USING DANCE TO TEACH SHAKESPEAREAN LITERATURE

By

Delphia Maria Birchfield

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate School
of
Western Carolina University
In Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
Of
Master of Arts

Committee:

_____ Director

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2009 by Delphia Maria Birchfield

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

USING DANCE TO TEACH SHAKESPEAREAN LITERATURE

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Examining the obstacles of teaching beginning Shakespeare students, whether in middle school, high school, or undergraduate levels, this study explores integrating dance as a teaching method to improve students' engagement in lessons. Summarizing some of the shortfalls of current approaches used to teach plays to populations that are inexperienced in Shakespearean studies, by presenting scholarly and anecdotal insights, the research examines the potential of dance to reach this audience. The exploratory study provides a structured program of research into these issues, and proposes a methodology for such an investigation. By assessing beginning engagement levels, and manipulating the level of students' participation through using dance to encourage their direct interaction with the chosen literature, it should be possible to distinguish the influence of these factors on the quality of students' attention outcomes. Applying this theory involves an assessment instrument used to record the effects of these ideas as they are practiced in an undergraduate Shakespeare class. The time in this class is used to observe students' engagement prior to and following the teaching of Shakespeare's *Othello* through movement. The students and instructor are surveyed before the movement lesson concerning their experience in English classes, preferred methods of study, and suggestions for improvement. All participants, class members and professor, are then surveyed and interviewed after the lesson to collect their reactions to the experience—information that provides the basis

for measuring outcomes and analyzing results. After reviewing the trends and patterns of the responses, conclusions of the study determine the effectiveness of this approach. Suggestions are then made to assist educators in incorporating this method into their own teaching. An appendix of movement terms and clues is provided to help teachers find resources that support this endeavor.

PREFACE—SHAKESPEARE'S WORDS IN ACTION: DEVELOPING DRAMATIC
MOVEMENT—ASSESSMENT AND MODELS

Implementing new ways to make literary studies and learning more effective is a
constant focus for educators. In my search for teaching tools, I discovered that one of my
own techniques engaged the students in a more complete manner than some of the traditional
methodology I used. This discovery came when I taught them a Shakespearean play. Given
that Shakespeare is embedded in a curriculum that will not change any time soon, it is
important to examine traditional and more newly developed methods of teaching
Shakespeare. Considering the method derived from my teaching experience, I decided to
study the theory in a liberal arts undergrad Shakespeare survey course. Little research had
been done to see whether the activity improved engagement in a college class. Using the
same method that I developed in high school classes, the method of study employs dance and
creative movement to explore one of Shakespeare's plays.

Traditional Movement in Shakespearean Drama

Shakespeare's text offers actors an invigorating range of movement. Due to the
multi-textured, rhythmic content of the plays, Shakespearean actors must integrate
interpretive action and spoken lines. Indeed, some scenes demand that actors almost
instantaneously express contrasting emotions and modes of social behavior. Therefore,
integrating action and word is necessary because the dramatist often employs physicality to
deliver dynamic plot revelations. One such scene, the Capulets' ball in *Romeo and Juliet*,
juxtaposes situations that involve characters' physical love and combative aggression.
Characters' indulgences in physical freedoms spur the heated conflict of the entire play. In

this case, romantic gender relations develop between opposite members of openly, and mutually, hostile families.

Romeo, meeting Juliet for the first time, is immediately infatuated. Almost simultaneously, her cousin Tybalt recognizes him as one of the family's enemies, and Romeo must respond to Tybalt's hostile behavior. Ultimately, when Tybalt watches Romeo interact with Juliet, the actions of the intruder Romeo speak much more emphatically to Tybalt than if he had simply overheard the couple's dialogue. In such a situation, actors must present and reinforce Shakespeare's words by movement and facial expression, rather than by merely reciting them as poetry. Scene 1.5 reveals the degree of advanced physical skill an actor would need to convey Tybalt or Romeo's emotions effectively to the audience.

Opportunities in passages such as this one from *Romeo and Juliet* indicate that if students have learned general dramatic techniques such as stage orientation, character analysis, and role-playing, then they are prepared to present Shakespearean drama on stage. Seeking guidance in applying their ideas, students can consult an array of information on staging Shakespeare's plays. Shakespearean movement texts reveal scholars' attention to staging specific cultural dances from the historical period. The literature features particular details of Shakespearean dramatic dance—specifically, the intricate elements of traditional dance that conventionally occur in Shakespeare's plays or productions. Often, however, such supplementary materials are too specialized to offer much assistance to the beginning dramatist or student director. These works only allow performers limited information, based on cultural dances from the historical period. These dances are typically too specialized for untrained minds to comprehend and novice actors to perform, thus such treatises discourage inexperienced actors. Confronted with these frustrations, novice actors are easily

disenchanted with the prospect of acting out play scenes. Students' ability to communicate a

broad range of ideas using what is referred to in dance as "vocabulary" allows them to use

physical movement to experience more thorough interpretation and comprehension.

As a consequence of such earlier methods' shortcomings, teachers since at least the

1970's have searched for new approaches to cope with these problems. Fortunately, some

Shakespearean scholars have been addressing these issues by suggesting innovative teaching

methods. In 1977, a collection of essays entitled *Teaching Shakespeare* encouraged teachers

"to use whatever . . .means available . . . to impress students with the idea of the play in

performance" (xii). In this book's introduction, Walter F. Eggers, Jr., stresses that "to the

degree that students can put themselves in the place of Shakespeare's audience [,] they

become experts in Shakespeare's plays, and even the first step in this direction is worth their

taking" (xiv). He advocates this "particular concern for developing students' interests and

skills beyond strict formal analysis" in order to focus on "the relationship between the text

and its audience" (xiv). During the 1970's, scholars supported teachers' initiating the study

of a selection by first emphasizing its literary elements, then using dramatic devices to

enhance the quality and degree of students' personal experiences. This philosophy is evident

as Eggers presents the "most compelling argument for bringing theater into the classroom [,

by asserting] that the teacher who liberates his conception of the text to include its contexts

expands the students' critical comprehension" (xiv). Beyond stark literary value, the

contexts of a selection include any related concepts that enlarge the text, such as those

associated with modes of action (namely performance), developed subplots, historical values,

and other elements that serve to enrich students' interaction with the text and thus to provide

them with a more intricate means of analysis. Discussing this process, Eggers explains the

effect of contextual study by asserting that "the contexts of genre and canon open out, as the context of the theater opens out, to the conventions and traditions of the broader context of history" (xiv). Eggers argues that when we relate the text to its contexts "special discoveries follow, in which students can participate directly" (xiv). When teachers cultivate a class's active involvement with the text, students eagerly evolve into directors or line coaches. Usually, class members assume personal responsibility for helping each other to achieve a more meaningful and memorable collective experience.

One key pioneer whose pedagogy exemplifies Eggers' philosophy is University of Iowa English professor Miriam Gilbert. Expanding upon Eggers' convictions about methods of teaching dramatic literature, Gilbert emphasized the performing and visual arts aspect of Shakespearean pedagogy in her 1984 *Shakespeare Quarterly* article, "Teaching Shakespeare through Performance." The crux of her article proclaims that "teachers are discovering what actors and directors find out on a daily basis, namely that the close scrutiny of small selections of text can produce extraordinary results" (602-03). Gilbert begins her university classes' performance exercises by instructing her students to "examine only a very small piece of [the play], but in detail" (602). This exercise assists English teachers in helping their students examine Shakespeare's plays in more productive ways. Gilbert explores lively, stage-based methods of teaching Shakespeare that are designed to immerse students in Shakespeare as drama. In an earlier *Educational Theatre Journal* article, "Teaching Dramatic Literature" (1973), Gilbert had explained:

> . . . the class production method is designed to simulate a sense of the complexity and variety of the theatrical endeavor together with a very personal sense of involvement in and re(-)creation of the play. . . . By asking

the student to be more than reader—to be actor, designer, director—we offer

the student a chance to enter into the creative process himself and thereby gain

a fuller understanding of the play's richness. (94)

Gilbert believes that if students creatively perform Shakespeare's plays, they not only achieve greater comprehension but have a more meaningful experience than if they only read them. Her assertions about developing active classrooms helped to shape the practices of a new generation of educators.

For instance, when I implemented similar exercises into my high school classes, I found that my students craved involvement in the creation of a dramatic portrayal. In the process of pondering these students' requests to be involved in the creative dramatic process, I asked them about their interests in interpreting Shakespeare's work. Considering their responses, which ranged in intensity, it seems that students exhibited a growing skepticism about authority that reached even into areas of academic expertise. Today's youth have a strong need to assert control over their learning situations, perhaps because of the many social uncertainties that they face. Consequently, students wish to test others' interpretations. When we teach, we impose our opinions onto our students through the natural process that occurs when we present the curriculum. Using instruction as a vehicle, we explore what we have experienced as "truths" on a given topic. However, students today are suspicious of trusting people and their interpretations of truth. Students need to understand evidence and our methods of drawing conclusions. They want to know how we determine what we "know" about a specific topic.

Recently, while substitute teaching at a local high school, I was told of an incident that perfectly exhibits this student perspective. One of the faculty commented on the "almost

hostile" environment in his science classes. He went on to explain that when he discussed the theories of origin of the universe or humanity, the students seemed to be trained since an early age—perhaps by influences at home or in the community—to resist certain scientific schools of thought. Similarly, I have had students who were vehemently resistant to issues such as race relations, gender equality, and sexual orientation as they were magnified in the literature of society. As a result, it is increasingly crucial that we work creatively to ease students' interaction with challenging literature. We can help them be more comfortable with the skills that they need to "unlock" the meaning and value of texts. In order to best excite students' comprehension of literature, teachers must demonstrate the manners in which they examine and draw conclusions from specific works. Illuminating the system of inference and deduction, teachers' methods exemplify the processes of interpretation.

Exhibiting this approach and focusing on the student-centered Shakespeare classroom, *Shakespeare Set Free*, a three-volume project of the Folger Library's Teaching Shakespeare Institute, contains innovative, performance-based approaches to teaching Shakespeare. Institute director Peggy O'Brien describes the set as "intellectually stimulating and perfectly practical" sourcebooks that include both scholarship and curriculum. The volumes feature compilations of essays by real classroom teachers in their real voices:

> [They provide] practical tools by which students could make Shakespeare's language—and by extension his plays—their own. . . . *Shakespeare Set Free* is support for the art, the craft, the significant magic of teaching. It is food for your brain *and* a lively piece of work for your students. It points the way toward students and teachers actively engaging with a text in ways that are that are intellectually sophisticated and stimulating *and* a hell of a good time

besides. This is the best kind of teaching and learning. (*Shakespeare Set*

Free: Teaching Twelfth Night and Othello, vii, xi).

The student productions that I directed certainly confirmed these experts' theories, and my activities for high school classes expanded upon their notions of performance education. While Miriam Gilbert advocates getting students away from their desks and onto the stage (literally or figuratively), my approach asks them first to use their bodies to interpret Shakespeare's script. Because today's students have spent so much time receiving audio-visual stimuli instead of reading, they initially experienced great difficulty discerning the progression of events in Shakespeare's plays. In order to combat this limitation, I asked my students to explore the action of particular scenes by using their bodies to "act out" in detail what happens as the characters interact. Miriam Gilbert briefly mentions this same notion in "Teaching Shakespeare through Performance," calling her activity a "sound and movement . . . [script] deprivation exercise" which calls for a "temporary displacement of the text" (605-06). This method was introduced to Gilbert by University of Delaware professor Nancy King at a workshop they taught together. Gilbert explains these exercises, pointing out that "by moving away from the text and then back to it, students discover its strength" (605). Gilbert explains that her "sound and movement exercise reduces a scene to emotional struggle" which helps uncertain students comprehend the action on a more personal level (606). Instead of using this exercise as a preliminary exploration only, I expanded upon Gilbert's application. I encouraged students to retain and further develop such physical portrayals. The portrayals may represent basic literary devices, such as the atmosphere and mood of a scene. After a brief summary of the scene, the assignment is to use only sound and movement, not words, to bring the devices to life in the context of the literature. Imagine

the creativity required to complete that assignment if students were first exposed to a scene from *Hamlet*, then immediately asked to portray the atmosphere and mood of Hamlet's reaction to seeing his father's ghost. Initial interpretations are then refined by textual study. As students explore the excerpts that they perform, they can review their earlier choreography and make adjustments as needed. The movement and sound exercises may then be integrated into a final performance.

The approaches I used to teach high school worked well not only in introductory drama classes, but also in literature classes. Even in upper level classes, students gain the most thorough exposure to Shakespeare from actually staging one of his plays. Nevertheless, as I discussed my discoveries with other faculty members, they were reluctant to experiment with these techniques. Teachers felt uncomfortable with the unique and specialized instructional methods. Due to their limited knowledge of physical communication, they were unfamiliar with how actors' bodies can portray drama. Thus, they were unable to recommend a legitimate physical vocabulary to classes or even to provide a quality assessment of students' blocking interpretations. One teacher attending a session at the Folger Shakespeare Library describes her experience with feelings of inadequacy when confronted with teaching Shakespeare as drama and not strictly as text. She admitted her preference for working with the ideas that are integral to literary study. She was far more comfortable around textual studies and line-by-line explanations to students. Most veteran instructors were much more at ease when confining their efforts to examining the language of the texts. Unfortunately, their lack of familiarity with movement kept their classes simply reading Shakespeare's plays.

