, and the importance of student and teacher agency was realized. Through this practice, future teachers would be more prepared to recognize and engage with their future students' diverse identities. Urmitapa Dutta's "The 'Messiness' of Teaching/Learning Social (in) Justice: Performing a Pedagogy of Discomfort," explores power relations in a classroom, and through Theatre of the Oppressed, allowed participants to engage with metaphorical classroom spaces that are difficult and discomfiting, leading to visions of a more inclusive classroom. Both of these articles are of interest to my own work because of the ways they address student and teacher power dynamics.

## Dramaturgy

### *Dramaturgy as Activism*

A. J. Hartley's concluding arguments found in his 2005 book, *The Shakespearean Dramaturg: A Theoretical and Practical Guide*, are of relevance to my work because he encourages his readers to realize that "the dramaturg can serve as an advocate for various causes

at various stages in the process and to a broad array of people,” and that “the dramaturg can function as a species of advocate concerns contemporary issues to which the theatre can lend its voice as a tool for a general betterment of the culture at large (209). Hartley also cites Mark Bly, writing that dramaturgs are in a position to influence the kind of social, political and moral questions that are presented on our stages” (209).

In 2012, the Dramaturgy Focus Group Debut Panel at the American Theatre in Higher Education Conference focused on the connections between dramaturgy and social justice activism. I discussed my work on the University of Colorado Boulder’s production of *I4* in a speech titled “Dramaturgy for Activism: Community Engagement and *I4*, by John Cameron.” My fellow Kennedy Center for the American College Theatre Festival (KCATCF) dramaturgy finalist, Wendy Gourley presented on her activism work completed at Utah Valley University in a speech titled “A Distance from Normal: Sarah Ruhl’s *Eurydice* and The Dear Eurydice Project,” and Milbre Burch presented on her work at the University of Missouri in a speech titled “Justice Served: Dramaturgy as Midwifery for Susan Glaspell’s *Trifles*.” The purpose of the Dramaturgy Focus Debut Panel is to spotlight “outstanding and potentially influential dramaturgy by emerging artists in professional and/or academic theatre,” and my 2012 panel demonstrated recognition and value of dramaturgical work for community engagement and activism.

Of particular interest is Colorado Shakespeare Festival’s (CSF) Theatre in the Schools program, which has used several Shakespeare plays to address social issues relevant to students. For example, the 2011 program used Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* to address bullying, and the 2013 program used Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* to address issues of violence. During my pilot work in 2014 and 2015 developing Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism in my own

classroom, as well as during the official study which took place in 2016, my student dramaturgy teams used news articles and video clips related to these programs to learn how dramaturgs may act as activists. Students were able to model much of the student dramaturgy “outreach” work using CSF performance and outreach programs as an inspiration, or what my students and I liked to call, dramaturg-activist mentor texts. When being interviewed about Colorado Shakespeare Festival’s anti-bullying tour, which was in its fifth year at the time, Colorado Shakespeare Festival literary manager Amanda Giguere explained that they wanted to “expose young people to the power of Shakespeare's language and the magic of a live performance,” but they also wanted to “teach students how they can take an active role in intervening in bullying” (Bounds). Colorado Shakespeare Festival’s work has been incredibly useful for helping my students to see the amazing possibilities for using Shakespeare and theatre to address relevant social issues with young people. Seeing CSF take Shakespeare’s work and adapt it for a target audience of young people, such as their abridged version *The Taming of the Shrew* in which was set in modern times and included “current music and cellphones worked in to Shakespeare’s dialogue,” has taught my students useful strategies and techniques to use with their own target audience (Bounds).

Helen Zdriluk’s 2016 “Facebooked: ‘Romeo and Juliet’ as Educational Theatre: An Improbable Fiction?” which was published in the *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, is a case study particularly interesting to me because her project involved college students developing a performance and outreach presentation using Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* to address issues of digital citizenship, and the target audience for the performance and workshop was eighth grade students. The development of the presentation and outreach work involved a single, collaborative team of seven students, and

much of the case study detailed the process these students went through to develop the final presentation for their target audience, such as brainstorming a focus social issue and ways that Shakespeare's script could be adapted for the target audience by modernizing the script and using interactive technology throughout the presentation. Zdriluk's study also makes connections between the student team's work and students' growth in terms of critical thinking and citizenship.

### *Collaborative Dramaturgy and Education*

In 2003, John Kendall Wilson explored the subject of dramaturgy teams in his article, "A team approach to dramaturgy at Cornish College of the Arts," which was published in *Theatre Topics*. "Wilson discusses the dramaturgical process behind a production of Christa Winsloe's play "Children in Uniform" at Cornish College in 1998. Five members of the faculty and one student collaborated as a dramaturgy team on the show. A brief synopsis of the play is given. The division of research areas among the members of the team are detailed.

In 2009, Robyn Quick's "Collaborative Dramaturgy: A Case Study of Expanded Access to Twenty-First-Century Pedagogy," examines how dramaturgy within an educational setting creates an ideal leaving venue for pursuing many of the goals that the Association of American Colleges and Universities' National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) have articulated as central to a twenty-first-century college education (113). Quick argues that the analytical skills required of the dramaturg's interaction with a script, as well as the questioning spirit that a dramaturg must bring to every part of the production process fulfills LEAP's requirements. The manner in which a dramaturg applies cultural, theatrical and historical information to the practical needs of a production, offers evidence of integrative



thinking. Quick also explains that according to LEAP, pedagogical strategies in higher education should be active, hands-on, collaborative, and inquiry-based forms of teaching and learning, and Quick explains that dramaturgy, as a project-centered and collaborative activity again provides an answer to this LEAP recommendation (113).

In Quick's Theatre Arts Department at Towson University, she explains that they have expanded the dramaturgical learning opportunities for students by employing teams of student dramaturgs to work on our departmental productions, and that "this work actively engages groups of students in critical thinking and integrative learning through projects that rely upon the kind of collaborative work they will need to employ as citizens and workers in the twenty-first century." This program was so popular with their university students that the department created a special course which the students ended up nicknaming "The Dramaturgy Club", where an entire class of students worked on a semester theatre production (115). Students completed individual research and wrote research papers which were used in dramaturgy casebooks, and this information was shared with the rest of the dramaturgy students and the production team. Student dramaturgy teams also developed program notes, lobby displays, audience activities, and other outreach programs.

Quick explains that much of the critical thinking challenges involving this project related to students being needing to consider "not only the kind of information to present, but also the most appropriate manner in which to present it" (118), and that students needed to analyze how their work would shape "the attitudes and expectations of audience members as they enter the theatre and how it might help them reflect upon those experiences as they leave" (119). Quick believes that it is especially in the outreach work that student dramaturgs are challenged to "use

their academic skills in relation to real-world situations and to engage in thinking and learning that comes from sharing their research in the public sphere” (119).

Richard Pettengill, Dawn Abt-Perkins, Shannon Buckley, and Katherine Babcock’s 2010 “Teaching Difficult Dramatic Texts: A Collaborative Inquiry Using Dramaturgy,” which appeared in the *English Journal*, details a study which included a preservice teacher, a theatre professor, an English professor (and former dramaturg), and several secondary English teachers who all came together to determine whether the use of dramaturgy strategies could motivate students to study a challenging text. High school students were given the opportunity to act as assistants to “real” production dramaturgs for Sean O’Casey’s *The Plough and the Stars*. They argued that “students became more active readers of this difficult text because of the authentic context for interpretation: the college production of the play” (65). In the conclusion of the article, they stated: “We can imagine little else that would motivate spring semester seniors more than working with college students on a live, local production, with the students leading the interpretive process in the role of dramaturgs” (69). This article is significant to my work because research regarding dramaturgy in the secondary English classroom has been extremely limited, and it was wonderful to see that dramaturgy strategies have indeed worked for other teachers and students, not just in the college environment, but in secondary English classrooms as well.

In 2011, Nancy Kindelan, argued for the place of theatre studies within liberal arts education and the college level in her article, “Theatre Studies as a Practical Liberal Education.” Within this text, she defends the value of theatre studies by drawing on dramaturgical activities which, she states, help “undergraduate students think critically, creatively, and practically about how dramatic literature illuminates past and present-day social concerns” (“Theatre Studies” 48-

54). I also seek to demonstrate that dramaturgical work “illuminates past and present-day social concerns”, but my focus is within the secondary learning environment.

### *Playwriting and Activism in Educational Settings*

In 2010, Tessa Carr’s *Keeping the Revolution Alive: Theatre for Social Change in the Classroom: Auburn Professor Uses Volunteer Work to Link Civic Engagement*, describes how Introduction to Theatre class students at Auburn University addressed relevant social issues in a beginner playwriting and performance project. Through background research, students created several performances that explored issues ranging from eating disorders to the loss of family members. The purpose of this instructional project included: 1) promoting student engagement in social issues, 2) teaching basic components of playwriting, 3) showing how theatre can be used for social change.

Jennifer McKenna’s 2014 “Creating Community Theatre for Social Change,” which was published in *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, describes a group of theatre students who collaborated as a class to develop a performance that addressed issues of hate and intolerance that was found in their homogenous community, which raised awareness among participants and the town. Mary Buckley-Marudas and Joshua Block’s 2015 “Putting Research on the Stage: Playwriting in the English Classroom,” shows how playwriting can be used in a tenth-grade classroom as an alternative to the traditional research paper. Students were asked to select a human rights issue to research, and then students developed a performance piece based on this research. Student performances helped bring awareness to these human rights issues and encouraged audience members to become actively engaged in seeking and enacting solutions to the focus problems.

## Writing Workshop

The Writing Workshop model has been developed and influenced by teacher-scholars such as Lucy Calkins, Ralph Fletcher, Donald Graves, and Nancy Atwell, in which the following structural characteristics exist in the classroom:

- Has a time-based structure
- “Norms” are present
- An “opening” is present within the model to help students review learning targets/goals, as well as the “need to know” for the workshop day
- A mini-lesson provides students with the *what* and *how* for the work day
- Student choice is important
- Work time where students work individually and collaboratively (reading, writing, discussing), as well as offering time for the teacher to confer with students
- Everyone can “share out”

In *Best Practice: Bringing Standards to Life in America’s Classrooms*, Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde explain that the workshop model recognizes that kids need less telling and more showing how, more modeling from teachers, and more time doing literacy or science or history, and less time hearing what these endeavors look like. Even the term *workshop* harks back to the ancient crafts-place, where not only real projects are made, but a master craftsman coached apprentices (46). I have spent several summers being trained by the Colorado Writing Project to use Writing Workshop with my students, and throughout my Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism research, the Writing Workshop model is used as a structure to

help organize student dramaturgy teams and their various writing tasks. Research regarding Writing Workshop and the use of mentor texts will be discussed in this section.

In his 2010 article titled “In Teachers and Students We Trust: Real Education Reform is a Writer’s Workshop,” Lane Barry argues that when we, as teachers, “write with our students and share our failures, we teach them that it is acceptable to fail and learn from that failure.” He explains that we must “learn to trust in ourselves as writers who fail and succeed,” and then we can “simultaneously learn to trust in students’ ability to make choices,” and writing can become a “tool for discovery and learning.” He argues that educational reformers can learn a lot from teachers who use Writer’s Workshop, because they would see classrooms where “teacher and student choice” is the norm, and “ideas flow freely.” He encourages teachers and educational reformers to see that “student success” should be a “common goal that grows out of repeated failure and support, not a benchmark of perfection used to keep schools continually failing.”

### Mentor Texts

In her 2007 article, “Writing Workshop Meets Critical Literacy: Using Magazines and Movies as Mentor Texts,” Emily Skinner discusses an after-school writing/popular culture club in a middle school that looked at popular culture through a critical lens and then reflected on this work. By focusing on one specific student during the case study, Skinner shows how using popular culture as mentor texts can help students develop critical thinking and overall writing skills.

In his 2011 book, *Write Like This: Teaching Real-World Writing through Modeling & Mentor Texts*, Kelly Gallagher explains how he can use modeling and mentor texts to help his high school English students improve their writing skills. He encourages his fellow teachers to

help students become good writers by reading good writing, so that students can find “mentors” within this texts to emulate in their own work.

In her 2012 article, “Social Justice Literature and Writing: The Case for Widening our Mentor Texts,” which was published in *Language Arts*, Emily Smith Buster makes the argument for using diverse mentor texts, and how students, when viewing these texts as young, critical scholars, can begin to analyze and understand social constructs. She also makes the argument that, by referring to her students as scholars, the students are empowered, which helps them to build confidence to become active citizens today and in the future.

## Common Core

### *Using the Common Core as a Secondary Language Arts Teacher*

Many articles and books have been written to help secondary language arts teachers design effective lessons aligned with the Common Core Standards, such as Giouroukakis and Connolly’s 2012 *Getting to the Core of English Language Arts Grades 6-12: How to Meet the Common Core Standards with Lessons from the Classroom*, and Ryan, Freeze, and Kendall’s 2012 book, *Common Core Standards for High School English Language Arts*. Also in 2012, Beach, Thein, and Webb’s book, *Teaching to Exceed the English Language Arts Common Core Standards: A Literacy Practices Approach for 6-12 Classrooms* takes this work a step further by also adding a discussion about critical literacies and ways to implement the standards using a critical perspective to challenge students and prepare them to become engaged citizens.

One of the most useful texts related to using the Common Core as a language arts teacher is Jim Burke’s 2013 *The Common Core Companion: The Standards Decoded, Grades 9-12: What They Say, What They Mean, How to Teach Them* which helps “unpack” these standards

for teachers. Lasisi Ajayi's 2016 article, "High School Teachers' Perspectives on English Language Arts Common Core Standards: An Exploratory Study," details practicing teachers' perspectives using the Common Core in their language arts classrooms, and highlights the need for more professional development and curricular material resources to help teachers continue to use the Common Core effectively. Many teachers expressed that they did not feel prepared to teach using the language arts Common Core, but they also felt that the skills described in the Common Core are relevant for the students and their futures.

### *Common Core with Gifted and Advanced Learners*

In her 2012 article, "Gifted Education and the Common Core State Standards," Susan K. Johnsen argues that educators need to "increase their self-awareness of ethical and moral professional decisions and actions" when implementing the standards with their gifted and advanced learners.

Joyce VanTassell-Baska's 2013 book, *Using the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts with Gifted and Advanced Learners*, provides teachers with strategies and examples for how to implement the Common Core State Standards with gifted and advanced learners in elementary and secondary classroom environments. This text is relevant to my own research because it focuses on how to use the standards to provide meaningful and challenging learning experiences for this population of students.

In her 2014 article, "Performance-Based Assessment: The Road to Authentic Learning for the Gifted," Joyce VanTassel-Baska argues that "performance-based assessment clearly represents an indispensable approach for assessing gifted student learning," and that "challenging performance tasks allow gifted learners to reveal their considerable intellectual capacity and

energy.” Then in 2015, with her article, “Common Core Standards for Students with Gifts and Talents,” VanTassel-Baska explains that because many states have adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), “teachers can look to these standards as a framework for supporting students with gifts and talents,” and that “differentiation of curriculum and instruction to address CCSS” is “necessary to meet the unique learning needs of learners with high ability and those with gifts and talents.” Also in 2015, Van-Tassel Baska continues her discussion of the Common Core State Standards with her article, “Arguments for and Against the Common Core Standards,” which was published by *Gifted Child Today*. As the title states, she does provide pros and cons of the Common Core, but what is most interesting is that she makes the claim that these standards “may offer a way to transform education in the classroom,” so that gifted and advanced learners are “able to fulfill their learning potential.”

### *Challenging Advanced Learners*

In the 2015 article, “Experiences of High-Ability High School Students: A Case Study,” which was published in the *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, Schmitt and Goebel present a case study following three identified Talented and Gifted high school seniors, in which the following question was used: “To what extent do 12th-grade high-ability students feel that their past educational experiences, particularly in high school, have challenged their academic abilities?” They explain that although “much research has been conducted in the field of gifted education about the identification, social and emotional characteristics, and educational needs of gifted students,” there is “little research” focuses “on how students themselves feel about the rigor and value of their educational experiences.”



In his 2016 article, “School Reform and Gifted Learners: Getting Battered by the Waves of Change,” Steve Haberman argues that the needs of Talented and Gifted and advanced learners are often overlooked, and that many of the “best practices” being implemented in many school districts “may inadvertently have an impact” on gifted learners. He also makes the argument that because of “accountability-heavy reforms,” many teachers and administrators are “reluctant to focus on gifted learners” and to use “recommended practices” for gifted learners, even when these “practices are research-based” for advanced students.

### *Common Core and Social Justice in the Classroom*

A.G. Dover’s 2016 article, “Teaching for Social Justice and the Common Core: Justice Oriented Curriculum for Language Arts and Literacy,” describes a qualitative study of twenty-four secondary language arts teachers who focus on social justice within their Common Core curriculum. This study found that there is potential for using a social justice curriculum in a Common Core classroom, and that these activities may help students improve in their critical thinking and higher order thinking skills.

### *Common Core and Creativity in the Classroom*

In his 2012 book, *A Creative Approach to the Common Core Standards: The Da Vinci Curriculum*, Harry Chaucer describes the Da Vinci Curriculum, which challenges educators to develop lessons plans and unit projects which can embrace the Common Core State Standards and cultivate genius. Chaucer provides multiple examples from real high school classrooms

where students are challenged and engaged while also harnessing imagination and finding joy in their work.

In her 2014 article, “Theatre is the Common Core,” published by the Theatre Communications Group, Teresa Eyring argues that “the skills of a dramaturg could almost be a blueprint for Common Core Literacy—researching cultural and historical information, analyzing context and so on,” and that “teaching students to think in this way is a powerful and efficient means of not only aligning with the Common Core but revealing that theatre *is* the Common Core” (8). I also agree that traditional dramaturgical work can serve as a “blueprint for Common Core,” and with Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism, students will also can engage with relevant social issues and serve as active citizens in their community.

## Chapter Two Summary

In this chapter, I presented research relevant to my pedagogical method of Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism. I demonstrated that Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism is grounded in the philosophies and practices of critical pedagogy, and has been strongly influenced by the seminal works of Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux. I also discussed how the foundation of Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism is Augusto Boal’s *Theatre of the Oppressed*, and reviewed research regarding the use of Theatre of the Oppressed with youth and young adults.

I explored research regarding the field of dramaturgy, such as collaborative dramaturgy, dramaturgy in educational settings, and dramaturgy as activism. I also explored relevant research connected to playwriting and activism in educational settings with youth and young adults. I presented a basic overview of the Writing Workshop or Writer’s Workshop model, and related

the research, ending the section with an overview of research regarding the use of “mentor texts” in the classroom. Finally, my literature review concluded with research connected to the Common Core State Standards, including topics related to language arts teachers, Talented and Gifted students, and theatre *as* the Common Core.

In Chapter Three, I will present a detailed description of Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism as used with advanced and Talented and Gifted 9<sup>th</sup> grade language arts students within my own classroom.

## Chapter Three

### Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism in My Classroom

#### Introduction

Chapter Three details my use of the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism (CDSA) curriculum sequence, and how the CDSA steps can help Talented and Gifted (TAG) and advanced students satisfy Common Core skill mastery in reading, writing, research, speaking and listening, can provide appropriate intellectual challenges, and can provide opportunities for students to engage with relevant social issues. In this introduction, I will first provide an overview of the research site and the study participants, then I will discuss the pre-CDSA sequence work conducted with my students, including the evolution of my central research questions. This will be followed by a detailed description of the CDSA curriculum sequence steps which serves as the foundation for the chapter and this research project as a whole.

#### *Project Background*

As previously noted, the script used for the CDSA sequence was Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. This text was chosen because advanced 9th grade students are required to study the play in the culminating unit of their advanced 9th grade language arts studies. The play is part of the high school literary canon, not only at Mountain View High School, but at many other secondary schools around the country. *Much Ado About Nothing* also lends itself well to a case study of social issues. Finally, when Colorado Shakespeare Festival (C.S.F.) announced that *Much Ado About Nothing* would be included as part of the summer 2015 season, it solidified my (and my department's) decision that *Much Ado About Nothing* would be a fabulous text to use

during the 2015-2016 school year. Pre-IB students (also known as advanced students) are required to complete summer reading tasks, and we were able to request that they view C.S.F.'s production of *Much Ado About Nothing* before starting the school year.

This research project began after students had completed most of an initial unit of study (including many formative tasks) connected to Shakespeare and *Much Ado About Nothing*. As discussed in Chapter Two, much research has been conducted by other scholars and teaching artists on best practices for teaching Shakespeare in the classroom. Therefore, my own research study does not detail the formative work completed by students, but rather focuses on the final summative project in which students became (or attempted to become) dramaturg-activists through participation in the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project

### *The Research Site*

The Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism research study took place during mid-April through the end of May 2016 (and the end of the 2015-2016 school year). Both the preliminary studies, which took place during the spring of 2014 and the spring of 2015, and my dissertation study occurred at Mountain View High School (not the school's actual name) in a mid-sized Rocky Mountain region university town. Although Mountain View High School has a significant population of students who are identified as Talented and Gifted, there are no classes designated solely for those students. Rather, Mountain View High offers a wide-range of advanced programs, including Advanced Placement (A.P.) and International Baccalaureate classes. For students identified as Talented and Gifted or advanced who are currently in 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade, a Pre-International Baccalaureate (PIB) program of study is available. I have taught in

this program for five years, and it is common for half or more of my students to be identified as Talented and Gifted.

Teachers in the Language Arts Department at Mountain View High School work on “teacher teams” which help teachers collaborative on curriculum and assessments. Typically there is an agreement among the teacher teams on texts used in the class, scheduling curriculum activities, and formative and summative assessments used with students. During the 2015-2016 school year, I worked on a teacher team with three other teachers, and all of these teachers, as well as my department chairs, school administrators and district supervisors, were aware of my plan to use Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism within my classroom, even though they would not be using this pedagogical sequence with their own students. However, it was necessary that I conform my curriculum choices to the team expectations regarding formative and summative assessments. Basic agreements included that all students of team teachers would be expected to read and annotate *Much Ado About Nothing*, and that students should participate in a summative activity that would require a presentation or performance connected to *Much Ado About Nothing*. Aside from these basic agreements, I was given complete freedom from my teacher team, my department chairs, and my administration to experiment with Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism within my classroom as long as I made sure to address the Common Core Standards throughout the project.

### *Student Participants*

The participant population consisted of advanced or identified Talented and Gifted students enrolled in the Pre- International Baccalaureate (PIB) 9th grade language arts program at Mountain View High School. Although Mountain View High School has a significant

population of students who are identified as Talented and Gifted, there are no classes designated solely for those students. Rather, Mountain View High offers a wide-range of advanced classes, such as the PIB language arts program. My student study participants were drawn from across three different PIB language arts 9<sup>th</sup> grade class periods which I taught during the 2015-216 school year.

My research using Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism in my own classroom was granted approval by the University of Colorado Boulder's Internal Review Board, and by the public school district, and only students whose parents signed the release for research participation are included as research subjects. Initially, 77 students were given permission slips and were invited to participate, and out of the 77, 40 students (with parent permission) agreed to participate. Based on Internal Review Board guidelines, I was not aware of who had consented to the study, and I did not know who, out of the 77 students, agreed to the study until final grades were submitted by me to Mountain View High School. This helped to make sure that certain students were not judged negatively or favorably by me in terms of their grades because of their participation in my study. Students who chose to participate gave signed permission slips to Dr. Sarah Zerwin, who also teaches at Mountain View High School and who kept these protected in her office until the end of the semester. Once the semester concluded, Dr. Zerwin gave me the permission slips to me and I was able to begin the process of data analysis.

From the pool of 40 student participants, I chose 15 focus students to represent the range of my student population found within my classroom. These students were chosen based on their pre and post Likert survey responses. In order to protect the identities of these students, only pseudonyms will be used. I intend for my inclusion of focus student responses and observations to help provide my readers with a more detailed experience of Collaborative Dramaturgy for

Student Activism within my classroom. An introduction to each of these focus students before the CDSA project is provided below:

Tom:

He is unusual because he is willing to admit in front of his classmates that he does struggle in some areas of the language arts and he does have things to learn. He also has been open about the fact that he gets lazy, especially when it comes to revising his own writing. He really enjoys collaborative work with his peers, and before the CDSA project expressed on several occasions his desire to address gender and class issues at Mountain View High School. He is identified as Talented and Gifted, but has never openly discussed this in front of his classmates. He is not concerned about his grades, but has been pushed by his parents to care about his scores so that he can attend an Ivy League school someday.

Patricia:

She has always shown a desire to improve her skills in language arts, not because of grades, but because she enjoys learning. She is quiet compared to the other students in her class period, and has been open about her difficulties speaking up in small groups and in front of the class. Because of her own shyness, she has told me that she is very aware of those around her who may also be shy or afraid to interact with others at school, and when given the opportunity, she tries to invite others to join her at lunch or work groups. She knows what it's like to feel uncomfortable in social settings, and wants to help others feel more comfortable. She has an interest in addressing gender and LGBTQI issues at Mountain View



High School.

Sarah:

She loves performing and enjoys any opportunity to practice her acting skills at school. She is eager to take on new challenges, especially when it's something brand new, like dramaturgy. She enjoys socializing, but she finds it hard to collaborate with her peers on class projects. However, she views collaborative projects as excellent opportunities to work on her collaboration skills, and she stated that she needs more collaboration tasks to help her improve and advance in terms of the Common Core Speaking and Listening skills.

Janice:

She tends to be quiet during class, but has opened up about her desire to do something about the gender, race, and sexuality issues she has observed at Mountain View High School. She has stated that she feels confident in all of the Common Core Language Arts skills, but does not feel confident in her ability to really cause positive social change within her peer group or among the larger student population at Mountain View High School.

Becky:

She has admitted that she feels very shy and almost scared when she is asked by a teacher to collaborate with her peers, and she finds it incredibly difficult to jump in during small group or whole class discussions. She is very aware of what she calls "slut shaming" at Mountain View High School, as well as what she considers to be a very unhealthy preoccupation with people's reputations.

Kaden:

He has expressed an interest in creative writing and enjoys any opportunities to challenge himself in any areas of the arts. He is not afraid to let others know when he is excited or happy about new learning opportunities. He does not feel like he is aware or engaged in social issues in his community. He is identified as a Talented and Gifted student but has stated that he does not feel like an advanced student and knows there are many Common Core areas where he can improve in his skill level.

John:

He has a great sense of humor and loves to have fun—in fact, he seems to use the word “fun” daily, such as when he says, “I hope that will be fun,” or “that sounds fun,” or “I thought that was a lot of fun.” He doesn’t take himself too seriously and he likes to remind his classmates to do the same. He enjoys taking on leadership roles, especially if he gets to be in front of the whole class. He seems to have the most “fun” when he is collaborating with his peers on group projects. He has expressed a desire to address issues at school related to popularity and grade shaming.

Glenda:

She tends to remark that she already knows how to do everything in language arts class, and often states that she has been doing language arts tasks since “Elementary school” and wishes that she were challenged. She is very vocal about her Talented and Gifted label and how she is incredibly advanced and therefore

cannot be challenged. She is also very interested in addressing gender issues and stereotyping based on gender at Mountain View High School.

Danny:

He feels very confident as a student of language arts, and has expressed that he has not been challenged in language arts compared to his other courses at Mountain View High School. He has explained that he does not feel engaged in community issues and is not aware of social issues at Mountain View High School.

Faith:

Throughout the entire 2015-2016 school year, she has shown that she has a strong interest in social justice issues and has seems genuinely interested in finding opportunities to make a difference in her community, but she can be shy when it comes to speaking to others. She has admitted that she struggles to use technology and wants to improve those skills.

Helen:

She has stated that she usually does not feel challenged in language arts, but has felt like there is room to grow as a writer. She has explained that she is aware of various social issues, but doesn't know how to actually address these issues. She feels like she is powerless when it comes to making her community a better place, but would like to gain the skills necessary to make a difference.

Robert:

He is very concerned about grades and he has explained that this focus on grades may actually interfere with his learning and growth. He gets very anxious when

asked to work with others because he is afraid that he will get a bad grade because of another student. He feels like he is advanced when it comes to the Common Core Standards of Language Arts, but he does have a desire to grow as a writer. He also is motivated to learn how to make a difference in his community.

Lucy:

She strongly identifies as a Talented and Gifted student and is vocal about the fact that she is advanced and seems to believe that it is impossible to challenge her appropriately. She has discussed how she has been active in Gay-Straight Alliance groups, and is motivated to make a difference in her community.

Alan:

He is very interested in educating others about environmental issues—especially climate change. He does not have a lot of interest on studying things which he feels is unrelated to his primary interest. He tends to believe that he already knows everything connected to language arts, and has a hard time understanding why he should study language arts in the first place. He would much rather be in a science classroom than a language arts classroom.

Elizabeth:

She is very confident in ability as an advanced language arts student, and does not believe that she can be challenged in language arts. She is vocal about how she doesn't believe the language arts curriculum can help her improve her academic skills. She is very motivated to address social issues within her community, and has been open about her desire to do so, as well as the difficulties she has faced in

her attempts to make her community a better place. Past experiences have caused her to lose faith in her ability to make a positive difference.

### The CDSA Curriculum Sequence Overview

Student dramaturgy teams made up of 4-6 students were asked to develop a hypothetical Shakespeare in the School program to address a specific social issue. The target audience for each dramaturgy team consisted of fellow students. Along with completing traditional dramaturgical tasks, students completed research regarding their target audience and social issues that exist among that population.

Using research data gathered from the target audience to determine the most relevant social issue, student dramaturgy teams adapted *Much Ado About Nothing* into twenty-minute school-performance-friendly versions, and created accompanying outreach programs to address specific social issue which utilized Theatre of the Oppressed techniques. Student dramaturgy teams conducted follow-up research to determine the effectiveness of their program. Students participated in final summative assessment activities and reflective tasks to determine if their work as dramaturg-activists using collaborative dramaturgy for social activism was effective in terms of their dramaturgy team goals and their individual goals as advanced learners. The final challenge for the student dramaturg-activists was to work individually during a two-hour period to develop their own dramaturg-activist plan for *Much Ado About Nothing*. This task challenged them to demonstrate their Common Core skills and their ability to engage with an individually chosen social issue.

Chapter 3 will follow the CDSA sequence, interspersed with classroom moments connected to the actual research process. I will present all of this information chronologically as it

occurred during the project, and when the activity is not directly connected to the CDSA sequence, I will write that it is a Pre-CDSA task or activity. I've provided the CDSA curriculum sequence steps, and a rough guideline of class time needed to complete each of the steps below if other teachers used the CDSA sequence:

Step One: Introduction to Dramaturgy (1-2 days)

Step Two: Dramaturgy Team Orientation (1-2 weeks)

Step Three: Dramaturgy Team Interviews (1-2 days)

Step Four: Back to the Script: Dramaturgical Close Reading (1-2 weeks)

Step Five: Dramaturg to Dramaturg-Activist (1-2 weeks)

Step Six: Performance and Outreach Planning and Implementation (2-3 weeks)

Step Seven: Individual Dramaturg-Activist Challenge (1-2 days)

For each CDSA sequence, I will describe, in detail, what occurs during the sequence, and I will also provide examples of student work/ student responses from my 40 student participants regarding the CDSA curriculum sequence tasks.

### **Pre-CDSA Task: Introducing the Research Project to My Student Participants**

Prior to the implementation of the CDSA curriculum sequence in my classroom, my students participated in several discussions and Likert questionnaires which helped us to gain insights into their current confidence and skill levels related to the Common Core reading, writing, speaking, and listening language arts skills as their background and feelings on social activism in their community. It was during this period that I explained my philosophies as a teacher and my belief in critical pedagogy. I asked students to think about their experiences during this school year using mentor texts, and I explained that as part of this project, I would

serve as their research mentor in their journey becoming researchers who use theatre to positively impact their own community. I explained that I like to call these researchers ‘dramaturg-activists’. I introduced them to Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism by discussing my work on CU’s production of *14*, by providing examples of Colorado Shakespeare Festival’s (CSF) outreach work, and by having them discuss their observations from viewing CSF’s *Much Ado About Nothing* over the summer. I explained how I believed their participation in CDSA project could provide challenging intellectual opportunities that would address the majority of the Common Core State Standards of Language Arts.

Several of my students wanted me to provide a unit overview with a description of how many points would be applied to each task. Although my students had been working under a portfolio based assessment system tied to the Common Core State Standards during the entire school year, I had a few students who could not break away from the “banking system” mentality that I would tell them what to think or do, they would think or do those things, and in return I would provide them with what they viewed as valuable points in Infinite Campus, our school districts online grade management system. I reminded them that we would still be working under the ePortfolio based system in which they could choose to include, or not include, artifacts from the CDSA project to serve as evidence of their learning and growth. I also reminded them that although I would not be granting specific points for the various tasks within the project, I predicted that much of their dramaturgy work would serve as excellent evidence which they could refer to during their grade defense meeting with me at the end of the year. I also let them know that I hoped this project would encourage and motivate them to identify and address relevant social issues in their Mountain View High School community.

Pre-CDSA Activity #1: Evolution of the Central Research Questions, *or yes, I'm aware that you are advanced or Talented and Gifted Students*

As part of the pre-CDSA work completed to prepare my students to take part in my research project, I spent a class period discussing the purpose of research and the importance of developing the right research questions with my students. Because I wanted my students to practice being researchers during this project, and because they were already familiar with the philosophies of “mentor texts” and “writer’s workshops” from curriculum units using these pedagogical strategies throughout the year prior to the CDSA project, I chose to serve as a “mentor” for their research work. In order to accomplish this, I needed to demonstrate how I conduct research, starting with the development of research questions. In Chapter One, I presented my central research questions; however, these were the revised versions, developed through some through a pre-CDSA discussion with my students that I will describe below. The original central research question #1 was: *How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism help students engage with relevant social issues?*

My students were shown this question, and were asked to reflect on whether they thought this question was sufficient for the work I hoped to achieve during my research. One student stated that the “help students engage with relevant social issues makes sense because it’s easy to see how it’s tied to critical pedagogy, but you aren’t being very specific what kind of student you are working with.” Another student responded that perhaps I should “write high school student rather than just student.”

As the conversation continued, several students brought up that all of them should be considered advanced students because they are enrolled in a PIB class instead of the “dumbed down” course. This student was correct in that all PIB classes are considered the advanced level,



but I reminded them that there are no “dumbed down” courses at Mountain View High School, just different ways of presenting the curriculum, and for some students, an accelerated course that emphasizes literary analysis is best. It was decided that the research question should reflect the advanced standing of the students in the course, and the question was revised to: How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism help *advanced high school* students engage with relevant social issues?

My students still felt that the question could be revised to better describe the study participants. One of my quieter students raised her hand and said that she has attended the TAG (talented and gifted) lunches at Mountain View High School, and that she was pretty sure that many of her fellow students were probably also TAG kids. She was a bit nervous when she added, “I’m not trying to say that we are special or anything, but maybe we are different, and so perhaps that should be added?” She was right; during this school year, the percentage of identified Talented and Gifted enrolled in each of my class periods was higher than it had ever been in all of my years of teaching in public school.

As their teacher, I knew quite well who was identified as Talented and Gifted versus students who were simply advanced enough in their language arts skills to attend the PIB level classes. This information was available to me as soon as they officially became my student at Mountain View High School, and by simply logging in to Infinite Campus and viewing my class roster I could see which students were TAG, or had other needs that required special notice, such as those with a medical issue or students who had learning disabilities or other learning needs and required modifications in the curriculum. A little flag appeared next to students who were identified as TAG so that I would be mindful of any differentiation or modifications might be needed to challenge this student appropriately.

In response to my student's comment, I asked if any other students thought that the phrase TAG should be added to the research question. Another student explained that "TAG might not be best because not everyone knows that TAG stands for Talented and Gifted, so to be more specific, you should probably write out Talented and Gifted in the question." Other students nodded in agreement. Another issue was observed by my students: "It says high school students, but we are 9<sup>th</sup> graders." And that's how central research question #1 became *How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism help advanced and Talented and Gifted 9th grade students engage with relevant social issues?*

Central research question #2 was also revised with the help of my students. The original question was *How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism challenge students and to increase their confidence and skill levels related to the Common Core State Standards for Language Arts?* I asked students to discuss in small groups why I would want to use this research question with them, and to try to identify the issues that this research question would try to address. Several students mentioned that the term "challenge" may have been added because they sometimes talk about how language arts class is a lot easier than some of the other courses at Mountain View High School, and that work that is supposed to be challenging can sometimes actually seem more like busy work. I shared these thoughts with all my students and then asked if they thought I should keep the word "challenge" within the question. Everyone agreed, but several students were concerned about what a more challenging curriculum would mean for their grade or the points in Infinite Campus. As I have done on many, many occasions, I reminded all my students that this final CDSA project would not have points (letter grades) applied to it, but that they could choose to use some of their work

during the project as evidence in their ePortfolio and during their grade defense meeting if they chose to do so.

Another word within initial research question #2 that brought up discussion was “confidence.” Many students stated that because they were already PIB students, they were already confident in language arts, and it wasn’t really necessary to build confidence. Based on these comments, I decided to have the class review all the Common Core State Standards for language arts, focusing specifically on the reading, writing, speaking and listening sections. I asked if they believed there were no areas where they could improve in their ability levels. One student said jokingly “yes, of course, I’m just that awesome,” but other students admitted that they did have growth areas.

I asked students to think about their ePortfolios and their grade defense meeting, and wondered if anyone could share what I love to see and hear them talk about during the meeting. I asked them, what do I really want you to show me? Growth, you want to see growth Mrs. Hunt, they responded. That’s right, I said, I want you to be able to show me how you have grown, and when you grow, you become more confident. “Confidence” was able to remain in the research question. There were no other major discussions around the already present language of question #2, but they did request that I add the “advanced and talented and gifted 9<sup>th</sup> grade students” to the new version for the same reasons offered earlier in this section. Therefore, central research question #2 became *How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism challenge advanced and Talented and Gifted 9<sup>th</sup> grade students* and to increase their confidence and skill levels related to the Common Core State Standards for Language Arts?

## CDSA Curriculum Sequence

### Step 1: Introduction to Dramaturgy or *What the Heck is Dramaturgy?*

It has been my experience that general knowledge about the field of dramaturgy is basically non-existent, but I wanted to verify this assumption: that my students would NOT be familiar with the work of a dramaturg. I developed a second very short questionnaire for my students which consisted of the following statement: “I’m familiar with dramaturgy.” The result of this survey was 1.68 (*disagree*) using a five-point scale. Honestly, I was surprised that the student response was that far right on the Likert scale, and I wondered if perhaps some of them were embarrassed to admit that they strongly disagreed with the questionnaire statement.

Because my students have been well-trained in the use of “mentors” and “mentor texts” as writers, I chose to introduce them to dramaturgy using a similar method. Rather than having a famous writer serving as a “mentor” and their work serving as “mentor texts,” I believed presenting them with an overview of my work as the dramaturg on CU’s production of *14* could offer them a similar way to grasp the techniques, skills, and best practices of a dramaturg for social activism. Before I discussed *14* (or revealed to my students that I identify as a dramaturg for social activism) I asked students to brainstorm what they thought dramaturgy is and what a dramaturg does. This is a basic summary of the most common student responses that were compiled on a classroom whiteboard by students:

- Something having to do with drama
- A person who does something in a theatre
- Sounds like turd
- Someone that farts (*yes, that actually was a common response, usually after someone said the word “turd”*)
- It’s not English

I asked students if they thought any of those answers accurately defined the work of a dramaturg or the field of dramaturgy, and most students shook their heads and laughed. I decided to give them their first research task as a dramaturg (without them knowing), and I told them to use available resources to define dramaturgy and dramaturg. Using their phones to lookup information on the internet or utilizing the dictionaries found in the classrooms, students created several columns on the white boards. One column stated “Definitions of Dramaturgy,” and the other column stated “Who the Heck is a Dramaturg.” Below is an example of these student-created columns:

What is dramaturgy?	What the heck is a dramaturg?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Dramaturgy is the theory and practice of dramatic composition or the act of participating in theater.</li>   <li>● the theory and practice of dramatic composition.</li>   <li>● The theory, study and practice of dramatic composition.</li>   <li>● The practice and theory of creating and researching plays.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A dramaturg is an occupation in a play or opera that deals with research and the development of the opera and play.</li>   <li>● A literary manager who whose job is to research themes, language, history, and criticism of a play and the period in which it takes place.</li>   <li>● A dramaturg provides advice about the production of the play, including literary, cultural, and artistic insight. A dramaturg can also serve as a buffer between different people in the production of the play.</li>   <li>● A member of a theatre company who creates context in a play, establish connections between the actor and the audience and offer opportunities for playwrights to generate projects and programs and create conversation about plays in their communities.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An expert at creating and researching the play.</li> <li>• A dramaturg is a critical thinker that provides literary, cultural and artistic insight before, during, and sometimes after the creation of a piece. They act as a critic and a consultant to the theater company and everyone involved with it.</li> </ul>
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After students created the columns with the definitions, I asked if they felt like they had a better understanding of dramaturgy and the role of a dramaturg, and most of them still appeared to be unsure. I informed them that many of those who work within the theatre profession can't define the terms *dramaturg* or *dramaturgy*, and that it's an exciting and ever-evolving field. I asked them how many might want to try dramaturgy based on their current understanding of what a dramaturg *does*. I enjoy using the thumbs up/thumbs down student reaction system in the classroom, and I asked them to show me their response--most were thumbs down with a few thumbs to the side, which represents a neutral or "not sure" response in my classroom. I asked them if they knew I was once a dramaturg, and they shook their heads or stared back at me. I asked if they would like to hear about my work, and most responded with thumbs to the side. Good enough! I thought.

I pulled up the Google Powerpoint I had created about my work on the production of *14* and began telling them the story of my own journey as a dramaturg. Because this history was presented in Chapter One, I will not repeat it here. Instead, I will return to my students' definition chart of dramaturgy and the dramaturg.

I asked students if they could identify similarities between the duties and philosophies behind my work as the production dramaturg of *14*, and the posted definitions/descriptions of dramaturgy and the dramaturg found on the whiteboard. Here are some of the similarities that they identified:

- I conducted a *lot* (emphasis from my students) of research
- I helped develop the production of *14*
- I gave a *lot* (again, emphasis from my students) of advice
- I used critical thinking skills
- I helped make connections / helped others see connections
- I facilitated conversations

I told them that I agree with them--that I did do all those things as a dramaturg, and I had to practice certain skills to accomplish those tasks. I asked students to brainstorm a list of skills/abilities required of a dramaturg. This is a summary of the general skills identified by my students:

- Research
- Reading
- Public speaking
- Writing
- Listening to the needs of others/ helping others
- Organization
- Patience
- Motivation
- Understanding of theatre
- Understanding/ knowledge of what an audience needs/ wants

I asked my students to review this list of skills to see if any seemed relevant to their advanced language arts class which uses the Common Core Standards of Language Arts and/or their preparation for the eventual work in formal I.B. and A.P. classes. Several students stated that most the skills used by a dramaturg are also important skills of the advanced language arts student.

I asked them to consider why we were having this conversation about dramaturgy. One student responded with, “Oh no, you are going to make US be dramaturgs for our final project?” *Yes, that’s true*, I responded. *But not just any dramaturg*. I wrote the phrase **dramaturg-activist** on the whiteboard, and asked them what they thought that meant. Here are some of their responses:

- It’s a dramaturg who also does things in the community
- A dramaturg who protests things
- Dramaturg who tries to make a difference
- A dramaturg who cares about social problems and things like that\*
- Someone who works for a theatre company and a community organization or national organization
- What Mrs. Hunt did with the play *14*.

(\*Yes, the students did use the descriptive word “things” quite a lot during this discussion)

After students made the connection between my work on *14* and dramaturg-activist, I asked them if they thought there was a difference between the skills required for a dramaturg-activist compared to a traditional dramaturg. Students brainstormed and provided a few answers, which they said might not be “skills” but more like life philosophies:

- Being aware of problems that could be addressed
- Figuring out how to inspire others to make things better
- Having a vision
- Knows how to cause positive change



I explained that during this final project, I hoped to help them learn how to serve as dramaturg-activist using a method called Collaborative Dramaturgy for Social Activism, which I also sometimes call Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism. I asked them to examine the individual words found within the title of this method and find a term we haven't discussed much today. I told them to circle any words they think we still need to discuss. The word “collaborative” was circled by a student, and I asked them what they thought “collaborative dramaturgy” meant. They compiled this list:

- Working as a dramaturg with other dramaturgs
- Having help with your work as a dramaturg
- Being in a group
- Working on a team

Although some of their ideas presented as separate bullet points seemed quite similar (*being in a group* and *working on a team*), I felt like they were getting a sense of what Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism might entail, so I began to transition the class to the first major step of using Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism in the classroom: forming dramaturgy teams.

### Pre-Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism Activity: Overview of Likert Questionnaires

Before students were given the pre-CDSA Likert questionnaires, we discussed the purpose of using a Likert scaling method to gather data on a target population, and I explained that they would also be creating surveys during the upcoming project to gather data about their own target population as dramaturg-activists. I introduced them to the five-point scale, and they learned how the five-point scale is a bipolar scaling method that measures either positive or

negative responses to a provided statement. They also learned that within the questionnaire, a “1” would represent “strongly disagree” and a 5 would represent “strongly agree” with the provided statement.

I showed students the questionnaires I built using Google Forms which connects to central research question #1 and #2, and I explained that Google Forms could be used as a research tool when conducting their own research about their own target audience. I told the students that by developing these specific questionnaires and by analyzing the results, I hoped we could gain further insight into their current confidence and skill levels regarding focus Common Core language arts standards, as well as insight into areas where I could help provide an environment for more intellectual challenges as their teacher. I also explained that the questionnaires and discussions we would have as a class would help us get a sense of our classroom community’s feelings on social issues at Mountain View High School and our classroom environment. I reminded them that it was important that they answer honestly, so that we could try to get accurate data to analyze together as a classroom community.

### Pre-CDSA Common Core Likert Questionnaire

In this section, each provided questionnaire statement represents a single Common Core expectation that students demonstrate through their language arts academic work in grades 9-10. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: reading, writing, and speaking/listening, each of which are related to three of the major Common Core areas of language arts study, and the skills of which are directly connected to my Research Question #2. I will use the following structure to present this data: first, the Common Core standard will be shown in italics, then the Likert statement will be shown, followed by Likert response from each of the focus student participants.

Volunteered comments provided by the focus students during class discussions will then be shared. I audio recorded these class discussions and I transcribed relevant focus student responses. At the end of each category for the Common Core Standards, I will provide a short analysis of the results of the pre-CDSA questionnaire.

During this discussion portion, I shared the overall results of the questionnaire with my classes, and asked my students to discuss and identify where they felt confident and where confidence could be built during the CDSA project. Students were asked to predict how each of the Common Core skills might be used when acting as a dramaturg-activist during the CDSA project. Students were also asked to consider if they thought they would be challenged when practicing the various Common Core skills during the CDSA project.

As part of their individual ePortfolio and end-of-the-year grade defense meeting preparation work, students were told to look at their own results to the questionnaire and consider areas where they could improve during CDSA project. I told them that they would also be completing a similar Likert questionnaire at the end of the project to help us identify which areas they felt like they grew as students in terms of confidence and ability levels. The overall results of the 40 student participants to the Pre-CDSA Common Core Likert Questionnaire and the focus student comments from classroom discussions which were audio recorded and then transcribed by me are provided in the next section below. I have organized this information by Common Core Standard, starting with Common Core Standard for Reading.

## Pre-CDSA Common Core Likert Questionnaire and Discussion

### *Common Core Reading Standards*

*Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1)*

Provided statement #1: I feel confident in my ability to cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what a text says.

<b>Focus Student's Name</b>	<b>Student Response on a scale of 1-5, with "1" representing "strongly disagree" and "5"</b>
Tom	2
Patricia	3
Sarah	4
Janice	4
Becky	4
Kaden	4
John	4
Glenda	4
Danny	4
Faith	4
Helen	5
Robert	5
Lucy	5
Alan	5
Elizabeth	5

*Focus Student Responses to CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1:*

Tom shared during the discussion that although he's been in advanced language arts classes for years, he's "always struggled with figuring out the best way to provide citations," and a lot of times he feels like he "uses citations just because my teacher told me to," and not "because it actually helps to strengthen the argument I'm trying to make about a text." Patricia stated that it "seems like dramaturgs probably do have to cite plays, such as when they are writing about the play or perhaps when they are discussing the play with an audience, so hopefully I'll have the chance to work on these skills during this project," and Faith shared, "I feel confident when making claims and using textual evidence about novels, short stories, and even poems," but "I'm really not that familiar with writing about plays, which is what dramaturgs seem to have to do." Alan stated that it's "easy to make claims and cite the text, and it probably won't be that hard to do that with a play, even if it is Shakespeare."

*Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2)*

Provided statement #2: I feel confident in my ability to determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text.

<b>Focus Student's Name</b>	<b>Student Response on a scale of 1-5, with "1" representing "strongly disagree" and "5"</b>
Tom	3
Patricia	4
Sarah	4
Janice	5
Becky	5
Kaden	3
John	5
Glenda	4
Danny	5
Faith	4
Helen	4
Robert	5
Lucy	5
Alan	5
Elizabeth	5

*Focus Student Responses to CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2*

Tom admitted during the discussion that “figuring our theme is still a tricky thing for me. It’s embarrassing to admit that, but it’s true.” Faith shared during the discussion that she is “really intrigued by the idea of connecting social issues to a play,” and it “sounds like a nice challenge for us.” Alan stated during the discussion that:

We’ve been analyzing theme in literature since Kindergarten. I think it’s safe to say that we all know what we are doing when it comes to analyzing theme. I don’t think analyzing a Shakespeare play is necessarily going to challenge us. I wish we could analyze something like environmental issues, you know, something that is real and matters. Nothing against theatre, but it just doesn’t seem to matter as much as climate change.

John shared this thought during the discussion:

I gave myself a 5 on the questionnaire because I've analyzed theme so many times, but I have to be honest and say that I am not experienced when it comes to analyzing themes in a Shakespeare play. It'll be fun to try being a dramaturg. Maybe I can even wear a funny dramaturg hat. Do dramaturgs have funny hats? They should!

*Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3).*

Provided statement #3: I feel confident in my ability to analyze how characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

<b>Focus Student's Name</b>	<b>Student Response on a scale of 1-5, with "1" representing "strongly disagree" and "5"</b>
Tom	4
Patricia	4
Sarah	4
Janice	4
Becky	5
Kaden	4
John	5
Glenda	4
Danny	5
Faith	5
Helen	5
Robert	5
Lucy	5
Alan	5
Elizabeth	5

*Focus Student Responses to CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3*

During the discussion, Sarah stated that she was "excited to get to analyze characters from a dramaturg's perspective," but she was also hoping "to get to perform some the parts. Dramaturgy

sounds interesting, but I really love performing.” Alan stated during the discussion that “analyzing characters is a lot like the theme thing, where it’s a skill that all of us already have.”

*Brief Analysis of Common Core Reading Pre-Questionnaire Results:*

Tom, Patricia, and Kaden were the only students who admitted that they were not already confident in the Common Core Reading Standards. Elizabeth, Alan, and Robert stated that they felt “very confident” in their reading abilities before the CDSA unit, and the other focus students felt either “confident” or “very confident” in their reading abilities.

*Common Core Writing Standards*

*Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1)*

Provided statement #1: I feel confident in my ability to write arguments to support claims.

<b>Focus Student’s Name</b>	<b>Student Response on a scale of 1-5, with “1” representing “strongly disagree” and “5”</b>
Tom	4
Patricia	4
Sarah	5
Janice	4
Becky	5
Kaden	4
John	5
Glenda	4
Danny	5
Faith	4
Helen	5
Robert	5
Lucy	5
Alan	5
Elizabeth	5

*Focus Student Responses to CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1*

Janice, Kaden and Patricia all predicted during the discussion that argumentation when you are a dramaturg probably means trying to convince others about your thoughts regarding the play, and Faith said that “writing arguments as a dramaturg maybe is connected to writing things for the audience connected to a social issue.” Robert and Lucy also predicted that a lot of the argumentation skills during this project would be connected to communicating with the audience.

*Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2).*

Provided statement #2: I feel confident in my ability to write informative/explanatory texts.

<b>Focus Student's Name</b>	<b>Student Response on a scale of 1-5, with "1" representing "strongly disagree" and "5"</b>
Tom	4
Patricia	4
Sarah	5
Janice	4
Becky	5
Kaden	4
John	5
Glenda	4
Danny	5
Faith	4
Helen	5
Robert	5
Lucy	5
Alan	5
Elizabeth	5

*Focus Student Responses to CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2*



Glenda stated during the discussion that “we do writing tasks practicing these skills all the time, so this should be fairly easy.” Lucy and Becky both mentioned that it seemed like doing dramaturgy would mean practicing these skills “a lot.”

*Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3).*

Provided statement #3: I feel confident in my ability to write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences.

<b>Focus Student’s Name</b>	<b>Student Response on a scale of 1-5, with “1” representing “strongly disagree” and “5”</b>
Tom	4
Patricia	4
Sarah	3
Janice	5
Becky	5
Kaden	3
John	5
Glenda	4
Danny	4
Faith	4
Helen	3
Robert	3
Lucy	5
Alan	4
Elizabeth	5

*Focus Student Responses to CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3*

Kaden said during the discussion that he “didn’t think practicing narrative writing would be that difficult,” but he was “excited to try something new when it comes to creative writing.”

Tom stated that he wasn’t “exactly sure how they would practice this skill using dramaturgy,” but that he thought it might be “fun to get to do some creative writing this semester.”

*Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4).*

Provided statement #4: I feel confident in my ability to do the following: Produce writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience; develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

<b>Focus Student's Name</b>	<b>Student Response on a scale of 1-5, with "1" representing "strongly disagree" and "5"</b>
Tom	3
Patricia	4
Sarah	4
Janice	4
Becky	4
Kaden	4
John	5
Glenda	4
Danny	4
Faith	4
Helen	5
Robert	5
Lucy	5
Alan	4
Elizabeth	5

*Focus Student Responses to CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4*

Tom stated that "it's not that it seems hard to actually do these skills, but sometimes I'm feeling lazy and I don't want to have to revise very much." Glenda said that this "will be simple because we've practiced these specific skills since Elementary school." John mentioned that it might be "fun to create writing that is just for the people in our class to read, and to think about them as we write it."

*Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.6).*

Provided statement #5: I feel confident in my ability to do the following: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

Focus Student's Name	Student Response on a scale of 1-5, with "1" representing "strongly disagree" and "5"
Tom	4
Patricia	4
Sarah	3
Janice	4
Becky	4
Kaden	4
John	5
Glenda	5
Danny	4
Faith	3
Helen	5
Robert	5
Lucy	5
Alan	5
Elizabeth	5

*Focus Student Responses to CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.6*

Faith said it is “nice that we are going to use technology because I’m actually not that great at things like that, even though I’ve been building my ePortfolio this year.” Danny mentioned that he wasn’t “quite sure how a dramaturg uses technology. I guess it would be to write up things for the audience or for people working on the play.”

*Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7).*

Provided statement #6: I feel confident in my ability to do the following: Conduct research projects to answer a question or solve a problem; synthesize multiple sources on the subject,

demonstrating understanding of the subject; Gather relevant information from multiple sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

<b>Focus Student's Name</b>	<b>Student Response on a scale of 1-5, with "1" representing "strongly disagree" and "5"</b>
Tom	4
Patricia	4
Sarah	4
Janice	5
Becky	5
Kaden	4
John	5
Glenda	4
Danny	4
Faith	3
Helen	5
Robert	4
Lucy	4
Alan	5
Elizabeth	5

*Focus Student Responses to CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7*

Faith stated that it seemed like “dramaturgy is basically all research.” Glenda remarked that the research “probably wouldn’t be that difficult, even though it’s dramaturgy which is new, because we are advanced students.” Alan mentioned that he liked that they would be “doing a lot of research, but I’m not sure if we are going to be able to research would I’m interested in.”

*Brief Analysis of Common Core Writing and Research Pre-Questionnaire Results:*

Tom, Sarah, Kaden, Faith, Helen, and Robert all identified areas where they could improve as writers and researchers during the CDSA project. Elizabeth and John stated that they already felt “very confident” in their abilities as writers and researchers before the project began. The other

focus students answered that they felt “confident” or “very confident” in their abilities as writers and researchers before the CDSA project.

### *Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards*

*Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1)*

Provided statement #1: I feel confident in my ability to initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one and in groups) on texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing my own clearly and persuasively.

<b>Focus Student's Name</b>	<b>Student Response on a scale of 1-5, with "1" representing "strongly disagree" and "5"</b>
Tom	4
Patricia	4
Sarah	3
Janice	5
Becky	4
Kaden	4
John	5
Glenda	4
Danny	4
Faith	3
Helen	5
Robert	5
Lucy	4
Alan	5
Elizabeth	5

### *Focus Student Responses to SL.9-10.1*

Patricia mentioned that the collaborative part of the project probably meant that she would “need to learn how to be confident when talking to others about the play and the project” and Faith explained that she predicted she would need to learn how to “express my own ideas in a clear and persuasive way so that my dramaturgy team members might take my thoughts and ideas into

consideration about the play and what we should do for our outreach.” Robert mentioned during the discussion that he feels:

Confident when I’m leading a discussion I have a hard time building on others’ ideas. A lot of times I’m so afraid about the grade when working in a group that I tend to want to do it all on my own, just to make sure that we will get an A. Maybe this project will help me stop doing that, especially since we don’t have to worry about points, and we just need to be able to demonstrate growth in terms of the Common Core.

Elizabeth explained during the discussion, “I’m already very confident in this skill area, and I have evidence already compiled in my ePortfolio to demonstrate that I’ve reached advanced mastery. I don’t predict that this project will help me improve my skills.” John stated:

I really enjoy collaborating and working with others, and even though I feel confident in this area, I look forward to learning more and strengthening my ability to collaborate and communicate with others. This sounds cool. I’ve never really loved Shakespeare, but maybe this project will make talking about Shakespeare more interesting.

Sarah said “it’s always difficult to work with other teenagers to make clear goals and figure out how to balance out all the jobs equally,” and she also predicted that doing Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism would encourage her to “work on these skills because there are lots of different tasks that need to be completed and it would be really hard to do all of that on your own.” Kaden stated that although he already felt confident in helping his “peers determine the most efficient way to complete a project,” the “upcoming project sounds quite challenging.” Elizabeth shared that she was already “very good at making sure that when I work in groups, everyone does what they need to do, and I remind them if they start to slack off. A lot of times

other students don't understand how important a project is, even if it is worth lots of points, but I've always been able to make them understand, or I just figure the project out on my own. I'll be able to do the same with this upcoming project."

*Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1. B).*

Provided statement #2: I feel confident in my ability to work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, create clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles.

<b>Focus Student's Name</b>	<b>Student Response on a scale of 1-5, with "1" representing "strongly disagree" and "5"</b>
Tom	4
Patricia	4
Sarah	3
Janice	4
Becky	4
Kaden	4
John	4
Glenda	4
Danny	4
Faith	4
Helen	5
Robert	5
Lucy	4
Alan	5
Elizabeth	5

*Focus Student Responses to SL.9-10.1. B*

Sarah shared during the discussion that "it's always difficult to work with other teenagers to make clear goals and figure out how to balance out all the jobs equally," and she also predicted that doing Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism would encourage her to "work on these skills because there are lots of different tasks that need to be completed and it would be

really hard to do all of that on your own.” Kaden stated that although he already felt confident in helping his “peers determine the most efficient way to complete a project,” the “upcoming project sounds quite challenging.” Elizabeth shared that she was already “very good at making sure that when I work in groups, everyone does what they need to do, and I remind them if they start to slack off. A lot of times other students don’t understand how important a project is, even if it is worth lots of points, but I’ve always been able to make them understand, or I just figure the project out on my own. I’ll be able to do the same with this upcoming project.”

*Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C).*

Provided statement #3: I feel confident in my ability to propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

<b>Focus Student’s Name</b>	<b>Student Response on a scale of 1-5, with “1” representing “strongly disagree” and “5”</b>
Tom	4
Patricia	4
Sarah	4
Janice	4
Becky	3
Kaden	3
John	5
Glenda	4
Danny	4
Faith	3
Helen	5
Robert	5
Lucy	4
Alan	4
Elizabeth	5

*Focus Student Responses to SL.9-10.1.C*



Becky added during the discussion that she has:

Often had lots of things I wanted to say during a discussion, but it's really difficult to jump in. Based on what Mrs. Hunt has said about dramaturgy, especially the kind of dramaturgy that she has done, like what she did on that play *14*, it seems like I will have to work hard to get better at asking an audience questions and trying to get the audience engaged with a social issue.

Tom shared with the class that he feels “comfortable discussing lots of topics with others,” and that he has never “done any dramaturgy or audience outreach sort of things before, but it sounds like it will be fun and different.” Glenda also shared during the discussion that she loves “participating in Socratic seminars, and maybe doing audience discussions after a play will be a bit like those discussions we have in class.” Elizabeth stated that she feels “very confident in my ability to use these skills, and even though I’ve never done outreach work and things like that, I can’t imagine it being that hard.” Robert also shared that he has “always felt confident with these skills,” but that during “this project it seems like we might have to get other students to listen to us and agree with choices that we want to make about the play, and that might be challenging.”

*Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4).*

Provided statement #4: I feel confident in my ability to present information, findings, and supporting evidence appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

Focus Student's Name	Student Response on a scale of 1-5, with "1" representing "strongly disagree" and "5"

Tom	4
Patricia	4
Sarah	4
Janice	5
Becky	4
Kaden	4
John	4
Glenda	4
Danny	4
Faith	4
Helen	5
Robert	4
Lucy	5
Alan	5
Elizabeth	3

*Focus Student Responses to SL.9-10.4*

Sarah shared during the discussion that she felt like there would probably be “excellent opportunities to practice presentation skills during this project, both when discussing the project with dramaturgy team members and when actually working with the target audience during the final presentation.” During the discussion Lucy explained that she is “interested in addressing issues of gender equality and other social issues, and it’ll be cool if I can do that during this project while also showing that I am advanced when it comes to my presentation skills.” Alan also stated that he is “already quite advanced when it comes to public speaking, but I will look forward to this project if I get the opportunity to actually talk about things that I’m interested in. I’m not sure that I’m into dramaturgy or Shakespeare.”

*Brief Analysis of Common Core Speaking and Listening Pre-Questionnaire Results:*

Sarah, Becky, Kaden, and Faith all identified areas where they could grow as speakers and listeners during the CDSA project. John, Helen, and Elizabeth all felt “very confident” and their abilities as speakers and listeners before the CDSA project. The rest of the focus students

answered that they felt “confident” or “very confident” in all of the Common Core Speaking and Listening skills.

### *Pre-CDSA Student Activism Questionnaire*

In this section, each provided questionnaire statement is related to one of my connected research questions for central research question #1. I will use the following structure to present this data: first, the Likert statement will be shown, then the questionnaire response and volunteered comments provided by the 15 focus students (using coded pseudonyms) during a class discussion will be shared. When students completed this questionnaire, they were given the option of providing follow-up written comments to explain their Likert answer, and these are provided as well.