Another obstacle to movement pedagogy is that when teachers try to use advanced movement techniques with beginning students, the result is often humorous to participants and observers. Such clumsily choreographed movement inhibits the actors' natural understanding and physical exploration of the literature. Confusing body language and misapplied action only hinder the accurate portrayal of Shakespeare's drama. Although I have experience in dance study and performance, it was still difficult for me to apply the formal elements of traditional Shakespearean dance to my classroom activities of asking students to use their bodies to visually represent textual elements. Instead of being overly concerned with technique and tradition, I found parts from the script that contextually describe movements of characters' bodies. One selection from *Romeo and Juliet* is effective for students beginning to embrace this technique. The script of Romeo and Juliet's first meeting textually cues students to move in manners that visually represent the situation. Romeo first woos Juliet by catching her hand in his. He then pardons his forward behavior by offering to kiss her hand:

> If I profane with my un-worthiest hand
>
> This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this:
>
> My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
>
> To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss. (1.5.95-98)

This passage instructs the student portraying Romeo to take "Juliet's" hand unannounced, and then move to kiss it apologetically, yet enticingly. This activity requires close textual reading to find the cues for interpretive movement.

Movement is the difference between reading and performing a play. In order to get students up from their seats and onto the stage (informally or formally), teachers must

encourage them to explore the script through movement. When a class initially reads a play, I look to develop any type of movement that helped students to identify with and thus more actively process the action of the play. Soon, it became obvious in my classes that performances gain a richer, fuller, and more balanced effect when performers base their movement and blocking on the indicators provided by Shakespeare's words. This realization reinforces the need for instructional materials designed specifically for teaching movement to beginning Shakespeare students.

Effective instruction provides directions for helping students become physically active as they study the plays. To be successful in their application for traditional English teachers, instructional guides should feature suggestions about staging Shakespeare's works through active depictions using movement, instead of relying on spoken presentation alone. Teachers should motivate students to use physicality to establish familiarity with a play and then use these elements to explore the plays' events and situations. Applying this basic knowledge, student performers may readily promote audience understanding through a production design that appeals to general familiarity with various life experiences.

When people's bodies communicate elements of a written text, performances have a stronger impact on the audience (even if the audience is only composed of students within a class). Because all people move during daily life, even people of different cultures can deduce much from only a single motion. Therefore, movement greatly facilitates the process of sharing ideas with other people. If the credible illusion of life experience is to be created, movement must be present. Because movement can express much more than words alone, elements of dance provide an intensively evocative form of visual theater. Conceptually, dance instructors refer collectively to the motions of people's bodies as

"movement." The term addresses all of the physical elements, or "physicality," that the human body uses to occupy space on stage. Movement includes less-refined (or perhaps more naturally occurring) actions, transition paths, and postures, along with the highly polished mannerisms that bodies exhibit in artistic dance. In fact, choreographers even integrate into some productions bodies that appear motionless because they project such "visual texture" onto the set, enhancing the mood with their presence and breathing patterns alone. In its entirety, the concept of movement provides a lush array of communicative devices that may be employed as vehicles to deliver the ideas of a play.

Increasingly popular, nonverbal theatrical presentations are now being referred to as "movement theater." Production methods based on facial expressions, motions, and gestures provide an almost universal language that truly expresses the core of a story. Because physical action often incorporates improvisational freedom, the movement may become the spirit of a play's production. The magical power of movement is so accessible to each of us that we seem to find increased common understanding concerning the human experience. The many aspects of movement make performances especially powerful for people to experience. Whether people simply watch or take part, there is more widespread appeal if the play includes a variety of physical activity.

As a case in point, my high school Shakespeare students experienced the most satisfying progress when they examined and presented segments of scenes actively in small groups. This exercise required that each group act out consecutive parts of scenes, in sequence. To accomplish this, each student director had to organize and stage a chosen scene by using physical movement and body language in addition to the text's dialogue. Students can have much design freedom because Shakespeare's plays are easily adapted to incorporate

modern settings, costumes, and even language patterns. After providing a brief overview of the play, I asked each student group to choose a scene from a list of scenes selected for their contribution to overall plot development. Students were encouraged to consider that each section of Shakespeare's text might suggest bodily action that best depicts its plot development, characterization, and language. When considering these elements, students begin to analyze what Walter F. Eggers discusses as "the specifically theatrical aspect, [or, in effect,] the performability of Shakespeare's texts" (xii). Eggers believes that Shakespeare "enhance[s] the poetry of his plays theatrically, by means of metaphors built into the structure of the theater, reflexive stage imagery, and even settings" (xiii). Similarly, I have found that Shakespeare's text provides contextual clues that suggest ideas for accompanying actions that enlarge the text. This approach enables students to bring their own interpretations to Shakespeare's inherent textual clues, which themselves hint at motions and placements for staging and blocking. This exercise, however, also requires that students have a substantial introduction to the fundamentals of expression through physical movement. Dramatic movement uses actors' body positions and transitions in posture, gesture, and facial expressions to provide a sense of physical context for the play. The movement employed to express the text can range from actors' changing location on stage to portrayals of extreme action, such as sword fighting.

Interpreting literature through movement not only provides a clearer understanding of the text, but facilitates dramatic catharsis—a therapeutic process crucial to students' growth and positive character development. Therefore, teaching Shakespeare through physicalization proves successful for significant reasons. The effort to fully develop Shakespeare's words into action requires that teachers refine students' sense of dramatic

movement so that they may become fully engaged in studies.

The study to research this theory is organized in the following order:

- Chapter 1 is an overview of recent Shakespearean pedagogy.

- Chapter 2 shows the state of performance pedagogy and explains the place of my approach in the field. As I will show, although many writers have convincingly demonstrated that linking pedagogy to performance is a sound idea, no one has examined the value of using dance and movement therapy to teach literature. I will argue that creative movement interpretation has the potential to be even more effective at engaging students with Shakespeare than other types of performance therapy because it does not require the teacher or the student to have special training in acting, enunciating, or pronouncing archaic language.

- In chapter 3, I describe the application of literary movement exploration to a college classroom and evaluate, through observation and interview of students and the class instructor, the effects of this therapy on student engagement. I demonstrate convincingly that engagement increased among virtually all students.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO A COMMON PROBLEM IN
TEACHING DRAMA AS LITERATURE

Students' work in literary studies increasingly challenges English teachers'

resourcefulness in the classroom. Ironically, while advancements in technology have made

literature more readily accessible than ever, in my experience the trend is that many jaded

English teachers feel that students typically are less motivated to experience it. From 1992 until

1996, I taught English at Brevard (North Carolina) High School, where I first observed, then

researched this paradox. As a new teacher hoping to gain more insight into this perplexing

situation, I interviewed my fellow English faculty members, whose experience ranged from

thirteen to thirty years. Reflecting on the past two decades, these veteran teachers reported

definite decreases in students' general academic proficiency, citing in particular shortened

attention spans and declining reading abilities. The growing difficulties that students

experienced when reading were magnified when they attempted to analyze literature set in time

periods unfamiliar to them or written in earlier forms of English.

Students' literary difficulties became especially evident when my English and theater

classes studied William Shakespeare. These students had a wide range of ability, yet most of

them found Shakespeare's plays to be virtually inaccessible, mainly because his works use

the language and reflect the value systems of England's Elizabethan Age (1558-1603). I

recall the dismay that my students demonstrated whenever I brightly announced that we were

to study or read aloud one of Shakespeare's plays. Although his plays' themes have

continuing universal appeal to a wide variety of audiences, most English teachers still must

help students to comprehend how the dramas reflect real life in order to make their

experience of the plays worthwhile. Initially, when classes study plays, teachers want their

students to determine the progression of events and to grasp meaning from the characters and their situations. Ultimately, because Shakespeare provides an undeniably comprehensive dramatic experience, teachers hope that students develop a lasting personal connection to his literature.   Even the experts in this area of teaching share their experiences concerning the challenges that accompany guiding play studies in class. Peggy O'Brien, former director of education at the Folger Shakespeare Library, ponders "How do you involve students as performers or audiences of Shakespeare's plays? How do you relate his work to contemporary culture?" O'Brien related in an *English Journal* article, ". . . emphasis on active learning would surely rescue the Bard from pedantry, enliven the study of his work, and possibly recruit a new generation of enthusiasts" ("Doing Shakespeare" 1). Although some students do not respond regardless how active the learning, teachers thus hope to present Shakespeare's literature in a manner that enhances students emotionally and assists them in the process of living. In order to make classroom explorations of Shakespeare and his drama a lasting success, the literature must therefore be both accessible to students and applicable to their lives.

Preparing a Class to Study Literature

When one begins Shakespearean studies, and indeed any introductory literature class, a most effective issue to address first is "Why study (Shakespearean) literature? What makes literary study worth our while?" Interestingly, many students are bewildered when asked this question directly. Most have never consciously considered what benefit actually may be derived from thoughtfully engaging other people's ideas and experiences via reading. When I addressed this issue in each new semester, students generally stared back at me confounded.

For some students, I voiced the same question that they had despairingly, yet silently

resonated to themselves in previous language arts and English classes. Others had never

even questioned the nature of their experience in the classroom. Usually, as responses to this

topic evolve, a class typically reflects two prevailing attitudes. Many literature students go

through school somewhat optimistically fulfilling their course requirements, despite their

uneasy feelings of being out of touch with what it is that they are, as they might say,

"supposed to be getting" from their studies. (This first type of student was much more

prevalent in my honors level classes, while the following group was the norm in my regular

level classes.) Other students, however, being bored, disinterested, or not fully convinced of

the value of the process, are so completely disheartened by their past experiences in English

that they come to high school already in a closed and defensive mindset. In her article

"Student Engagement in Instructional Activity: Patterns in the Elementary, Middle, and High

School Years," Helen M. Marks observes that researchers' studies beginning in the mid-

1980s present student disengagement at school emerging as " . . . a troubling picture of the

internal organization and culture of comprehensive high schools [which] portrayed dispirited

teachers and disengaged students 'putting in their time' while negotiating a sprawling and

fragmented curriculum" (155-156). The pattern of instruction in the majority of these

classrooms ". . . followed the transmission model and induced passivity and boredom in

students" (156). When students enter class each day feeling hardened to a subject, the

environment is rarely conducive to learning. Often, because students have become so

familiar with the scholastic routine in grade school, high school and college teachers in

particular must help students to gain a fresh appreciation for academics.

When teachers and students use their initial discussions to agree on the importance of studying literature, classes are more likely to approach activities with a receptive outlook. Students feel empowered when teachers help them to assert themselves through collaborative class design. Many times students voice their desire to know how their lessons and assignments are relevant to what they perceive to be real-life issues. Thus, students' engagement in literary subject matter ". . . is an important facet of students' school experience because of its logical relationship to achievement and to optimal human development" (Marks 155). English teachers may explain that because literature acts as a magnifying glass that focuses people's understanding of society and individuals, it sharpens and deepens readers' contact with existence. By analyzing other people's reactions to life situations, readers may become ultimately more insightful and deliberate in behavior and action. Literary studies help people to be more prepared to cope with life than if they had never considered how to react to the myriad of scenarios they may have experienced in the literature. For example, consider the rationale for teaching *Romeo and Juliet* to ninth graders. That play is about fourteen and fifteen-year-olds, and ninth graders are generally the same ages as the main characters. Everything that irritates adults about Romeo and Juliet is appealing to freshmen because it is similar to their ages and social rites of passage. Freshmen are fascinated by that passionate sexuality, that willingness to die rather than compromise with their families, and that all-or-nothing mentality. *Romeo and Juliet* is all about our students and how they approach love, and telling them this information does not hurt. Therefore, teachers and classes must return to the relevance of this type of discussion and apply its tenets to the study of genres and authors' works. Allowing students to feel empowered makes the demanding technical elements of literature much more palatable and

memorable to them. Thus, while they honor academic commitments, students may find elements in Shakespeare's plays, for instance, that serve them well beyond their scholastic careers.

Teaching Shakespeare: Searching for Answers

 While there are many resources designed to assist teachers in planning invigorating Shakespeare classes, one expert is particularly helpful in establishing a beginning approach. Peggy O' Brien has taught Shakespeare to students in the District of Columbia public high schools. Featured in the introduction of one of her popular publications based on a Teaching Shakespeare Institute held in Washington, D. C., O'Brien offers insights and suggestions that are timeless in regard to introducing Shakespeare to beginning students. *Teaching Shakespeare: New Approaches from the Folger Shakespeare Library* is a videocassette with an accompanying "Learning Guide" that states the recording presents "quality teaching strategies and other information [such as background facts about Shakespeare's life and language] meant to be immediately applicable and useful in classes" (3). Addressing many literature teachers' concerns, O'Brien discusses what she refers to as the "sometimes sticky business of how to teach Shakespeare." She relates that "[Shakespeare] can be hard to teach," affirming that the curriculum is difficult:

> . . . the students moan and groan, because those characters are all kings and
> queens, and, besides, they talk funny. Much of the negativity and fear about
> learning Shakespeare has to do with his language. Yet Shakespeare wrote for
> an audience that in some ways was not so different from a sixth period class.
> Chances are that many people sitting or standing for a performance at the

Globe Theater in 1603 did not understand every word or image of the play.