To the statement, *I am aware of relevant social issues in my community*, my students answered the following:

<b>Focus Student's Name</b>	<b>Student Response on a scale of 1-5, with "1" representing "strongly disagree" and "5"</b>
Tom	3
Patricia	3
Sarah	4
Janice	4
Becky	4
Kaden	2
John	5
Glenda	4
Danny	2
Faith	4
Helen	4
Robert	3
Lucy	5
Alan	2
Elizabeth	5

Robert mentioned that he “had witnessed students being insulted as well as various relationship issues at Mountain View High School and outside of school”. Tom stated that he had noticed there was some “gender inequality in his community and around the world,” and that there were “clear divides between the rich and the poor at Mountain View High School” and in his “larger community”. Patricia explained that she saw “issues of gender inequality” and issues connected to those in the “LGBT community at Mountain View High School and in America”. Janice explained that she has noticed issues related to gender inequality as well as issues related to one’s sexuality and race” in her community. Becky responded that she had witnessed a “ridiculous amount of gossip among girls at Mountain View High School,” as well as an “obsession with one’s reputation and slut-shaming.” Glenda stated that she had observed “gossip and rumors being spread around, gender issues, and stereotyping of different groups of people at Mountain View High School.” Faith explained that she was “very aware of grade shaming at Mountain View High School,” as well as gossiping, especially around Halloween, Christmas and prom.” John wrote that he had noticed a “lot of gossip among the student population at Mountain View High School,” as well as “significant struggles related to popularity, often based on grades or how much money your family has.” Lucy explained that she was “very aware of misogyny, transphobia, homophobia, racism, and ableism” at her school and in the larger community. Elizabeth stated that “the issue of bullying is extremely prevalent in today’s society and at Mountain View High School,” and that this “bullying is often shown through spreading rumors, gossiping about others, insulting others, and trying to harm someone else’s reputation.”

To the statement, *I am currently engaged in trying to make my community a better place*, my students answered the following:

<b>Focus Student's Name</b>	<b>Student Response on a scale of 1-5, with "1" representing "strongly disagree" and "5"</b>
Tom	2
Patricia	3
Sarah	5
Janice	2
Becky	4
Kaden	2
John	4
Glenda	4
Danny	2
Faith	4
Helen	2
Robert	2
Lucy	4
Alan	2
Elizabeth	5

Patricia wrote that she thought an example of when she tries to make her community a better place is “during lunch when I might ask a couple people from time to time to come sit with me and my friends,” and “in general, I try to have a good attitude.” John stated that he tries to “speak out” when he “sees others being hurt or treated unfairly.” Lucy wrote that she’s “in the G.S.A. (Gay-Straight Alliance) at my school, and I try to educate people as often as possible.” Glenda responded that she has “always tried to help my friends realize that other people’s opinions aren’t the be all end all of life.” Faith explained that she is “in the Red Cross, and I was in the allies and diversity group in eighth grade.” Sarah stated that she “tries to make my community a more positive and inclusive place by not participating in speech that is prejudiced, unfair, or non-inclusive. I also try to call out people I see talking like this and I tell them to stop.”

### *Brief Analysis of the Activism Pre- CDSA Questionnaire Results:*

Overall, 6 out of the 15 focus students believed that they were not aware of social issues within their community, and 8 out of the 15 students believed they were not actively engaged in addressing social issues in their community.

### *Positive and Inclusive Environment Discussion*

All of my classes begin with a mindfulness activity (sometimes this is as simple as taking three deep breaths as a class) and a writing prompt which they answer in their writer's notebooks, and before the CDSA project began, I gave my students this writing prompt at the start of class: *Describe what you think a positive and inclusive community would be like.* I asked each student to share their response as part of our attendance rounds which is another tradition in my classroom (every student shares something with the class every day, even if it's just one word, each student still has opportunity to have their voice heard daily). The responses of my focus students to this writing prompt are provided below:

Becky, Janice, Kaden, and John focused on the importance of not judging others. For example, Becky stated that "a positive and inclusive community would be composed of non-judgmental people who communicate often to uncover the truth about each other rather than making false assumptions." Janice responded that a "positive and inclusive community would accept everyone as they are and would not judge people, and the community wouldn't try to change people to fit their norms." Kaden explained that he believed "a positive and inclusive community would be accepting of everyone's differences and flaws, and people would always have a place to express their thoughts and feel heard. People would not be constantly judged for

the smallest actions, or for their grades or the classes they take, or for their appearance or how much money their parents make.” John stated that he a “positive and inclusive community is only possible if there is no judgment before getting to know a person for who they are.

Lucy, Patricia, and Helen focused on their belief that a positive and inclusive environment is created when people are accepting and don't want to change others. Lucy responded that “people must be allowed to be themselves and they should be honored for who they really are.” Patricia explained that a “positive and inclusive community is welcoming to everyone, no matter their background, and every person is focused on building a stronger community.” Helen stated that “in a positive and inclusive community, there would be very little talking behind people's backs, there wouldn't be name calling, we wouldn't feel obligated to meet expectations of society and peers, we wouldn't worry about what our peers thought, and there wouldn't be social groups.”

Faith and Elizabeth both responded that they don't believe a positive and inclusive community can exist. Faith stated, “I don't think that there is such a thing, but I suppose it would be a place where everyone is happy with who they are and they aren't competitive with each other, especially when it comes to grades or if you are in advanced or regular classes.” Elizabeth responded:

I don't think that it is achievable, but in a perfect world, a positive environment would be one where ego doesn't matter and all that matters is self-acceptance. I think that a lot of the issues that we see at Mountain View High School come from students judging themselves and others all the time, and maybe even from parental and teacher judgment as well.

## CDSA Curriculum Sequence

### CDSA Step 2: Dramaturgy Team Orientation

#### Forming Dramaturgy Teams

I instructed the class to review the list of skills of a dramaturg and dramaturg -activist, and to identify areas where they personally felt confident and proficient in their abilities to complete tasks in those areas. I recommended that they do the following: a) consider their responses to the pre-project questionnaire, and b) jot down three or four “high confidence” and ability categories in their language arts composition notebook (which we call their “writer’s notebook”). I reminded them that we all have different strengths and skills, and that it’s important to take this into consideration when forming collaborative learning groups, or in the case of this final project, what we call *dramaturgy teams*.

Next, I asked students to write down their names next to their self-identified high confidence categories listed on the whiteboard. Once all students had the opportunity to add their names, I told students to try to form balanced groups consisting of roughly 4-6 students each. I reminded them that the goal was to create the most “well-rounded” dramaturgy teams. I reminded my students that the criteria for “well-rounded” should include identifying each other’s strengths and weaknesses, and then making sure that there was a balance of strengths and weaknesses within their chosen dramaturgy teams.

#### Dramaturgy Team Member Orientation

Once students self-selected into dramaturgy teams, it was important to make sure that the group members were good “fits” for each other. Three orientation activities were used that



related to script analysis, and three activities were related to group member prior experience with Shakespeare, social change/ outreach work, and social issue interest areas. These tasks could potentially be used in a different order than what is described below, but for this research narrative, I've numbered the activities in the order that I used them.

### Dramaturgy Team Orientation Activity #1

#### *'I See' Statements*

This activity is based on the “I see” and “for me” dramaturgy tasks described by Irelan, Fletcher, and Dubiner in *The Process of Dramaturgy: A Handbook* which assists dramaturgs when composing the initial letter to the director of a production (26-27). I found this activity to be a nice “ice breaker” of sorts for the new dramaturgy teams. The modified version of this exercise as it was used in my classroom is detailed below:

- 1) Dramaturgy team members sat in a circle.
- 2) Each student wrote down an “I See” statement about *Much Ado About Nothing* in their writer’s notebooks.
- 3) Once these statements were composed, students passed their notebooks to their left.
- 4) Fellow dramaturgy team members read the “I See” statements, and commented on the similarities and differences between their statement and their team members’ statements.
- 5) Once all “I See” statements were reviewed and commented upon by dramaturgy teams, students were instructed to revise statements and create collaborative “We See” statements.

Irelan, Fletcher and Dubiner state that “I see” statement can be viewed like the “opening position statement in a light-hearted debate of ideas for which the rest of the letter will argue” (27), and in the case of Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism, these statements serve as a way for dramaturgy team members to get a sense of any major similarities and differences in initial readings of *Much Ado About Nothing*. Below are examples of the “I See” statements revised by dramaturgy teams into “We See” statements during this orientation activity:

“We see manipulation, confusion, longing, lust, insecurity, wit, lies, and importance of reputation in *Much Ado About Nothing*”

“We see lots of jealousy, insecurity about reputation, dishonesty, innocence, and sarcastic humor in *Much Ado About Nothing*.”

“We see jealousy, gullibility and naivety, unhappiness, love, loyalty, humor, and a concern for the reputations of people in *Much Ado About Nothing*.”

“We see jealousy, anger, love, gossip, trust and a lack of trust, humor, and lots of meddling with relationships that test other’s loyalty.”

“In *Much Ado About Nothing* we see insecurities, gossiping and dishonesty. But we also see love, humor and kindness.”

## Dramaturgy Team Orientation Activity #2

### *Shakespeare/ Live Theatre Background*

This activity was useful because it served several different purposes: 1) it helped the dramaturgy team members get to know each other a little more, and 2) it allowed the dramaturgy team members to practice basic oral storytelling, and 3) the activity allowed dramaturgy teams to consider whether the group was balanced in terms of prior theatre and Shakespeare experience. When students were forming their dramaturgy teams, something they were asked to consider was group member experience with Shakespeare and/or live theatre. It was recommended that dramaturgy teams should have at least one, but preferably two, students with prior experience.

Because the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism work served as the culminating class project of the year, I was aware of my students' interests inside and outside of the classroom--especially the fact that I had an amazingly high percentage of students who entered their 9th grade studies with years of theatre experience. Students were instructed, if possible, to watch the Colorado Shakespeare Festival performance of *Much Ado About Nothing* during the summer of 2015, and I predicted that students would reflect on that experience during this activity, and I was right. Finally, because we are blessed to have such a vibrant local theatre community-- especially the Colorado Shakespeare Festival education programs-- I hoped that my students would do their best to balance out the experienced students with the non-experienced students. Below is a description of this activity.

- 1) Dramaturgy team members sat in a circle.
- 2) Students were asked to answer these two writing prompts in their writer's notebook:
  - a) Have you ever watched a Shakespeare play? If so, please describe the experience. If not, what do you think it would be like?

- b) Have you ever been involved in a Shakespeare production? If so, please describe the experience. If not, what do you think it would be like?
- 3) Students took turns sharing out their memories and experiences.

### Dramaturgy Team Orientation Activity #3

#### *What Is It About?*

The “What Is It About” task is similar to orientation activity #1, but encouraged dramaturgy team members to expand their collaborative writing and revision work. The process used is described below:

- 1) Dramaturgy teams sat in a circle.
- 2) Each student answered the writing prompt “What is it about?” in their writer’s notebooks.
- 3) Once these statements were composed, students passed their notebooks to their left.
- 4) Fellow dramaturgy team members read the “What is it about?” statements, and commented on the similarities and differences between their statement and their team members’ statements.
- 5) Once all “What is it about” statements were reviewed and commented upon by dramaturgy teams, students were instructed to revise statements and create collaborative “What is it about” statements.

Example dramaturgy team “What is it about?” statements are provided below:

“In our opinion, *Much Ado About Nothing* is a two-layer love story: The first and main layer being Beatrice and Benedick--two unlikely souls falling for each other in the end; and the second being slightly more complex with Hero and Claudio. In the end, like most fairy tales, everyone but the villain lives happily ever after (And gets married).”

“*Much Ado About Nothing* is about a town of people who enjoy pulling pranks and tricking their neighbors. The townspeople eavesdrop and tend to spread rumors causing complicated situations to get worse.”

“*Much Ado About Nothing* is a story about the drama of love and play. People often trick each other and spread rumors, all the while affecting the relationships of love between people.”

“*Much Ado About Nothing* is a play that discusses issues around gossip, drama, and the complicated relationships humans get themselves into. With lots of trust and distrust, it’s a small comedy that also shows the effect of these negative social traits.”

“It’s about meddling adults who have important jobs but spend their time interfering in their friends lives because they’re bored.”

“The play is about the complexity of human relationships, especially manipulation and love.”

## Dramaturgy Team Orientation Activity #4

### *Social Activism*

Based on the many of the “What is it about” statements regarding *Much Ado About Nothing* that noted social issues, I chose to follow activity #3 with several social activism brainstorming sessions, personal reflection discussions, and a short survey about social activism. Because the first three activities during the dramaturgy team orientation week focused on writing, speaking, and listening tasks, and I gave my students some small research opportunities that did the following: a) provided the new dramaturgy teams with a basic collaborative research experience, and b) it allowed dramaturgy team members to determine if they were on the “same page” when it comes to social activism philosophies. A description of this orientation task and representative student responses is provided below:

- 1) Dramaturgy team members formed a circle.
- 2) Writing prompt and discussion question: What do you think is social change?
- 3) Students used smartphones to research definitions of social change and were asked to come to find a definition that all dramaturgy members accepted.
- 4) Writing prompt and discussion question: What do you think is social activism?

Representative student responses are provided below:

“I think It’s where a large group of people try to make a change at a large scale of a social issue.”

“I think that social activism is being active in one’s community and society especially with local issues.”

“I think social activism is where members of a society protest or exercise their powers and rights to change something they don’t like.”

5) Students used smartphones to research definitions of social activism and were asked to come to find a definition that all dramaturgy members accepted.

6) Writing prompt and discussion question: Do you have any experience with social activism and social change? If so, describe. If not, what are some areas where you wish you could become more involved with social activism? Why?

7) Students were asked to discuss relevant social issues they were aware of. Below is a list of the social issues noted by my students:

- Gossip
- Popularity Struggles
- Reputation
- Insults
- Lying/cheating at school
- Gender issues/ gender roles/ stereotypes based on gender/ double-standards
- Poor/rich in the Boulder Bubble
- sexism/ misogyny
- Transphobia
- Homophobia
- Racism
- Ableism
- Bullying
- Gossip among the girls at FHS
- Reputation and slut-shaming.
- Gossip and bullying
- Grade shaming
- Jumping to conclusions
- Talking about people behind their backs
- Focusing too much on people's grades

## Dramaturgy Team Orientation Activity #5

### *Are We Telling the Same Story?*

During the dramaturgy team orientation weeks, I tried to provide my students with a balanced introduction to Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism, which meant that I needed to find a balance between the more traditional dramaturgical activities and introductory work related to social activism. Therefore, I transitioned from the social activism focus tasks to another Irelan, Fletcher, and Dubiner exercise titled “Are We Telling the Same Story?” This activity was designed to serve as a checkpoint for avoiding the “pitfall” of working on a project only to realize near the end that production team members had differing visions for the theatre production (36). Below is a description of a modified version of their exercise that I used during dramaturgy team orientation weeks:

- 1) Students paired up with fellow dramaturgy team members.
- 2) Using whatever mode of expression was most appropriate and applicable, students took five minutes to tell the story of *Much Ado About Nothing*, including the shape the narrative takes. The majority of the students orally told their version of the story, but some students that were more visually oriented chose to draw out the arc of the play or created a chart or a map that graphed the progression of scenes, images, or themes.
- 3) After five minutes, students switched partners and roles.
- 4) In the final step of this exercise, dramaturgy teams reflected on the different versions that were told, and students jotted down notes in their writer’s notebooks.



## Dramaturgy Team Orientation Activity #:

### *Much Ado About Nothing* and Relevant Social Issues

To conclude the dramaturgy team orientation period, my students participated in a collaborative task which required them to practice basic dramaturgical script analysis while using a social activist lens. Here is a description of the task followed by representative student responses which are organized by student response coded themes:

- 1) Dramaturgy team members formed a circle.
- 2) Students individually answered this prompt in their writer's notebooks: What are some relevant social issues found within *Much Ado About Nothing* that you might want to address as a dramaturg-activist? Your target audience is advanced 9th graders, so the social issue should be relevant to them. Consider how you could address the chosen issue with the target audience.
- 3) Dramaturgy team members discussed their ideas
- 4) Dramaturgy teams attempted to come to a consensus on the social issue.

### *Gossip*

Gossip/assumptions are relevant issues that involve 9th graders. People usually belong to a group of friends that often is very different from other groups, and people are very quick to label them or assume something about them when they don't even know each other. Gossip is also huge because in the school environment, people are constantly talking and socializing, so it's easy for people to spread rumors, etc. While this problem may never cease, refraining and catching yourself when you do these things will be beneficial to everyone.

Gossiping still happens frequently and especially during school and with young adolescent teens. We could compare the gossiping in *Much Ado About Nothing* to gossiping in school and how they are similar.

We would like to maybe address gossiping and eavesdropping. We would most likely would like to do it like CU did it: Perform the scenes in *Much Ado About Nothing* where eavesdropping/ gossip occurs and its consequences, and then after we perform, we could discuss with the class how eavesdropping/ gossip ties in with real life.

### *Gender Issues*

We can act out how scenes went, such as the one where Benedick makes nasty comments and then show how the scene should have gone in a world with gender equality.

Gender issues are still relevant and we see evidence of this today in the real world and especially at school. We could show examples from the real world and connect it to the play of how sexism is still very similar and is still a big issue today.

We might want to address gender roles. We could talk about how the gender issues in this play are still in the modern day and how it can come up in Mountain View's atmosphere.

Gender issues are a clear issue that appear in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Hero is like a prize to be given to Claudio after his bravery in the war. To us 9th graders, people are

sometimes stereotyped based on gender on their role in after school activities (i.e. sports) and the clothes people wear.

A social issue our theatre company would like to address is the idea that a woman must be a virgin before she is married. We might address this issue by emphasizing the lines in which this issues resides and expressing how these lines portray gender issues. Another issue we might address is gossiping and how gossiping leads to misunderstandings and misjudgments in the play and how that overall affects the play's end.

## CDSA Curriculum Sequence

### CDSA Step 3: Dramaturgy Team Interviews

As the dramaturgy team orientation tasks ended, some groups remained intact while others disbanded, the orientation week having served its purpose of helping students know if they should commit to current team members or try again with new collaborators. For teams that remained together, the next task did not seem daunting, but for those who were just getting to know one another, upcoming dramaturgy team interviews loomed ahead. Originally called “group auditions,” the dramaturgy team interview process was designed to provide the self-selected groups with an opportunity to demonstrate how effectively they could work together. During the “interview,” student dramaturgy teams were required to demonstrate proficiency at several basic dramaturgical tasks. If they failed to do so, they had been informed that students would be moved to teacher-selected student dramaturgy teams. Below were the expectations for the dramaturgy team interviews:

- 1) Dramaturgy team members must agree on a focus social issue that is found within *Much Ado About Nothing* and is relevant to the target audience (9th grade students)
- 2) Collaboratively construct a basic Dramaturg Note (persuasive essay) that addresses the team's chosen topic and at least two pieces of cited evidence from *Much Ado About Nothing* to support your team's argumentative claim. Orally present this argument during the interview to demonstrate your group's oral communication skills
- 3) Provide a written essay arguing why your group should be able to work together during the C.F.S.A. summative project. Provide data (evidence) should consist of individual student skills/talents found within the group. Your dramaturgy team should explain how these different skills/talents/ personalities will combine to make a great theatre company.

In the section below, I've provided the outline dramaturgy teams were expected to follow when they appeared for their interview and several examples of dramaturgy team preparation writing.

### *Dramaturgy Team Interview Outline*

- A) Orally share your team's dramaturg note. Show your group's creativity by performing the data found within your group's argument (the lines DO NOT have to be memorized), and provide warrants for the data.
- B) Explain why your group picked the focus social issue
- C) Orally share your team's argument for why you should receive permission to continue working together on the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project.

*Dramaturgy Team Interview Transcription# 1*

A. Beatrice and Benedick use their insults and their humor to hide their true feelings towards each other. They are engaged in a fierce battle of wits, always throwing taunts and clever wordplay at one another without pause. This indicates that they have a strong connection, along with many other similar qualities. One example of a conversation they have starts with Benedick saying:

“Then is Courtesy is a turn-coat: but it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted: and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truly I love none.

Beatrice

A dear happiness to women, they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God and my cold blood, I am of your humor for that: I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me.

Benedick

God keep your Ladyship still in that mind, so some gentleman or other shall ‘scape a predestinate scratched face.

Beatrice

Scratching could not make it worse an ‘twere such a face as yours were.” (I.i.99-109)

In this exchange, they show that they are of similar mentalities and cleverness. They also both confess they both don’t want to get married. Benedick doesn’t want to marry due to the fear that a woman would cheat on him as soon as they married; Beatrice doesn’t want to be tied down to one person forever. It is because of these beliefs that they are scared to acknowledge any feelings about each other. We know that Benedick does indeed like Beatrice because he compares her beauty to Hero in his conversation with Claudio:

“I can see yet without spectacles and I see no such matter.

There’s her cousin, an she were not possessed with a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty as the first of May doth the last of December. But I hope you have no intent to turn husband, have you?” (I.i.147-151).

With this, he leaves no doubt of his admiration of Beatrice's beauty. He thinks of her as more attractive than Hero, who is undeniably quite beautiful. When Leonato, Claudio, and Don Pedro set a trap for Benedick he says to himself:

“I did not think I should live till I were married - here comes  
Beatrice: by this day, she's a fair lady, I do spy some marks of love in  
her” (II.iii.198-200)

He is quick to believe that Beatrice has feelings for him, and convinces himself to submit to his already existing feelings for her. The intense attitude between Benadick and Beatrice towards each other stems not from dislike, but from an underlying attraction towards each other.

**B.** We chose to discuss and perform the topic of insults. This subject is prevalent both in Shakespearian times and today. Shakespeare used many insults in his plays, some of which were aimed to mock societal hierarchies, but the majority was playful banter that often came off as offensive. Some examples of this are found in the exchanges between the two well-known characters in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Beatrice and Benedick. These gibes are important to the play and the story because their words and subsequent reactions say a lot about the characters themselves. The characters relentlessly mock each other, but are often affronted by the taunting, which shows that they may care more about each other than it seems. Likewise, today many derisive phrases that were just intended as banter, are taken as rude comments at someone else's expense. Just like in Shakespeare plays, lots of insults aren't meant to be offensive but can often come off that way without proper context. People in both *Much Ado About Nothing* and the present-day struggle with the topic of insults as they affect relationships and interactions between everyone.

**C.** We believe we would work well as a dramaturgy team because of the variety of our skills, our efficiency as a collaborative group of students, and our compatible personalities. Our variety of skills and personalities help us to work together so we can showcase everyone's specific talents and make our work the best it can be by focusing on each of our strengths. This works particularly well with the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project because we believe we can effectively divide up the work to each of our individual skill sets such as writing with the Toulmin argumentation format, creating websites and using technology for

dramaturgy tasks, art skills, and public speaking. We are also motivated to help each other in our problem areas. In addition, we all intend to take part in the public presentation portions of this project. With these components combined, we will be able to create a diverse, strong, and well-organized dramaturgy team.

*Representative Dramaturgy Team Interview Transcription #2*

**A.** Insults are a false front to conceal true emotions and insecurities. In Act 1, Scene 1, Benedick says to Beatrice, “it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted: and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truly I love none.” Benedick is claiming to be sought after by all except Beatrice, and yet, he claims to not love any of the women seeking him. This suggests that the only woman who is not pursuing his affections, Beatrice, is the one he loves. In Act 2, Scene 3, Benedick is mocking Claudio for falling in love with Hero, “I’ll never cheapen her: fair, or I’ll never look on her: mild, or come not near me.” His emotions are hidden behind his front of indifference; his love is hidden as he describes how he would not act on any affection. He is mocking Claudio to hide his insecurities. He insults Beatrice indirectly here; he acts as though he could never love her and dismisses the notion that she could ever be a woman of interest to him. In this way, he is deceiving himself and pushing the two of them apart.

**B.** The topic of insults is prevalent both in Shakespearian times and today. Shakespeare used many insults in his plays, some of which were aimed to mock societal hierarchies, but the majority was playful banter that often came off as offensive. Some examples of this are found in the exchanges between the two well-known characters in “Much Ado About Nothing”, Beatrice and Benedick. These gibes are important to the play and the story because their words and subsequent reactions say a lot about the characters themselves. The characters relentlessly mock each other, but are often affronted by the taunting, which shows that they may care more about each other than it seems. Likewise, today many derisive phrases that were just intended as banter, are taken as rude comments at someone else’s expense. Just like in Shakespeare plays, lots of insults aren’t meant to be offensive by can often come off that way without proper context. Both “Much Ado About Nothing” and present day struggle with the topic of insults as they affect relationships and interactions between everyone.

C. The makeup of our dramaturgy team allows everyone's skills to shine while still cohesively cooperating with one another. Each of our member's carries a unique talent that ranges from knowledge of creative writing to computer science and Shakespeare. We have computer and website knowledge as well as directing and theatre experience. We have backgrounds in leadership, creative writing and acting. Our team enjoys academic writing and all members are eager to contribute to the project. We are especially eager to work on this project together because we believe we can provide unique insights into the Shakespeare world. These traits allow our group to have a diverse knowledge of everything needed to produce a prodigious dramaturgy team. Overall, the blend of the members of our group provide a motivational atmosphere that allows tasks to be efficiently accomplished.

### CDSA Curriculum Sequence

#### CDSA Step 4: Back to the Script: Close Reading

Once student groups completed the "interview" process and were approved by me to become "official" dramaturgy teams, we returned to the most important tool of a dramaturg: the script. This section details the individual student and collaborative dramaturgy team tasks completed during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project that attempted to do just that.

#### *Individual Script Annotation Task*

In the advanced (Pre-IB) 9th grade language arts program across all course sections, students are required to annotate the *Much Ado About Nothing* script. Students who participated in the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism study completed this task as well, but the



task was modified to encourage dramaturgy team members to identify relevant social issues within the script. The student instructions are listed below:

1. Highlighting or underlining the text (underline the text if you are using highlighting for your coding system)
2. Marginalia—summarizing what you underlined in the margin, and/or writing comments about what you underlined. Do not simply repeat your coding with your annotation. (Example: rather than writing “characterization of Romeo” in the margin, write “Romeo—romantic.”)
3. Coding—a system to identify the different strands of your annotation. Either use tabs, colored pencils, highlighting, or include a list of annotated pages.

*Code for the following in your script:*

1. Plot summaries:  
Summarize major events as they occur in the text (may be at the end of each Act)
2. Characterization of the following characters  
Beatrice, Benedick, Hero, Claudio, Don John, Don Pedro, Leonato, Dogberry and Verges (comic double act), the Watch (source of comic relief)
3. Social issues

### *Character Brainstorming and Analysis*

Student dramaturgy teams used their close reading and annotations of the script to answer the following analysis prompts:

For each of the characters listed below, please provide the following:

- A. First impressions/assumptions from theatre company members

- B. Lines or phrases that are typical of them at particular moments
- C. What other characters say about the character
- D. What the character says when alone (in their soliloquies)
- E. Actions of the character
- F. How the character changes and develops
- G. Overall personality notes (how does Shakespeare show different sides of the character's personality?)
- H. Connections between the character and the different coding areas (such as gender issues, love, trust/deception, relationships with others, honor and reputation, illusion/appearance, jokes and insults, eavesdropping and gossip, and any other coding areas proposed and used by group members)

Here are examples of student dramaturgy team responses to the prompts:

#### Beatrice

- A. Witty, sassy, strong, independent woman
- B. "What should I do with him, dress him in my apparel and make him my waiting gentlewoman?" (II.i.26-27) This line is typical of Beatrice because it shows how she doesn't really care about anyone and is very independent
- C. "You will never run mad, niece." -Leonato (I.i.68) This lets us know that everyone thinks Beatrice is very angry/stubborn all the time.
- D. After Beatrice overhears Hero and Ursula she talks a lot to find a solution of what to do about Benedick and if she should love him or not.
- E. Frequent banter, often rude to people.
- F. Confesses love for Benedick, changes her relationship with him.
- G. Shakespeare shows her personality through banter.
- H. Heavily connected with jokes and insult

#### Benedick

- A. Witty, has a "frenemy" relationship with Beatrice, confident (sometimes overly confident), can be arrogant at times
- C. Beatrice: "O Lord, he will hang upon him like a disease: he is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad. God help the noble Claudio, if he hath caught the Benedict. It will cost him a thousand pound ere a be cured" (1.1.62-65). Beatrice thinks he is a nuisance and a pest.
- E. Banter, reveals love for Beatrice.
- F. Changes after revealing love for Beatrice.

H. Heavily connected with jokes and insults

#### Don John

- A. Deceptive, a liar, enjoys watching other people suffer, the kind of guy who laughs harder when you say “dead puppies” to get him to stop laughing so hard
- B. “If I can cross him in any way, I bless myself in every way.” (I.iii 48-49). This line is typical of Don John because it shows how he lives on other people’s pain
- C. Other characters say that Don John is a very miserable person and. “He is of a very melancholy disposition.” -Hero (II.i.5)
- D. He is never alone in the script, but I feel as if he were the type of character to talk about his evil plans while he is alone.
- E. Don John creates many evil plans, and tricks people into thinking bad of others. For example, he tricked Claudio into thinking that Don Pedro was wooing Hero and that Hero was having an affair with someone else
- F. The character doesn’t really change because he stays evil the whole entire time
- G. There aren't many sides to Don John because he is not really a main character. He shows what other people think of him, and how he has a position of power compared to Borachio and Conrade and sometimes Claudio
- H. Don John relates to the theme of trust/ deception, because he is very good at gaining people’s trust and but then causing them pain.

#### *Cutting the Script*

After individual tasks (such as the individual annotation task previously described) and further group brainstorming tasks, dramaturgy teams used the following procedure to develop the condensed performance script. Google docs was utilized by dramaturgy team members to make the collaborative script cutting process more efficient. Each writing prompt is provided below followed by representative dramaturgy team responses:

**1) Brainstorm and define “context”** “the parts of a written or spoken statement that precede or follow a specific word or passage, usually influencing its meaning or effect: the set of circumstances or facts that surround a particular event, situation, etc.”

**2) What do you think “drives the play” and made *Much Ado About Nothing* work for Shakespeare’s original audiences?** “We think that the humor and lighthearted feel of *Much Ado About Nothing* made it popular for original as well as current audiences. Also, the strong storyline made it easy to follow and is as relatable to society then as it is now, if not more.”

**3)Your dramaturgy team needs to make *Much Ado About Nothing* work in your own context. What do you think this means?** “We think making *Much Ado About Nothing* in our own context means to “rewrite/represent” the play in a way that both matters and is easier to understand to our target audience, which would make the play more enjoyable if the audience could understand the meaning and characters.

**4) Brainstorm what will “drive” your theatre company’s production of *Much Ado About Nothing* and “make it work” for your audience.**

- Understanding the jokes and humor in the play will make it popular with 9th graders.
- Connecting the storyline to real life issues will make it educational and relatable to 9th graders.
- Focusing on the characters’ feelings and interactions

**5) Each dramaturgy team member should write what they feel is the spine or arc of the play.**

- Two couples overcome the barriers that kept them apart.
- A man loves a woman, who is accused of being unfaithful, while another couple learns that the woman was wrongly accused and tries to prove that she was wrongly accused so that they can reunite the couple.

- A man wishes to marry a woman whose reputation is ruined due to misunderstandings.
- Two couples fall in love, surrounded by issues with reputation, trust, and gossiping.
- People play tricks on two couples, to get them to do what they want.

**6) Write down a dramaturgy team statement for the spine or arc of *Much Ado About Nothing*.** “Two couples overcome issues with wrongful accusation, reputation, misunderstanding, trust, and gossiping.”

**7) Using the responses from this task and prior conversations about the script, what moments from the play will you include in your 15-20-minute performance?**

A portion of Beatrice and Benedick’s “merry war” to introduce the characters and make it interesting.

- The masquerade ball would be included in the performance because it has many events that affect the entire play.
- Don John’s plan
- The night where Claudio sees Margaret disguised as Hero with another man.
- The original marriage between Claudio and Hero where Claudio accuses Hero of being unfaithful and Hero “dies”.
- The part where Leonato talks about Hero and how he wishes she were dead.
- The part where Claudio visits Hero’s monument to sing to her.
- The wedding between Claudio and Hero and Benedick and Beatrice

8) Use this information to begin creating the “cutting” of the script that you will use for your performance. Place the cutting of the script in the space below.

Keep in mind:

- Make sure that the performance time of this script is between 15 and 20 minutes.
- Consider ways to make the play more comprehensible for your target audience (modern-day narration, properties, signs, etc.) while keeping much of Shakespeare’s original script (and language!) intact.

*Sample Dramaturgy Team Performance Script*

Below is an example dramaturgy team script which serves as a representative condensed 15-20 minute performance script:

**Scene 1**

(Start with Beatrice and Benedick arguing), (There is a sign that says Messina, Italy)

**NARRATOR:** Benedick and Beatrice are longtime friends who often mock and tease each other about their personality and appearance. They have feelings for each other but aren’t ready to talk about them. Currently, Benedick is staying at the house of Beatrice’s uncle, Leonato, along with his friends.

**BENEDICK**

What, my dear Lady Disdain! Are you yet living?

**BEATRICE**

Is it possible Disdain should die, while she hath such meet food to feed it, as Signor Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to Disdain, if you come in her presence..

(both freeze) (Beatrice exits)

**NARRATOR**

Claudio and the prince Don Pedro on their way back from a war with Don Pedro’s brother, Don John, who is now in captivity. Benedick is not so pleased with the available female company but

Claudio seems to be liking it just fine. (Hero enters) That is Hero, Beatrice's cousin and the daughter of Leonato.

**CLAUDIO**

In mine eye she is the sweetest lady that ever I looked on.

**BENEDICK**

I can see yet without spectacles and I see no such matter: there's her cousin, and she were not possessed with a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty as the first of May doth the last of December. But I hope you have no intent to turn husband, have you?

**CLAUDIO**

I would scarce trust myself, though I had sworn the contrary, if Hero would be my wife.

**DON PEDRO**

I know we shall have reveling to-night:  
I will assume thy part in some disguise  
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio,  
And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart  
And take her hearing prisoner with the force  
And strong encounter of my amorous tale:  
Then after to her father will I break;  
And the conclusion is, she shall be thine.  
In practice let us put it presently.

**NARRATOR**

Claudio tells Don Pedro within minutes of meeting Hero that he is in love with her and intends to marry her. He appears to have fallen in love with her as soon as he returned from the war. Don Pedro, being a loyal friend, offers to "woo" her for him at a masked ball and "give" her to him.

## CDSA Curriculum Sequence

### CDSA Step 5: Becoming Dramaturg-Activists

Once dramaturgy teams had developed solid cuttings of their hypothetical school production script, I felt comfortable helping them transition to the educational outreach focus of the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project. This section will detail the activities students completed as they evolved into student dramaturg-activists.

#### *Team Research Task: Augusto Boal and Theatre of the Oppressed*

During this activity, student dramaturgy teams practiced their collaborative research skills and became more familiar with Augusto Boal and Theatre of the Oppressed. Students were provided with school Chromebooks and research prompts found located on Google docs. Once student dramaturgy teams completed the required research tasks, teams shared knowledge with the rest of the class, and students created bullet point lists of significant information on the classroom whiteboards. The research prompts and example student responses are provided below:

#### **1)Who was Augusto Boal?**

- Brazilian
- Theatre director
- Writer
- Politician
- Established Theatre of the Oppressed
- wrote *Theatre of the Oppressed*
- Seen as a threat to the military coups in Brazil
- Cultural activist
- Kidnapped, arrested and tortured
- Inspiration to many people



## 2) What is Theatre of the Oppressed?

- A form of theatre
- Theoretical framework
- Set of techniques
- Interactive with audience members
- Audience participates
- Addresses social issues through dramatic acting
- Can be used to bring about social change
- Uses interactive theatre games
- Addresses issues of oppression
- Encourages self-discovery and personal/critical reflection
- Forum Theatre
- Image Theatre
- Invisible Theatre
- Legislative Theatre
- Newspaper Theatre

## 3) How does Boal's work/ T.O. relate to social activism?

- People can better recognize issues of oppression
- Empowers people
- Encourages people to carry out positive changes in society
- Informs/educates the audience
- Tool for social change = can be used by social activists
- Engages people in social activism

## 4) What is interactive theatre?

- Breaks the "fourth wall"
- Audience can participate
- Active relationship/ interaction between the actors and the audience

## 5) How effective do you think Theatre of the Oppressed or Interactive Theatre would be with your target audience (9th graders)? Why?

Representative student responses are provided below:

We think that Theatre of the Oppressed can be effective if the activities and types of theatre used are in a way that is engaging to 9th graders. This could be engaging because some people may have certain ideas about what theatre is like and applied theatre and Theatre of the Oppressed can make the people find new ways to express their feelings and find that theatre is a lot broader and more modern.

This kind of theater could be effective to not only 9th graders but any kind of student who is struggling to stay on top of their work. This kind of theater works because it is visual and interactive. On the other hand, not all people like participating in or experiencing theater. Because of this, people may not enjoy the experience making it hard for them to relate and pay attention.

We think that Interactive theatre would be effective with some ninth graders, and less so with others. For some, interactive theatre would enrich the experience and help them understand and connect to the play better. It also could allow them to connect if they end up participating, and it could also make the performance more fun and memorable. However, for some, they might find it harder to pay attention, or just not like it as much as normal theatre, especially if it is done poorly.

Theatre of the Oppressed would be effective with our target audience because it is intended for all subjects and types of people around the world. It helps people to better understand and reflect upon themselves and their surroundings. Interactive Theatre also would be effective because plays are more compelling when there is no barrier between the actors

and the audience, and the spectators would feel like they were transported to the world of the play.

We think that a lot of 9th graders won't want to participate in a lot of stuff. If we try to make them act out anything, we feel like no one will join in. It's kind of typical for freshman to want to sit and stare and not want to move.

We believe that an interactive Theatre experience would be most effective because you can have them be a part of the play, and they can also put some people in a certain situation to see how they feel and make them understand how real some social issues are.

### *Mentor Group Research*

Because my students were familiar with the use of “mentor texts” in the classroom, and I had introduced my dramaturgy work on *14* as a potential “mentor” dramaturgy project, I decided to continue using this strategy for my students’ dramaturgy-activist training by having each dramaturgy group research and choose three different “mentor groups.” The research prompt and example student responses are provided below:

Research prompt: **Use outside research to choose three different groups that use Theatre of the Oppressed or Interactive Theatre techniques effectively to address relevant issues in society.**

*Example dramaturgy team response #1:*

**What is the name and location of the group?**

Jan Hus Homeless Outreach and Advocacy placed in New York City.

**Provide a detailed description of what occurs in the video footage.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vi1HfSiMxCU>

This video is to raise awareness of the homeless people, and how it could happen to anyone. First, the woman is “warming up” the audience, where they do simple interactive exercises back and forth her and the audience. Then, it is the actual play, and it is about a homeless man who is trying to get the custody of his 4-year old daughter, but unable and rejected to at the courthouse because of his social identity. Lastly, in the forum, some people from the audience jump in as the main character who was trying to get the custody of his daughter and experience what it would be like to be in their shoes.

**Is the group using a Theatre of the Oppressed or Interactive Theatre technique If so, which one?**

This group uses Forum Theatre.

**What does this group seem to be trying to accomplish with their work?**

This group is trying to raise awareness of the homeless, trying to get them to be treated equally and not judged harshly because it could happen to anyone.

**Based on the video and your research, how effective does this group's work seem?**

We think it's effective because the audience got involved and excited and in the end the message got through to the people.

**Brainstorm how might you use this group as a "Mentor Group" with your own dramaturgy team outreach work.**

We may use this group as a mentor group, especially the Forum Theatre portion where they had people from the audience jump in and experience what it felt like to be part of the performance as a homeless person.

*Example dramaturgy team response #2:*

**What is the name and location of the group?**

- Interactive Theatre Project
- CU Boulder

**Provide a detailed description of what occurs in the video footage.**

- They are acting and involving the audience. They are also trying to improve their acting, by getting feedback from others. This video just shows them talking about their program along with clips of them rehearsing for various productions.

**Is the group using a Theatre of the Oppressed and/or Interactive Theatre technique**

**If so, which one?**

- They are using the technique of Forum Theatre because they are trying to get audience members to directly interact with the theatre production. They will have audience members think through what actually happened in the scenario and make application to personal experiences. They will also have audience members think about possible consequences of the performed scenario and discuss and dialog possible solutions and potential strategies for change.

**What does this group seem to be trying to accomplish with their work?**

- They want their audience to relate to the characters, by involving the audience in their productions.
- They are also trying to give participants the ability to discuss possible solutions and potential strategies for change, using the wisdom of the community to create better solutions.
- They address a lot of big social justice issues that are currently happening, such as sexual assault, or poverty, and try to raise awareness about these things. They also are trying to make campus more inclusive

**Based on the video and research, how effective does this group's work seem?**

- They have been performing since 1999, so they seem to be effective and they used to perform at freshman orientation, relating topics like “sexual assault, binge drinking, racism and other hot-button topics”.

- They did lose all their funding in May, 2015, so we dunno... However, we do believe they were very effective for the people who participated, and did achieve their goal of raising awareness, just to what extent, we don't know.

**Brainstorm how might you use this group as a “Mentor Group” with your own dramaturgy team outreach work.**

- They use topics that are prevalent on campus, so we can do our play on something that most of the students relate to, to maximize how much the students can relate to it.
- We could also use them as a Mentor Group by trying to get audience members to relate the topics discussed in our play to their own lives and brainstorm ideas about how to deal those problems in real life.

*Example dramaturgy team response #3:*

**What is the name and location of the group?**

The Mandala Center for Change is in Port Townsend, Washington.

**Provide a detailed description of what occurs in the video footage.**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2xjQab\\_cYc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2xjQab_cYc)

This video was a forum, where the actors first portrayed some thoughts that appear in people's minds that prevent them from acting. The audience was then brought in to share

the voices that they had in their own minds as “spect-actors”. They repeated the negative messages to a single person over and over again. They then translated those negated messages to their opposites. Voices that inspire strength.

**Is the group using a Theatre of the Oppressed / Interactive Theatre technique?**

They were using a technique called Forum Theatre, in which the audience is brought into the scene to convey their thoughts.

**What does this group seem to be trying to accomplish with their work?**

The group wants to use art to inform people about societal problems. They want to help bring about change in society.

**Based on the video and research, how effective does this group’s work seem?**

Their technique seemed to have an impact on the people who were present because there was a lot of participation. They don’t have a very wide reach for their audiences, but they seem to be affecting those who do know about them.

**Brainstorm how you might use this group as a “Mentor Group” with your own theatre company outreach work.**

Our dramaturgy team could use this one as a mentor group by trying to be more engaged with our audience. We probably won’t bring them into the act, but we might be able to more effectively succeed with conveying our ideas by have more eye contact, speaking



directly with the audience, and overall, trying to show that the audience has a vital part in the production world.

### Definition Work - Oppression and Image Theatre

After students learned the basics of Theatre of the Oppressed, student dramaturgy teams started workshopping potential ideas and strategies they could use in educational outreach programs. In this next described activity, students explored definitions of oppression and then conducted some target audience brainstorming related to oppressive forces in their lives. Students then worked on using Boal's Image Theatre to represent oppression for their target audience.

Team research prompt: **What are various definitions of *oppression*?**

Team brainstorming prompt: **Which definition seems most relevant to your target audience?**

**Why?** Representative student responses and image theatre examples are provided below:

#### *Pressure from Peers and Self Group statements:*

Example #1: The feeling of being heavily burdened, mentally or physically, by troubles, adverse (harmful) conditions, anxiety, etc. seems most relevant to our audience. At our age, we are burdened more often by societal pressures and expectations than by figures of authority. This is not necessarily true, but more stress factors come from our peers and ourselves than people in positions of authority.

Example #2: Judgment and bullying in school environments often lead to anxiety, self-consciousness, etc. These things build up over time and eventually causes someone to feel burdened by troubles, having a heavy weight on them as they constantly have to worry about these things.

Example #3: The most relevant to our target audience is “the feeling of being heavily burdened, mentally or physically, by troubles, adverse conditions, anxiety, etc.” This is because ninth graders these days have a lot of pressure to be “perfect” or “smart” and after a while it can be very tiring. This can have a huge impact on the person and can cause what the feeling of oppression.

*Image Theatre Examples for pressure from peers and self:*

- A student dramaturgy team chose to have one member go to the center of the room and then froze in a pose that looked like self-choking.
  - The audience responded that they felt like the image represented self-pressure
- Another dramaturgy team used all members to create a picture that looked a bit like drowning/ attempting to come up for air/ pushing yourself up by pushing others down
  - The audience stated that the image might represent peer pressure and “drowning” in the school environment.

### *Academic Stress and Pressure Group Statements*

Example #1: The definition that seems most relevant to our audience is: “the feeling of being heavily burdened, mentally or physically, by troubles, adverse conditions, anxiety, etc.” We believe that this is most relevant to our audience because “the feeling of being heavily burdened” could mean stress over academics or other changes in life that come with the teenage years.

Example #2: The most relevant definition was the feeling of being heavily burdened, mentally or physically, by troubles, adverse conditions, anxiety, etc. and because since students in advanced classes normally over stress and get very anxious about school.

Example #3: Homework, finals, projects, and tests also heavily burden 9th graders, causing mental exhaustion, anxiety, and stress.

### *Image Theatre Examples of Academic Stress and Pressure*

- One student dramaturgy team asked if they could use props, to which I said yes, of course. They had one student lie on the ground in the center of the room, and then they used some textbooks from our class bookcase to surround the student. They also placed a textbook on the student’s chest and used an open textbook to cover the student’s face.

- Audience members stated that they thought the image might represent academic pressure and stress/ being overwhelmed by school/ not being able to escape academic pressure
  
- A second dramaturgy team focused on this issue by having one student stand in the center of the room, holding a textbook over her face with other group members surrounding the first student, pointing as if to “make fun” of the student.
  
- Audience members believed this image represented bullying based on academic status--advanced vs. non-advanced students/ focus on who got the highest grade on a test, etc.

### *Depression Group Statements*

Example #1: a sense of being weighed down in body or mind: depression --seems more relevant to our target audience because it's easier to understand and more relatable among teenagers.

Example #2: the feeling of being heavily burdened, mentally or physically, by troubles, adverse conditions, anxiety, etc.” This definition shows that oppression does not have to be just physical, but also mental, such as that of depression. Oppression comes in many forms.

### *Image Theatre Examples for Depression*

- A dramaturgy team sent three members to the middle of the room. One student seemed to be silently screaming while reaching out hands for help, the second student faced the first student but covered his eyes, and the third student faced the student but covered her ears.
  - Audience members believed the first student represented the silent scream/ plea for help when one is suffering from depression, with the second and third students representing the inability of friends and family to *hear* the pleas for help or *see* the pleas for help.

### Personal Connections - Writing About and Performing Oppression

The second significant activity students worked on during this stage of the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project was a narrative and performative skills task in which they were asked to make personal connections to oppressive forces in their own lives. Students were required to answer the provided prompt in their writer's notebook, but they could choose where they placed the response. To clarify, students have sections in their writer's notebooks that we call their "Doors of Writing," and I respect their privacy by not opening those "doors" unless invited to do so by the student. Students were not required to present their personal connection piece to the class, but several did choose to sit in the "Bouncy Chair." The personal connection pieces that were performed are the ones I chose to use as student examples below.

Student writing prompt: **Have you ever *felt oppressed*?** Student Performance Examples to this prompt are provided below:

## Grades and Oppression

I tend to feel oppressed during finals week every semester, and weighed down by all the studying I must accomplish. Rather than focusing on building my knowledge of the actual content and bettering my understanding, I spend my time strategizing test-taking skills which will, most likely, never be utilized past my high school career. This is very frustrating, and I feel that the grade system tends to oppress most students, especially in an extremely high-achieving, competitive environment like Fairview.

## White Guilt and Oppression

I have never felt oppressed because I am a middle class white male. I am the exact opposite of oppression. I try to be understanding and kind to others so they can also feel that their life is fair, but I have never been oppressed because I know I'm privileged. I just feel guilty that so many people are oppressed and I can't do anything about it. I don't know why some people are privileged and some people aren't. It doesn't seem fair.

Yes. I mean, I get pretty easily stressed and I am prone to really nasty anxiety, so when I have a lot of school work and other, personal issues, to stress about, I suppose you could say I feel oppressed. But is it okay to say I feel oppressed when I'm a privileged white person? I feel guilty. I feel guilty for so many reasons. I have always expected the best of myself and my unreasonably high expectations lead to perfectionism and OCPD, which

has caused me to have anxiety and other feelings that could easily fall under the category of “oppressed,” but I still feel guilty about saying I feel oppressed.

## Gender and Oppression

Up until I moved recently, every day I would walk home, and every day I would be cat called. I also have taken self-defense lessons since I was in fourth grade, and have had to fight back against many people. (I have broken two men’s noses, and I will do it again.)

Yes; more mentally than physically. I have been called r\*tarded and told I was an abomination to God (that one was kind of amusing) for not identifying as cisgender female or heterosexual. I am told that I am too young to know how I feel or who I feel attraction to and I am belittled and misgendered daily. I have also been oppressed for having mental illnesses and struggling with certain tasks. The comments don’t affect me that much; I’m just more careful about who I trust. When they come from my parents, that’s harder, but even so, I know myself well enough to know what I am confident and sure about.

## Race, Ethnicity, and Oppression

Yes. Yes, I have felt oppressed. It usually pertains my physical appearance, but I have been oppressed mentally. I’ve been called terrorist on multiple occasions, scum, and various other slurs. Also, in India, women are held up to heavy expectations (being

modest, traditional, conservative...) and I break all those rules, inciting harsh criticism whenever I'm in India. I usually never let it get the best of me, though.

I have been oppressed because of my race. School work drags me down, and it sometimes doesn't allow time for me to do what I love and my hobbies. I'm usually so focused on school work that I forget the people and things around me. In middle school, my old group of friends were making fun of my race by forcing me to do their homework. I was oppressed by the stereotypes of my race.

### Target Audience Oppression and Bouncy Chair Q&A

The third significant activity required students to look back at their responses and work connected to Activity #1 (Oppression Definitions), and to develop personas who could enter the Bouncy Chair for a Q&A session with the audience. The "Bouncy Chair" is a chair made out of bungee cords that my students love to sit in when sharing their writing or taking on different personas. For the Bouncy Chair Q&A, student dramaturgy teams sent representatives to sit in the Bouncy Chair as their created persona, and answered questions from the audience in character.

I've listed some of the fictional personas created by dramaturgy teams below, as well as some of the questions asked by audience members when a persona was in the Bouncy Chair.

*Julia is a 9th grader who does not dress slutty, and yet she's gotten in trouble for wearing a sleeveless shirt because there's a double standard, guys can wear tank tops, but girls can't. Julia is frustrated because girls aren't allowed to wear too revealing clothes, so the guys won't be distracted. Instead of teaching guys that girls aren't objects,*



*this is teaching girls to cover themselves up. Julia wishes she could do something to change all of this.*

Audience example questions:

- Have you talked to the administration about your concerns?
- Do you feel like an object?
- If you knew the rules, why would you wear a sleeveless shirt?

***Tommy** thinks he's smart enough, but he gets bullied by other kids because he isn't taking all advanced classes. He tried to stay motivated to do his school work, but he gets depressed when he thinks about how his peers view him as stupid. He doesn't know how to convince others that he isn't stupid.*

Audience example questions:

- Why are you taking the dumb kid classes?
- What is your favorite subject in school?
- Have you tried ignoring students who make fun of you?

***Sarah** is a 4.0 student in all advanced classes, but doesn't feel happy. She sleeps maybe two hours a night, and is currently involved in the marching band, three student clubs, and two volunteer organizations. She wishes she could tell her parents that she is so tired, but they won't understand. All they care about is that she gets accepted to Harvard in a few years. Sarah doesn't want to let her parents down.*

Audience example questions:

- Have you considered quitting some of the extracurriculars?
- Have you tried talking to your parents?
- Do you actually want to go to Harvard?

### *Developing an Educational Outreach Program*

To create an effective educational outreach program, student dramaturgy teams completed the following tasks:

1) Describe your target audience (*9th grade advanced students at Mountain View*)

Here are the whole class example responses listed on a white board:

- Smart
- Rambunctious (sometimes)
- Studious
- Stressed out
- Over Achievers
- Mature (sometimes)
- Perfectionists

Dramaturgy team example written responses are provided below:

9th graders tend to have short attention spans, as well as are only interesting in things that are unique or funny. They can be very rude when being taught something, as well as having a very closed mind to things like this. Also, living in and near Boulder, they are all privileged kids and are lucky to be going to school here, since the atmosphere is, in general, good for students.

We have the advantage of being in the same position and age as our target audience and we can share personal experiences and instead of putting ourselves in the audience's shoes, we are already in their shoes. I think a presentation from someone who was not our age talking about issues that affect us and possibly not them could be uncomfortable or even

just not effective. The audience will know that as their peers we both understand and have experienced the issues we want to talk about.

Our target audience is focused, intelligent, mature, and can be somewhat judgmental. There are also people who gossip, but there are also students who step up and do something good. Our target audience is very open-minded with lots of ideas and very strong opinions about certain things. We like to be active in certain situations instead of sitting back and listen.

Advanced LA 9th graders at Mountain View are a very interesting audience. They are clever and smart, but don't have a long attention span, and get bored easily. Not to mention the fact that the audience gets distracted very easily, for example by a phone notification.

They care a lot about their grades, in general. Hopefully, they all are trying to do their best work. They care about their reputation probably more than they should. They care about what people think about them, especially their friends. Some of them want to be perfect, some of them want to be popular, some of them want attention, and some of them are just desperate to be looked up to or to be loved. Ninth graders care about their images. They care about the facade they put up and the walls they build to hide behind.

Our target audience is likely between the ages of 14 and 15, overly concerned with themselves and different things that apply to their lives, entering or in puberty, and awkward. Some are overly concerned with sports, while others focus more on academics.

2) What ideas do you have for how to use Theatre of the Oppressed strategies to address relevant social issues with your target audience?

We can use Theatre of the Oppressed to address relevant issues because we can allow the audience to participate in different activities to let them practice different situations.

Our group should focus on gossip because we all see it in our lives and *Much Ado About Nothing* the most.

We could use games to help illustrate social issues in an interactive and attention grabbing way, and then we could also use image theatre and forum theatre. Both would keep the audience's attention and inform them on the issues.

I think that we can use a lot of interactive theatre and theatre of the oppressed: combined, we can break down the fourth wall and create something engaging that will hopefully inspire some sort of social change. We can get the audience involved in our production, and in turn, the issues we're discussing in our performance.

We could use interactive theatre together to create an exciting way to teach teens about issues in everyday life that would get them thinking about how to change it.

## Formal Target Audience Research

The final pre-production task for the dramaturgy teams was to conduct formal target audience research using 21st century tools. This section details the process the teams went through to develop target audience questionnaires, analyze the data, and finally choose the focus social issue for the summative dramaturgy team presentation. Prompts are bolded and representative student responses are provided through bullet points or with quotation marks.

**1) As a dramaturgy team, think back to all the preparation and research work completed to prepare for the final presentation. At this point, what are some social issues that group members feel should be the focus of your team's outreach work?**

- Believing without knowing the whole truth
- Gossip and eavesdropping
- Hearing the whole story
- Ruining someone's reputation
- Assuming that what you hear is the whole truth

**2) Brainstorm data you would like to have about your target audience to help you develop your outreach program. What questions could you ask to get this data?**

- Have you ever jumped to conclusions without knowing the whole story?
- Have you ever participated in gossiping about someone?
- If so, how often have you observed someone judging before they know the whole story?
- Have you ever heard of people gossiping about you?
- Rate the importance of knowing the whole truth about something before acting.
- Has it ever helped you if somebody didn't know the whole truth?
- Does gossip ruin people's reputation?
- How important is reputation to 9th graders at Mountain View High?
- Do you think that people have made judgments about you without knowing you?
- In your opinion, does gossip hurt or help you?
- Do you feel that gender issues are a big problem in your life?
- Which is the biggest problem at Mountain View High? Options: Gender issues, gossiping, stereotyping, jumping to conclusions, ruining someone's reputation
- Have you ever seen anything get way out of hand because somebody spread lies?
- Have you ever seen somebody ruin somebody else's reputation?
- Would you say that many times, gossip ruins reputations?

**3) Use these brainstorming ideas listed above to develop a Google form to gather data on your target audience.**

**4) What did you learn from the Google survey results?** “Gender issues is not a big problem at Mountain View High School, but sexism does occur. A lot of things that occur *in Much Ado About Nothing* also occur at Mountain View. People think that jumping to conclusions and gossiping are of equal issue at Mountain View.

**5) What will be your group’s relevant focus topic/social issue? Why?** “Gossiping We all think it would be a fun thing to do and is very relevant in the context of Mountain View and the survey results confirmed that.”

**6) How will you use information found in the Google survey to develop your outreach program?** “We will use the responses to some questions to see what need to be addressed in our hallway presentation. We will also find out which aspects of gossip we will address. In addition, we will focus on gossip in the educational outreach section of our production.”

## CDSA Curriculum Sequence

### CDSA Step 6: Performance and Educational Outreach Planning and Implementation

In final preparation for the dramaturgy team final presentations, students created a performance and presentation plan which consisted of four sections. The prompts are bolded and student example responses are provided below in italics:

#### *Section One: Before the Presentation*

##### **I. Lobby Display**

**1) What do you want your audience members to be thinking or learning about before they watch *Much Ado About Nothing*?** “We want our audience members to be thinking about the life of Shakespeare and how it influenced his plays, especially *Much Ado About Nothing*. Also, we hope to create an interactive display relating to gossip to interest our audience before our performance.”

**2) How will your dramaturgy team use the lobby display to get audiences excited to watch *Much Ado About Nothing*?** “Our hallway display will be interactive and fun and will give our target audience the opportunity to learn interesting facts about our topics. It will allow for our classmates to think about connections between the play and their personal lives. Instead of simply reading a paragraph on Shakespeare or on *Much Ado About Nothing*, people will be able to pick fun facts out of a box or respond to questions about gossip and the play on a poster.”

**3) What is your dramaturgy team trying to accomplish with your lobby display?** “We are trying to educate our target audience about Shakespeare and *Much Ado About Nothing* in a fun



and interactive way. We also want to show connections between gossip in this play and gossip between ninth graders here at Mountain View High School.”

**4) What are your lobby display ideas?** “We are going to research interesting facts about Shakespeare and *Much Ado About Nothing* to put in a box for people to read. Also, we are going to create a poster with questions regarding gossip and the play that people can respond to. Finally, we will enhance our hallway display with pictures and quotes by Shakespeare, along with important quotes from the play.”

**5) What is your dramaturgy team’s lobby display plan?** “Two dramaturgs will make the poster and the fun facts, along with finding pictures and quotes from Shakespeare. The other remaining three will print the quotes and images. Everyone will pitch in to construct the poster. It will be hung in the hallway outside of the LA classroom.”

## II. Playbill

**1) What do you want your audience to learn about Shakespeare from reading the playbill? Why?** “We want our audience to learn about Shakespeare’s early life, along with the major events in his life that influenced his plays. It is important for the audience to be well educated about the playwright to fully understand the play’s themes and origin.”

For the **Dramaturg’s Note** section of the playbill:

**2) Why this play, for this particular audience, at this particular time, in this particular place?** “We are performing this play because it contains a lot of the same issues and themes that are present here at Mountain View High School in the twenty first century, such as gossip. The effects and content of gossip has slightly evolved over the years, but the overall

principles remain quite similar. People in this area are generally well educated and will understand the principles in the play, along with respecting our social outreach.”

**3) How will we integrate our research about the social problem and our data collection (responses from the target audience surveys) into our program note?** “In our program note, we will include some important statistics from the survey, especially about how many people have gossiped or been gossiped about, and the effects of gossip on our target audience. We will also include our definition of gossip.”

**4) What is your dramaturgy team trying to accomplish with your playbill?** “Our goal with the playbill is to educate our audience about Shakespeare and introduce to our audience what we are trying to achieve. We also would like to include facts and statistics about gossip and how they connect to our social issue and the play, along with our target audience.”

**5) What other ideas do we have for the playbill?** “For the playbill, we can also include the casting on the back and a picture of a mask on the front.”

**6) What is your dramaturgy team’s playbill plan (who will be responsible for various items in the playbill)?** “We will each work on incorporating facts and ideas into the playbill such as information on Shakespeare’s life, gossip, and statistics from our class survey.”

## Section 2: During the Presentation

### I. The Script

**1) What are some difficulties our audience members might face when trying to understand the language of Shakespeare?** “Our audience might have some trouble understanding the old-fashioned language of the play. However, we have all spent a lot of time reading and annotating the script, so we have a good feeling about our performance cutting of the

script. Also, everyone understands the main plot of the story, and with context in the play there should not be a lot of difficulty understanding the main points and events of the play. In addition to this individual work, we have created a narrative summary at the beginning of each act to help guide the audience through the play.”

**2) What ideas do we have to help them understand this language during the play?**

**(Modern-day narration, translators, subtitles, signs, body language, etc.)** “We will have narrators summarizing each act in modern day language before each scene is acted out to ensure that everyone understands what is going to happen. Because everyone has read and annotated the story, there should not be too much difficulty understanding the events in the play.”

**3) Even though your presentation of the performance script will be very short (15-20 minutes), how will you keep the spine or the arc of the play intact?** “We will keep the spine of the play intact by maintaining all important components of the narrative arc in our script, as well as connections to our social issue of gossip. Our play will include the exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution of the story so that everyone understands the themes, characterization, relationships, and main plot points.”

**4) How will the audience know you are starting the dramaturgy team presentation?**

“Our presentation will begin when we assemble on the “stage” and the narrator will begin to summarize the act.”

**5) How will the audience know that when the performance is over?** “The performance will be over after the final dancing scene when we all come out and take a bow.”

### Section 3: After the Show (Educational Outreach)

**1) How will your dramaturgy team use Theatre of the Oppressed and/or interactive theatre to help the audience actively explore the target social issue?** “We will ask for a volunteer to share a scenario involving gossip and we will use improvisation to act out the scene. The volunteers will be rewarded with a slice of cake as gratitude and motivation for participation. At a certain point in the scene, one of us will pause the play and ask the audience what to do. Then, we will continue the play following the advice of the audience. We can repeat this process multiple times depending on time constraints.”

**2) Who will write or construct the scenarios for the interactive theatre outreach performance?** “The idea is for the audience to come up with a scenario, however if people are not interested in participating then we will have previously, collectively written an emergency Forum Theatre scene to perform.”

**3) Who will serve as actors in the outreach performance?** “We will all participate in this performance.”

**4) How many facilitators are you planning on using during the discussion with the audience members?** “We will have two facilitators.”

**5) What do we want our audience members to think or do after participating in our outreach program?** “We want our audience to think about all the effects and consequences of gossip, intended and unintended. After the play, we hope that the target audience will think twice before saying something behind someone’s back, or will actively try to stop gossip among their friends. Our overall goal with this is to make an impact on our audience; for them to walk away from this class having thought about their previous reactions to gossip and hopefully think twice

next time they are gossiping. We want the audience to register that gossip does hurt and to try and put themselves into the shoes of someone who is being gossiped about.”

**6) What are we really trying to accomplish with our educational outreach program?** “We want the audience to understand that throughout history, gossip has the potential to be hurtful. Whether it is unintentional or not, people need to realize that gossip always has unintended consequences and negative effects on someone.”

Part Four: Assessing Effectiveness -Audience Feedback

**Hallway display effectiveness questions for the audience:**

“Did you learn a new fact about Shakespeare from our hallway display?”