[They were not] puzzling over theme. They certainly didn't have footnotes.

What they did have for a couple of hours was a perfectly wonderful time. Our

students can have that same good time enjoying and appreciating Shakespeare

without having to know the meaning of every word and every image. That is

very important for us to keep in mind.

With these thoughts, Peggy O'Brien introduces some of the most important tenets of teaching

Shakespeare to young people. Her statements indicate that one major class hurdle occurs

when teachers overcomplicate the study of Shakespeare by focusing too much on elements of

the written script. Just as O'Brien warns in her introduction, many teachers ambitiously

approach the study of Shakespeare by trying to cover every word and image in a chosen play.

Some teachers present Shakespearean characters' speeches the way they would teach

poems, because the playwright so often used verse in his dramatic dialogue. The similarity

in teaching approach occurs when methods traditionally applied to the study of poetry, such

as line-by-line explication, rhythm, and word analysis, are used as the main guiding

perspective, but in this case to study one of Shakespeare's entire plays. This approach can be

daunting to beginning Shakespeare students because they become overwhelmed not only

with the multiplicity of information contained in the lines but also with the length of the play.

Indeed, I have found that beginning readers even have difficulty understanding characters'

actions and how they interact with each other, often because the characters' names are so

unusual. Thus such factors as dated diction, unfamiliar names, and references to Elizabethan

events in Shakespeare's plays often explain why many of today's classes remain adamant

about their dislike for his complex works. The same classes, however, are amazingly

receptive to studying later modernized versions of Shakespeare's plays, such as *West Side Story*, a musical inspired by *Romeo and Juliet*. It is here, though, that we lose such charming moments as, "draw thy tool" and all the bawdy language of the original. The original and modernized versions work well side by side, but the study of modern derivations is not enough. Albeit students are enthused about the modernized versions, they tend to view them as a relief from the textual study of Shakespeare's original plays. Modern culture and language is more familiar and comfortable, the modern works are usually viewed in performance, and students seem to grasp the essence of them more easily. It is critical to develop the skills students need to access deep appreciation for Shakespeare's literature. In so doing, the students become better readers, more confident learners, and are exposed to the depth of knowledge and self-discovery that Shakespeare and other major writers provide. As Peggy O'Brien points out, students' discomfort with Shakespeare usually originates in the difficulty they experience when working to comprehend the language in which the plays are written. O'Brien reiterates her thoughts on Shakespearean study in "Background Bits to Remember or Demystifying Will":

> "Doing Shakespeare" does not necessarily mean going through an entire play, line by line. Depending on time, reading levels, and other factors, scenes from several different plays may prove more useful. If it makes sense with your class, summarize particularly difficult, unclear, or unnecessary scenes when studying a single play. ("Learning Guide to Accompany the Videotape" 7)

O' Brien asserts that teachers must assess their classes' capabilities and needs in order to plan their lessons accordingly.

Skip Nicholson, a master teacher at the 1985 Folger Institute on teaching Shakespeare, expounds upon O'Brien's notions based on observations of the high school classes he teaches in South Pasadena, California. Nicholson notes that moving away from an intense focus on the language helps to relax his students. Furthermore, he says that if teachers make an effort to approach word study in a manner that eases and soothes students, they help to keep Shakespeare's language as alive as possible. By guiding students through their uncertainties regarding Shakespeare's verbal style, teachers such as Nicholson prove that students who do not feel overwhelmed by the process of studying a play's language will more likely enjoy and benefit from their time spent with the literature. Thus, the main challenge for teachers is to find ways to help students feel more comfortable with Shakespeare's language.

Common Methods of Teaching Shakespeare

Searching for successful strategies to overcome barriers to Shakespeare's verbal style, teachers have used a variety of methods with their students. I have experienced many of the conventional approaches to literary study as a student and / or tried to use in teaching my English classes. The first method is a generally effective traditional technique for honors-level students. Often, teachers assign one or more acts of a play to be read before a class meeting. Students are expected to complete this reading alone as homework in preparation for the teacher's lectures and class discussions of the assignment. After this initial exposure, instructors "cover" the play by leafing through the text while summarizing the reading, focusing on key passages, and interjecting personal comments and explanations. Using this style, the teacher's lecture can serve as a review for students'

previous reading and help them learn about the effectiveness of their independent reading abilities. Using a more inclusive reading strategy, many teachers are now doing most or all of the readings in class together, especially for non-honors sections. By focusing on an act or so every few days, a class might spend three weeks or more studying a play in this manner. Most likely, the exploration of the play will culminate in a written examination over the entire work, perhaps followed by the students' viewing of a taped performance.

Admittedly, this basic method can be beneficial to students' initial interaction with a text because it helps them gain a solid understanding of what occurs in a play. Yet without an understanding of the literary devices that playwrights use to achieve their dramatic effects, students are usually consumed just with the effort of discerning plot development. Indeed many readers are ultimately frustrated by a lack of coherence in their understanding of the plot. Therefore, lessons designed to provide only this brief coverage, without further exploration, severely limit students' personal experience with Shakespearean drama.

In fact, such quick study of a Shakespearean play typically is especially difficult for less-talented readers, who are unable thereby to develop even an elementary comprehension of the work. In classes having several weak readers, teachers sometimes will follow the in-class readings of an act with a test and video segment before the class goes on to read the next act. This second method often results in the study of a play being drawn out over a period of two to three weeks if classes meet only for an hour each day. Because daily school schedules often are riddled with interruptions, some students experience great difficulty trying to piece together a meaningful plot over the course of so many class meetings.

On any typical day in a class, several students may be absent from their regular schedule in order to fulfill performing, club, athletic, and even academic responsibilities.

Then with several class members already absent, just as the literature lesson gets well underway, other students may have to leave to attend various sessions that are specified assistance elements of their Individualized Education Plans. Some of these special education students then proceed from an incomplete lesson in the regular class meeting to a "learning lab" where they receive help with topics such as reading, math, and science (whatever their area of greatest weakness may be). Thus, the English class finishes the day's lesson with perhaps only half of its students having met for the entire period. At this point, the teacher must decide whether the next day's lesson plan would work, considering the fact that a number of the students are now one class period's work behind the others. (This problem compounds, of course, as the week progresses and absences continue.) If the teacher proceeds, trusting absentees to arrive prepared by having read while away from class (which is rarely the case based on my experience, especially in regular level classes), the literature exercises feel contrived due to many students' fabricated discussions of an obviously unfamiliar literary work. By this time, both groups of students and the teacher are frustrated. A class consumed with frustration certainly lacks the energy and enthusiasm necessary to sustain extended focus on a full-length play and to make true progress in improving comprehension and appreciation.

In studying a play in this broken manner, most of the allotted time is spent simply trying to get completely through all of the play's acts, plot, and devices, important especially because of end-of-course testing. As a result, students who are socially acculturated to getting instant gratification often quickly lose interest in the play. Many students are reluctant to work through a written text to understand the literature because they want it read aloud and explained to them. Several students' lack of industry might occur because they are

adolescents who can focus their concentration only for approximately the length of a music video or digital game session. Having short attention spans, these students have difficulty even sitting in desks for extended periods of lecture or class work and either lapse into slumber or exhibit distracted hyperactive behavior.

When I taught Shakespeare at Brevard and Swain High Schools, the parents of students who have this condition often shared their skeptical concerns with me in conferences about their children's work habits and grades. Interaction with these families convinced me that students with limited attention spans deserve to have classes structured to help them deal with their difficulties, rather than making them resort to medications or enrollment in less-demanding English courses. Although students with special needs require assistance to develop effective methods of studying, they too can benefit by studying Shakespeare. In fact, the majority of students can use some extra help when examining a complicated work, such as a Shakespearean play. Interestingly enough, the same methodology can be effective when teaching Shakespeare to all types of students.

While students gain a brief familiarity with a play as a result of either of the aforementioned approaches, they lack a full conception of the intricacies that make it unique and effective on stage as well as in the literary canon. Although techniques such as strict lecture or recorded coverage can provide needed guidance when students first examine a play, ad hoc lectures with textual commentary are often the only methods of exploration that teachers provide. Therefore, after using conventional exercises, such as briefly reading through a script, to help classes to grasp some basic understanding of the play, teachers should really proceed to facilitate students' closer readings of the text. While all approaches

have some limitations, teachers must seek to assist students to fully explore the plays as meaningful depictions of human experience.

Some perhaps restrictive techniques may result when instructors consider themselves to be complete, sufficient experts on their curricular topics. Thinking that they are the primary source of information valid in classroom literary study, these teachers have an exclusive attitude that may disregard the student experience. This instructor-centered practice, although useful, causes students to sit passively, never being offered opportunities to experience a play directly. Passive students are often unsatisfied students because they are told what to think about the literature instead of being asked to analyze and then react to the selection. When students simply absorb, and then regurgitate, information that an instructor has presented to them in class, they may soon forget many of the details on which they have been tested. Students comprehend and retain much more knowledge about a topic when classes are designed to expose them to activities that synthesize information and develop skills. In actuality, it is when we as teachers ask our students to open themselves to the possibilities of a literary work that we often also discover from them fresh ideas that further develop our own notions of a classic story or play. Although the previously described teaching methods are common ways to introduce a dramatic work, they do not provide the opportunity for all students to study and understand it adequately.

Identifying Student Needs

In order to determine the best manner in which to structure lessons that more fully meet individual needs, some teachers administer diagnostic tests to each class. By determining students' personality preferences and aptitudes, the tests provide data that can be

used to develop Individualized Education Plans (or IEPs). The purpose of the IEP is to outline specific differentiated learning needs for each class member. Examining details of students' personalities enables teachers to design curricula that foster many types of learning. First made popular by Howard Gardner, a professor in cognition and education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, the theory of multiple intelligences is currently a foremost notion in education. His research in human thought processes is outlined in "Project Zero: Principal Investigators":

> Howard Gardner . . . critiques the notion that there exists but a single human intelligence that can be assessed by standard psychometric instruments. During the last fifteen years, he and colleagues at Project Zero (a research group in human cognition that maintains a special focus on the arts) have been working on the design of performance-based assessments, education and understanding, and the use of multiple intelligences to achieve more personalized curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Most recently, Gardner and his colleagues have launched the Good Work Project. "Good Work" is work that is both excellent in quality and also exhibits a sense of responsibility with respect to implications and applications. Researchers are examining how individuals who wish to carry out good work succeed in doing so during a time when conditions are changing very quickly, market forces are very powerful, and our sense of time and space is being radically altered by technologies, such as the web. (1-2)

Since the middle 1980s, Gardner's innovative work has heavily involved him in school reform efforts in the United States. As educators adopt his theory and practice, their classroom effectiveness steadily increases.

Another way to individualize learning, the article, "Working Out Your Myers Briggs Type," presents specific information about personality assessment. Introducing the Myers Briggs as "one of the most popular models of personality [assessment] in the world [,] . . . [this work] contains a description of each of the Myers Briggs preferences [, and] provides some help in working out your own Myers Briggs type" (1). The Myers Briggs model of personality assessment is based on four preferences, and the article asks individuals to consider the following questions: "Where, primarily, do you direct your energy? How do you prefer to process information? How do you prefer to make decisions? How do you prefer to organize your life?" (1). The test that I have used with my own students is a modified Myers Briggs Type Indicator format in two sections (published by the Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc.). In essence, the results reveal the kinds of multiple intelligences that make up a class. The first part of the test surveys students' general preferences to paired statements such as, "Generally, I prefer being called imaginative or intuitive," and "Generally, I prefer being called factual and accurate." These answers indicate strengths in how disparate personalities receive and process different kinds of information. Among other classifications, individuals may be described as sensory or intuitive, and introverted or extroverted. Perhaps most important to dramatic studies, determining students' social loci of control provides indicators of the personal interaction characteristics that they may display in class. This knowledge is useful for teachers seeking to create the most effective learning

atmosphere for all students. The results from the first part of the test begin to distinguish diversities in the group, but the second part focuses more directly on learning styles.

In addition to determining personality types, the test also identifies individual learning channels. Responses to ten statements in each of three sections classify students' preferred channels as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (haptic) or "hands-on." Statements from these sections require students to reflect on many details of learning such as, "I remember something better if I write it down," "I remember things that I hear, rather than things that I see or read," and "I think better when I have the freedom to move around." These questions help students and teachers to realize individuals' inclinations. Analyzing student reactions via these sorts of Myers Briggs testing helps educators to capitalize on the opportunities that their students' distinct learning modes offer. Although classes may be composed of many different types of students, one truth is universal to all personalities and learning styles. Learning occurs when students are involved, focused, and "on task" for the entire period that they meet as a class.

Designing Effective Classes

Teaching methods and class designs that facilitate all students' active engagement in learning became even more important to student success when my high school adopted a "block" schedule for its school day. With just four classes per day, students spent ninety minutes in each. Experimenting with teaching techniques that I had used when class periods lasted only fifty minutes, I asked my students to pre-read unfamiliar literature for homework to prepare for the next day. I then lectured for the entire ninety-minute class on the selection's literary devices and plot highlights. The class dutifully took notes and even

commented at the onset, but within sixty minutes or so, their attention had dulled. The instructional pace then became labored as students struggled to record the information. Despite their earnest efforts, those who sat in desks for extended periods of time were inevitably more likely to become disengaged and even begin to sleep. This situation supports the existing research indicating that the "window" for student attention is twenty to thirty minutes, maximum. After talking with other teachers, I discovered that throughout our high school, students were wrestling with the adjustment of learning in the new block schedule environment. Regardless of students' ability levels, prolonged meeting periods required teachers to give them increasingly active roles in class.