“On a scale of 1-5, how effective was our poster?”

“Did you engage with our hallway display?”

**Playbill effectiveness questions for the audience:**

“Did our playbill educate you about Shakespeare and his mission statement?”

***Much Ado About Nothing* performance effectiveness questions for the audience:**

“ Did our performance make the plotline of M.A.A.N. more understandable and entertaining?”

**Educational Outreach effectiveness questions for the audience:**

“Did you participate in our educational outreach? If not, why?”

“Did our educational outreach program inform you about the negative impacts of gossip?”

**What will your audience members use to answer these questions?** “We created a Google survey to measure the effectiveness of our performances. The link is on Schoology, and students

will use their personal devices to answer the questions. If anyone does not possess a device, they can borrow one from a neighbor.”

### *Dramaturgy Team Performances and Outreach Summary*

CDSA Step Six concluded with the actual performance and outreach dramaturgy team presentations. Once all dramaturgy teams had finished planning and preparing, each dramaturgy team had the opportunity to see if their plans were actually effective when used with the target audience. Each dramaturgy team created their hallway displays, playbills, presented their cut version of *Much Ado About Nothing*, and attempted to engage their target audience through an outreach program which utilized Theatre of the Oppressed Techniques. The next section details CDSA Step Seven, in which dramaturgy team members evaluate the effectiveness of these performances and outreach presentations.

## CDSA Curriculum Sequence

### CDSA Step 7: Individual Dramaturg Challenge

The Collaborative Dramaturgy for Social Activism research project in the classroom concluded with a two-hour long final exam period. The policy at the research site school is that students must remain in the classroom for the entire two-hour block and must participate in some sort of instructional activity. Therefore, this last day served as an excellent time for my student dramaturg-activists to demonstrate their confidence and skills related to the Common Core Standards of Language Arts in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and continued to practice new skills of the dramaturg-activist. The provided prompts are in bold and representative student responses are italicized.

#### *Dramaturgy Team Effectiveness*

Prompt #1: **Do you feel like your dramaturgy team accomplished what you all set out to do? (In other words, do you feel your company was effective?) How do you know?** In their responses to this prompt, study participants used different methods to evaluate their effectiveness. For example, over half of the participants chose to use data from audience surveys. Some students limited their entire response to the quantitative data gathered from the survey results. Below are several examples of participants using the actual survey results to agree that their dramaturgy teams were indeed effective:

Example #1: Yes, I do feel as though my dramaturgy team accomplished our goals.

Based on the survey, most students learned a new fact about the playwright, Shakespeare, from our hallway display. Also, most students believed that our interactive poster about

gossip was effective in terms of engaging the audience, which I'm satisfied with. Over 80% of our peers participated in our hallway display based on the survey results, and 100% of students agreed that they learned about Shakespeare, our mission statement, and the issue of gossip from our playbill, which I'm very proud of! In addition, most our peers believe that our *Much Ado About Nothing* performance made the play much more understandable and entertaining. 100% of students thought that our outreach program effectively informed them about the negative effects of gossip!"

Example #2: I think that our dramaturgy team was effective in achieving our goals. We could make the play a little more understandable for most of the audience (70.6%), and could show the negative impacts of gossip 100% of the time. 64.7% of the audience learned something new about Shakespeare from our poster, and most of them thought that our outreach work was effective in evaluating the impacts of gossip. Lastly, 100% said that our playbill educated them about Shakespeare and the issue of gossip.

Several study participants used the survey results to admit that they were not entirely effective.

Example #1: Based on the audience feedback that we got back from our Google survey, there were certain parts of our presentation that were more effective than others. For example, no one said that our hallway display did not convince them that gossiping was a problem; everyone said that it was either in the middle or it convinced them. In addition, 85% of people said it made them think about how frequently it happened in their lives. However, no one said that that reading about Shakespeare in the playbill helped them to



understand the play better so we must question the effectiveness of the playbill. Overall, we were not as effective as we would have hoped.

Example #2: “It was difficult to be effective with this project because each dramaturgy team was working with *Much Ado About Nothing* and because we all had the same target audience, every group also ended up addressing basically the same social issue. By the time we presented to the class, I think our target audience had grown tired of *Much Ado* and its connection to the topic of gossip.

Example #3: I do not think that my theatre company accomplished everything that we set out to do, especially because I do not think that my company was effective at getting our point of gossip across to the audience. I know this because of some of the responses from our surveys along with what we thought we did not accomplish. In our survey, many of the responses contained the lower numbers.

Other participants focused their entire responses on their social activism skills:

Example #1: Overall, I believe we were effective as a dramaturgy team because we used all our combined skills and dramaturg choices to convey the dangers of insulting, accusing, and gossiping. I do believe that theatre can and should be used as a tool for social change, and I’m glad we could use *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Theatre of the Oppressed* to address relevant social issues with our target audience.

Example #2: I believe we were effective because we could connect with our target audience and help make them happy through our performances. We helped our audience

become more aware of social issues like gossip, and I think all (including my dramaturgy team members) learned more about the dangers of gossip and focusing too much on reputation.

Several participants took a more balanced approach when answering this prompt. Rather than referring only to survey responses or focusing on a discussion of activism strategies and success with the target audience, some attempted to include both. For example, one student explained:

Overall, I do believe our dramaturgy team accomplished what we set out to do, which was to inform the entire class about gossip, and how it is an issue. Our dramaturgy team provided info on gossip and our educational outreach and script covered gossip and gossips effect on people. We had an interactive hallway display that also dealt with our educational outreach issue. With the feedback, we've gotten our performance was very effective, ranging from 6-10. As for our educational outreach, it was also very effective, especially if we look back at the survey. People said our educational outreach was ranging from 6-10 on effectiveness. As for the hallway display and playbill, the effectiveness ranged from 7-10. We had some very good comments on our hallway display, sadly though we threw away our hallway display after the play. Although we don't have the poster anymore to remember the project, I know I will remember that we could make a difference with a target audience when it comes to this issue.

One of the more surprising approaches taken by students in answering this prompt was the focus on snacks when attempting to get the target audience to engage the focus social issue:

Example #1: Admittedly, our target audience did not seem incredibly receptive, at first, to our performance and outreach program. But then one of my dramaturgy team members got the fabulous idea that we should start giving them snacks, and this was a great

success! After the snacks our audience became more receptive to our outreach program and wanted to be more involved. Is this social activism or bribery? We aren't quite sure, but we do know that snacks may be the key to our target audience, not Theatre of the Oppressed.

Example #2: Our dramaturgy team's work was effective because we could reach a compromise (bribery) with our target audience with Mentos minted, sugar free gum; we could catch the attention of our classmates and everybody participated! Yes, we are aware that neither William Shakespeare nor Augusto Boal planned on the use of gum to engage audience members, but we had to do what we had to do.

**Prompt #2: If you could present your dramaturgy team's project again (including the lobby display, playbill, performance, and educational outreach) using the same focus social issue and dramaturgy team members, what would you change? Why?** Most study participants responded that they would want to revise their educational outreach program to encourage more audience involvement. Many of the student-dramaturg-activists mentioned that their audience members "didn't want to participate," and several stated that they wish they had offered a "reward" for people who did choose to participate in the educational outreach program, either as spect-actors or those who could offer solutions and reflective comments on the Forum Theatre Scene. One study participant went as far as to say that his group should have been "more aggressive in making people participate," so that their outreach program "could have been more effective for the target audience." Although only one study participant believed that the audience should be forced to participate, it was clear that many were frustrated and felt very challenged in their work with the target audience. This student seems to sum up what many study

participants were feeling: “In the end, we gave it all we had, but the outcome wasn’t what we had expected at all. Our group had even talked about it afterwards on how we could’ve made it more successful, but it was really, really difficult to work with our target audience.”

Several participants mentioned in their responses that the issues with the educational outreach portion may have stemmed from the fact that not every audience member was able to participate, even if they wanted to. One student wrote that they would change their educational outreach program to “include everyone.” Another student observed that according to her dramaturgy team’s audience feedback survey, “people who got to participate in the Forum Theatre scene” felt that the project was more “effective than those who did not get to participate.” One student concluded that one of the reasons why his group did not “have much interaction with the audience” even though his dramaturgy team “tried really hard to be welcoming and engaging” is that the Forum Theatre script and other interactive theatre scenarios might not have been as relevant to the target audience’s lives.” This student explained:

Even though the scenarios demonstrated the social problem, the setting of the issue was not familiar to the target audience, since most teenagers do not have full-time jobs in an office and they are not married. If we had been more careful to write scenes set in the high school environment, perhaps the audience would have been more willing to engage with the social problem and propose potential solutions to resolve the problem.

Some students moved away from the focus the lack of preferred audience participation to the realization that although social issues had been highlighted, there was not much success in determining viable solutions to the social problems. One participant stated:

As for the educational outreach, we had a lot of participants and we got our point across, but I wish we could have focused more on a solution to the issue rather than just bringing

attention to it. I think our target audience was definitely aware of the issues of gossip at our high school before our educational outreach, and yet they did not seem willing to propose solutions to this problem. It's hard to tell if they couldn't think of a solution, if they didn't view this issue as an actual problem, or maybe if they just didn't care.

Several other students mentioned that they felt like the social problem was addressed and solutions to the problem were proposed, but the reaction of the audience made the dramaturgy team members feel like the target audience wasn't taken the educational outreach program seriously:

What I wish we could change is to figure out how to get our target audience to engage with the focus social issue without us having to add in humor. I feel like the people in the class didn't take our work seriously and when we tried to keep them on track, they seemed very impatient and only wanted to pay attention when things were humorous. I didn't feel comfortable making light of what we view is a serious social problem, but we also had to keep the audience engaged.

Continuing with the focus on educational outreach, some student participants proposed in their responses that they wish they could have integrated Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed and (without knowing it) Brecht's Epic Theatre strategies into the *Much Ado About Nothing* performance:

If we were to perform again, I would have stopped the performance between acts and maybe even scenes, and sung a song or stated my own opinion about the characters, or maybe we could stop and we could have a Joker ask the audience how they would resolve certain situations. Overall, I would want the audience to be quite aware that they are watching *Much Ado About Nothing* to identify and learn about the focus social issue, rather than just

sitting there being passive spectators. It seemed like our target audience didn't care about anything unless it was humorous, and having the audience just sit there and laugh is not going to solve social problems.

**Prompt #3: Think about all the different performances you watched as an audience member. In your opinion, which dramaturgy team's work was most effective? Why?**

In their responses to this prompt, study participants tended to use the following language and strategies when describing the effective dramaturgy teams:

- Entertaining
- Enjoyable
- Fun
- Everyone was engaged
- Creative
- Organized
- Included songs
- Included narrators
- Relatable
- Provocative

Many students preferred dramaturgy teams which presented work that they considered to be “eye-opening” and helped audience members see “possible ways in which certain social situations can be changed or resolved.” A few students stated that they felt like the most effective dramaturgy teams were those that “made people come up,” and “forced the target audience to participate.” Continuing this thought, one student described a dramaturgy team's choice to have

audience members write down insults as part of the lobby display and then turn in the insults for a cookie. The insult sheets were pulled out of a hat during the outreach presentation, and the students who had written down the specific insults were told to come up and participate. Some students felt that this strategy was “a really good way to get people involved and have them share their insults,” and even though it was “forced participation, it didn’t feel like people were being coerced into doing something they didn’t want to do.”

### *Part Two: Group Member Effectiveness*

**Prompt #1: What were your initial expectations for your fellow dramaturgy team members?**

Out of the responses provided by the focus study participants, the most common characteristics or descriptions included the following:

- Helpful
- Equal effort
- Cooperative
- Work hard
- Communicate

The idea of building off each other’s strengths was also common, such as is found in the following student example:

I expected my dramaturgy team members to be involved with getting the show and educational outreach program up and running. I thought everyone would work together and in the end, we would have a great performance. I knew we each came in with different strong suits so I didn’t expect everyone to be doing everything.

Prompt #2: **Please reflect on each group member's contribution to this project and the overall ease of working with each person.** For this prompt, study participants reflected on each fellow dramaturgy team member, and wrote a few sentences about everyone. In the space below are the common positive and negative characteristics, common phrases used, and representative student responses to an individual's work on the dramaturgy team. The positive characteristics that were most often found in the participant responses when reflecting on an effective dramaturgy team member included:

- Excited
- Engaged
- Work ethic
- Upbeat
- Cooperative
- Open-minded
- Nice
- Good communicator
- Fun to be around
- Leader
- Dedicated
- Efficient
- Focused
- Positive energy
- Cared
- Genuine



- Thoughtful
- Flexible
- Responsible

Positive phrases that were used by multiple focus study participants when reflecting on an effective dramaturgy team member included:

- did his/her best
- worked his/her butt off
- eager to help
- the glue that held us together
- put forth a lot of effort to overcome discomfort
- really saved us
- proud of his/her work

Representative complete student responses include:

Example #1: “She is so artistic and she worked really hard to prepare for our performance. She showed a lot of strong leadership skills. I think that she deserves special recognition on being so determined and hardworking.”

Example #2: “He always devoted time outside of class to contribute to the project and was a pleasure to collaborate with!”

*Part Four: Dramaturgy and Social Issues*

For the final portion of the dramaturg-activist challenge (final exam), students were given this scenario: **You are a dramaturg working with a professional theatre company that focuses on bringing Shakespeare’s work to public school students. Your job is to help design an educational outreach program utilizing Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing* that will address relevant social issues connected to your target audience.** Students then went through the process of brainstorming this outreach program by completing seven writing prompts, each of which are connected to the dramaturgical process. Each of the prompts will be provided below in bold, followed by student examples in italics which will help demonstrate the social issues students chose to engage with during this process.

Prompt #1: **What is your chosen focus social issue? Why? (The chosen issue should be something that YOU believe is significant to your target audience and yourself.)** In their answers to this prompt, many study participants chose to focus on social issues connected to gender, such as misogyny, sexism, gender inequality, gender binary, and gender stereotypes. Over 90% of these participants explained that they chose to focus on gender related issues because they are “major issues” to them and “directly affects” them, close friends or family members in their own lives. Multiple students also stated that gender issues are something they feel “very passionate” about. In this section, I will provide the student sub focus issues connected to gender issues, followed by student examples underneath each category. Because many students chose to focus on gender equality specifically, I will begin with those examples. One student explained:

I would focus on the social issue of gender equality because it is a big issue but many people don’t think a lot about in everyday life until they hear a specific example of

inequality that hits closer to home. I think that everyone should be treated equally for whatever gender they are. I have friends who are gender fluid, transgender, etc. and they feel pressured to do certain things, like go into the girl's bathroom vs the boys. I want to help everybody feel equal in our society.

Another student wrote:

Gender equality would be my focus issue because it's still a major issue and I don't think a lot of people realize that. Though women have gained near equality in recent years, it still isn't complete equality and it is essential that people recognize this and fight for full equality. Perhaps the key is to get people thinking about this issue when they are young, so that if/when they find themselves in positions of power that can try to make positive difference in changing inequality based on your gender or gender identity. Or, maybe even more important than that, young people need to realize that changing our world starts with each individual person, so that in all actuality, teenagers can actually make choices to make a difference now, rather than waiting until we are adults.

Some students referred specifically to misogyny as the most important social issue to address. One student stated "the idea that another human being deserves less because of their gender is absolutely absurd, and it happens every day." A few students argued that women being valued based on their sexual purity is the major problem that should be discussed and resolved. One of the participants explained that "it is unfair that girls are expected to be pure and perfect and guys can do whatever they want but people won't say that they aren't worth anything anymore." Other students stated that gender stereotypes were the major social issue that should be addressed. One student explained that "stereotypes based on gender are used and accepted in our society on a daily basis, and this isn't okay." Another student wrote that "associating different genders with specific

roles is very common in our world, and it causes problems and tension between the genders. We can see this in our own school as well as in the media, in how jobs are filled.”

Another issue many students chose to focus on during their response was fear of hurting one’s reputation and how insults can harm others and damage reputations. One student explained:

In today’s world, many people are constantly insulting those around them due to insecurities, discomfort, and even because of jealousy. Perhaps these people do so because they want to hurt others’ reputations, and in those acts, improve their own reputations. It’s unfortunate that so many people define their self-worth based on how others view them.

Another student connected the issue of insults to the political climate in America at the time the research study occurred: I think that the focus social issue should be insults, because insults take up a big part of our lives, especially because it is election season, and a Republican (cough cough Trump.....) is busy insulting anyone and everyone around him. Several students mentioned that the issue of insults and being overly concerned with one’s reputation affected them in their daily lives and that they know the consequences of it.

A few students stated that they would focus on family dynamics for their chosen social issue. One participant wrote:

As a teenager, everyone will have trouble at some point in time with their parents, their siblings, and perhaps other extended family members. However, I feel like it becomes a social issue when the problems reach levels of dysfunction, and parties involved don’t have the proper skills to make the relationships healthy again. I choose this issue for my outreach program because I want to use certain scenarios found in *Much Ado About Nothing* and Theatre of the Oppressed scenarios to stress the importance of working to build healthy

relationships and attempting to stay close to your family members by loving and respecting them.

Prompt #2: **What ideas do you have for how you would cut/adapt the script of *Much Ado About Nothing*?** In their answers to this prompt, 100% of the study participants chose to continue focusing on their chosen social issues. Below are some examples of the participant responses to this prompt. One student wrote:

I would focus more on Claudio's interactions with Hero and how she was perceived to have become "worthless" by her father and former fiancé after they thought that she had been having an affair. I would also focus on how important it was to the men in the play (Don Pedro and Claudio in particular) that the women they chose be considered worthy. I would try to portray Claudio and Hero's relationship in a more negative way, showcasing the many troubling things in their relationship as examples of how a relationship can become too much about status and reputation. I would use this to contrast with the other relationship in the play: the relationship between Beatrice and Benedick, which (although initially looking negative) would prove to be a relationship between two people who chose each other for each other's sake, instead of a relationship between one person and the idealized image of another.

Another student brainstormed how Theatre of the Oppressed strategies could be integrated into the *Much Ado About Nothing* performance:

I would make the roles of women even more obvious and the stereotypes blatant. I might also have it so that there was a bit of Forum Theatre strategies used in the middle of the play, so that at scenes where the audience viewed women being treated poorly, they could

call for a freeze in the action, pause and someone fulfilling the role of the Joker could come out and say “does this still happen today? Why is this a problem? How could this be fixed?”

Several students said they would emphasize the patriarchal rules and privileges found within the world of the play. For example:

I would alter/cut the script by putting a large amount of emphasis on the discrimination and privilege that is given to men throughout *Much Ado About Nothing*. It is somewhat horrifying how the women of the play are treated, and along with that the concept of shaming a girl as being a slut is somewhat of a double standard, because it seems as if males are sexually to do as they please.

Another student explained:

I would emphasize the parts where Hero isn't able to defend herself against the men who accuse her just because she is a woman. I would also focus on how Beatrice is bitter that she can't get revenge on Claudio because she is a woman. Lastly, I would focus on how women were treated as possessions to marry off and give from one man to the next instead of actual people.

Many students also wrote about how they would cut the script to highlight the habits and dangers of insulting others. For example, one student explained that he would emphasize “scenes in which Benedick and Beatrice are arguing about insignificant matters and throwing insults left and right due to insecurity and, most likely, discomfort.” Another student explained that she would explore the issue of insults by integrating Theatre of the Oppressed strategies into her *Much Ado About Nothing* adaptation:

I would keep all the insults that Beatrice and Benedick throw at each other as found in Shakespeare's original script, but I would also like to do some playwriting work with the

actress and actor playing these roles. During the rehearsal period, I would help them develop original monologues about how those insults affect their character personally, and explore why they insult each other in the first place. I think it might be interesting to use these monologues as part of the school performance (maybe at the end of the original Shakespeare scenes?) and maybe we could have the audience ask the character's questions after hearing both "sides" of the story.

**Prompt #3: What ideas do you have for a lobby display?** Like their answers to prompt #2, 100% of the study participants chose to continue focusing on their initial focus social issue for this prompt. Below are some examples of the participant responses. In preparation for a performance and outreach workshop focusing on family dynamics and family dysfunction, one participant wrote:

I would have each of my classmates write two nice things about each of the family members in their household, and they could choose to add these thoughts to a "sharing wall." I would also include posters that would provide information about the different family relationships found within *Much Ado About Nothing*, and audience members could predict before watching the show the kinds of conflicts that might appear within these relationships.

Another student focusing on the issue of sexism wrote that he would do the following about his proposed lobby display:

I would want to provide many statistics and examples of sexism, especially what's common in my target audience's lives (high school). Once the audience members have learned about sexism, I would try to involve them actively by having them answer these two questions

anonymously on several sharing boards: 1) How have you been affected by sexism? 2) What is one sexist remark you have heard before, even if it wasn't directed at you?

Many students focused most their lobby display plans on gender stereotypes. For example, one student stated that she would “have people write several stereotypes and roles that they associate with either gender,” and another student wrote that his lobby display would focus on definitions of gender and “provide a timeline of stereotypical gender roles throughout the years, the ways they affect us every day.”

Several students had similar lobby display ideas for how to address insults in life. For example, one student explained that she would:

have audience members put on signs which have insults, to mimic the power of insults and the “labels” that they create. By doing this, the audience members would become more aware of the negative effects of insults by putting them in the position of the person whose reputation is spoiled by the insults another person says to them, and they would be thinking about this issue before seeing *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Another student explained:

I really like the idea of the interactive sharing boards to get the audience thinking about issues before and after the show, so I would create sharing boards with prompts such as: “Describe insults in one word”, “Have you been affected by insults? How? How do they make you feel?”, “Are most insults that you experience joking or harmful?”, “Has your self-confidence ever been affected by insults?”, “Have you ever insulted someone? If so, how did you feel afterwards?”, and “If you insult people, is it mainly to their face or behind their back?” I would also incorporate a sharing board specifically for the audience to write



about their observations of insults found *in Much Ado About Nothing* once they've viewed the production.

Another student stated that he would use sharing boards and multimedia to address this issue:

I would invite audience members to write down insults they have been called, and insults they have called other people, and the outcomes those insults had on them and the other people. I would also have a slideshow playing with videos of people talking about how they've been affected by this kind of bullying.

To address the issue of reputation and self-worth, one student explained:

I would put up a mirror (or several mirrors) in the lobby and ask audience members to write what they thought was the most important thing about the person in the mirror. I'm hoping this would get people to think about where they decide that their own worth comes from (only positive things!). Then I would have people write on a mask what they think other people valued about them and then ask themselves if they were being valued for the same things that they thought were important.

**Prompt #4: Write an original monologue that you could use in an educational outreach program addressing a focus social issue, then ask another student dramaturg to provide feedback on your work. Revise and title your monologue.** The participants continued to focus on their initial social problem chosen in prompt #1 by writing connected monologues that could potentially be used in outreach work for their target audience. Representative monologues which demonstrate the range of social issues addressed during this prompt are provided below and are presented using italics. In the following monologue titled "Lesser" the participant attempted to address issues of gender equality:

They say that they think I am equal. They tell me that I am valuable and they lie to themselves because they have decided that they could never speak untruths but every time that I work harder or do something better I can see in their eyes that they expected me to be worse. They cannot stand the thought of doing something worse than somebody they see to be a girl. They tell themselves that it's because I'm just too smart and they make themselves feel better by imagining that they are better than all the others in their class - besides me; I am the only exception to them- and they stick with this because they feel they will be mocked for being "worse than a girl". And yet, they say, just because the pay wage is unequal, just because the worst insult to their masculinity is being compared to somebody feminine, this does not mean they are misogynistic! They believe in equality, so long as they aren't lesser.

In the following monologue titled, "What Am I?" the participant addressed what she viewed are societal expectations based on gender:

"You need to be pretty" they said. "You need to dance well" they said. "You need to become a housewife," they said. "Stop dreaming," they told me. "Stop pretending you can ever be anything other than what you are." Because what am I? I am a woman. I am a woman and that is all they ever see. A girl with a pretty face and stupid, impossible dreams. A woman who wanted to grow up to be a man because what was the point of being a girl, what was the point of this body and this life if I couldn't be what I wanted to be. No one wanted to know that I could hack into their cars, steal their financial history and disappear again without so much as moving off my couch. They didn't want to know that I could create apps and software that they know they would use if it were real. They didn't want to see what I could do because "Women aren't supposed to code." They saw me writing

streams of code and scowled. They saw me creating a new world and they slammed the computer shut and told me to go do something girly for once. And I was sick of it. Sick of being told what to do. Sick of being told what I wasn't capable of. I would show them. I could build up an empire. And I could tear down the world if I wanted. And I would. I would erase their doubts. I had to.

In the next piece titled "Powerless," the participant wrote about objectification based on gender:

I was walking down the hallway in school with my friends, when we passed a group of three or four guys. They watch us as we passed by, and I swear they avoided looking at our faces but rather looked at other parts that they found more appealing. They whistled, saying things like "Oh, I'd hit that" and "hey pretty ladies, come on over to dada here, he'll make you feel right at home" followed by laughing and jeering. One of my friends slumped by, trying to hide her embarrassment at being called these names and her fury towards these boys. I wanted to do something, but I guess all of us just tried to ignore them. These boys made us feel powerless, vulnerable and objectified; it was like they viewed us as sex toys rather than human beings. It's one thing for someone to say things like that to me, but it felt like quite another when it was happening to my best friends and I didn't or couldn't do anything to help.

In the monologue titled "Invisible" a study participant addressed the issue of feeling ignored in a classroom setting because of one's gender.

It didn't matter that I had my hand up to ask a question. Every time Mr. K called on a boy, another's would take its place. It's not like this was new. It happened every day, and I knew I'd just have to go talk to him after class again, and then get another late mark for my next class. When the bell rang, I got in line with all the other girls to ask questions in hope that

we'd be able to understand it and do well on the next test. It's not that we were stupid, but more like we were invisible to the teacher. I like math, and I can be good at math, right?

In the monologue titled "84%," the participant addressed conversations and insults surrounding grades:

Today I was talking with my friends about finals and how glad we were they were almost finished. Then, we got on to the topic of grades. All my friends are incredibly smart, and while I always do fairly well in school, I pale in comparison to them. So of course, when the topic arose, I attempted to fly under the radar. Unfortunately, when my friends were comparing grades on the science final, Shelly turned to me and asked what I got. The previous four people who shared had gotten scores of 96%, 98%, 100%, and 90%. Shelly was the 90%, and I could tell that she was self-conscious at being the lowest grade so far. She was attempting to push the attention and ridicule off of herself and onto me, which I did not appreciate. Instead of answering, I shrugged and said that it wasn't all that important. My friends all smiled and said that it was fine, they wouldn't judge me, and eventually I admitted that I earned an 84%. They all looked sympathetic, but I could tell that it was false. They were all just glad that it wasn't them. I remember Shelly's eyes glinting as she said, "Wow, Sarah, that's a new low! There's no way you're going to Harvard now..." Her tone suggested that she was joking, but I knew better. Underneath her seemingly lighthearted sarcasm was a sharp, bitter note that cut like a knife.

In the following monologue titled "The Letter," the participant addressed family dynamics and conflicts stemming from sibling parental comparisons and sibling rivalry:

The letter finally arrived today. Yes, letter not letters. Just one, looking cocky, unopened, and singular on the bottom of the mailbox. Maybe the other got lost in the mail? Mom said.

Probably not, responded my dad, looking doubtful. Doubtful seems to be his permanent expression, fixed on his face like someone's nailed it to his forehead. Me. That expression was probably because of me. Not getting that A in Biology, not turning that frown upside down, not getting that same admission letter as my sister to "Super Fancy Music School" even though we applied at the same time. It's like he's just been disappointed so many times that he's stopped looking in my general direction. My sister is tried hard not to smile when all this was happening, which I appreciated for my own selfish reasons. Why shouldn't she smile? She is made of acceptance letters and shiny trophies. She is in first place, I'm always runner up. Why shouldn't she celebrate? Her reputation for brilliance proceeds her. Mine is always trailing after me about half a block back. She is the favorite daughter, the favorite sister. Some days I'm not sure I'd even pick myself over her. I can't do the things she does, I can't play the piano, I can't trick my brain into understand parametric equations, I can't get Dad to smile at me. It's over and that single letter on the table was living proof. She's just worth more.

In this monologue titled "The Voice," the study participant addressed the impact of insults:

It seems like there is always a voice in my ear and whisper behind my back. Insults define my life. When I speak with my "friends" all they do is insult me playfully and when I walk away all they do is insult me blatantly. I can't tell who puts them up to it. Is it him, is it her, or am I really that despicable that I attract insults all on my own. It's not only my friends that talk about me, it seems like everything I try to do, every new thing that I take in just to escape the old, turns out to be just as painful. When I leave one friend group for another, all I find is that I am once again target practice in the shooting range of high school. Out with the old and in with the new I guess? I have tried it all, sports, clubs, academics, parties

no matter where I go, I am strong enough, cool enough, smart enough, or crazy enough. The world says I am a being with no flavor, something that has no purpose other than to be ridiculed. It seems like there is always a voice in my ear and a whisper behind my back.

**Prompt #5: Write an original scene that could be used during an educational outreach workshop to address your chosen social issue, then ask another student dramaturg to provide feedback on your work. Revise and title your scene.** Like the task completed for prompt #4, the participants continued to develop dramatic narratives, moving from monologue work to dialogue which could potentially be used in outreach work for their target audience. Representative scenes which demonstrate the range of social issues addressed during this prompt are provided below.

In the first representative scene titled “The Problem” a participant addressed the issue of insults surrounding school work and grades:

*Enter Tiffany and Brittany*

T: Hey Brit!

B: Hey Tiff!

T: Do you know the answer to question number five on the homework?

B: Um, yeah, it’s obvious. Did you even try?

T: Oh, haha yeah... so you just multiply this and then divide by this?

B: Um, no, idiot. I can’t believe you don’t know how to solve this.

T: Oh, yeah, this unit’s pretty difficult for me...

B: Gosh, you’re so stupid sometimes, the answer’s 34. *(Walks away)*

T: Ok thanks... bye.

In the next scene titled “The Pacer,” a participant addressed the issue of gender stereotypes and athletic ability:

*(Enter Tommy and Sam)*

**Tommy:** Did you hear how Jan beat Todd today in the pacer?

**Sam:** I don't believe it; girls just aren't faster than guys.

**Tommy:** I know! Some believe she used steroids to help her go faster!

**Sam:** Well, here she comes, let's ask her.

*(Jan enters.)*

**Sam:** Jan! Congrats on winning the pacer today! How'd you do it?

**Jan:** I don't know. I guess I just have better endurance than Todd, or he was having a bad day.

**Tommy:** Probably the latter, because we all know you couldn't really beat him.

**Jan:** Why wouldn't I be able to do that!

**Sam:** Jan, seriously, everyone knows that girls aren't faster or more athletic than guys.

The only possible way that you could've beat him today was if you were on steroids, or maybe you aren't actually a girl.

The next scene titled "Like A Girl," another participant also addressed stereotypes based on gender and insults that can arise from these situations:

*(Lights up on GUY #1, GUY #2, BOY and Narrator)*

GUY#1: *(tauntingly)* You throw like a girl.

NARRATOR: The boy grimaces. He knows he must be better.

GUY #2: Your arms are weak; you should join the girl's team.

NARRATOR: The boy feels so embarrassed. He does not want to be compared to a group of people so fragile.

GUY #1: You lost your arm wrestle to Sadie, and she wears *makeup*.

NARRATOR: This is said as though wearing makeup is some sort of a crime and the boy feels disgusted with himself. He will never be good enough.

GUY #2: Where are your muscles?

GUY #1 and #2 (*together*): You are wimpy, you are weak, you are like a girl.

*(The BOY throws down his hat, quitting, and walks off stage).*

In the following scene “Just A Girl,” the participant addressed the issue of parental expectations based on gender:

*(Lights up on Mother, Girl, and Father)*

Mother: Please, honey, go play with your friends.