As teachers realized their students' plight, they began to implement strategies to help contend with the challenges of the longer class periods. Entire workshops were dedicated to the topic of training teachers to better manage students' limited attention spans. By planning lessons that addressed the needs of diverse learning styles, teachers changed their classroom methods to make the expanded time periods more valuable experiences for their students. One method employed by literature teachers involved students' assuming character roles to read a play. Concurrently, the instructor conducted ongoing discussions of the play's events and literary devices. Indeed, this technique encouraged readers to become more familiar with the literature than if they simply read it independently. Furthermore, students who are encouraged to read aloud in character typically gain deeper understanding of the text because this reading fosters a more active learning environment. If students then summarize what they have read in character, inferential learning is greatly enhanced.

There are several ways to ask students to summarize elements of Shakespeare's work. One effective summarizing exercise recommended by Folger Library's Peggy O'Brien

involves paraphrasing to get students to understand what is going on in a play. Her strategy

encourages teachers to ask students first to read lines aloud, and then to restate the meaning

in their own words. Other teachers attending a Folger Institute expanded upon O'Brien's

paraphrasing exercise, suggesting that students take entire scenes from a play and put the

script into their own modern English. After dividing into groups, students translate the play's

lines and the characters' dialogue into the same "modern talk, slang, or street language" that

students would normally use (*Teaching Shakespeare*). Paraphrasing and translating help

make Shakespeare's language less impenetrable to students because both methods allow

students to make Shakespeare's words their own.

Although paraphrasing can be exciting to students who like the challenge of doing

what they deem to be "deciphering" Shakespeare's play, not everyone enjoys this exercise.

In fact, these practices can be intensely difficult for typical classes, which usually have only a

few truly skilled readers. Moreover, when students first experience the material, they seldom

can comprehend the play well enough to provide a truly accurate representation of its

characters and action. Even in a class blessed with several capable readers this approach

causes students to experience a play in fragments, due to frequent interruptions for the

discussion needed in order for a class to comprehend each segment of the play. At best,

"broken" presentations made up of teachers' many interpolations addressing the play's

development prevent students from feeling truly successful in their grasp of the play's

details. Many of these current methods are not guiding students to reach their full potential

in the Shakespeare classroom.

This overview reminds English teachers what has been done in Shakespearean studies

traditionally. Thus, with these conventional methods in mind, teachers continue to search for

effective ways to unify their students' experience in dramatic studies. One increasingly

popular and fascinating solution is to modify literary studies to emphasize physical, not

purely verbal, elements for more significant student participation and learning. The study of

modified kinaesthetics provides tools that are central to implementing the use of dance and

creative movement to teach mainstream curricula. "Kinaesthetics" is that which is of or

relating to bodily reaction or motor memory. The term originated from "kinesthesia," the

sensory experience derived from muscle sense. "Muscle sense" is a sense mediated by end

organs that lie in the muscles, tendons, and joints and are stimulated by bodily movements

and tensions. This methodology has been shown to be applicable to all areas of literary

study—for example, other authors, genres, characters and personas, settings, and forms.

Since no studies have been done to show whether kinaesthetics increases engagement in a

Shakespeare classroom, I conducted research using this method to test its success in an

undergrad, liberal studies Shakespeare survey class (see complete study description in

chapter three).

CHAPTER TWO: ENCOURAGING PERFORMANCE: DANCE AND MOVEMENT IN
LEARNING

Performance: A Magic Link

Texts can be analyzed in a variety of ways: as literature, as rhetoric (that is,

persuading a contemporary audience), as morality tale, as etiology (explaining the origins of

something, like a place name or a practice), as teleology (explaining how events led up to a

final historical conclusion), as an illustration of a philosophy or view of history, as ritual, or

as expression. As educators design and incorporate curriculum into lessons, they must assess

whether their methods permit students to explore and express themselves fully and healthily.

Students may become more engaged in lessons when they actively take part on a personal

level in finding meaning in a text. Milla Cozart Riggio advocates this premise in her

methods:

> . . . performance pedagogy—more than simply an approach or option—
>
> provides a holistic frame with a broad range of options and implications. . .
>
> though staging or reading texts appears to be the most pragmatic of
>
> approaches, even at the beginning level performance engages both teachers
>
> and students in interpretation. . . [Even] simple questions [about the text]
>
> immediately provide a personal involvement and a point of view for each
>
> participant. . . . Students who find these issues less than compelling when they
>
> are presented as theoretical abstraction can be engaged fully and deeply in the
>
> issues when faced with making sense out of a line of text. (*Teaching*
>
> *Shakespeare through Performance* 1-3)

When students interpret the text themselves, they are practicing the act of translation. In this sense they are moving ideas from one area or method of expression to another. The result of this translation is that students create a new comprehension of the text that incorporates their individual life experience into what was previously the sole expression of the text's author. Emphasizing this point, Martha Tuck Rozett suggests that teachers ". . . begin from the premise that [even] students' first readings are a legitimate form of interpretation that reflects the social and educational culture students inhabit" ("Teaching Teachers: *Othello*" 141-142). In order to make the most of this process, the act of translation can be approached from a perspective to which all people can relate—the actions of physical movement.

The concept of using physical movement to explore a text is most often taught as performance. Movement pedagogy, however, is applicable to literary studies on a much broader scale. All people are naturally able to move (albeit in a variety of capacities) and for this reason, creative movement is a mode of exploration that enables all students to develop a more thorough engagement with the literature than if they had only briefly experienced a text.

This expanded familiarity can be especially evident in Shakespearean studies as the Bard's literature characteristically contains elements that challenge beginners' comprehension. Teachers can discover invigorating strategies to help students feel that Shakespeare (through his literature) speaks to them with power and relevance. Because Shakespeare's plays richly magnify facets of human behavior, teachers must illuminate the plays in physical performance. Accordingly, students who come into contact with the play's situations in action are more capable of understanding and applying the literature's "lessons" to their personal needs. Teacher Nancy Goodwin addresses this concept in her *Shakespeare Set Free* article, "Whole-Brained Shakespeare," asserting her belief in the potential of performance movement:

It's hard to learn Shakespeare sitting down. Students will sit in a circle and

talk about how they're going to move on performance day, but when I prod

them to get on their feet and run the scene there is an amazing difference in

how they read, how they engage, how they think (226).

Not only do they interact with and understand the literature in a more personal manner, but

students who act come to participate much more consciously. As they try to represent the

plot's situations onstage, actors are engaging themselves in scenarios that mimic or anticipate

experiences from their personal lives. Whenever people visualize themselves in a situation,

they simulate the experience in their minds. In so doing, actors are able to explore how they

might react to different circumstances.

   When I directed an exercise in character development, drawing upon elements of

performance that students had utilized in personal life, such as physical movements

associated with work, dance, or sports, had much more appeal to the participants than if the

class simply sat and read through the script. Each person has a unique pattern of movement

evident in everyday life. These characteristics may be harnessed as exploratory

communication tools in learning. These beliefs were central in the practices of Rudolph

Laban, whose work on the social importance of understanding movement significantly

influenced European thought in the first half of the twentieth century. In Eden Davies' book

Beyond Dance: Laban's Legacy of Movement Analysis, Warren D. Lamb, who studied dance

in Laban's school and furthered Laban's observations of workers during the Industrial

Revolution in England, explains that Laban ". . . was always looking beyond 'Dance' in the

colloquial sense of the term . . . to the significance of the harmonies and rhythms of how

people move in their everyday lives" (xi). Eden Davies, having studied Laban's work

through Lamb's personal experience with him, notes in the introduction that Laban's

observations reflect ". . . deep philosophical interest in the potential of the human body and

spirit. Dance, he believed, should grow naturally out of the rhythm inherent in every

individual, a rhythm which should find expression in their [sic] everyday life" (xiii). Warren

D. Lamb developed Laban's analytic premise concerning people's movement in industry:

> Working in factories had already established the principle that each person
>
> should find their [sic] own way of performing even simple operative tasks,
>
> and furthermore that certain people were better suited to particular tasks, even
>
> positions in a team, than others. . . . [This concept led] to the discovery that
>
> each person's movement pattern, developed in early childhood, is as
>
> individual as their fingerprint or DNA. By identifying and analyzing this
>
> movement pattern it is possible to predict how the person will react and inter-
>
> act in any given situation, not simply in operative tasks but in personal
>
> relationships, management positions, and anything requiring the assessment of
>
> personality. (31)

Students' natural physicality also reveals much about their personalities. In alignment with

this philosophy, child-centered teaching encourages healthy physical self-expression on the

basis that this process is integral to a healthy body and balanced mind. Laban brought this

philosophical basis to all aspects of movement: ". . . in industry just as much as in dance,

movement should be a dignified, graceful, and joyful experience" (24). He believed that it

should be recognized ". . . as the common denominator to all human activity, whether in

work, social or spiritual life," always remembering "the paramount importance of

individuality and its expression through movement" (50). Before long I realized the

significance of what was happening when I helped students to link their own physical movement to the words of the text. They comprehended much more about the literature and their own capacity for creative interpretation than when they merely read or heard the plays.

Expanded dramatic activities involving physical acting give students opportunities to gain deep personal familiarity with the play. Because it encourages active processing of the material being explored, physical interpretation also provides students relief from the passive-learner situation of the typical seated class. In contrast to staged exercises, class activities that involve simply reading the text or listening to recordings of the plays yield little improvement in students' understanding, skills, retention, and especially enthusiasm. Trying to study every part of an entire play can leave teachers and students frustrated—an effect that may become a lasting detriment to beginning Shakespeare students. I found this to be especially true when I was required to design lesson plans for ninety-minute class periods. I soon discovered by experimenting with Shakespearean drama that it is more accessible to students if they focus on a work's basic elements, namely, the main ideas that are used or presented by the playwright. Watching and comparing significant scenes from different productions of the same play can begin to expose the student to the myriad of interpretive possibilities available. In "Interpreting the Tragic Loading of the Bed in Cinematic Adaptations of *Othello*," Kathy M. Howlett supports this notion in her classroom practices:

> The overwhelming power of the visual image . . . persuades me that
>
> adaptations . . . can be useful in illuminating the play's markers that

> Shakespeare's language, the conventions of Renaissance drama, and editorial
>
> practice can obscure or confuse. (177)

Especially when students have difficulty relating to Shakespearean language, film as literature can assist them in overcoming barriers to comprehension and exhibit the variety of ways that people derive and portray meaning from Shakespeare's text. The scene between Hamlet and Gertrude in Mel Gibson's production is a striking example of how blocking changes the scene's actual content. Samuel Crowl attests to this effect in "Ocular Proof":

> . . . a series of clips can give them the flavor of each production and plenty of
>
> details to use in seeing how each creates its own approach to Shakespeare's
>
> text as is becomes a script for performance . . . provid[ing] ample opportunity
>
> for students to grasp the range of options open to directors, actors, and
>
> designers when working with the same material. . . . This method allows
>
> students to develop strategies for reading Shakespeare in performance and to
>
> see how the same script can produce a variety of performance and production
>
> choices. It is this idea of choice, in my experience, that seems best to open up
>
> for them an expanding universe of Shakespearean possibilities as well as to
>
> create the understanding that choice, in any given production approach, also
>
> creates limitations. (163)

If after watching and comparing several versions of key scenes or briefly reading through the play, students are then asked to create their own physical performance—a production that has authority grounded in the text—teachers allow them not only to experience the literature, but also to comprehend and process the material as it relates to themselves and the world around them.

Performance exercises go beyond the normal school day activities to help students be better prepared to deal with various issues. Discussing the benefits that students receive when they participate in performance activities, W. B. Worthen posits in his article "Drama, Performativity, and Performance" that "dramatic performance . . . becomes an act . . . in which an understanding of the text emerges not as the cause but as a consequence of performance" (1101). Worthen explains how performers come to use a text as a base from which to communicate their own interpretive understanding through modes of acting out or imitating reality. Worthen, who bases his considerations on previous performance work addressed by Joseph Roach, contends that:

> . . . performance can be described as surrogation, an uncanny replacement acting, an ambivalent replaying of previous performers and performances by a current behavior. An act of memory and an act of creation, performance recalls and transforms the past in the form of the present. . . . [Performance as] surrogation involves not the replaying of an authorizing text, a grounding origin, but the potential to construct that origin as a rhetorically powerful effect of performance. (1101)

Worthen's convictions formally describe students' abilities to find ways to project their own experience and values into a staged play's re-creation. When they invest their time and energy into performing scenes from a play, students discover new qualities about themselves that are elicited by the circumstances surrounding the characters' reactions to the scripts' developments.