Girl: I don't want to. I am in the middle of something.

Mother: What are you doing dear?

Girl: Writing an app. It will-

Father: Girls don't code. Go with your mother. You're going shopping.

Girl: But I don't-

Father: Don't cross me! I am your father. You are my daughter. You will listen to me!

Mother: Come on dear. He's right. You're only setting yourself up for disappointment.

Girl: No, I'm not. I'm good. I know I am. I can get somewhere. I can change the world. I-

Father: A girl can't change a man's world. Stop dreaming. Stop pretending you're anything other than what you are.

Girl: And what am I then?

Father: You are a girl. Just a girl.

Girl: Well maybe I don't want to be.



In the following scene titled “Man’s Playground” the participant explored the issue of gender in the workplace:

*(Lights up on Jamie and Lucy in the break room)*

Jamie: I don't understand what their problem is with us two.

Lucy: Let me tell ya, we are working in a male dominated profession and we have to buck up to be treated as equals.

J: Well, for one thing I never thought that culinary arts would become a man’s playground. Like for God's sake, women are stereotyped to be stay at home wives and do the cooking and the cleaning, but when we are out of the house, we are made a spectacle.

L: I know, I know, but what are we supposed to do? Quit our jobs and let the men take over? No, no, no, I'm not going anywhere because while I'm still young, I'm gonna do what I love.”

*(Enter Scott)*

Scott: “Com’on ladies, haul ass. Break’s over.”

**Prompt #6: What are your educational outreach ideas? How would you engage the audience with your focus social issue?** For this task, study participants were invited to brainstorm what they felt would be the most effective strategies to help engage their target audience with the focus social issue. Representative student outreach plans are provided. One participant focused on issues of sexism by using monologues and Q&As with characters:

I would start by having an actress perform my original monologue about sexism and then I would invite the audience to interview the character so that they could get to know her better. Then I would invite several actresses representing Hero and Beatrice to the stage,

and the three characters would have a conversation about sexism followed by a Q&A with the audience.

Another student proposed the following outreach program to address issues of sexism:

I would present my original scene to the audience, and then I would invite them to enter the scene to help develop solutions to the problem of sexism. I would ask if sexism has ever affected someone in a way that prohibited them from being able to do something or take an opportunity. I would also ask them how prevalent they think sexism is in our community. Lastly, I would inquire as to what they think has changed throughout time about gender, especially regarding the gender binary. I would explain that the issues that result from sexism are very clear in *Much Ado About Nothing*, from how women act and defend themselves and others, to how the men treat women. Sexism is still prevalent today in the more traditional sense of males and females, as well as the new problems that have arisen due to the elimination of the gender binary. Women feel oppressed by the more “powerful” sex, and this results in the loss of many opportunities. Genders that have arisen outside of the gender binary also feel oppression in the same way, and other ways as well.

I would ask the audience how this reaction would impact them if they were the girl. Would they aspire to be a nurse or a doctor? Would they work harder, or be satisfied with what they already got? How could they get girls to have more confidence in their abilities?

Another student proposed that sexism could best be addressed by doing the following:

I think the most effective use of educational outreach time would be spent presenting the original monologues with character Q&As followed by the original Forum Theatre scenes in which performers identifying as both genders would experience stereotypes and double

standards. The audience would be invited up by the Joker to rehearse ways to help stop this issue in the hallways of high schools.

To address issues of being overly concerned with one's reputation, this student proposed the following:

For my educational outreach program, I would probably include my original monologue and/or the script. I also might include an engaging activity. I could have all the audience members think about the past day, week, same period, and decide (in their heads) how many times they decided with the influence of what others may think. I would then have them put their heads down and put up how many times this occurred with their fingers. I could record how many times it happened to how many people, and then tell them my results. Based on the numbers, I would come to conclusions. I could, for example, decide that the average person of \_\_\_\_\_ demographic makes reputation-influenced decisions \_\_\_ times per day, week, etc. I could do the same activity but with how many times they noticed something that someone did, wore, said, etc. that made an influence on the person's reputation. I could also come to conclusions about this data.

Another student explained how they would use interactive theatre and bits of *Much Ado About Nothing* in the outreach program to address issues of one's reputation:

We could perform a short scene with a group of people who are all talking about another student and how they broke up with their boyfriend in front of everyone and how their reputation is going to be ruined so that no one will ever want to date them again. That person would then come onstage and tell her side of the story through a monologue. Then audience members would be invited to convince the character that she is worth more than her reputation and that they wouldn't want to spend time around people who only like them

because of their reputation anyway. Using this as an example, we would then engage the audience by re-enacting the last scene of *Much Ado About Nothing* and having Hero express a different reaction to Claudio asking to marry her.

Another participant proposed the following to address the issue of reputation:

Each audience member would be given an identity, one with valuable traits and a great personality, only to have it taken away. Certain audience members would be chosen to create a label that would ruin their desirable reputation, and the characters would be required to keep these labels until the end of the scene. Once they finished, those who were abused would share how it made them feel and possible solutions to avoid the negative effects of insults and how they affect a person's reputation.

Several students stated that they would use interactive theatre to address the issue of insults. For example:

I would start the outreach program by explaining there are many instances of insults in *Much Ado About Nothing*, the major focus issue that we are addressing. Then I would invite the audience by saying: We would like to have you come up and help us perform some of these scenarios and ask you how you would react. Some questions that we would like to ask you are the following:

- How do insults play a role in your everyday life?
- Do you insult other people?
- Do you get insulted by other people?

I would also use my original scene that would incorporate the audience in acting and reactions. Once the scene is acted out by audience members, the other audience members can propose solutions to the situation.

Prompt #7: **Write a dramaturg's program note about your chosen focus issue and *Much Ado About Nothing*.** For the final individual dramaturgy task, study participants were asked to write a program note about their chosen focus issue. Representative student dramaturg program notes are provided below in italics. The first representative program note focuses on gender inequality and misogyny:

Gender inequality and misogyny not only prove to be an issue in all our everyday worlds, but it also proves to be a major issue in in the play *Much Ado About Nothing*. In our production of this play, you will be amazed by the effect of gender roles/misogyny in our character's fictional lives. In our lives, discrimination gender issues and are often prevalent. For example, some dress codes don't allow girls' body parts to show because they don't want to distract others, which implies that men won't be able to focus with a girl in the area. Although discrimination is typically thought of as just towards girls, sometimes boys are affected. In P.E. class, boys are expected to produce better results because of their gender, even though a girl could be stronger or more fit. Unfair gender roles are a very common issue. Gender biases are shown throughout our production, such as when Claudio and his friends immediately believe Hero is guilty without considering that she might have been framed but is indeed loyal. During this scene, they could have asked her if she was innocent and went straight to the source, but instead they trusted gossip and the framed act that they saw from far away. Without assuming that the women will always cheat, you will see that a lot of drama could have been prevented. Hopefully, this play will show you that gender discrimination is often present, both in the play and in real life, and we hope you enjoy it and learn something!

In the dramaturg note titled “Breaking Stereotypes,” this participant focused on the Beatrice’s fight against social expectations:

*In Much Ado About Nothing*, Beatrice is seen as kind of a rebel because of her sharp wit and fiery personality: “Oh by no means, she mocks all her wooers out of suit” (2.1.264). In that time period, women were supposed to be quiet and not have many opinions. The character of Hero is this way, a contrast to her cousin: “And you too, gentle Hero?” (2.1.282). Beatrice defies this stereotype. Although women are basically supposed to marry whoever they were told to, Beatrice has no such desire to do so: “I did never think that lady would have loved any man” (2.3. 84). She is very headstrong and able to make her own decisions. She is ahead of her time. The main stereotype in the play is that all women are supposed to be quiet, not have opinions, and just look pretty, but Beatrice shows that the stereotype is false for her. Though gender stereotypes aren’t as much of a problem today as they were during the time of the play, there are still many, many stereotypes in modern culture. One stereotype that our target audience of 9th graders regularly experience is probably that all teenagers are rebels. Others might be that girls aren’t good at sports, blondes are dumb, or all Asians are geniuses (“Stereotypes Examples”. I Love India. Iloveindia.com. Web. 25 May 2016.). As you can see, even though we have come a long way in terms of accepting all people, stereotypes still exist. Stereotypes are bad because we make generalizations about a group of people instead of distinguishing the individuals (Saul McLeod. “Stereotypes” Simply Psychology. 2008. Web. 25 May 2016.). Stereotypes are actually something that our brain does to more quickly gather information about those around us, but it is not always correct (“Stereotypes in Everyday Life.” Boundless.com.

Boundless Sociology. Web. 25 May 2016.). Anyone can be stereotyped, and when they are it can be a very hurtful and insulting experience.

Because so many student dramaturg program notes mentioned the 2016 presidential race, I include a representative sample:

Insults are very common in both Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* and today here at Mountain View High School. While the content of the insults has changed over the years, many of the effects and consequences remain the same. In *Much Ado About Nothing* many insults are traded between Beatrice and Benedick in the form of banter. They used these insults to hide their true feelings of love for each other, but it was clear that the insults did affect them. For example, at the masked ball, Benedick was very hurt when Beatrice said that he was a terrible jester. In the end, Benedick and Beatrice became a couple, but insults can also be much more damaging, such as when Hero was accused of infidelity and everyone shamed her. These insults harmed not only her reputation, but her self-esteem and relationships with friends and family. Most insults in the play had at least some negative impacts, and were often used to shame people and damage their reputations. In the modern day, while insults are used and taken differently, they are still very common and many of the effects are quite similar. Insults are often used to damage people's reputations. An excellent example of this is in politics, especially with the upcoming election. Many of the candidates have turned to insults in order to ruin how people view their opponents and make themselves look better. These insults have ruined not only reputations, but some of the candidates' campaigns. Clearly, today, insults have the potential to ruin opportunities, such as they nearly did with Hero in *Much Ado About Nothing*. During some of the presidential debates, what could be an opportunity to have

intelligent discussions about politics and credibility has turned into a mess of insults completely unrelated to the campaigns, or politics in general. The candidates have called each other con artists, weak, and crazy to better their own agendas. Some have even resorted to insulting appearances to get ahead. These instances show the extent to which insults are prevalent in our lives today and how damaging they can be to reputations and opportunities.

Here is another example of a discussion of the current political climate appearing in a program note:

Throughout *Much Ado About Nothing* and in the political world of 2016, insults and the affects they have on a person's reputation are very relevant issues. When Beatrice says to Benedick that “scratching could not make it worse an ‘twere such a face as yours were” (1.107-109), it shows that by insulting another person's appearance, one's confidence may be ruined and they may carry that label with them for a while. During this election, we have seen Donald Trump insulting women based on their appearance, which can have a very negative effect on a woman's confidence level and reputation. Overall, this shows that in both *Much Ado About Nothing* and in the real world today, insults are a very relevant issue that have a negative effect on many people's reputations.



### Chapter Three Summary

This chapter provided a description of Collaborative Dramaturgy for Social Activism curriculum sequence as it was used in my classroom during the research period, starting with the pre-production team dramaturgy tasks, following by the production and educational outreach portion of the project, and finally concluding with the Dramaturg Challenge (final exam) which challenged individual student dramaturgs to develop an entire dramaturgy plan for *Much Ado About Nothing* in under two hours. The next chapter will provide the focus student data from the post-Likert questionnaires and transcribed responses from Grade Defense meetings.

## Chapter Four

### Focus Student Responses

This chapter provides written responses from my fifteen focus students to the two required post-Likert questionnaires, and I also include some transcribed student oral responses shared with me during the 2016 student end-of-the-year grade defense meetings. The chapter is broken up into sections based on my two central research questions and the connected questions. The first section focuses on results connected to research question #1, and section two focuses on the results connected to research question #2. An analysis of these results is provided in the next and final chapter.

#### Section One

Central Research Question #1: How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism help advanced and Talented and Gifted 9th grade students engage with relevant social issues?

**Connected Question #1A: How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism help advanced and Talented and Gifted 9<sup>th</sup> grade language arts students become more aware of relevant social issues in their community?**

For the Likert questionnaire statement, *Because of the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I am more aware of relevant social issues in my community*, my students answered with the following:

Lucy answered with a “1” (*strongly disagree*), and wrote that she was already “very aware of social issues” in her environment, so it would have been “incredibly difficult” to “make me more aware.” She also added that she “plans on addressing social issues” throughout her life, and hopefully plans to “pursue a career that will allow me to do just that.” Elizabeth answered with a “2” (*disagree*), and she explained that she “came into the project caring a lot about social issues,” and she was “already aware of the issues of gossip and reputation before the project began.” She also explained that she “answered with a ‘2’ not because” she “didn’t care about social issues,” but that she “cares a lot.”

Tom and Glenda both answered with a “3” (*neutral*), but also provided examples of how they had learned more about social issues during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project. Tom wrote that the “project made me more aware of gossiping and reputation issues at Mountain View High School, especially in terms of how I can help to prevent these issues in the future.” Glenda explained that she also had become “more aware of the obsession with reputations at Mountain View High School,” and how “gossip is often used to hurt the reputations of others.”

Alan, Kaden, Danny, John, Sarah, Janice, and Patricia all answered “4” (*agree*). Alan wrote that he “learned how much gossip affects people negatively.” Kaden explained that he “became more aware of many social issues during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, such as gossip, insults, reputation, and gender issues.” Danny stated that he “realized that there are a lot of different social issues” in his community, such as “eavesdropping on others, deceiving others, gossiping and spreading rumors about others to hurt their reputation or to make yourself feel better about yourself.” John wrote that he “was aware of gossip before the project,” but he better understood the “magnitude of gossip’s negative effects.” Sarah and

Janice both wrote that they were more aware of gossip and reputations, and Patricia explained that the project “definitely helped me become more aware of gossip and rumors because those were very prevalent issues among our target audience.”

Robert, Dana, Becky and Faith each answered with a “5” (strongly agree). Robert wrote that he “learned about gossip and how to stop and prevent it.” Helen stated that she became “much more aware of the issues of gossip and being obsessed with your own reputation or the reputation of others.” Becky explained that she “learned about the issue of insults and their effect on a person’s reputation,” because it was “very relevant in *Much Ado About Nothing*” and it “made me think more about this issue at my school and in my community.” Faith responded that she “became much more aware of the effects of gossip because of this entire project.”

**Connected Question #1B: How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism help motivate advanced and Talented and Gifted students to try to make their community a more positive and inclusive place?**

For the Likert questionnaire statement, *Because of the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I am more motivated to try to make my community a more positive and inclusive place*, my students answered with the following:

Alan, Helen, Lucy, and Elizabeth each answered with a “2” (*disagree*). Helen chose not to provide any other information with her answer. Alan chose to add that he answered a “2” because he was interested in helping “others become more aware of environmental issues,” and the “Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project did not address these important issues.” Lucy explained that she was “already very motivated to make my community a more

positive and inclusive place, in fact, that is my daily goal.” Elizabeth stated that she appreciated what I tried to do with the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, but that she doesn’t “really believe that anything can make a difference, especially since no one will ever really listen to me.”

Danny and Glenda answered with a “3” (*neutral*), but both also chose to add ideas for how they can make their community more positive and inclusive. Danny stated during his grade defense meeting with me that the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project helped him be:

More motivated to make a difference. Through participating in the various Theatre of the Oppressed activities, I am now able to recognize some of the scenarios when they occur in real life, such as when others start gossiping, and I think I can make a difference and I can help stop some of this from hurting others. Some ideas that I have include encouraging the administration to develop classes that are just for discussing social issues and how people are affected by them. Maybe these classes could be added to the health curriculum, and maybe you could teach them and show students how to use Theatre of the Oppressed. Maybe from these classes my fellow students could learn how to stop spreading rumors and to just calm down when they are insulting somebody.

Glenda explained that she was going to “try to be more supportive of everyone, not just my friends,” because now “I realize that everyone probably has something going on in their life that is tough, and they could use my support, even if I don’t know them very well.”

Robert, Sarah, Janice, and Faith all answered with a “4” (*agree*). Robert stated that he hopes to continue to find ways to “raise awareness about gossip and how to stop it.” Sarah explained that she knows she will “try to stand up against gossip more, and I would like to try to

focus less on things that people might gossip about (such as grades, relationships, rumors, etc.) and more on the person themselves.” Janice wrote that she wants to “try to actively stop gossip” that she might “notice around the school, especially after big tests or when grades are posted on Infinite Campus.” Faith remarked that she “wants to help stop the grade shaming at Mountain View High School,” but she is “not quite sure exactly what she could do to stop it.”

John, Tom, Becky, and Patricia answered with a “5” (*strongly agree*). Tom chose not to provide any more information connected to his answer. John explained that he wants to “point out when people should change their actions.” Becky remarked that she plans to “become more confident about my opinions and to stand up for those I care about much more often.” Patricia wrote that she “wants to get involved with more volunteering and small things around my neighborhood, such as playing with the neighborhood kids, and being a good example for them.”

**Connected Question #1C: How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism help advanced and Talented and Gifted students believe they can make a positive difference in their community?**

For the Likert questionnaire statement, *Because of the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I believe I can make a positive difference in my community*, my students answered the following:

Elizabeth answered with a “1” (*strongly disagree*), and did not choose to provide other information regarding her answer.

Danny, Helen, and Glenda all answered with a “3” (*neutral*). Helen chose not to add any additional information, but Danny and Glenda both provided explanations for their responses.

Danny stated that he hopes he “can make a difference, but it’s probably going to be dependent on whether people will listen to my ideas about how to prevent gossip and rumors.” Glenda explained that she is not sure if she will be “able to be supportive of everyone, because some people are really annoying at Mountain View High School.”

Robert, Alan, Kaden, Tom, Janice, Patricia, and Faith, responded with a “4” (*agree*). Tom chose not to explain his response, but the rest provided more information. Robert explained that he knows he can “teach others about the dangers of gossip and he can convince them not to gossip.” Alan stated that he is “determined to stop others from hurting the environment,” and he will do “everything he can to educate others about why we need to protect the earth.” Kaden knows he “can be more respectful and loving to all those he encounters on a daily basis,” even to “strangers.” Janice stated, “I can definitely make a difference by not spreading gossip when I hear it, and that way I can serve as an example for my friends.” Patricia knows she will “make a difference by finding ways to help the kids in my community each day, even if it’s just hanging out with them and asking how everything is going.” Faith “will make a difference by stopping others when they are talking about their scores on tests and their grades,” and she will tell people to “recognize that people are more than their grades.”

John, Sarah, Lucy, and Becky all answered with a “5” (*strongly agree*). John stated that he “doesn’t want to be mean about it, but there are certain things people do at Mountain View High School that aren’t appropriate and hurt others,” and he is “determined to stop them. This is the way that I will make a positive difference.” Sarah explained during her grade defense meeting with me, that:

the way I will make a difference starts with myself and my choosing to not gossip and to focus on who a person really is rather on their grades, and this might seem small, I think

this can actually help others. Maybe I will be a role model for others and then they will also stop focusing on things like grades and who is dating who and stupid rumors that are going around Mountain View High School.

Lucy wrote that she is already:

actively involved in several groups that are pushing for LGBTQI rights and making people more aware of gender inequality, and I will continue to work as hard as I can each day to fight for these rights until every person is free to be who they really are, and they have the same opportunities as others.

Becky explained to me during her grade defense meeting that she has:

Always been really shy, but working on the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project showed me what I am actually capable of doing. I'm still nervous speaking up for myself, but now I believe that I can help others, and I think that gives me the courage to speak up and fight for them. A year ago I wouldn't have said that I believe I can actually make a difference in my community, but now I know that I can and I will. I just want to say thanks, Mrs. Hunt.

Connected Question #1D: **Is my classroom a positive and inclusive environment during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project?**

For the Likert questionnaire statement, *Mrs. Hunt's classroom has been a positive and inclusive environment during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project*, my students answered with the following:



Helen answered with a “1” (*strongly disagree*), and did not choose to provide any more information regarding her response.

Elizabeth responded with a “2” (*disagree*), and added the following: “N/A people will always judge, because it is so much easier to get people to hate something than to be accepting of it and all its flaws.”

Alan and Lucy each responded with “3” (*neutral*), but each also provided examples for how my classroom environment was positive and inclusive. Alan stated, “We are all pretty nice to each other,” and Lucy responded that in my classroom, “it’s pretty chill.”

Robert, Kaden, Danny, Janice, Glenda, and Patricia all answered with “4” (*agree*). Robert explained that “everyone is nice and welcoming,” and Kaden explained during his grade defense meeting that:

Doing mindfulness and warmup theatre games in your class helped everybody relax. I also think that doing Forum Theatre and Image Theatre helped my classmates be more engaged and have fun when we were dealing with some serious issues. I’ve never been into theatre or mindfulness or anything like that, but I’m definitely starting to see the benefits of participating in activities like that.

Danny wrote that my classroom is positive and inclusive because:

There is a feeling that people can speak their thoughts without being told to shut up and people can talk without making anyone in the classroom uncomfortable. We know each other, and we respect each other, and we are careful to show that respect. Mrs. Hunt taught us how to do that at the beginning of the year, and I think we actually learned how to respect other human beings, which is a big deal when talking about 9<sup>th</sup> graders in a public school classroom.

Janice told me during her grade defense meeting my classroom is positive and inclusive, because of the following:

It's because of the fact that people in our class have learned to accept mistakes and have healthy debates and this makes it a positive environment. It was hard, at first, to accept that sometimes we would fail, and that failure is sometimes inevitable. But now, after the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism unit, we aren't trying to prove that we are smarter or better than each other. We recognize that we are stronger when we work with each other, especially when we are taking on a project that is so difficult and new and challenging. To be honest, being an advanced or TAG kid at Mountain View High School can make a person super competitive, but now I think most of us are happy when someone else does well, and we can celebrate that, rather than feeling like we need to get down on ourselves because we weren't the absolute best at something.

Glenda wrote that our positive and inclusive environment was supported by the fact that "no one was overly rude" although sometimes "other students could be really annoying and kind of obnoxious at times." Patricia wrote about my "enthusiasm," as well as "the enthusiasm and support" of some of her classmates when she reflected on our classroom environment.

John, Tom, Sarah, Becky, and Faith responded with a "5" (*strongly agree*). John stated that he felt like my classroom was a "relaxed atmosphere (most of the time)," and Tom wrote that my "lamps were cool, and it was also cool that nobody judged each other in Mrs. Hunt's classroom." Sarah explained during her grade defense meeting with me that:

You encouraged us to share our ideas with each other and to collaborate and come to conclusions independently, but she you were always present and paying attention so that you could interfere if the discussion or activity was moving in a non-positive direction.

This worked well, because even though we like to act like we know exactly what we are doing, and we like to pretend that we know everything just because we are smarter than most people, we are still just 9<sup>th</sup> graders. Sometimes we do need you, and it'll sound a little stupid, but I've decided that it's comforting to know that you will always be there if we get stuck, or frustrated, or just need to cry because we felt like we are failing, and I know that happened with me a lot, and I'm still sorry about that. I think I was always afraid to fail, but now, I guess I know that failure isn't the end of the road, and that it can make me stronger. I'm still afraid to fail, but it's getting better.

Becky wrote that she feels like my classroom:

is a positive environment because all students are respected and acknowledged for their hard work and achievements. Mrs. Hunt treats us like real people rather than just students sitting in a row of desks because we are real people. Mrs. Hunt doesn't expect us to be perfect but she does expect us to do our best work, even if that means revising repeatedly, or trying out new ways of accomplishing different tasks. I will always respect Mrs. Hunt because she doesn't just respect me, she respects all people. And she has taught us that we should also respect all human beings, even if we have differences, and even if we can't get along. We have to view our intelligence as a gift, and we need to use our intelligence to make this world a better place.

Faith also reflected on our classroom environment by writing:

I like how Mrs. Hunt is understanding and helps take the stress off her students. It's been effective for me this year in terms of how I've been feeling stress-wise. I used to be constantly stressed, but now I'm starting to understand that my value as a human being doesn't have to be based on my grades and if I'm in all pre-IB courses. School doesn't have

to be stressful. During this class, I've really enjoyed participating in theatre games and mindfulness and using Image Theatre and Forum Theatre, and I've also learned a lot while taking part in these activities. I think all classes should be like this.

## Section Two

Central Research Question #2: How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism appropriately challenge advanced and Talented and Gifted 9th grade students and increase their confidence and skill levels related to the Common Core Standards for Language Arts?

**Connected Question #2A: How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism appropriately challenge advanced and Talented and Gifted learners in terms of the Common Core speaking, listening, reading, research, and writing skills?**

### Speaking and Listening Common Core Skills

For the Likert questionnaire statement, *During the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I was appropriately challenged as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learner to initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions on texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing my own clearly and persuasively*, my students answered with the following:

Lucy responded with a "1" (*strongly disagree*), and did not provide other information regarding this response.

Robert, Alan, John and Kaden all answered "3" (*neutral*). Robert added that he did "not feel that challenged during the project, except during CDSA Step 7, the performance and

educational outreach portion. Working with the target audience, and attempting to get them to discuss and participate was not easy.”

Sarah, Helen, Glenda, Danny, Faith, and Tom answered with a “4” (*agree*). Helen explained during her grade defense meeting that CDSA Step 4, the dramaturgy protocol portion, was the most challenging because “it was a struggle to get my dramaturgy team members to focus on all the dramaturgy research and analysis tasks at hand. It shouldn’t have been that difficult to just talk to my team, but it was.” Glenda also stated that CDSA Step 4 was the most difficult because it “involved cutting the script. This step was the most important for practicing discussion skills because we had to discuss *Much Ado About Nothing* and we had to work together to cut the script and make sure that we were keeping the narrative arc intact.” Sarah wrote that she was most challenged during CDSA Step 5, the dramaturg-activism research and planning work, because “it was difficult to come to a consensus as a group on what social issue we should focus on. The target audience survey results showed that the majority of students felt that gossip was the most significant issue, but I did not feel passionate about this issue.”

Janice, Becky, Elizabeth, and Patricia answered “5” (*strongly agree*). Becky explained that CDSA Step 4, cutting the performance script challenged her dramaturgy team because “we had to initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions about *Much Ado About Nothing*, and we had to reach a consensus on what must remain within the performance script, and what we could delete.” Elizabeth argued that the “entire Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project was challenging because it was one massive group project, and therefore it was crucial that we all be able to get in touch and communicate with one another at all times, even when we weren’t at school.”

For the Likert statement, *During the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I was appropriately challenged as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learner to work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making create clear goals and deadlines and individual roles*, my students answered the following:

Lucy answered with a “1” (*strongly disagree*), and stated that her dramaturgy team “established what we each needed to work on, but that was about it. There was nothing challenging about it.”

Alan and Tom each answered “3” (*neutral*), but both students also provided ways in which they were challenged during this project. Alan explained that the dramaturgy tasks found in CDSA Steps 4-6 challenged his “dramaturgy team the most because we struggled to make clear goals and deadlines in terms of what we had to accomplish, and many times it felt like we weren’t going to finish all the dramaturgy tasks required for this project.” Tom stated that the “entire CDSA project challenged us because we had to repeatedly communicate with our dramaturgy team members to figure out the best plan for us and what would be good for our target audience.”

Sarah, Glenda, Danny, and Faith all answered with “4” (*agree*). Sarah explained during her grade defense meeting that:

The whole project was challenging, because having a goal, and working towards that goal in a group especially when not everyone understands the importance of the project in general, is tough. We had to find ways to reach common ground when it came to our goal as a dramaturgy team. For some, they just wanted to get a good grade, and for people like me, we wanted to make a difference with the target audience. One of my dramaturgy group members would ask things like, ‘how many points is that worth? How hard is Mrs. Hunt

going to grade it?’ and that was really frustrating to me because I wanted to do well with this project, not for an A in Infinite Campus, but because there are real problems at our school and I wanted to address those problems through our dramaturgy team work.

Helen, Robert, Janice, Becky, John, Olivia, Connor, and Patricia all answered with a “5” (*strongly agree*). Helen explained during her grade defense meeting that:

The entire CDSA project was difficult because I couldn’t get our dramaturgy team to divide everything evenly, and I ended up having to complete most of tasks. It was like my group members didn’t even care about their grade. I felt like the only person who wanted an A. They just wanted to chat and have fun, and I was the only one serious about keeping my good grade in the class. It was so frustrating. My team members definitely failed when it came to this Common Core skill.

Robert, Janice, and John all stated that the CDSA project was challenging because many dramaturgy team members wouldn’t divide the work evenly. Janice explained that she and the rest of her dramaturgy team members found the whole CDSA project “helpful with these skills because we all had to compromise and contribute ideas and make plans, and sometimes change those plans. We had to learn how to stick to a schedule, even when certain tasks weren’t being flagged as missing in Infinite Campus.” Becky explained during her grade defense meeting that she felt challenged during the entire CDSA project when it came to these Common Core skills because she and her dramaturgy team members had to:

Work with each other to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, create clear goals and deadlines, and we had to establish individual roles. For example, we had to plan who would be reading the different roles during our *Much Ado About Nothing* performance, we had to figure out who would research what when we were preparing for

the performance and the outreach, and we had to determine who would be responsible for the lobby display and playbill tasks.

Elizabeth explained during her grade defense meeting with me that one of the biggest challenges during the CDSA project was related to this Common Core skill,

You assigned us multiple tasks with due dates, but we were not assigned specific times to carry out specific tasks, and so that responsibility fell on us to get the work done. I've always been very good about making sure that when a teacher assigns homework or other tasks, I complete them on time and I make sure that I do everything I can to get all the points connected to the assignment, but you made it very difficult because you left much of the planning up to us. It would have been much easier and better if you had told us what to do each day of class, rather than giving us that freedom. Honestly, I was afraid that we might not get all the tasks done, and then I might not get an A on assignments, and this was really stressful. I have really enjoyed your class, but I can't stop worrying about my grades.

Kaden explained in his grade defense meeting that:

The entire project related to my dramaturgy team's *Much Ado About Nothing* performance and outreach presentation challenged me and my team members because we had to learn how to practice skills of collaborating and planning and negotiating with each other. Many of us were used to classes where everything is laid out for you by a teacher, and we weren't used to having this freedom, so it was hard. But actually, I think that freedom helped prepare us for what we might experience someday when we aren't students anymore and we have jobs and are expected to get things done on our own. We won't always have teachers looking over our shoulders, and I think the CDSA project helped show us that we can be independent and we can work together to make things happen. So, I guess I want to



say that it was challenging, but thanks for trusting that we would eventually get it all figure out.

For the Likert statement, *During the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I was appropriately challenged as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learner to propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate other into the discussion; and clarify and verify or challenge ideas and conclusions*, my students answered with the following:

Lucy answered with a “1” (*strongly disagree*) and did not provide any other information regarding this answer.

Robert and Kaden both responded with a “3” (*neutral*), and Robert added that he “felt challenged when my dramaturgy team did the CDSA Step 7, our educational outreach with our target audience.”

Sarah, Helen, Alan, Janice, Glenda, Danny, and Faith answered “4” (*agree*). Sarah wrote that she was “challenged when working on my dramaturgy team’s educational outreach program—both planning and actually presenting it—and I also felt challenged when I was responding to other dramaturgy team presentations, such as their lobby display work.” Janice stated that:

getting our target audience to participate in our educational outreach really challenged me and helped me with these skills, because it was difficult to get them to talk to us and share their opinions, but through our Theatre of the Oppressed work showing them the scenarios we posed and through the questions and discussions, we were able to get some of the audience to contribute their ideas.

Glenda also stated that the:

educational outreach program challenged our dramaturgy team because our program focused on the Theatre of the Oppressed scenarios and we needed our audience to participate so that they could develop solutions to the problems found in the scenes. It was hard to get the audience involved, even when we tried to warm them up by playing some theatre games, but eventually we were able to get a couple of students to join us.