As actors "become" characters, they inevitably simulate situations that confront life experience. Even though Shakespeare's plays are remarkably popular and have been staged

countless times, actors still find insightful elements to bring to current character development. Although the tragic characters of Julius Caesar and his betrayers have been portrayed on stage in many settings, students usually bring fresh insights to the assassination scene that are based on their own experiences with deceptive friends. Perhaps due to the consequences of the conflicts witnessed in Romeo and Juliet's tragedy, students *may* find themselves more likely to negotiate disagreements, avoid fights, and solve problems healthily and peacefully. This idea came from the role-play exercises I observed in "anti-bullying" presentations and therapy training sessions designed to modify student behaviors in positive ways. Themes from single scenes contain many universal applications in which students can learn much from depictions of life. Worthen explains in "Shakespearean Performativity" that this discovery develops due to the inherent nature of drama:

> By deploying the text in recognizable genres of behavior . . . theatrical performance can never be [simply] 'historical' . . . as a means of recovering meanings inscribed in the text, because the theatre does not cite texts, it cites behavior[, arguing that student awareness arises] . . . at the interface where texts and performances, language and bodies, engage, represent, resist one another. (127, 132, 179)

No literary class activity can offer students more of an opportunity to gather such a volume of focused awareness as this type of exercise. Addressing this assertion, Howlett adds, "Lines from the play summon a context that determines [its] nature. . . . As students [perform] they come to understand how practices of dramatic performance produce meaning," reminding us that "there can never be a reconstruction or derivation of the play, only a contemporary understanding of the material difference of early modern textuality."

Howlett asserts that this process is what "gives the text meaning as performance" (169, 179).

By providing students the opportunity to problem-solve and look for answers in connection

to the literature, by asking them what they see in Shakespeare's plays and what these

observations make them feel, teachers assist their process of empathizing with and thinking

critically about the characters' plights. In essence it is by "tracing how our texts, films, and

the critics who discuss them renegotiate the [performance elements], students learn to

interpret for themselves whether Shakespeare's drama can ever be an idealized and unified

repository of value and meaning" (179). In so doing students may find it worthwhile to

undergo self-examination and catharsis which can lead to emotional purging and positive

behavior modification.

For instance, in pressure-filled or uncomfortable situations, people with less life

experience may be prone to panic and perhaps react to everyday problems with negative,

pessimistic, hopeless thinking, or even passive-aggressive behaviors. Classroom methods

that include activities that avoid conflict help students to develop increased self-esteem and

better communication skills. These in turn can help them to better deal with conflict and thus

can serve to diffuse intense trauma and even violence. As a result of the lessons learned in

presenting dramatic scenarios, students who can confidently present themselves to others do

not feel compelled to resort to extreme methods of communicating their needs, just to feel

that they are "heard" or acknowledged by society. Because the student actors explore reality-

based situations in the safety of the fictional stage, they are able to experiment with different

reactions to problems and to find more thoughtful solutions to deal with issues. Nancy

Goodwin refers to this trial-and-error process as "reaching an audience," saying that "this is

her own theory of how Shakespeare got so good so fast." She explains this theory in relation to students' acting experience:

> [Shakespeare] was writing for a live audience. He went out onstage, or sent his material out onstage via other actors; he conveyed the words; he got reactions; he revised. Take away the live audience, and the process loses steam. So it is with students. So what if the audience is their classmates? Put them in the position of linking Shakespeare's play to real people, and as they strive to please they breathe life into the words. One of the best things about performance is also one of the best things about lectures and articles—some of the words and ideas stay with us. (226)

When students are capable of communicating their feelings about life situations effectively on stage, they can allow their experiences with dramatic performance and its "rhetorically powerful effect" to help them be more composed in many real-life instances.

The performing arts present scenarios that bring students into direct contact with issues that confront them as they develop socially. Professionals in education often use some form of dramatic enactment to work with students. Coaches ask students to "run through plays" in order to prepare for their opposition in upcoming games. Psychologists conduct group sessions that employ skits, guided imagery, or movement and dance therapy as a way to open dialogue and encourage its uninhibited flow among participants. Other specialists might use drama as a catalyst for discussion in workshops about abuse or bullying prevention. Teachers who enable student actors to use their own bodies, voices, and minds to re-enact complex social situations actually help students to cope better with the occurrences of their lives.

As educational practices evolve, teachers increasingly realize the value of incorporating performance in their classes. Discussing this progression, Crowl summarizes developments in Shakespearean pedagogy:

> The past twenty-five years have seen a revolution in performance approaches to teaching Shakespeare. Many professors, following Miriam Gilbert's lead at Iowa, have turned their classrooms into rehearsal spaces where students spend more time on their feet speaking the text to one another than at their desks taking notes on imagery, characterization, theme, or historical context (see Gilbert). . . . professors are trying to give their students varying ideas of how Shakespeare's texts were conceived originally as scripts for performance and of why those scripts have as much vitality for modern audiences (and modern media) as they did for those at the Theatre, Globe, and Blackfriars for whom they were first performed (162).

Teaching performance is becoming increasingly popular in the Shakespeare classroom, yet as part of performance methods, creative movement still needs to become more achievable for teachers and students. Many teachers do not yet understand how to use the text to find clues that provide dance and creative movement opportunities that help students better comprehend the text. The study of using kinesthesia, or bodily reaction or motor memory, to increase engagement in the Shakespeare classroom remains limited in practice. The following study will test whether dance and movement, abilities that students already possess, yet need to be skillfully honed, will increase student engagement in a Shakespeare classroom.

CHAPTER THREE: STAGING ACTIVE SCENES FROM SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

Contextual Creative Movement: Key Terms and Performance Clues

Dance and creative movement are defined in as many terms as there are people who participate. The daily use of kinesthetics as a way of knowing and feeling are less prominent in the classroom and have not yet been traditionally accepted in core communication curriculum. A specialist in literacy, literature, and arts integration, Claudia E. Cornett asserts that dance is an art form in that it emphasizes intention through conscious physical movement. She defines it in *Creating Meaning Through Literature and the Arts*: "Dance is movement aware of itself. . . . It is communication through movement that intends to express ideas and feelings for aesthetic purposes. Dance is artful movement" (284). Cornett's 2007 third edition of this book, an integration resource for classroom teachers, has a section that thoroughly addresses integrating dance and movement, as well as other arts, throughout the curriculum. Cornett provides evidence-based research updates that support how student learning increases when students are engaged in the arts. Her book outlines sources and provides references to recognized educational principles and practices for teachers. She even assists teachers with arts-integrated lesson and unit planning through practical examples. Her work is a valuable resource for any teacher using dance to teach other curricula.

It is important to remember that dance's integration into literary studies does not involve strict imitation, nor pantomime. The whole person is involved in dance construction through a highly-intellectual mind-body connection. Claudia Cornett says that student engagement and commitment to active learning are integral to the use of dance expression in the effort to show instead of tell:

Dance engages head, hands, and heart in problem solving. Students are called

upon to use their own ideas to transform important concepts through

movement. This causes students to cognitively restructure information, and

they are in turn transformed themselves. . . . When students are asked to show,

describe, and relate (e.g., connect to their lives), they begin to form more

meaningful links. . . . [D]ancers remind us that the most creative ideas come

from people who are not bound by conventions. . . . Creative problem solving

depends on flexibility, risk taking, and openness to possibilities. Dance

integration puts [this] process center stage as students learn to use dance

thinking to connect and imagine ideas, conduct inquiry, and grow in new

perspectives. (296, 297)

The motivation for using dance to explore traditional curriculum comes from dance's use of

creative thinking, problem solving, and imagination in the effort to communicate feelings and

values. In essence, the controlling idea is that when words become silent, motions begin to

"speak." Words transform into gestures of meaning that can become almost universal

communication. It is perhaps this widespread application that caused Cornett to believe that

dance is ultimately cross-curricular:

Students involved in dance learn effective ways to use the body as a language.

Dance elements become conceptual anchors students can use across

disciplines to show understanding. Most vocabulary meanings can be danced,

especially verbs, adverbs, and emotion words like *contrite* and *ferocious*.

Choreography involves composing and gives options to organize thoughts; it

parallels written communication. . . . Students use their bodies to gain deep

> understanding of key concepts such as dependence, interrelationships, and
> cause-effect. . . . As students learn to analyze the dance elements of energy,
> space, and time, they simultaneously learn to analyze and categorize their
> thinking. (283)

Explaining and showing how to use creative movement and dance in application, this exercise in practice provides an example of word exploration. The assignment instructs participants to do the following: "Using just your bodies, exemplify 'Trust' and 'Envy'." The assignment is full of opportunities for interpretation, and while a multitude of solutions could satisfy this challenge, two group possibilities are described hereafter. These concepts require awareness of both personal and general space in cooperation with shapes, forms, levels, and energy. To show trust a group could form a body sculpture in the shape of a human circle with all members facing the same direction and simultaneously standing with knees bent, perching on one another's laps. Each member leans on the knees of the one behind for balance to create the interdependent form. If any one person moves away from the circle, the entire form is thrown off-balance and collapses. Therefore, the idea of trust is emphasized through the use of participants' bodies. In a separate endeavor, envy could be represented by having the group form a sculpted "hug" in which the majority of members are all embracing, perhaps sitting comfortably on the floor in co-centric layers focusing toward the center of the form. Yet the envy is evident by an ostracized minority who are limited to the marginalia of the group—standing on the outskirts, yearning for the acceptance, comfort, and security that exudes from the communal center. These segregated few, perhaps two or three people, may be peering, reaching, or even leaning inward as they represent the desire to break into the unity of the group in the center. The outsiders visually represent the meaning

of envy as their bodies indicate yearning and longing for the unit from which they are excluded. The group could then discuss the feelings of trust and envy they experienced while participating in the exploratory body sculptures.

Dance seeks to extend self-expression and cause aesthetic response. This communicative quality makes it an inventive teaching and learning tool in the literature classroom. Because people move before they use language, the mode of movement provides an effective way in which to move away from, and then return to, the text and discover interesting facets of literature through nonverbal explorations. Thus, the issue of how creative physical activity assists students required more formal research. Does dance help literature students become more engaged in lessons?

The formal research of literary dance explorations in relation to student engagement took the form of a study that focused on the obstacles of teaching beginning Shakespeare students, whether in middle school, high school, or undergraduate levels. Considering some of the shortfalls of current approaches used to teach plays to populations that are inexperienced in Shakespearean studies, by presenting scholarly and anecdotal insights, the research examined the potential of integrating dance as a teaching method to more effectively reach this audience. The central goal was to research whether dance improved student engagement in lessons.

Attending a workshop in cross-curricular teaching methods using dance honed my interest in this instructional method so that it became the focus of the research project. A one-week workshop in June 2008, presented in Montgomery, Alabama, sponsored by the Alabama Institute for Education in the Arts in conjunction with the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, focused on teaching methods that integrate the arts into core curriculum. The

institute summarized featured dance teachers' methods of integrating movement into a literary curriculum, as well as providing opportunities for added observations, ideas, and exercises used in my own seven years of classroom teaching. The exploratory study provided a structured program of research into these issues and proposed a methodology for such an investigation. By assessing beginning engagement levels, and manipulating the level of students' participation by using dance to encourage their direct interaction with the chosen literature, I attempted to discover the influence of these factors on the quality of students' attention outcomes. To apply this theory, I developed assessment instruments (surveys and interviews) to record the effects of these ideas as they were practiced in an undergraduate Shakespeare class.

I conducted a study on an undergraduate, liberal arts program course—English 333 Introduction to Shakespeare—at Western Carolina University during a fifteen-week 2008 fall semester. The class of twenty students met two times per week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, during the time period of 12:35-1:50 P. M. The project's procedures involved first observing the volunteer participants' engagement in the class which was taught using a lecture-discussion-test format. This pattern of literary study was well-established and the observation portion was to follow the same basic format. Throughout the semester, the professor asked the students to have read a play independently in preparation for a classroom discussion of a filmed production. Viewing the production served to introduce the literature in performance and reinforce comprehension of outside readings. The professor lectured on elements of the particular play being studied, and afterward, the class discussed the specifics of the lecture.

The study began during week twelve of the semester as the class began the section of the syllabus entitled "Elizabethan Ideas of Tragedy." Shakespeare's development of the tragic

form was explored through his play *Othello* with focus on the following topics: the nature of evil in the play, the play's setting, the recurrent imagery, and the role of antagonist Iago. The highlight of this portion of the syllabus was its conjunction with the university's production of *Othello*. This coordination presented a teaching moment with the dual objective of simultaneously studying the literature and performance characteristics.

My first observation occurred during the beginning of the class' focus on *Othello*. The professor introduced me and my research project goals. I explained that all sessions were to be videotaped in order to analyze students' engagement. As I described the details of my study and distributed participation consent forms, two students voiced excited positive reactions. The professor then introduced the next unit of study. Although independent reading of *Othello* had been assigned on the syllabus for that class meeting, none of the students had begun. The professor glossed the main characters of tragic hero Othello and villain Iago. Of the seventeen students (eight women and nine men) in attendance that day, only four responded with comments to the professor's prompts. Next the viewing of the film began serving as an orientation to the play. For the duration of approximately one hour, the professor showed Act 1 through 2.1 of *Othello*. My seated position behind the class enabled me to fully observe student activity. Initially all students were on task as some watched while others followed the lines of the text in their books. As the viewing session progressed, most students remained attentive, occasionally laughing at Shakespeare's word play, mostly cued by the professor's response and explanation. Yet almost one-third of the group lapsed into intermittent doodling, text messaging on mobile phones, checking e-mail on laptops, or sleeping unabashedly. The last five minutes of the class was reserved for a guided discussion of what the students had seen of the play that

day, followed by the assignment to read for the next time considering, "What can we gather

from the first 200 lines of the play?"

My second observation began with a review of the main characters for the fifteen class

members (six women and nine men) in attendance. Afterwards, the viewing continued from

Acts 2.1 through 3.2, the end of part one of the production. The transition featured a discussion

of the significance of the handkerchief and whether it could represent "ocular proof." The

viewing resumed as the class watched 3.3-3.4. Just as in the previous meeting, most students

were on task though almost one-third of the class was texting, emailing, or sleeping during the

viewing. The session ended with discussing the theme of Iago and Othello's being inexplicably

bound together forever.

After completing two observations of students' actions and responses in this traditional

setting, my third day of observation began by having students complete the voluntary

participation consent forms for my study. I distributed surveys to the students and instructor in

preparation for my teaching a lesson using dance to explore the literature. The surveys were

designed to collect data concerning individuals' academic interests and majors, experiences and

preferences in teaching methods and literary studies, learning styles, and suggestions for

improvement in English class design. The survey asked participants to respond to items on the

"Student Survey—Pre-lesson" listed in Appendix 2. Fourteen class members (seven women

and seven men) attended that day. Returning to the viewing exercise in Act 3.4, the class

finished the play completely through 5.1. Again all students were attentive initially, yet the two

who most often slept in past viewings did so up until the play's climax when Othello murders

Desdemona. Following this scene, the sleepers faded back to slumber.

Data Analysis of Pre-lesson Responses

Responses to the pre-lesson survey revealed a wide variety of characteristics, experiences, and preferences among class members.

Item one's self descriptions indicated a variety of majors, areas of academic interest, and career goals. Many of the participants were interested in teaching various subjects to different age groups: community college teacher in English with a literature concentration, secondary school educator in social studies, teacher and published writer in English literature with a creative writing minor, elementary educator in kindergarten with an art concentration, and elementary educator in second grade physical and health education. Others were drawn to areas such as chemistry research focused on enzymes using sugars, motion picture screenwriter and director with a focus in English, and Radio Communications. This information reveals that the class was comprised of a cross-section of students who are not English majors and therefore represent a more challenging group with which to conduct the study.

Item two inquired, why study literature? The student responses introduced their thoughts about the value of literary studies. Students' thoughts were especially revealing given the fact that the course was an elective for them. Several participants alluded to finding literature interesting because it transports readers' imaginations back in time, place, and society and allows them to examine individuals' language and experiences. Thus, it helped people understand many things in life. One response explained, "I study literature because I am reading and writing anyway." Another said "Because I love stories." More intellectual reflections reported that literature expands minds and conscious thought, sharpens critical thinking skills, and develops vocabulary.

In item three, respondents described their experience of studying a piece of literature. Most mentioned reading (in or out of class), trying to simplify and do close analysis so as to break down and figure out the work. Some preferred to read the selection first and then discuss it, saying that by reading first, the imagination is free to create versions of scenes and characters. Others would rather read and discuss it at the same time. One student confides, "I've tried reading 'Spark' notes and then reading [the selection,] but it seems like that limits how you interpret an initial reading." Cooperative processes usually followed the readings, such as discussions, debates, projects, papers or activities. One of the most common practices involved viewing performances and productions of the literature.

In item four students explained their preferences in the study of a literary work. Students preferred class discussions, group analyses, interpretive and creative projects, and film and live productions. Item five inquired about the value of students' preferences from item four, "How do these methods encourage learning? How do they expose you to the literature and connect to your greater life experience?" Essentially, students seem to value activities that encourage reading the material and comparing their comprehension and points of view to others' while expanding and enlarging contact with the text. Not only do they gain confidence in their own opinions, but learn to empathize with others and thus connect to literature to the world and their lives. One student commented that these methods connect the students because they ". . . understand the story in a deeper way. If you involve creatively then I find there is a better understanding with the concepts that the literature is attempting to convey."

Item six asked students to describe their individual learning style, "Do you learn more from visual or auditory presentations of information? Would you prefer stationary or kinetic

(hands-on) learning?" Some chose both visual and auditory presentations, desiring ". . . an all-around approach to subject matter." While most students favored hands-on experiences, one student preferred stationary learning.

Item seven surveyed how the study of literature in class might be improved. Students were urged to provide suggestions to help teachers assist them in becoming more engaged in class lessons. Some of these responses echoed promoting discussion and watching videos in class. Others stressed less lecturing and desired having a professor explain what is going on in a story without using terribly complicated words. Most wished for more involvement, allowing students to be a part of learning and helping them think differently about learning. Responses also supported relating literature to modern day and different life situations. They emphasized getting up and moving around, and going outside—any project that encourages creativity is a great way to remember and learn about all subjects. One student advised, "Make more relevant comparisons creating situations that force students to feel engaged, such as modernizing reenactments."

The final item of the pre-lesson survey asked, "What else should be considered about literary study and teaching methods?" Students believe that teachers should make lessons as interesting and fun as possible utilizing the art that is storytelling. They advocate making sure everyone is participating and not have one person holding the discussion. They feel that a wide variety of teaching is always interesting: showing a movie every once in a while, group work, notes from board and teacher, field trip, and critical analysis essays. In addition the consideration of background information such as lifestyle of the author, culture, society and teaching the literature as a relevant text that can be used in daily thought and practice by the lessons learned.

After reviewing the initial survey responses to better orient myself with the individuals that compiled the class, I observed a fourth class to note details of those responses as I perceived them in the students' behaviors in the traditional setting. The weekend prior to this meeting, students had the opportunity to attend the university's staged production of *Othello*. During the class, the professor conducted a discussion based on a collection of "Critics' Observations on Shakespeare's *Othello* (1604)." Sixteen students (seven women and nine men) were present. Even with extended discussion, during which almost one-half of students commented, some repeatedly, two students slept intermittently while one focused on unrelated laptop activity. At the end of this session I distributed "Literary Selection" study guides (see Appendix 4) designed to prompt class members' critical assessment of the play. The format is useful for provoking thought about a variety of literary genres and is intended to be open-ended so that students may respond in a broad, individualistic manner. I asked the class to complete the surveys on their own time so that their answers could reflect greater focus. Ideas from the study guide were used to prompt activity in the next class meeting. The goal was to let literature's inherent movement indicators set the pattern for physical interpretation.

In the fifth class meeting of the study, I instructed the students and professor by following a lesson plan that used dance and movement to portray the play's main elements by incorporating the study guide responses. The lesson plan objective was to stage a class "mini" production of *Othello*. The goal was to have all students engaged in creating and using dance and movement to act out this play's main elements. First, I presented a quick overview of the rationale for using dance to explore *Othello*. Then I explained the elements of dance through the warm-up exercise: "What is the BrainDance—15 Dance Concepts." Ann Green Gilbert's

"Music for the BrainDance" includes a poster that introduces the BrainDance through an

overview of its elements, development, and components:

What is the BrainDance?

The BrainDance is a very effective body / brain exercise based on

eight developmental movement patterns babies move through for the

first year of life to wire the central nervous system so that the brain can

operate at its full potential. This centering exercise prepares all

students for learning. The BrainDance can be used with all ages

(toddlers to seniors), and in all learning situations.

Moving through these patterns at any age reorganizes the central

nervous system, warms-up and aligns the body, promotes focus and

concentration, strengthens social and emotional skills, develops eye-

tracking, and relieves stress.

To assist students' grasp of dance elements and concepts, I introduced the mnemonic aid that

Pamela Sophras taught at the 2008 Alabama Institute for Education in the Arts— BEST [see

Claudia Cornett's "Ready Reference 10.1" for a thorough listing (285)]. This concept

represents the following fundamental dance elements: B=Body, E=Energy, S=Space, T=Time.

"Body" refers to parts, shapes, and actions or moves, such as nonlocomotor, stationary action,

and locomotor, movement through space. "Energy" is the force a person uses and signals the

mood that a dancer intends in regard to the attack, weight, and flow of movement. "Space" is

the personal or shared area in which the body is used and takes into account level, direction,

size, place or destination, pathways, and focus. "Time" regards rhythm, speed or tempo, accent

or emphasis, duration, and phrases. In addition to the BEST concepts, certain choreographic

principles are integral to dance making: repetition, contrast, unity, variety, balance, patterns, and transitions. At that point, I reviewed the "Literary Selection" Sheet, discussing, sharing, and recording responses to prepare for the dance exploration.

After the introduction, I played a recording of "BrainDance" (CD Selection 3) and led the class in a physical movement warm-up session. I then divided students into groups and assigned each group a part using the play's acts—five acts, one for each of the five groups. The dance lesson began with my coaching the students though beginning movement elements, such as body posturing, modes of movement and personal and general space. Then groups were given time and space to independently plan and choreograph their chosen selections. I asked the groups to design three body sculptures, choosing three different modes of movement to transition between the sculptures. All of the dance must somehow visually represent what was happening in the text. The next step was a performance "run-through" of the five consecutive acts with my directing— clarifying, suggesting, and enlarging the groups' efforts. After adding music to enhance mood, the class performed both without and with musical accompaniment. We celebrated our accomplishments, and then I distributed the "Post-lesson Student Survey." Following the teaching of Shakespeare's *Othello* through movement, I surveyed participants to sample their reactions to the lesson concerning their engagement in each instructional setting (see Appendix 5). I closed the session by asking them to reflect on the lesson in preparation for the class interview that I would conduct in the next meeting.

Data Analysis of Post-Lesson Responses

In item one, participants explained whether using physical movement and dance helped them find increased connection with the literature. Most students gave positive

reactions. Some said that it helped them to think interpretively which helped them see what is gong on and get into the act as well. Another responded that the acting part helped because the student got to idealize the character within and try to act it out. Others reported that it was interesting trying to get the essence of the play in a short amount of time and "made me think outside the box about Shakespeare." One student however experienced a mixed reaction saying "It's not that it's bad, but I felt uncomfortable. I'm never really comfortable however with attention or being a focal point. I wasn't able to get past that."

In item two students discussed whether and how using their bodies to interpret the text assisted their discovery of more facets of the selection. Most students replied that it did make them look at the play differently enabling them to put themselves into the play more literally. One student explained "I do not remember very much when I read and when I watch something that is hard to understand. . . . Doing and watching can explain a lot more then words can." Another stated that "Having watched the video & the play I felt like I had really known the play before [; it] would have helped for a play less studied." The student who expressed some discomfort in the first item committed, "Not really, but I don't think it is how I learn."

Item three surveyed what fresh insights or questions students had concerning the author or literature after this lesson. Students indicated that the exercise made them more inquisitive about Shakespeare's playwriting, thereby giving them a different "feel" for the literature. One cited the "hard language," while others wondered how Shakespeare would have directed saying, "I would just want to know exactly what Shakespeare had in mind for how the play would be acted out." One focused on characterization questioning, "How does one think and make up all those characters which seem so different and real?"

Item four inquired, "How does using movement and dance to study literature compare to reading the selection on your own?" Students responded that dance makes them think more and challenge their own interpretations. One student elaborated, "Doing the dance & movement helps [me] see & interpret things that the text does not. I can sometimes have a movie going on inside my head as I read but when I do not understand what I read then the movie screen is blank." Another explains that the dance exercise "Helps [me] to have a visualization and [the plot] is easy to remember when up & moving & under pressure." Although one student uncomfortable with creative movement claimed he could get more out of it on his own, another asserted, "It gets one engaged in a different way. It is still analytical but with a different section of your brain."

Item five asked students to explain whether dance engaged them more fully than studying through dramatic reading, viewing, projects, papers, or discussion. Several students spoke favorably of the dance process. One said, "It helped more than talking about it; visuals are always better!" Another said that it encouraged thinking more deeply into the literature. An enthusiastic participant explained, "Dance works better because it is more hands-on. It is full body. You are using most of your senses." Some students felt that the dance did not really engage them fully or better, just in a different way and should be integrated with reading and papers. One student said, "It took my mind off the literature more than anything."

Students described the creative process in item six. They explained how they and their groups decided what actions best portrayed the literary work. Most thought that it was a good, creative collaboration, as they discussed it and acted it out. Individuals recalled that they improvised, making it up as they went along, ". . . other than the initial first part of

figuring out the scene." Some felt that the biggest part of the scene was of greatest concern. Others were more methodical, saying their process was simple in that they decided first who was in the scene. Then they decided who was able to play what part. After that, they decided on the three things of which their dance consisted. They limited their dance moves to the most important actions—the ones that created the most change and commotion.

Item seven asked students, "In what way did you find this method of study more and less comfortable than traditional means such as lecture and discussion?" Some felt that it was more comfortable because the class was a lot more "loose" (in a good way), and that it was better because it was more involved. One summed it up saying that it was "More comfortable for me because I am okay being silly in front of others. I teach children that are five years old. Being silly is the only way to keep their attention. Also we sing and do the dancing to them." Others reported that it was uncomfortable, forcing them out of their comfort zone because it was a lot of pressure to be video taped and under limited time. One student explained, "I felt it to be about the same comfort level as discussion because both ways you are up front with your interpretations and thoughts for all to see."