For the Likert questionnaire statement, *During the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I was appropriately challenged as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learner to present information, findings, and supporting evidence appropriate to purpose, audience, and task*, my students answered with the following:

Lucy and Alan answered “2” (*disagree*), and Lucy wrote that she “came into the unit already quite advanced when it comes to public speaking, and it this project wasn’t really hard for me.”

Robert and Kaden both answered “3” (*neutral*), but Robert also wrote: “I have to admit, it was a bit challenging when my dramaturgy team presenting our educational outreach presentation. I assumed we would have lots of audience volunteers, but in actuality, not many wanted to participate. It was frustrating.”

Sarah, Janice, Glenda, Danny, Faith, and Tom all answered with “4” (*agree*). Sarah explained that she “really enjoyed the educational outreach part of the project, in fact, in was my favorite part, but I also think it was the most challenging because we were working with our target audience, and a lot of them really didn’t want to listen to us or participate and interact with the social issue.”

Helen, Becky, John, Elizabeth, and Patricia answered “5” (*strongly agree*). Becky stated during her grade defense meeting with me that it was the CDSA Step 3 dramaturgy team interviews that challenged her the most:

Preparing for and participating in our dramaturgy team interview really challenged us to work on our presentation skills. As part of this task we were required to state our claim and provide evidence for why we should be able to remain a dramaturgy team. We had to stand in front of you and persuade you that we are efficient and effective when we all work together, and that was nerve-wracking.

For the Likert questionnaire statement, *Overall, the Common Core speaking and listening tasks required during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project appropriately challenged me as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learner*, my students answered with the following:

Lucy answered with a “2” (*disagree*), and stated that she wishes she could have “been more challenged” because she “really likes speaking and listening” and she “wants to work with people addressing social issues as a potential career someday.”

Helen, Robert, Alan, Janice, Kaden, Glenda, Danny, Faith, and Tom all responded with a “4” (*agree*).

Sarah, Becky, John, Elizabeth, and Patricia responded with a “5” demonstrating that they strongly agreed that they had been appropriately challenged as advanced or Talented and Gifted learners during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project in terms of Common Core speaking and listening tasks and skills.

### Reading Common Core Skills

For the Likert statement, *During the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I was appropriately challenged as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learner to cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what a text says*, my students answered with the following:

Lucy and Glenda both answered “2” (*disagree*). Lucy added that she “started out this project already being really good at citing the text, and it wasn’t hard at all to complete the basic dramaturgy team tasks.” Glenda stated that she “didn’t really do a lot of citation work during this project,” and that she “did more of this in other classes.”

Robert and Kaden answered “3” (*neutral*), but both explained how the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project had challenged them in terms of these reading skills. Robert wrote that “completing the CDSA Step 4 activities such as annotating the script and analyzing the characters challenged me to practice my citation skills.” Kaden also stated that “the *Much Ado About Nothing* character analysis work, such as analyzing character traits, what other characters thought about them, etc., helped me with these Common Core skills.”

Helen, Alan, Janice, Patricia, Danny, Faith, and Tom answered “4” (*agree*). Patricia explained during her grade defense meeting that what really helped her was during CDSA Step 4, when she:

returned to the *Much Ado About Nothing* script after my initial read, and during this time through the play I worked hard to format my annotations and coding so that they would actually help me and my dramaturgy team with the tasks at hand. Because my coding was

very organized, it was quite simple to find data I needed. I brought it with me. Do you want to see it again? I'm actually quite proud of it!

Tom chose to write about the challenge of script analysis:

During the CDSA project, the most challenging task for me was definitely annotating the script in a way that would not feel like busy work, but would be useful to me. In the end, I started to understand why dramaturgs need to spend so much time with the script. In middle school, we were forced to annotate different books, and a lot of times we would just write random things in the margins, and I never could see the reason why teachers asked us to do that work; it just felt very much like busy work. Learning how to be a dramaturg has helped me to gain analysis skills that are actually useful, even if it's just being able to challenge myself to examine different texts and situations from a more critical perspective.

Sarah, Becky, John, and Elizabeth all answered "5" (*strongly agree*), and Sarah wrote that:

During CDSA Step 6 in which I spent a lot of time working on the dramaturg's note for the playbill challenged me, but I also found it incredibly enjoyable to spend so much time thinking about *Much Ado About Nothing* in terms of my dramaturgy team's focus social issue. It was also nice to know that I was creating something that would be read by multiple human beings and would serve a real purpose, rather than just writing an essay that my teacher would read and then add in points to Infinite Campus.

Elizabeth wrote that the:

Dramaturgy team interviews which happened during CDSA Step 3 required us to use textual evidence to support our claims that our group works well together, and we also had to show that we could connect social issues such as gossip to *Much Ado About Nothing*. My entire dramaturgy team felt challenged during this part of the project.

For the Likert statement, *During the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I was appropriately challenged as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learner to determine a theme or central idea of a text and to analyze in detail its development over the course of the text*, my students answered with the following:

Lucy answered “1” (*strongly disagree*) and wrote that “it wasn’t hard at all to do this during the project. It was actually really easy. But I guess doing the script annotation work helped me practice these skills some.”

Helen, Robert, and Glenda answered “3” (*neutral*), and Helen explained during her grade defense meeting with me that she:

didn’t feel challenged at all, but I guess the different presentations helped me analyze theme. It was pretty boring, though, that each group did the same theme of gossip. I don’t know why you had them do that. It would have been much better if groups could have picked different themes to address.

Alan, John, Elizabeth, Kaden, Patricia, Faith, and Tom answered “4” (*agree*). Elizabeth wrote that:

during CDSA Step 4 I went through the script and annotated many different topics such as gossip and sexism that I could potentially use later as a focus theme/social issue. Later, my dramaturgy team isolated one prevalent theme (gossip) that we were able to successfully incorporate into our educational outreach work using Theatre of the Oppressed, and we were able to emphasize gossip during our performance of *Much Ado About Nothing*. I think this shows that even though we were challenged as learners, we did know what we were doing, and therefore we deserve an A for this skill.

Tom also wrote about CDSA Step 4:

As part of this project, I was challenged to determine the theme or central idea of *Much Ado About Nothing*, but what made that even tougher was I also needed to take into consideration my target audience of 9<sup>th</sup> graders and what themes would be relevant to them. I had to analyze the development of *Much Ado About Nothing* over the course of the entire play so that I could figure out the best ways to cut the script down to only 20 minutes. I really had to reflect on what was important in the play and what details I could leave out.

Sarah, Janice, and Becky all answered “5” (*strongly agree*), and Janice explained during her grade defense meeting with me, that:

Analyzing each of the main aspects of *Much Ado About Nothing* challenged me and really helped me to see that there are lots of different relevant social issues within the play. I found lots of evidence of gossip and eavesdropping, as well as sexism and insulting others. Although my dramaturgy team ended up focusing on gossip for our presentation, it was useful to have practiced my analytical skills by observing how many different themes developed over the course of the play.

For the Likert statement, *During the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I was appropriately challenged as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learner to analyze how characters develop over the course of a text, interact with others characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme*, my students answered with the following:

Tom answered “3” (*neutral*), but also wrote that “annotating the script was a challenging task, and I spent lots of time working on my character coding and it actually ended up being useful for my dramaturgy team.”

Sarah, Helen, Alan, Kaden, Glenda, and Patricia answered “4” (*agree*). Sarah stated that it was “challenging, but helpful, to analyze so many different characters found within *Much Ado About Nothing*. It was interesting to note their relationships, their development throughout the play, etc.” Alan explained that the “dramaturgy work, especially tasks connected to CDSA Step 4, helped me the most when it came to this Common Core skill area.” Glenda also referred to CDSA Step 4 in this written response:

During CDSA Step 4, we basically had to analyze all of the characters in the play, and this was a challenge because there were a lot of characters. I’m not sure if it was actually necessary to track character development for all characters, but I did it since that is what I was expected to do. I’m really familiar with all the characters, so I guess that’s a good thing, but I found it kind of dull.

Robert, Lucy, Janice, Becky, John, Elizabeth, Danny, Faith, and Tom all answered “5” (*strongly agree*). Janice wrote that:

all of the character analysis work, especially tasks completed during CDSA Step 4, really challenged and helped me with these skills. When my dramaturgy team was cutting the script, we noticed that it was really important for us to know all the characters, because we needed to know what to include in the play to effectively show changes in each character.

Becky also stated that CDSA Step 4 tasks helped “enhance my ability to analyze characters and how they developed during *Much Ado About Nothing*. There were definitely aspects of each character I would have missed if I hadn’t been reading closely.”



For the Likert questionnaire statement, *Overall, the Common Core reading tasks required during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project appropriately challenged me as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learner*, my students answered with the following:

Lucy answered “1” (*strongly disagree*), and she did not provide any other information regarding this response.

Robert and Glenda both answered “3” (*neutral*), and Robert wrote that “some of the tasks were a little more challenging than others, but I didn’t find any of it to be super difficult that it is in some of my other classes.”

Helen, Alan, John, Kaden, Patricia, Faith, and Tom answered “4” (*agree*), and John wrote that he was “really happy he got to participate in the project.”

Sarah, Janice, Becky, Elizabeth, and Danny all responded with a “5” demonstrating that they strongly agreed that overall, the Common Core reading tasks required during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project appropriately challenged them as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learners.

### Writing and Research Common Core Skills

For the Likert questionnaire statement, *During the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I was appropriately challenged as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learner to write arguments to support claims*, my students answered with the following:

Lucy answered “1” (*strongly disagree*), and she wrote that she was already an advanced writer and most of the writing tasks “were easy” for her.

Helen answered “2” (*disagree*).

Robert answered “3” (*neutral*), but also added that he thought that “preparing the dramaturgy program note challenged” his dramaturgy team.

Alan, Janice, Kaden, Glenda, Patricia, Faith, and Tom answered “4” (*agree*), and Faith stated in her grade defense meeting that:

It was interesting to work on pieces that my classmates were going to read, and that made me a little more nervous about it, but it also motivated me to work harder. I think it was during CDSA Step 6, when we really had to start planning our performance and our outreach program that I felt super challenged with my argumentation skills. We were using the Toulmin method, but it felt different, and I was afraid that I wasn’t going to develop the dramaturg note properly, but I think it worked out in the end.

Janice also wrote that the dramaturgy preparation work found in CDSA Step 6 challenged her and her dramaturgy team members to “be mindful of their target audience when preparing the dramaturgy note and the educational outreach materials.”

Sarah, Becky, John, Elizabeth and Danny all answered “5” (*strongly agree*), and Sarah wrote that her dramaturgy team’s work on the playbill, “such as when we wrote the article about gossip and wrote about gossip in the dramaturgy note,” challenged them.

For the Likert questionnaire statement, *During the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I was appropriately challenged as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learner to write informative/explanatory texts*, my students answered with the following:

Lucy answered “3” (*neutral*), and chose not to provide any other details about her response.

Helen, Robert, Janice, John, Glenda, Patricia, Danny, Faith, and Tom all answered “4” (*agree*), and Glenda wrote that “although these tasks weren’t hard for me, some of my dramaturgy team members really struggled when they were preparing informative pieces for our playbill. I was able to help them because it’s all been really quite easy for me.”

Sarah, Alan, Becky, Elizabeth, and Kaden answered “5” (*strongly agree*).

Kaden stated in his grade defense meeting with me that:

The playbill writing tasks put all my writing skills to work in ways that really challenged me, but especially with my informative/explanatory writing abilities. Also, the writing my dramaturgy team completed while developing the playbill felt more authentic than other school writing tasks I’ve been given in the past. I suppose that’s because I knew the entire class would be reading our work, and I wanted them to be impressed with what we created. I wanted it to seem like we really knew what we were talking about in our writing.

For the Likert questionnaire statement, *During the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I was appropriately challenged as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learner to write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences*, my students answered with the following:

Lucy and Glenda answered “2” (*disagree*), and Glenda wrote that although she “did enjoy writing some monologues and scripts for the educational outreach work, it really was not difficult enough.”

Sarah, Helen, Janice, John, Elizabeth, Kaden, Patricia, Danny, Faith and Tom answered “4” (*agree*). Danny wrote that he’s:

never been that comfortable writing fiction or narratives based on real life, and so it was challenging to do the monologue activities, especially during CDSA Step 5, because it felt like I was combining fiction and my own life and things I care about all into one. Some of the monologues were good, but some of them just weren't as good as I hoped for.

Tom stated during his grade defense meeting with me that:

I know I'm not the absolute best writer in the world, even though I'm in this advanced language arts class, but I like getting the chance to be creative, and I think during this project one of my favorite activities was writing some monologues about social issues and also getting to develop scripts for Forum Theatre.

Robert, Alan, and Becky all answered "5" (*strongly agree*), and Alan explained during his grade defense meeting with me that:

It's probably clear to you by now that I don't love Shakespeare and theatre and all of that, but I did enjoy when you let me write about environmental concerns and such through brainstorming monologue work in my writer's notebook. Not everyone thinks that we should care about the world, but it is important to me, and that's why I decided to create a persona of Mother Earth. Some of my dramaturgy team members totally made fun of me for being a hippy, but I just created what I felt. So, thanks again. I know I drove you crazy when I was stubborn and didn't want to follow directions during this project, but I did actually learn a few things.

Becky stated during her grade defense meeting that:

cutting down the script for the performance during CDSA Step 4 through Step 6 helped me strengthen my narrative writing skills. I think that's because I had to learn how to isolate which sections of the play were crucial to the story and find ways to incorporate the entire

script together into a cohesive whole, even though the original script had to be drastically cut down to satisfy the school performance time requirements. I know that we didn't write *Much Ado About Nothing*, but working with the script did make me feel like more like a playwright myself which was kind of fun. And then when we also got to write monologues and scripts about social issues, that was challenging and also really fun. It was something different and I liked that.

For the Likert questionnaire statement, *During the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I was appropriately challenged as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learner to produce writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience; develop writing as needed by planning revising editing, rewriting or trying a new approach focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience*, my students answered with the following:

Glenda and Robert answered “3” (*neutral*), and Glenda wrote that she already knew how to “develop various pieces of writing for different audiences, and it wasn't difficult to apply those skills to dramaturgy work.” Robert stated during his grade defense meeting with me that “he enjoyed preparing the playbill and the educational outreach posters,” but that it “wasn't challenging or tough to complete.”

Helen, Lucy, Janice, Patricia, Danny, Faith and Tom all answered “4” (*agree*), and Helen, Lucy, and Danny all wrote that CDSA Step 6 challenged them with these skills, because they needed to consider their target audience when they were researching, writing, and preparing all the materials for the performance and outreach presentation.

Sarah, Alan, Becky, John, Elizabeth, and Kaden answered “5” (*strongly agree*). Sarah wrote that she found it “challenging as well as fun and interesting to work on a playbill for the target audience,” and she learned a lot when she worked on her “dramaturgy team’s protocol work which was part of CDSA Step 4.” Becky, John, and Kaden also mentioned in writing that they felt like CDSA Step 4 tasks helped them work on these Common Core skills.

For the Likert questionnaire statement, *During the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I was appropriately challenged as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learner to use technology, including the internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing produced, taking advantage of technology’s capacity to link other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically*, my students answered with the following:

Robert and John answered “2” (*disagree*) and Robert wrote that he’s “known how to use all technology forever,” so it is “really difficult to challenge me in this area.”

Lucy and Alan both answered “3” (*neutral*), but Alan wrote that “sometimes it was challenging to get all of my dramaturgy team members to use technology properly and efficiently, like when we needed to split up the tasks using Google docs.”

Sarah, Elizabeth, Kaden, Glenda, Patricia, Danny, Faith, and Tom all answered “4” (*agree*), and Elizabeth wrote that:

it was challenging to use technology because not everyone on my dramaturgy team knew what they were doing. I tried to teach them how to do everything correctly, and so I suppose that is part of how I was challenged, because I needed to deal with them. Some of my team members weren’t even paying attention to upcoming deadlines, and we needed to work together using the technology to finish all the tasks.

Janice, Becky, and Helen each answered “5” (*strongly agree*) and Janice stated the following during her grade defense meeting with me:

I used technology multiple times a day as a dramaturgy team member to research Shakespeare, production history of *Much Ado About Nothing*, Theatre of the Oppressed and Augusto Boal, and my team used Google docs to share and organize our information. When it came time to polish our Protocol, it was useful to use Google docs because we could collaborate on this writing task, even when dramaturgy team members were out of town. It would have been really difficult to complete this project without the help of all of the technological resources at our disposal. I’m not sure how dramaturgs completed their work before Google.

For the Likert questionnaire statement, *During the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I was appropriately challenged as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learner to conduct research projects to answer a question or solve a problem; synthesize multiple sources on the subject; gather relevant information from multiple sources, using advanced searches effectively; draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection and research* , my students answered with the following:

Helen, Robert, Alan, John, and Danny answered “3” (*neutral*), and none of these students chose to add any more information regarding their answer.

Lucy, Becky, Kaden, Glenda, Patricia, Faith and Tom all answered “4” (*agree*), and Becky, Kaden, and Tom and wrote that they were most challenged as dramaturgs and researchers when they were working on CDSA Step 4.

Sarah, Janice, and Elizabeth all answered “5” (*strongly agree*), each of these students also referred to CDSA Step 4 as challenging them in connection to these Common Core skills.

For the Likert questionnaire statement, *Overall, the Common Core research and writing tasks required during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project appropriately challenged me as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learner*, my students answered with the following:

Lucy answered “1” (*strongly disagree*).

Alan and Robert answered “3” (*neutral*).

Helen, Kaden, Glenda, Patricia, Danny, Faith and Tom answered “4” (*agree*), and Glenda added that although she did find “some tasks to be challenging,” they were “not incredibly hard.” Faith wrote that she “enjoyed working on the creative tasks, especially those found in CDSA Step 5, like writing monologues and working on scenes,” and she hopes to “be able to participate in more playwriting activities in the future.”

Sarah, Janice, Becky, John, Elizabeth, all responded with a “5” demonstrating that they strongly agreed that overall, the Common Core research and writing tasks required during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project appropriately challenged them as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learners.

**Connected Question #2B: Can the Common Core tasks found in the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project challenged advanced and Talented and Gifted learners more than the tasks provided in other classes (present or past)?**



For the Likert statement, *Overall, the Common Core reading tasks required during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project challenged me more as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learner than tasks asked of me in other classes (present or past)*, my students answered with the following:

Helen and Lucy answered “1” (*strong disagree*).

Robert, Glenda, and Alan answered “2” (*disagree*).

Becky, Elizabeth, Kaden, answered “3” (*neutral*).

Janice, John, Patricia, and Faith answered “4” (*agree*).

Sarah, Danny, and Tom answered with a “5” demonstrating that they strongly agreed that overall, the Common Core reading tasks required during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project challenged them more as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learner than tasks asked of them in other classes (present or past).

For the Likert statement, *Overall, the Common Core research and writing tasks required during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project challenged me more as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learner than tasks asked of me in other classes (present or past)*, my students answered with the following:

Helen, Robert, Lucy answered “1” (*strong disagree*).

Alan and Glenda answered “2” (*disagree*).

Faith answered “3” (*neutral*).

Sarah, Janice, Becky, Kaden, Patricia, Danny, answered “4” (*agree*).

Tom, John and Elizabeth answered with a “5” demonstrating that they strongly agreed that overall, the Common Core research and writing tasks required during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project challenged them more as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learner than tasks asked of them in other classes (present or past).

**Connected Question #2C: How does the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project help advanced and Talented and Gifted students feel more confident in terms of speaking and listening, reading, research and writing Common Core skills?**

#### Speaking and Listening Common Core Skills

For the Likert questionnaire statement, *Because of the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I feel more confident in my ability to initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions on texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing my own clearly and persuasively*, my students answered with the following:

Helen, Robert, Alan, and Glenda all responded with “3” (*neutral*). None of these students chose to write more in this section of the questionnaire. Kaden, Danny, Faith, and Tom answered “4” (*agree*). Tom added that:

CDSA Step 7, the performance and outreach presentation, was most challenging because we had to actually put all of our dramaturgy team planning and practice to use with our real target audience. The educational outreach portion was fun, but man, we had to work hard to keep their attention. We did keep their attention, though, and I was able to actually

get them to discuss and participate during our presentation, so that did help build my confidence level in terms of these skills.

Sarah, Lucy, Janice, Becky, John, Elizabeth, and Patricia all answered with “5” (*strongly agree*).

Janice stated that:

With CDSA Step 6, which was when we were planning the performance and outreach, my dramaturgy team was challenged to create an effective presentation for our target audience. We had to use each other’s ideas and build on them to come up with the absolute best plan that would make a difference with our target audience. It was hard, but we could communicate with each other and our target audience, and it helped me to feel more confident because we accomplished our goals.

Patricia wrote that:

During this process, we had to discuss a lot, especially during CDSA Step 4, when we were cutting *Much Ado About Nothing* for performance. We had to debate and share our opinions, and some of us were very stubborn (including myself), but we were able to get it down. I know that in the future I’ll be able to use my discussion and negotiation skills to accomplish a variety of tasks.

For the Likert statement, *Because of the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I feel more confident in my ability to work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making create clear goals and deadlines and individual roles*, my students responded with the following:

Lucy responded with a “1” (*strongly disagree*), and added, “I don’t feel *more* confident because I was already quite confident before the CDSA project began that I could work well with

others to determine roles and set deadlines, and I don't feel like there is any improvement in these skill areas.”

Alan, Kaden, and Glenda all answered with a “3” (*neutral*). Alan stated that “there were many activities that helped me practice this skill during the project, but I don't feel like I'm more confident since I was already quite confident with these skills, even before I came to high school.”

Danny and Faith both answered with a “4” (*agree*). Danny wrote that he found that “CDSA Step 4 and 5 helped build my confidence area regarding these skills the most because my team was challenged and able to make a lot of decisions regarding tasks and deadlines.”

Sarah, Robert, Janice, John, Elizabeth, Patricia, and Tom all answered “5” (*strongly agree*). Patricia explained the following during her grade defense meeting with me:

When working on this project, CDSA Step 4 challenged me a lot with these Common Core skills. Creating our *Much Ado About Nothing* performance script forced my team to try to have collegial discussions and we had to determine and reach clear deadlines that we had set for ourselves. My dramaturgy team struggled with this. But in the end, we did accomplish all the tasks on time, and this showed me that I do have these skills and that I can use them effectively.

Robert explained that he feels more confident “in terms of these Common Core skills because my dramaturgy team had to divide up the work on this project and we were able to do that effectively. Even though it was sometimes frustrating to work with each other, we got it all done.” John wrote that:

Near the beginning of this project, my dramaturgy team struggled to communicate effectively with planning, determining who would oversee which parts of the dramaturgy

Protocol, and when we needed to get our work submitted to our group members. After about a week of our organizational struggles, we decided to sit down and talk out a plan for completion and success. During this dramaturgy team meeting we did what is described in the Common Core standard: we worked with each other to set rules for our daily discussions, work time, and process for decision-making, we made a collaborative Google doc where we set clear goals and deadlines, and where we could plan exactly what each dramaturgy team member would work on, based on their research interests. So, although I had not mastered this skill at the beginning of the unit, I do believe I greatly improved because of this project.

For the Likert statement, *Because of the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I feel more confident in my ability to propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate other into the discussion; and clarify and verify or challenge ideas and conclusions,* my students answered with the following:

Lucy answered with a “1” (*strongly disagree*), and did not provide any other information regarding her answer.

Robert, Kaden, Glenda, and Danny all responded with “3” (*neutral*). However, these students but Robert provided examples for why they felt more confident in terms of this Common Core skill. For example, Kaden stated that “the CDSA Step 7 educational outreach portions helped me practice these skills and helped me feel more confident in my ability to ask questions and respond to questions.” Glenda and Helen also referred to this portion of the CDSA curriculum sequence. Glenda stated that “the skills we had to demonstrate during the educational

outreach are directly connected to this Common Core area because we had to propel conversations connected to our focus social issue and we had to get people to participate in the discussion.” Helen wrote that the “education outreach presentation helped me to gain more confidence when it comes to asking questions and answering questions.”

Sarah, Alan, Janice, and Faith answered with “4” (*agree*), and Faith explained during her grade defense meeting with me that the:

Educational outreach part of the CDSA project helped me feel more confident in my ability to propel conversations with my peers, and to clarify and ideas during a formal presentation. Before I worked on this project, I was kind of shy, but now I am sure that I am capable of being a leader and I can help others talk about social issues that are relevant to us.

Becky, John, Elizabeth, and Tom all responded with “5” (*strongly agree*). Elizabeth wrote that she has:

Always enjoyed talking and debating with people, and during this project my group was very efficient at talking and listening to other people’s ideas and further creating solutions and compromises on each of the issues brought up. Before anything was submitted to Mrs. Hunt or printed off, we all contributed in some way and I think through that feedback and active conversations we had no trouble forming conclusions to various topics. I think this demonstrates that we did accomplish what we needed to do, and we deserve an A for our work.

Becky, John, Patricia, and Tom all stated that CDSA Step 7 educational outreach presentation helped build their confidence with these Common Core skills. Becky wrote that “the educational outreach work challenged me to ask my classmates questions, and even though I’ve always been

really shy to do that, especially when standing up in front of the class, I was able to do it. This might not seem like such a big deal, but for me, it really did boost my confidence.” Patricia wrote, “When my dramaturgy team was presenting our educational outreach program, we presented our scenarios and we were able to get out classmates to consider how they can approach these issues in the future.”

For the Likert statement, *Because of the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I feel more confident in my ability to present information, findings, and supporting evidence appropriate to purpose, audience, and task*, my students answered with the following:

Lucy, Kaden, and Alan answered “3” (*neutral*), but Kaden also wrote that “the entire CDSA project helped me to practice my public speaking skills.”

Sarah, Helen, Janice, Elizabeth, Glenda, and Danny all answered “4” (*agree*). Janice explained during her grade defense meeting with me that:

The educational outreach task required us to share verbally what we had learned about in terms of gossip and how gossip negatively impacts many people at Mountain View High School. This experience helped boost my confidence when it comes to presenting in front of others, and it was nice to feel like we were making a difference, even if our target audience wasn’t completely engaged during our presentation.

Elizabeth wrote that she had:

Never had a problem with sharing my writing, such as on a Google Presentation or Prezi, because there is no talking or presenting required. With the final presentation— including both our *Much Ado About Nothing* performance and our educational outreach— I was challenged (in a good way) because it forced me to get over my fear of public speaking and

I enjoyed demonstrating my knowledge of the characters through the performance and my understanding of our focus social issue through the outreach work.

### Reading Common Core Skills

For the Likert statement, *Because of the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I feel more confident in my ability to cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what a text says*, my students answered with the following:

Helen and Glenda answered “2” (*disagree*). Glenda chose not to provide more information about her response, but Helen wrote:

I suppose the character analysis work found in CDSA Step 4 provided a way for me to practice my textual analysis and citation skills, but it would have been much more helpful for me if we had just written traditional essays rather than trying to pretend that what we were working on was going to matter to anybody. 9<sup>th</sup> graders don't care that much about anyone but themselves, but some students do care about their grades, like me. I like it when things are more structured the way they are supposed to be in the classroom.

Alan and Kaden both responded with “3” (*neutral*). Alan and Kaden also chose not to explain their response.

Sarah, Robert, Janice, Elizabeth, Patricia, Danny, and Faith all answered “4” (*agree*), and Janice explained during her grade defense meeting that:

The character analysis work completed during CDSA Step 4 where I cited various lines from *Much Ado About Nothing* to back up my claims about each of the characters benefited my skills to cite the text and helped me feel more confident in this area. I'm also proud of how I could utilize my annotation/coding work during this task. I have my script with me



if you want to look at it again, because it does show that I was quite efficient and organized and I was even able to help out my fellow dramaturgy team members on multiple occasions with their analysis work by showing them my script.

Becky stated that having to “choose crucial moments from *Much Ado About Nothing*, which was part of CDSA Step 4, helped me practice citing strong and thorough textual evidence to support my analysis of the play, and this work helped me to become much more confident.” Faith also mentioned CDSA Step 4 during her grade defense meeting with me:

When my dramaturgy team was working on cutting *Much Ado About Nothing* for our performance, we realized that it would probably help our target audience out a lot if we added some narration that would summarize or clarify the action of the play. I used my coding and annotation work to create this narration, which helped me realize that there are lots of reasons to annotate and code texts, and it can be helpful. I am confident that I will be able to effectively use these skills when I am a PIB LA 10 student.

For the Likert statement, *Because of the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I feel more confident in my ability to determine a theme or central idea of a text and to analyze in detail its development over the course of the text*, my students answered with the following:

Glenda answered “2” (*disagree*), and stated that she “already knew how to analyze theme and so it wasn’t hard at all to complete all the analysis tasks quickly and efficiently, if I was working on my own. Sometimes it was more challenging because my dramaturgy team members weren’t as knowledgeable about literary analysis as I am, and so I was forced to help them at times.”

Helen and Alan answered “3” (*neutral*), and they also chose not to provide more information.

Becky, Elizabeth, Kaden, Patricia, and Faith answered “4” (*agree*). Becky wrote that CDSA Steps 4-6 helped her “practice determining central themes or ideas in *Much Ado About Nothing* and how they develop over the course of the play. Because of this work, I feel much more confident in my ability to analyze themes.” Kaden also wrote that CDSA Steps 4-6 helped him “practice these skills, since we needed to analyze how themes developed in *Much Ado About Nothing*.” Faith wrote that “working to integrate our group’s focus social issue into our performance and outreach program allowed me to get a lot of practice and now I feel more confident in my ability to do this kind of work.”

Sarah, Robert, Lucy, Janice, John, Danny, and Tom all answered “5” (*strongly agree*). Tom, Danny, John, and Sarah all stated that annotation practice helped them be more confident with these skills. Sarah explained that “all of the close reading and coding work of *Much Ado About Nothing*, especially focusing in on the issue of gossip, helped me to improve my analysis skills in this area.”

For the Likert statement, *Because of the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I feel more confident in my ability to analyze how characters develop over the course of a text, interact with others characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme*, my students answered with the following:

Lucy answered “1” (*strongly disagree*), and she stated that she was “already confident in my ability to analyze characters, but script annotation work did help me practice these skills.”

Helen, Robert, Alan, Kaden and Glenda all answered “3” (*neutral*), although four out of five of these students provided explanations for why they thought they felt more confident in terms of these skills. Helen, Robert Alan, and Kaden, each referred to CDSA Step #4 which required various character analysis tasks, and which these students felt helped them to build their confidence levels.

Sarah and Patricia answered “4” (*agree*), and Patricia stated that in preparation for CDSA Step 7, the performance and outreach, she “worked hard to understand all of the characters.”

Janice, Becky, John, Danny, Faith, and Tom all answered “5” (*strongly agree*). John, Faith and Tom all mentioned that CDSA Step 4 annotation tasks helped them to build their confidence and ability level when it comes to character analysis.

#### Research and Writing Common Core Skills

For the Likert statement, *Because of the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I feel more confident in my ability to write arguments to support claims*, my students answered with the following:

Lucy answered “1” (*strongly disagree*).

Helen answered “2” (*disagree*).

Alan, Kaden, and Glenda answered “3” (*neutral*), but Alan also wrote that the dramaturgy tasks from CDSA Step 4-6 helped him to practice his argumentative writing skills and helped him to “feel more confident” in this area.

Sarah, Robert, Janice, Becky, Elizabeth and Danny answered “4” (*agree*). During Sara’s grade defense meeting she chose to discuss the following connected to these Common Core skills:

my dramaturgy team’s work on writing “Gossip and the Play” helped us to practice our

argumentation skills, especially when it comes to being aware of writing for a specific audience. Although we were aware that we were writing for advanced students of language arts, and therefore their reading comprehension is much higher than that of many of their peers, we also were aware that they were still 9th graders, who perhaps didn't have a great desire to read pages and pages in our play program about the social issue of gossip at our high school. We forced ourselves to keep this in mind as we revised the Program Note, and we had to learn how to condense our argument down to the bare necessities while also making sure it was still convincing to our target audience.