Students described the challenges that this exercise presented for them in item eight. Outstanding challenges included dancing and trying to work through a horrible fear of being in front of people. Students alluded to how difficult it was to be comfortable enough to properly portray a character. They found it challenging to think about the scene and try to get it for all to understand with short amount of time to present and not being able to talk during the movement enactment. Others were faced with the difficulties that arose from the limits of this particular study, such as time and people who did not attend class on dance lesson day. For example, one student commented, "The only challenge was the timing to the

music. That was only because we didn't get to hear it first. Otherwise everything was great."

Item nine asked, "Were you able to realize new potential in yourself as a scholar using dance to study literature? In what way?" Some students emphatically said that the dance exploration could help them learn the plays better by making them think about the literature differently. Another explained, "I think there is potential but it is not something I would do on my own. [It has p]otential because it engages the mind in a new and different way." Others were limited because they experienced only an initial lesson.   One future teacher stated with some optimism, "Probably not, but if I do teach any Shakespeare I would like to do something similar."

The final item asked students to discuss any other insights they felt were relevant to this method of study. Most participants said that it helped them think differently about the play and how to interpret it. One student reiterated that "I don't doubt that someone can get a lot from this method, but more likely with a concentration on it throughout the semester." Similarly, another student stated, "[I would have preferred] more time and being able to listen to the music first so the dance can go with it a little better." Another student affirmed, "It forces one to not just talk about the scene and character but be the scene and character. This approach allows students to fully analyze and take in literature." Perhaps the most telling response expressed, "Overall I thought it was a memorable experience and fun too! Having a limited amount of time is pressure but also I think it is helpful. Not having tons of time to ask questions is good in a way. It simplifies what needs to be done and gets everyone focused quickly."

During my sixth class involvement, I conducted a group interview with the class members and professor to record final responses to the experience. The instructor was also interviewed separately to gain professional assessment of the methodology in practice. Responses from the follow-up interviews reiterated and elaborated on participants' answers from the post-lesson survey. Following the class study, I systematically examined data, looking for trends, categories, et cetera regarding student engagement across contexts. This information provided the basis for measuring outcomes and analyzing results. After reviewing the trends and patterns of the responses, I was able to determine the effectiveness of this approach.

Concluding Remarks

Interpretive dance opportunities encourage students' full participation in creating the experience of literary study. The students in my study enjoyed aspiring to produce a play, and they openly used their own experiences to enhance interpretations. Using physical movements to portray the events of the play helped students to express their uninhibited, unbiased interpretations of the play's occurrences. Thus, the learning process is more completely engaging when students become directly and personally involved in the presentation.

When students use their own movement as much as possible in the initial study of the play, and even in the final production, they establish a somewhat natural, comfortable relationship with the play's elements. This comfort enables students to relate more easily to the plot, and thus to be more at ease with portraying its development as they stage the play. Teachers must review their use of students' physical explorations of the curriculum. Indeed, students' responses may assist educators' incorporation of this method into their own

teaching. An appendix of movement terms and clues is provided to help teachers find resources that support of this endeavor. Ultimately, a teacher's job is to get students to learn what the plays are doing—not to tell or show them (except as demonstrations and models). Accordingly, students become independent in their literary comprehension and analysis. As a result, students learn to read and enjoy Shakespeare on their own.

Using dance and movement to teach literature more actively engaged the study participants in lessons. The natural processes of movement helped students to feel comfortable in the learning atmosphere. As students relaxed, they were able to participate more freely in class activities. As their tension and self-consciousness subsided, they were much more prepared to receive information and instruction. In this way, dance serves as a tool that personalizes students' engagement in a classroom exploration of a play.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1—CONTEXTUAL MOVEMENT TERMS AND CLUES

This "Introduction to the Language of Dance," developed by the Southeast Center for Education in the Arts, is a guide to familiarize participants with the verbal and conceptual process of expressive movement. Presented to educators at the Alabama Institute for Education in the Arts in 2008, the guide describes ways that a body moves and occupies space and therefore may perceive and communicate ideas.

BEGINNING VOCABULARY WORD GUIDE

Suggestions for Use

Specific movement-related vocabulary should be emphasized in every lesson. Limit the number of new words (usually one or two) introduced at the beginning of a class. Provide visualization of the word (write it), spell it orally, and demonstrate meaning of the word through the action of the lesson.

Maintain a comprehensive written list that can be used for review. Periodically, provide the list of new movement words to the classroom teacher. These words can be used to reinforce concepts and to check spelling proficiency in classroom writing assignments.

Suggested words are listed below and are outlined according to general movement

categories. It is also recommended to choose vocabulary from lesson concepts (i.e. same,

different, pattern, sequence, etc.). From lessons that have a cultural heritage component,

include spelling the names of countries. Some words may seem especially challenging for

this [beginning level], however, most [students] will be ready and excited to learn the new

words. Vocabulary meaning will become evident within the context of the lesson.

Body Parts Identification

Body, head, back, foot, feet, knees, ankles, legs, hips, arms, hands, shoulders, neck, etc.

(Add details as knowledge of the body becomes more sophisticated.)

Safety Words

Go, stop, freeze, stillness, (Encourage use of synonyms.)

Body Action Words

Axial: bend, stretch, twist, spin, lean, fall, swing, position, (including **first, second,**

parallel), balance, etc.

Locomotor: walk, jump, hop, run, leap, gallop, skip, roll, slither, etc. (See "Kinetic cords"

for additional descriptive ideas)

Other dance-related words:

Plie-to bend, **releve**-to rise, **jete**-to jump, **contract**-increase muscle tension resulting in a bending action, **release**-relax muscle tension, **flex**-(as related to articulation of the foot) pull foot upward, **turn out**-rotate the leg outward from the hip socket (this should never be taken to extreme range)

Time-Related Words

Same as safety words, plus: fast, slow, even, uneven, beat, etc.

Space and Shape Design Words

Round, curved, straight, zigzag, forward, backward, sideward, small, big, large, circle, triangle, square, up, down, high, middle, low, etc.

Force / Effort Words

Heavy, light, strong, weak, firm, fine, tighten, relax, etc.

ADVANCED VOCABULARY WORD GUIDE

Review words used in the "Beginning Vocabulary Word Guide" for beginning students especially Laban effort actions. Reinforce words which insure personal safety. Encourage use of synonyms or other descriptors for all categories of action and stillness.

Body Parts Identification

Add to external parts identification: shin, calf, thigh, buttocks, waist, chest, torso, wrists, etc.

Begin internal parts identification and link to body functions:

lungs, heart, rib cage (and other parts of the skeletal structure), abdominals (and other parts of the muscular system).

Body Action Words

Add refined descriptors, such as:

Wax, rise	wane, set
Flutter, vibrate	agitate, shuffle, jiggle
Shake, sway, oscillate	pivot, hinge, see saw
Creep, slide	jump, jerk
Dangle, flap, wave, hang	twitch, shake, tremble, quiver
Merge	cut, wipe

Bounce, spring	pitch, roll, yaw, sheer
Pulsate	stir
Materialize	dematerialize
Static	dynamic

Extend words and concepts related to Time and Space.

Movement in Time

Rate of Movement

Slow, ponderous	fast, swift, racing
Speeding	crawling, dilatory
Smooth, flowing	jerking, leaping
Regular	irregular, fluctuating
Even	uneven, syncopated
Rhythmic	random, accidental, unexpected
Active	inactive
Starting	stopping, continuing
Pulsing, stirring	vibrating, shaking, jiggling, twitching
Changing	unchanging, repeating
Controlled, ordered	uncontrollable, chaotic
Continuous	discontinuous
Energetic, intense	languorous

Uniform	increasing, decreasing, changing
Visible	too fast to see, too slow to see
Evolving, becoming	sudden, immediate

Duration of Movement

Within a short time, briefly	over a long time, extended
Continuous	discontinuous, interrupted, arrested
Lasting, enduring	immediate, instantaneous, temporary
Perpetual, incessant	fleeting, brief, with interval of rest
Prolonged, drawn out	stopped short, sudden
Delayed	disappearing
Continuing to completion	incomplete, transient, fugitive
Accelerated	decelerated, reduced, ceased
Constant, during a phase	changing, erratic

Frequency of Movement

Often, many	seldom, few
Regular	irregular
In a ratio	random

Sequence of Movements

Before	after
Following, recurring	preceding

First	second, third, . . .
Present	past, future
In sequence, consecutive	simultaneous, contrapuntal, synchronized
Regular, systematic	irregular, random
In order	unexpected, out of order, reversed

Change

Modifying, modulating	transforming
Stable, settled, fixed	shifting, deviating
Permanent, quiescent	fluctuating, vacillating, interchanging
Unchanging	metamorphosing, altering
Gradual	radical, sudden

Interval

Frequent, periodic	infrequent, seldom
Regular	irregular

Movement in Space

Size of Movement

Large	small
Sweeping, sprawling	tight, rigid, cramped
Long, stretched	short, compressed

Hovering	extending

Shape of Movement

Straight	curved, rotating, encircling
Direct	winding, undulating, rolling, twisting
Zigzagging	spiraling, circling, oscillating, serpentine
Restricted	meandering, random, uncertain, wandering
Easy, free	constrained
Simple	complicated, compound

Direction of Movement

Upward	downward
Rising, lifting, floating	lowering, dropping
Horizontal	vertical, diagonal
Parallel	at an angle
Forward	backward, sideways, reversed, swaying
Right	left
Toward a center, inward	away from a center, outward
Concentric	radiating
Contracting, compressing	expanding, stretching
One-directional	in more than one direction
Around, rotating	up, down, through
Expelling, repelling	absorbing, attracting

Opening	closing
Converging	diverging, shifting, veering
Bouncing	thrusting, sliding
Clockwise	counterclockwise
Advancing	receding
Revolving, rotating	pendular, rocking
Falling, plunging	rising, sliding
Vertical, horizontal	lateral, oblique
Centripetal	centrifugal

Position

Vertical	horizontal, diagonal
Perpendicular	parallel, at an angle
Left, left side	right, right side
Front, in front of	back, behind
Center	periphery, edge, circumference
Within	outside, without
Above	below, under, between, around, among
Near, close, nearby, adjacent	far, distant
Raise, protruding	receased, incised

Density

Close, crowded	spread out, sparse

Thick, solid	thin
Compact, dense	loose, diffuse, nebulous
Massed	separated
Concentrated	diluted
Cluttered	spacious
Localized	scattered
Clustered	isolated, dispersed
Bundled, grouped	separated
Compressed	expanded

Interval

Small	large
Short	long
Close	distant
Equal, equispaced	gradated
Regular	irregular, fluctuating
Progressive	random
Connected	disconnected, remotely connected
Near, adjacent	far away, far apart

APPENDIX 2—STUDENT SURVEY—PRE-LESSON

<u>Student Survey—Pre-Lesson</u>　　　　　Name_____

1. Print your name and describe yourself. What is your major, area of academic interest, and career goals?

2. Why study literature?

3. Describe your experience of ways of studying a piece of literature.

4. Explain your preferences in the study of a literary work.

5. How do these methods encourage learning? How do they expose you to the literature and connect to your greater life experience?

6. Describe your individual learning style. Do you learn more from visual or auditory presentations of information? Would you prefer stationary or kinetic (hands-on) learning?

7. How might the study of literature in class be improved? What suggestions do you have to help teachers assist you in becoming more engaged in class lessons?

8. What else should be considered about literary study and teaching methods?

APPENDIX 3—STUDENT SURVEY—PRE-LESSON RESPONSES

Responses—2008 Fall Semester   English 333   Shakespeare (CO 301)

T / R 12:35-1:50   Dr. Jim Addison

<u>Student Survey—Pre-Lesson</u> (Answers recorded verbatim without editing.)

1. Print your name and describe yourself. What is your major, area of academic interest, and career goals?

    -Catherine Berryman—English / Lit. Con.—Community College Teacher

    -Christopher Burch—Secondary Ed.—Social Studies

    -Adam Crisp—English Lit. / Creative Writing Minor—Teacher / Published Writer

    -Christopher Goodnight—Elementary Ed. / Art Con.—Kindergarten Teacher

    -Alisha Hunter—Chemistry—Research enzymes using sugars

    -Carey McKelvey—Motion Picture / English—Screenwriter / Director

    -Justin Rhodes—Communications / Work in Radio

    -Ali Rook—Elementary Ed. / P. E. & Health Ed.—2nd Gr. Teacher

2. Why study literature?

    -It is interesting, you can take a step back in time, into another world, or somebody else's shoes. Really lets you use your imagination.

    -To learn about people from the past through what they wrote.

    -I study literature because I am reading and writing anyway.

-To expand our minds and sharpen our critical thinking skills. It also says much of the author the literature does and it can also show examples of the society of that time.

-Studying literature helps us learn how people lived back then. Also it gives us a chance to see the language that was used too.

-Because I love stories.

-Expansion of vocabulary and conscious thought.

-Literature helps you understand many things in life.

3. Describe your experience of ways of studying a piece of literature.

-The best way I've studied literature (esp. Shakespeare) is to read and simplify it at the same time, also doing a close analysis. Breaking down literature is what makes it most interesting and easiest to remember.

-Read & discuss.

-I've tried reading Spark notes & then reading but it seems like that limits how you interperate an initial reading. I've just read it & tried to figure it out. When I first came to college, I tried the method of being in an altered state of mind so I could be more open to the literature, but my past grades reflect the failure of that method.