John, Patricia, Faith and Tom answered "5" (*strongly agree*), and John, Faith, and Tom wrote that CDSA Step 6 helped them practice these Common Core skills.

For the Likert statement, *Because of the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I feel more confident in my ability to write informative/explanatory texts*, my students answered with the following:

Lucy answered "2" (*disagree*).

Robert, Helen, Glenda and Tom all answered "3" (*neutral*) but Tom also wrote that working on CDSA Step 4, especially "the research connected to Shakespeare and Theatre of the Oppressed" helped him to "practice these skills."

Becky, Kaden, Patricia, Danny, and Faith answered "4" (*agree*), and Kaden also wrote that CDSA Step 4 as well as CDSA Step 5 helped him with these Common Core skills.

Sarah, Alan, Janice, John, and Elizabeth all answered "5" (*strongly agree*). John explained during his grade defense meeting that:

The dramaturgy team research that was part of CDSA Steps 4, 5, and 6, and writing

the playbill helped challenge me and strengthen my skills at informative writing. In these writing assignments, I had to incorporate my research and knowledge into my writing while also attempting to teach my target audience through my writing pieces.

For the Likert statement, *Because of the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I feel more confident in my ability to write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences*, my students answered with the following:

Lucy and Glenda answered “2” (*disagree*).

Helen answered “3” (*neutral*), but wrote that she “felt more confident in writing monologues and scripts because of the project.”

Robert, Alan, Janice Elizabeth, Kaden, Patricia, Danny, and Faith answered “4” (*agree*), and they all referred to CDSA Steps 5 and 6 in writing or during their grade defense meetings as tasks that helped them feel more confident in their narrative writing abilities.

Sarah, Becky, John, and Tom answered “5” (*strongly agree*), and Tom explained during his grade defense meeting that:

writing the narration in our *Much Ado About Nothing* performance script helped me the most with my narrative skills, because I had to keep the narration interesting while incorporating the original plot and trying to stay consistent with the narrative arc Shakespeare intended. Going through this process also helped me when I needed to write original monologues and scenes about social issues I found to be most relevant to my own life. Although some may not be able to see how cutting a Shakespeare script and writing a Theatre of the Oppressed script is connected, it did help me with my narrative writing skills

to do both tasks around the same time.

For the Likert statement, *Because of the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I feel more confident ability to use technology, including the internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing produced, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically*, my students answered with the following:

Glenda answered "2" (*disagree*).

Lucy, Alan, John, and Kaden each answered "3" (*neutral*), but John stated during his grade defense meeting that he "feels more confident when it comes to using technology, probably because of the CDSA project."

Sarah, Elizabeth, Patricia, Danny, and Faith answered "4" (*agree*), and Faith wrote that she "definitely feels more confident in her ability to use Google tools such as Google forms and Google docs."

Helen, Robert Janice, Becky, and Tom answered "5" (*strongly agree*), and Robert stated during his grade defense meeting that:

During CDSA Step 5, I used Google technology to create a survey that helped my dramaturgy team get a lot of useful information about our target audience. I had never used Google Forms before this project, and I can see how this tool will be useful in the future. It was so helpful how Google Forms compiled the results into graphs and things like that. It made my team's job easier when it came to planning the audience outreach portion of the project.

Elizabeth explained during her grade defense meeting with me that she:

appreciated how quickly we could get information from our audience about how it went-- what they thought of our lobby display, our playbill, our performance and audience outreach, by using Google forms. As you know, sometimes I get anxious that my peers aren't going to like or respect my work or my team's work, but we ended up getting positive feedback from our audience on the Google Form. It was also incredibly useful to be able to identify areas we could improve upon if we were to do this project again in the future. I'm sort of a perfectionist and so I don't always like getting feedback, but the feedback we got was really constructive and helpful.

For the Likert statement, *Because of the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I feel more confident in my ability to conduct research projects to answer a question or solve a problem; synthesize multiple sources on the subject; gather relevant information from multiple sources, using advanced searches effectively; draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection and research*, my students answered with the following:

Helen, Robert, Lucy, Alan, John, Kaden, and Glenda all answered "3" (*neutral*), although both Alan and Kaden wrote that they were "better researchers" because of many of the CDSA tasks.

Becky, Patricia, Danny, Faith, and Tom answered "4" (*agree*), and Faith wrote that she felt "much more confident when completing research tasks," and she explained that she even feels like she can "be a leader in a research group in other classes now."

Sarah, Janice, and Elizabeth, answered “5” (*strongly agree*), and all three wrote about CDSA Steps 4,5, and 6 in helping them practice and build their confidence levels related to these Common Core skills.

For the Likert statement, *Because of the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I feel more confident in my ability to produce writing in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience; develop writing as needed by planning revising editing, rewriting or trying a new approach focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience*, my students answered with the following:

Helen, Lucy and Glenda answered “3” (*neutral*), and Glenda wrote that “it’s clear that we did work on these skills a lot during this project, but I was already quite confident in my abilities as a writer.”

Sarah, Robert, Janice, Kaden, Patricia, Danny, and Tom answered “4” (*agree*), and Sarah, Kaden, Patricia and Danny mentioned how CDSA Steps 5 and 6 helped them practice these skills.

Alan, Becky, John, Elizabeth, and Faith answered “5” (*strongly agree*), and all five of these students wrote that CDSA Steps 5 and 6 provided challenges to help them practice and improve their skills in this Common Core area.

**Connected Research Question #2D: How does advanced and Talented and Gifted student participation in the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism help them feel more confident that they will be able to effectively use their speaking and listening, reading, writing and research skills in the future?**



For the Likert statement, *Because of my participation in the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I am confident I will be able to effectively use my speaking and listening skills in the future*, my students answered with the following:

Kaden and Tom answered “3” (*neutral*).

Robert, Lucy, Alan, Glenda, Danny and Faith all answered “4” (*agree*).

Sarah, Helen, Janice, Becky, John, Elizabeth, and Patricia responded with a “5” (*strongly agree*).

For the Likert statement, *Because of my participation in the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I am confident I will be able to effectively use my reading skills in the future*, my students answered with the following:

Helen answered “2” (*disagree*).

Tom answered “3” (*neutral*).

Robert, Alan, John, Kaden, Glenda, Patricia, and Faith answered “4” (*agree*).

Sarah, Lucy, Janice, Becky, Elizabeth, and Danny answered with a “5” (*strongly agree*).

For the Likert statement, *Because of my participation in the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I am confident I will be able to effectively use my research and writing skills in the future*, my students answered with the following:

Lucy, Alan, John, Kaden, Glenda, Patricia, Danny, and Tom all answered “4”

Becky, Sarah, Helen, Robert, Janice, Elizabeth, and Faith responded with a “5”

Connected Research Question #2 E: **Does participation in Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism help advanced and Talented and Gifted 9<sup>th</sup> grade students feel like they grew as readers and writers, researchers, speakers and listeners?**

For the Likert statement, *I feel like I grew as a speaker and listener during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism* project, my students answered with the following:

Helen and Lucy both answered “2” (*disagree*).

Alan and Glenda answered “3” (*neutral*).

Sarah, Robert, Kaden, Danny, and Tom all answered “4” (*agree*).

Janice, Becky, John, Elizabeth, Patricia, and Faith responded with a “5” (*strongly agree*).

For the Likert statement, *I feel like I grew as a reader during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism* project, my students answered with the following:

Lucy answered “1” (*strongly disagree*).

Helen answered “2” (*disagree*).

Robert, John, and Glenda answered “3” (*neutral*).

Alan, Kaden, and Tom answered “4” (*agree*).

Sarah, Janice, Becky, Elizabeth, Patricia, Danny and Faith answered with a “5” (*strongly agree*).

For the Likert statement, *I feel like I grew as a researcher and writer during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project*, my students answered with the following:

Lucy answered “1” (*strongly disagree*).

Alan and Helen answered “2” (*disagree*).

Glenda answered “3” (*neutral*).

Sarah, Robert, Janice, Kaden, Patricia, Danny, Faith, and Tom answered “4” (*agree*).

Becky, John, and Elizabeth all responded with a “5” (*strongly agree*).

**Connected Research Question #2 F: Will advanced and Talented and Gifted students enjoy the Common Core tasks required during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project?**

For the Likert statement, *Overall, I enjoyed the Common Core speaking and listening tasks required during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project*, my students answered with the following:

Lucy answered “1” (*strongly disagree*).

Alan and Tom answered “2” (*disagree*).

Helen, Robert, Becky, Kaden, Glenda and Danny answered “3” (*neutral*).

Sarah and Faith answered “4” (*agree*).

Janice, John, Elizabeth and Patricia responded with a “5” (*strongly agree*).

For the Likert statement, *Overall, I enjoyed the Common Core reading tasks required during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project*, my students answered with the following:

Lucy answered “1” (*strongly disagree*).

Helen and Tom answered “2” (*disagree*).

Alan, Becky, Kaden, and Glenda answered “3” (*neutral*).

Robert, Janice, Elizabeth, Patricia and Faith answered “4” (*agree*).

Sarah, John and Danny answered with a “5” (*strongly agree*).

For the Likert statement, *Overall, I enjoyed the Common Core research and writing tasks required during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project*, my students answered with the following:

Lucy answered “1” (*strongly disagree*).

Helen, Alan, and Tom answered “2” (*disagree*).

Kaden answered “3” (*neutral*).

Sarah, Robert, Janice, Becky, Glenda, Patricia, Danny and Faith answered “4” (*agree*).

John and Elizabeth both responded with “5” (*strongly agree*).

## Chapter Four Summary

In this chapter, I provided written responses of fifteen focus students to the two required post-Likert questionnaires, and I also include some transcribed focus student oral responses shared with me during the 2016 student end-of-the-year grade defense meetings. All student responses provided in this chapter are directly connected to the research questions being used throughout this research project and which are provided again below:

Central Research Question #1: How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism help advanced and Talented and Gifted 9th grade students engage with relevant social issues?

Central Research Question #2: How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism appropriately challenge advanced and Talented and Gifted 9th grade students and increase their confidence and skill levels related to the Common Core State Standards for Language Arts?

In the next and final chapter, I will discuss my conclusions and insights regarding my research project as well as suggestions for future studies.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusions, Limitations, Recommendations for Future Research

#### Chapter Introduction

In this final chapter, I present data charts which present the Likert questionnaire data using a side-by-side format analysis of the data. Each of the provided charts is connected to my central research questions and connected research questions. These charts have been organized into two different sections. The first section will present side-by-side Likert data connected to central research question #1, and the second section will present data connected to central research question #2. Following each chart I will present conclusions drawn from the data. This will be followed by a discussion of the limitations found within this research and recommendations for future research, especially for those interested in using the methods of Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism in a school or community setting.

#### Likert Data Charts

##### Section One

Central Research Question #1: How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism help advanced and Talented and Gifted 9th grade students engage with relevant social issues?

**Connected Question #1A: How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism help advanced and Talented and Gifted 9<sup>th</sup> grade language arts students become more aware of relevant social issues in their community?**

<b>Focus Student's Name</b>	<b>Before the Project:</b> <i>I am aware of relevant social issues in my community</i>	<b>After the Project:</b> <i>I am more aware of relevant social issues in my community</i>
Tom	3	3
Patricia	4	3
Sarah	4	4
Janice	4	4
Becky	5	4
Kaden	4	2
John	4	5
Glenda	3	4
Danny	5	2
Faith	5	4
Helen	2	4
Robert	5	3
Lucy	1	5
Alan	4	2
Elizabeth	2	5

**Connected Question #1B: How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism help motivate advanced and Talented and Gifted students to try to make their community a more positive and inclusive place?**

<b>Focus Student's Name</b>	<b>Before:</b> <i>I am currently engaged in trying to make my community a more positive and inclusive place</i>	<b>After:</b> <i>I am more motivated to try to make my community a more positive and inclusive place</i>
Tom	5	2
Patricia	5	3
Sarah	4	5
Janice	4	2
Becky	5	4
Kaden	2	2
John	4	4
Glenda	3	4
Danny	3	2
Faith	4	4

Helen	2	2
Robert	4	2
Lucy	2	4
Alan	2	2
Elizabeth	2	5

Connected Question #1C: **Does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism help advanced and Talented and Gifted students believe they can make a positive difference in their community?**

<b>Focus Student's Name</b>	<b>After the Project:</b> <i>I believe I can make a positive difference in my community</i>
Tom	4
Patricia	4
Sarah	5
Janice	4
Becky	5
Kaden	4
John	5
Glenda	3
Danny	3
Faith	4
Helen	3
Robert	4
Lucy	5
Alan	4
Elizabeth	1

Connected Question #1D: **Is my classroom a positive and inclusive environment during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project?**



Focus Student's Name	<i>Mrs. Hunt's classroom has been a positive and inclusive environment during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project</i>
Tom	5
Patricia	4
Sarah	5
Janice	4
Becky	5
Kaden	4
John	5
Glenda	4
Danny	4
Faith	5
Helen	1
Robert	4
Lucy	3
Alan	3
Elizabeth	2

## Section Two

Central Research Question #2: How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism appropriately challenge advanced and Talented and Gifted 9th grade students and increase their confidence and skill levels related to the Common Core Standards for Language Arts?

Connected Question #2A: **How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism appropriately challenge advanced and Talented and Gifted learners in terms of the Common Core speaking, listening, reading, research, and writing skills?**

Likert statement: *During the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I was appropriately challenged as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learner...*

Speaking and Listening Common Core Skills

<b>Focus Students' Names</b>	<i>Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions...</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1)	<i>Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making...</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1. B).	<i>Propel conversations by posing and responding...</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C).	<i>Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly...</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4).	<i>Overall, the Common Core speaking and listening tasks appropriately challenged me</i>
Tom	4	3	5	4	4
Patricia	5	5	5	5	5
Sarah	4	4	4	4	5
Janice	5	5	4	4	4
Becky	5	5	5	5	5
Kaden	3	5	3	3	4
John	3	5	5	5	5
Glenda	4	4	4	4	4
Danny	4	4	4	4	4
Faith	4	4	4	4	4
Helen	4	5	4	5	4
Robert	3	5	3	3	4
Lucy	1	1	1	2	2
Alan	3	3	4	2	4
Elizabeth	5	5	5	5	5

In relation to the Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards, the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project most challenged my advanced and Talented and Gifted learners when they were participating in activities related to CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.

B. Overall, 14 out of 15 study participants (93%) felt appropriately challenged as speakers and listeners throughout the CDSA project.

Common Core Reading Skills

<b>Focus Students' Names</b>	<i>Cite strong and thorough textual evidence...</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1)	<i>Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development...</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2)	<i>Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text...</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3).	<i>Overall, the Common Core reading tasks required during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project appropriately challenged me</i>
Tom	4	4	3	4
Patricia	4	4	4	4
Sarah	5	5	4	5
Janice	4	5	5	5
Becky	5	5	5	5
Kaden	3	4	4	4
John	5	4	5	4
Glenda	2	3	4	3
Danny	4	4	5	5
Faith	4	4	5	4
Helen	4	3	4	4
Robert	3	3	5	3
Lucy	2	1	5	1
Alan	4	4	4	4
Elizabeth	5	4	5	5

In relation to the Common Core Reading Standards, the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project most challenged my advanced and Talented and Gifted learners when they were participating in activities related to CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3. Overall, 12 out of 15 study participants (80%) felt appropriately challenged as speakers and listeners throughout the CDSA project.

Writing and Research Common Core Skills

Focus Students' Names	<i>Write arguments to support claims...</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1)	<i>Write informative/explanatory texts...</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2).	<i>Write narratives to develop real or imagined...</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3).	<i>Produce clear and coherent writing...</i>  (CCSS.ELA LITERACY.W.9-10.4).	<i>Use technology, including the Internet...</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.6).	<i>Conduct research projects...</i>  (CCSS.ELA LITERACY.W.9-10.7).	<i>Overall, the writing and research tasks appropriately challenged me</i>
Tom	4	4	4	4	4	4	5
Patricia	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Sarah	5	5	4	5	4	5	4
Janice	4	4	4	4	5	5	4
Becky	5	5	5	5	5	4	4
Kaden	4	5	4	5	4	4	4
John	5	4	4	5	2	3	5
Glenda	4	4	3	3	4	4	2
Danny	5	4	4	4	4	3	4
Faith	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Helen	2	4	4	4	5	3	1
Robert	3	4	5	3	2	3	1
Lucy	1	3	3	4	3	4	1
Alan	4	5	5	5	3	3	2
Elizabeth	5	5	4	5	4	5	5

In relation to the Common Core Writing and Research Standards, the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project most challenged my advanced and Talented and Gifted learners when they were participating in activities related to CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2. Overall, 10 out of 15 study participants (66%) felt appropriately challenged as speakers and listeners throughout the CDSA project.

In conclusion, Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism activities related to the Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards most effectively challenged advanced and Talented and Gifted learners.

Connected Question #2 B: **How do the Common Core tasks found in the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project challenge advanced and Talented and Gifted learners more than the tasks provided in other classes (present or past)?**

Likert Statement: *The Common Core tasks of.... required during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project challenged me more as an advanced or Talented and Gifted learner than tasks asked of me in other classes (present or past.*

Focus Students' Names	Speaking and Listening	Reading	Writing and Research
Tom	5	5	5
Patricia	5	4	4
Sarah	4	5	4
Janice	4	4	4
Becky	4	3	4
Kaden	3	3	4
John	5	4	5
Glenda	2	2	2
Danny	4	5	4
Faith	4	4	3
Helen	2	1	1
Robert	2	2	1
Lucy	1	1	1
Alan	1	2	2
Elizabeth	4	3	5

9 out of 15 students, or 60% of student participants felt that the Common Core Speaking and Listening and Common Core Writing and Research tasks completed during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project challenged them more than tasks completed in other courses.

Connected Question #2 C: **How does Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project help advanced and Talented and Gifted students feel more confident in terms of speaking and listening, reading, research and writing Common Core skills?**

Likert Statement: *Because of the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I feel more confident in my ability to...*

Speaking and Listening Common Core Skills

<b>Focus Students' Names</b>	<i>Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions...</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1)	<i>Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making...</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1. B).	<i>Propel conversations by posing and responding...</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C).	<i>Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly...</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4).
Tom	4	5	5	5
Patricia	5	5	5	5
Sarah	5	5	4	4
Janice	5	5	4	4
Becky	5	5	5	5
Kaden	4	3	3	3
John	5	5	5	5
Glenda	3	3	3	4
Danny	4	4	3	4
Faith	4	4	4	5
Helen	3	5	5	4
Robert	3	5	3	5
Lucy	5	1	1	3
Alan	3	3	4	3
Elizabeth	5	5	5	4

In relation to the Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards, the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project best helped my advanced and Talented and Gifted

learners become more confident in skills related to CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1. B and CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4. All 15 focus students (100%) responded with “agree” or “strongly agree” to the Likert Statement in at least one skill area, and the majority of the focus students responded with “agree” or “strongly disagree” in multiple Common Core Speaking and Listening skill areas.

### Common Core Reading Skills

<b>Focus Students' Names</b>	<i>Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1)	<i>Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2)	<i>Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3).
Tom	5	5	5
Patricia	4	4	4
Sarah	4	5	4
Janice	4	5	5
Becky	5	4	5
Kaden	3	4	3
John	5	5	5
Glenda	2	2	3
Danny	4	5	5
Faith	4	4	5
Helen	2	3	3
Robert	5	5	3
Lucy	5	5	1
Alan	3	3	3
Elizabeth	4	4	5

In relation to the Common Core Reading Standards, the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project best helped my advanced and Talented and Gifted learners become more confident in skills related to CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1 and CCSS.ELA-

LITERACY.RL.9-10.2 12 out of the 15 focus students (80%) responded with “agree” or “strongly agree” to the Likert Statement in at least one skill area, and the majority of the focus students responded with “agree” or “strongly disagree” in multiple Common Core Speaking and Listening skill areas.

### Writing and Research Common Core Skills

<b>Focus Students' Names</b>	<i>Write arguments to support claims...</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1)	<i>Write informative/explanatory texts...</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2).	<i>Write narratives to develop real or imagined...</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3).	<i>Produce clear and coherent writing ...</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4).	<i>Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish...</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.6).	<i>Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects...</i>  (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7).
Tom	5	3	5	5	4	5
Patricia	5	4	4	4	4	4
Sarah	4	5	5	4	5	4
Janice	4	5	4	5	5	5
Becky	4	4	5	5	4	4
Kaden	3	4	4	3	3	4
John	5	5	5	3	3	5
Glenda	3	3	2	2	3	3
Danny	4	4	4	4	4	4
Faith	5	4	4	4	4	5
Helen	2	3	3	5	3	3
Robert	4	3	4	5	3	4
Lucy	1	2	2	3	3	3
Alan	3	5	4	3	3	5
Elizabeth	4	5	4	4	5	5

In relation to the Common Core Writing and Research Standards, the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project best helped my advanced and Talented and Gifted learners become more confident in skills related to CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3 and CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7. 13 out of the 15 focus students (86%) responded with “agree” or “strongly agree” to the Likert Statement in at least one skill area, and the majority of the focus



students responded with “agree” or “strongly disagree” in multiple Common Core Speaking and Listening skill areas.

**Connected Research Question #2 D: How does advanced and Talented and Gifted student participation in the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism help them feel confident that they will be able to effectively use their speaking and listening, reading, writing and research skills in the future?**

Likert Statement: *Because of my participation in the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, I am confident I will be able to effectively use my ...in the future.*

<b>Focus Students' Names</b>	<b>Speaking and Listening</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing and Research</b>
Tom	3	3	4
Patricia	5	4	4
Sarah	5	5	5
Janice	5	5	5
Becky	5	5	5
Kaden	3	4	4
John	5	4	4
Glenda	4	4	4
Danny	4	5	4
Faith	4	4	5
Helen	5	2	5
Robert	4	4	5
Lucy	4	5	4
Alan	4	4	4
Elizabeth	5	5	5

15 out of 15 focus students (100%) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that because of their participation in the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, they are confident they will be able to effectively use skills from at least one of the Common Core Language Arts categories. 15 out of 15 focus students (100%) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that because of their participation in the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project, they are confident they will be able to effectively use the Common Core Writing and Research skills in the future.

**Connected Research Question #2 E: Does participation in Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism help advanced and Talented and Gifted 9<sup>th</sup> grade students feel like they grew as readers and writers, researchers, speakers and listeners?**

Likert Statement: *I feel like I grew as a ...during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism*

<b>Focus Students' Names</b>	<b>Speakers and Listeners</b>	<b>Readers</b>	<b>Writers and Researchers</b>
Tom	4	4	4
Patricia	5	5	4
Sarah	4	5	4
Janice	5	5	4
Becky	5	5	5
Kaden	4	4	4
John	5	3	5
Glenda	3	3	3
Danny	4	5	4
Faith	5	5	4
Helen	2	2	2
Robert	4	3	4
Lucy	2	1	1

Alan	3	4	2
Elizabeth	5	5	5

12 out of 15 students, or 80% of student participants “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that they grew most as speakers, listeners, writers, and researchers during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project.

Connected Research Question #2 F: **Do advanced and Talented and Gifted students enjoy the Common Core tasks required during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project?**

Likert Statement: *I enjoyed the Common Core ...tasks required during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project.*

<b>Focus Students' Names</b>	<b>Speaking and Listening</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing and Research</b>
Tom	2	2	2
Patricia	5	4	4
Sarah	4	5	4
Janice	5	4	4
Becky	3	3	4
Kaden	4	3	3
John	5	5	5
Glenda	3	3	4
Danny	3	5	4
Faith	4	4	4
Helen	3	2	2
Robert	3	4	4
Lucy	1	1	1
Alan	2	3	2
Elizabeth	5	4	5

10 out of 15 students (66%) of student participants “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that they enjoyed the Writing and Research Common Core tasks required during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project. 12 out of 15 students (80%) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that they enjoyed at least one of the Common Core tasks required during the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project.

### Final Reflection of CDSA Participation and Student Activism

Most my focus students responded that because of the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism project they are more aware of relevant social issues in their community. Lucy and Elizabeth came into this project both filled with intrinsic motivation to make a positive difference in their community. According to them, the CDSA project did not help them become more aware, but what I care about is that they truly do seem like they want to engage with social issues, and I don’t need to take credit for that. I know they will do great work and that they will help their fellow human beings, and that is what matters.

From the very beginning, Elizabeth has shown that she has been greatly hurt by those in her past—to the point where she now truly believes that it is futile to attempt to change things for the better. Elizabeth told me that she appreciated what I tried to do with the CDSA project, but she doesn’t “really believe that anything can make a difference, especially since no one will ever really listen” to her. I tried everything I could think of to help her understand that *I* would listen, and I would try to help in any way I could, but I never got through to her. This is where being a teacher-researcher feels very different than research conducted by an outside party. Elizabeth is not a study participant to me; Elizabeth is so kind, and feels so deeply, and I feel like I was given the opportunity to help her know she’s not alone and I failed. As many of my students learned

during this project, often failure is inevitable, but recognizing that doesn't make it hurt less. I want to say that I know what I could have done differently, that I can propose specific strategies other teachers and other researchers can use to help their students and study participants, but with Elizabeth, I'm at a loss.

On a more positive note, I'm thrilled that Danny is now so motivated to try to make a difference in his community. He's not a theatre kid, and I know he was shy trying out Theatre of the Oppressed activities at the beginning of the project, but I'm so proud of him for being willing to try something new and taking that risk has helped him realize that he does have the power to help others. I'm hopeful when I think about Janice and Faith recognizing that there are issues of student obsession with grades and grade shaming at Mountain View High School, and that they both want to actively try to stop this from occurring. I'm also so happy for Becky, who is one of my quieter students at times that she has the desire to be more confident about sharing her opinions and she wants to start self-advocating more and become and advocate for others

Most my students agreed that this project helped them believe that they can make a positive difference in their community. Although some of my students, like Glenda, can't commit to saying that they will be able to be supportive of others, other students showed their various passions when reflecting on what they can do to make a difference. Alan, of course, discussed his desire to help Mother Earth, and Kaden and Janice both observed that it is often the small, daily actions that can make a big difference, and Faith has a specific goal to stop "others when they are talking about their scores on tests and their grades," and she wants to help her classmates "recognize that people are more than their grades." Lucy began this project already active in several different social activism groups, and she seems to have made a life-long commitment to fighting for the rights of others.

Reflecting back, it's clear that Helen was not happy during this unit, but she never wanted to discuss why, even when I tried to reach out to her outside of class, through e-mail, etc. She was the only student that answered "1" (strongly disagree), and she also chose to give me any more information on why this was the case. I have a strong sense that her frustration with this project stemmed mostly from a frustration with her dramaturgy team members who she chose, but I will never know for sure.

One of the most uplifting moments during this project came when Janice discussed how our classroom environment has shifted from one filled with students desperately afraid of failure to one in which they are learning to accept that failure can actually help you in the end, because some of our greatest insights come from those moments of intense failure. I'm also so happy that she mentioned that some of the competitiveness that exists among the advanced and TAG population is starting to lessen, and that she and her classmates can now celebrate others' accomplishments rather than viewing them as evidence of their own failure to not come in first place.

Out of all the students I worked with during this process, I think I saw myself most in Sarah. Teaching is so much more than a job to me, and it makes me so glad that I've found my calling when students like Sarah tell me that they know I will always be there for them to support them, even on their worst days, and that I've helped them realize that it really, truly is okay to fail sometimes. Sarah said that she is "still afraid to fail," but that she knows "it's getting better."

### *Final Reflection of the Common Core Standards and CDSA*

Although I asked my students to help me determine which steps found in the CDSA sequence were most challenging to them, multiple students wrote in their reflection or informed

me during their grade defense meeting that the entire project was challenging, and that it was hard to pick out single moments because all the different tasks were tied together. However, there were several specific steps that did come up during my discussion with many of the focus students. For example, multiple students stated that the dramaturgy tasks found in CDSA Steps 4-6 were challenging because the dramaturgy team independent preparatory work pushed them to learn how to work on their own without a teacher telling them what to do every second of the class.

It was also interesting to hear that within the dramaturgy teams, some conflict arose because of personal feelings regarding grades and points. Sarah mentioned how some of her dramaturgy team members were motivated strictly for the points they might earn, even though there were no points to be given out by me. For Sarah, she was motivated to complete the tasks to the best of her ability, not for points that would mathematically make an “A” in Infinite Campus, but because she knows that there are “real problems at our school” and she wanted to address those problems” through her dramaturgy team work.

Most of my students mentioned that they felt most challenged in terms of the Common Core speaking and listening skills, because they had to consider their target audience as they developed their dramaturgy team presentation and plan, and then they had to work with that target audience. So many of my students mentioned how difficult it can be to work with 9<sup>th</sup> graders. It was through this work with their target audience that many of my students felt like they failed and for quite a few of them, this was the first time that they failed anything. It is interesting to talk to some of my students about how they wanted to force their target audience to care about the social issues and to be motivated to really engage with the social issue, but they

couldn't. Overall, CDSA Steps 4-6 challenged my students the most in terms of the Common Core skills.

### Limitation

Because I was working with my own students, and I was very transparent about my motivations for doing this research and what I hoped CDSA would accomplish, I must acknowledge that there may have been cases without me knowing where students answered a certain way because they thought that is what I wanted to hear. But knowing my students, I do believe that most of them were honest in their responses.

### Recommendations for Future Research

My research project has shown me that CDSA works well when used in advanced and Talented and Gifted 9<sup>th</sup> grade language arts classrooms, but I wonder if it would be even more effective if used in upper level high school courses, or perhaps at the undergraduate level. This method seems like it would lend itself well to I.B. classes at the high school level or a cross-disciplinary class at the college level. For future research, I would be interested to see if CDSA would work better if each dramaturgy team could choose their play, rather than being assigned the play by a teacher. Student choice is powerful and very important, and I would love to see more choice being used with CDSA.

### In Conclusion

Based on my teacher observations and my students' responses regarding CDSA, I do believe that Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism helps advanced and Talented and



Gifted 9th grade students engage with relevant social issues and can help them become more aware of relevant social issues in their community. I believe that advanced and Talented and Gifted student participation in a CDSA project can help motivate students to try to make their community a more positive and inclusive place. I also believe that using CDSA in my own classroom did help me to make this space a more positive and inclusive environment.

I believe that Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism does appropriately challenge advanced and Talented and Gifted 9th grade students, and can help increase their confidence and skill levels related to the Common Core State Standards for Language Arts. Although I do not believe that CDSA challenges advanced and Talented and Gifted students more than their other advanced academic classes, I do believe that it does challenge them at roughly the same level, and that CDSA participation can help advanced and Talented and Gifted students feel more confident in terms of speaking and listening, reading, research and writing Common Core skills.

I believe that advanced and Talented and Gifted student participation in the Collaborative Dramaturgy for Student Activism helps them feel more confident that they will be able to effectively use their speaking and listening, reading, writing and research skills in the future, and that CDSA participation does help advanced and Talented and Gifted 9th grade students feel like they grew as readers and writers, researchers, speakers and listeners.

## EPILOGUE

*"People are more than their grades."*

-- Faith

*I will continue to work as hard as I can each day to fight for these rights until every person is free to be who they really are, and they have the same opportunities as others*

--Lucy

*We know each other, and we respect each other*

--Danny

*we can be independent and we can work together to make things happen*

--Kaden

*I believe that I can help others,  
and I think that gives me the courage to  
speak up and fight for them.*

--Becky

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*I think I was always afraid to fail, but now, I guess I know that failure isn't the end of the road, and that actually it can make me stronger. I'm still afraid to fail, but it's getting better.*

--Sarah

*Yes, I think, it is getting better.*

--Mrs. H

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