-Discussing literature and reading it at the same time. Then after reading watching a film version. By reading first, the reader gets to imagine his / her own version of scenes and characters.

-Just the watching of video and reading in or out of class.

-I usually read the piece before class then we discuss and do some kind of activity or project with it.

-Reading, performance, videos, internet articles.

-I have had discussions, debates, watched the movie while reading, done projects, papers.

4. Explain your preferences in the study of a literary work.

-Breaking down and looking at it from different points of view, group analysis helps throw in different view points.

-I like class discussions.

-For me the best way is to read it & have a conversation about it. The more you read something the more you understand it.

-Discussing gives me a chance to analyze and dig for deeper meanings within myself. Reading before the movie allows me to imagine every image without being limited to the film version.

-I prefer watching the video and reading along outside of class.

-I enjoy analytical discussions, and I like doing interpretive and creative projects involving the literature.

-Video or live productions.

-I like discussions, watching the movie, and doing group projects.

5. How do these methods encourage learning?   How do they expose you to the

    literature and connect to your greater life experience?

    -These methods help widen my view of the works and am able to have a round view

    of it.

    -I think they encourage reading the material.

    -Well, the method of reading & understanding makes (or urges) me to understand

    different points of view. That's always a good way to understand or empithize with

    different people.

    -These encourage learning by making one think and imagine for oneself. One learns

    to have a solid voice and let it be their own. They all expose one to the literature and

    connect to life experiences because discussing connects our minds I think more than

    just reading or watching a film. It makes one connect our lives & world to the

    literature by discussing.

    -For those who are visual, they can see what is happening then, go home and review

    what happened. Not sure of that one.

    -I think it connects the student because it gets them to understand the story in a deeper

    way. If you involve creatively then I find there is a better understanding with the

    concepts that the literature is attempting to convey.

    -They are performed and laid out instead of leaving the details up to my false

    perceptions.

    -They allow you to relate the literature to more then just itself. Makes you relate to

    life. Expecially w / group projects b / c you can do so many things with that.

6. Describe your individual learning style. Do you learn more from visual or auditory presentations of information? Would you prefer stationary or kinetic (hands-on) learning?

-Both or either, but visual helps when it comes to remembering for a test. I prefer stationary learning.

-Visual & auditory.

-Reading and seeing the information is best. If it's a mechanical task, like working on cars or electronics then it's best for me to hack it out myself with instructions and time.

-I like to learn from both hearing and seeing the information. I would rather have hands-on learning after hearing it and seeing it.

-I learn from visual presentations better. Also the hands-on experiences are better for me.

-I like a little bit of everything, too much of one can overload. I like getting an all-around approach to subject matter.

-Visual, hands-on.

-I am a very visual hands on person.

7. How might the study of literature in class be improved? What suggestions do you have to help teachers assist you in becoming more engaged in class lessons?

-Getting up and moving around, group discussions, going outside, any project that encourages creativity are all great ways to remember and learn about all subjects.

-I think the videos that we've watched in this class have been helpful.

-Promoting discussion is best.

-Make more relevant comparisons and situations that force students to feel engaged.

-I am not good at reading long stories anyway so understanding them is worse for me. Having a professor explain what is going on in a story without using terribly complicated words to explain it.

-Less lecture, more involvement.

-Modernizing reenactment. Relate literature to modern day.

-Allow you to be a part of the learning. Have you think of different ways of learning. Maybe also think of different life situations.

8. What else should be considered about literary study and teaching methods?

-Doing a wide variety of teaching is always interesting, showing a movie every once in a while, group work, notes from board and teacher, field trip, and critical analysis essays.

-N / A?

-I believe in making it as interesting as possible. I know that's not easy with some works & with some people.

-The consideration of background information such as lifestyle of the author, culture, society and teaching the literature as a relevant text that can be used in daily thought and practice by the lessons learned.

-Make sure everyone is participating and not have you of one person holding the discussion.

-The art that is storytelling.

-Inside jokes—w / Shakespeare and Jonathon Swift all the unknown jokes pertaining to time period haze the stories and plots.

-Make it fun!

APPENDIX 4—LITERARY SELECTION GUIDE

<u>Literary Selection Guide</u>   Name / Group—_____

Title, Author, & Genre—

Setting(s)—

Main Characters—

Summarize the plot outlining its six elements. Describe the pervading mood /

atmosphere of each section.

Themes—

Other Notable Elements—

APPENDIX 5— DANCE / MOVEMENT CLASS LESSON PLAN

Fall 2008—<u>English 333—Introduction to Shakespeare</u>

Objective: Stage a class "mini" production of *Othello*

Goal: Have all students engaged in creating and using dance and movement to

               act out this play's main elements

Steps: 1. Outline lesson

        2. Review / collect "Student Pre-lesson Survey"

        3. Present Dance Rationale

        4. Explain "What is the BrainDance—15 Dance Concepts"

               --Play CD and Warm-up with "BrainDance" Selection #3

        5. Discuss "Literary Selection" Sheet, sharing and recording responses

        6. Divide students into groups and assign parts using the play's acts

        7. Groups independently plan and choreograph selections

        8. Performance "Run-through" with teacher as director

        9. Add music to enhance mood

        10. Class performance with music

        11. Distribute "Post-lesson Student Survey"

        12. Class Interview—next class meeting

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        4. Explain "What is the BrainDance—15 Dance Concepts"

Ann Green Gilbert's "Music for the BrainDance" includes a poster that introduces the

BrainDance through an overview of its elements, development, and components:

               What is the BrainDance?

"The BrainDance is a very effective body / brain exercise based on eight developmental movement patterns babies move through for the first year of life to wire the central nervous system so that the brain can operate at its full potential. This centering exercise prepares all students for learning. The BrainDance can be used with all ages (toddlers to seniors), and in all learning situations.

Moving through these patterns at any age:

- Reorganizes the central nervous system

- Warms-up and aligns the body

- Promotes focus and concentration

- Strengthens social and emotional skills

- Develops eye-tracking

- Relieves stress"

After --Play CD and Warm-up with "BrainDance" Selection #3—"The

Eight Minute BrainDance (narration)"

APPENDIX 6—STUDENT SURVEY—POST-LESSON

<u>Student Survey—Post-Lesson</u>   Name / Date— _____

1. Did using physical movement and dance to experience literature help you to find increased connection with the literature? Explain.

2. Did you discover more facets of the selection by using your body to interpret the text? How so, or not?

3. What fresh insights / questions do you have concerning the author or literature after this lesson?

4. How does using movement and dance to study literature compare to reading the selection on your own?

5. Explain whether dance engaged you more fully than studying through dramatic reading, viewing, projects, papers, or discussion.

6. Describe the creative process. How did you and your group decide what actions best portrayed the literary work?

7. In what way did you find this method of study more and less comfortable than traditional means such as lecture and discussion?

8. What challenges did this exercise present for you?

9. Were you able to realize new potential in yourself as a scholar using dance to study literature? In what way?

10. Discuss any other insights you feel are relevant to this method of study.

APPENDIX 7—STUDENT SURVEY—POST-LESSON RESPONSES

Responses—2008 Fall Semester   English 333   Shakespeare (CO 301)

T / R 12:35-1:50   Dr. Jim Addison

<u>Student Survey—Post-Lesson</u>   (Answers recorded verbatim without editing.)

Name—

--Cathryn Berryman [No Pre-lesson Survey]

A--Christopher Burch

B--Adam Crisp

C--Chris Goodnight

D--Alisha Hunter

E--Carey McKelvey

1. Did using physical movement and dance to experience literature help you to find

    increased connection with the literature? Explain.

    -Yes it was interesting trying to get a short piece of in a short amount of time.

    -Well it made me think outside the box about Shakespeare.

    -No. It's not that it's bad, but I felt uncomfortable. I'm never really comfortable

    however w/ attention or being a focal point. I wasn't able to get past that.

-The acting out part did because I got to idealize the character within and try to act it out.

-Yes, because visual interpretation helps me to see what is happening and get into the act as well.

-Yes, because it made me think interprtively

2. Did you discover more facets of the selection by using your body to interpret the text? How so, or not?

-Having watched the video & the play I felt like I had really known the play before, would have helped for a play less studied.

-Yes, I think so it made me look at it different

-No, same as above

-Yes because I was able to put myself more into the play literally.

-Yes I did. I do not remember very much when I read and when I watch something that is hard to understand, well enough said there. Doing and watching can explain a lot more then words can.

-Not really, but I don't think it is how I learn.

3. What fresh insights / questions do you have concerning the author or literature after this lesson?

-I would just want to know exactly what Shakespeare had in mind for how the play would be acted out.

-You can get a differenent feel for the literature

-I was wondering how he would have done it

-How does one think and make up all those characters which seem so different and real?

-Other than the hard language, nothing.

-XX

4. How does using movement and dance to study literature compare to reading the selection on your own?

-Helps to have a visualization and is easy to remember when up & moving & under pressure.;)

-It challenges the interpretation of of the text

-I can get more out of it on my own.

-It gets one engaged in a different way. It is still analytical but with a different section of your brain.

-Doing the dance & movement helps see & interpret things that the text does not. I can sometimes have a movie going on inside my head as I read but when I do not understand what I read then the movie screen is blank.

-I think more about the interpretation

5. Explain whether dance engaged you more fully than studying through dramatic reading, viewing, projects, papers, or discussion.

-It helped more than talking about it, visuals are always better!

-No, I don't think it really engaged me fully—it was just different

-It took my mind off of the literature more than anything.

-It did not work better but just in a different way. It should be integrated along with reading and papers.

-Dance works better because it is more hands on. It is full body. You are using most of your senses.

-It did because it made me think more deeply into the work

6. Describe the creative process. How did you and your group decide what actions best portrayed the literary work?

-The biggest part of the scene was the biggest concern.

-We discussed it & acted it out.

- We made it up as we went along, other than the initial first part of figuring out the scene.

-We limited them to the most important actions. The ones that created the most change / commotion.

-Our process was simple. We decided first who was in the scene. Then we decided who was able to play what. After that, we decided on the three things that our dance concisted of.

-It was a good creative collaboration.

7. In what way did you find this method of study more and less comfortable than traditional means such as lecture and discussion?

-It was a lot of pressure to be video taped and under limited time.

-it was uncomfortable—it forced me out of my comfort zone

-More—the class was a lot more loose (in a good way) / Less—same as #1

-I felt it to be about the same comfort level as discussion b/c both ways you are up front with your interpretations and thoughts for all to see.

-More comfortable for me because I am ok of being silly in front of others. I teach children that are five years old. Being silly is the only way to keep their attention. Also we sing and do the dancing to them.

-It was better because it was more involved

8. What challenges did this exercise present for you?

-Thinking about scene & trying to get it for all to understand with short amount of time to present & no talking.

-DANCING!

-Trying to work through a horrible fear of being in front of people.

-Being comfortable to properly portray a character.

-The only challenge was the timing to the music. That was only because we didn't get to hear it first. Otherwise everything was great.

-limited by time and people.

9. Were you able to realize new potential in yourself as a scholar using dance to study literature? In what way?

-Probably not, but if I do teach any Shakespeare I would like to do something similar.

-Well, it made me think about it differently.

-Not with an initial lesson.

-I think there is potential but it is not something I would do on my own. Potential b/c it engages the mind in a new / different way.

-Yes. Doing this can help me learn the plays better

-Not sure.

10. Discuss any other insights you feel are relevant to this method of study.

-Overall I thought it was a memorable experience and fun too! Having a limited amount of time is pressure abut also I thin is helpful. Not having tons of time to ask questions is good in a way. It simplifies what needs to be done and gets everyone focused quickly.

-It helps one the think differently about the play & how to interpret it.

-I don't doubt that someone can get a lot from this method, but more likely with a concentration on it throughout the semester.

-It forces one to not just talk about the scene and character but be the scene and character. This approach allows student to fully analyze and take in literature.

-No insights, sorry. Except more time and being able to listen to the music first so the dance can go with it a little better.

APPENDIX 8—LIMITATIONS

The study may have involved some limitations that could possibly affect the accuracy of the outcomes and conclusion:

- Students may try to please me in their survey responses.

- The experiment tests engagement only, not learning or understanding.

- This study was conducted over the course of a limited time period with a limited number of participants providing only a "snapshot" of student behavior.

- When teaching lessons, I create as an artist—based upon years of training, performance, and choreography experience with teaching, literature, dance, and drama.

- Interviewing students in a group may result in less-truthful responses caused by self-consciousness, peer pressure, etc.

- A social stigma against dance exists making it "not cool" to fully engage.

- Students and teachers may be self-conscious and shy in the physical realm.

- The time element of the lesson is difficult to judge when planning and conducting the session—some groups need more time than others. This variable may be related to plot development, for example, one act may have more details to process / evaluate for cause and effect, etc.

- Students may pave physical limitations, i.e. disabilities or injuries.

- Classroom size is too small or cluttered to accommodate the number of students / type of activity.

- Group activities may become noisy and disturbing to other classes in the vicinity.

- Technical difficulties may occur, such as a-v equipment malfunctions with accompanying music selections.

- Students did not prepare in advance and therefore lack basic familiarity and understanding of the plot to develop with movement—did not read assignment or slept during class viewing of literature in production.

- Personality conflicts may cause friction in group efforts.

- Some inhibition may result from gender interactions.