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SHAKESPEARE IN HIGH SCHOOL DRAMA: A MODEL FOR ACTIVE LEARNING

by

Liisa Marie Rose

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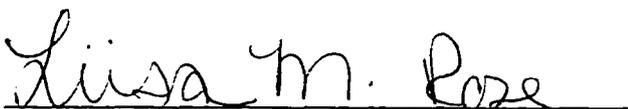
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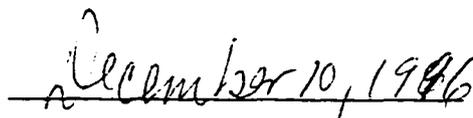


APPROVAL BY THESIS DIRECTOR

This thesis has been approved on the date shown below:



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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my grandmother Helen A. Johnson who is the first in a line of teachers in our family and to my daughter Alyssa Maija Rose, possibly the next in that line. I also dedicate it to my friend, editor and soul-mate, Mark Edward Rose.

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ABSTRACT

There is a need in the United States for a philosophical change in education. Students schooled in the traditional manner of direct instruction are not graduating high school with adequate preparation to enter college or the work force. To change this trend, teachers must consider using methods other than direct instruction. This thesis presents one possible method: active learning.

For information to be most useful to students, it must be made relevant. Active learning places emphasis on meaning making and the entire process of learning which encourages students to find connections with the material. In active learning, students become learners as well as learned in a subject, a step beyond direct instruction.

Presented is a model for all of curriculum, a refinement of active learning for high school Shakespeare including example lessons.

I

An Alternative Way to Learn

A young child notices heat emanating from the kitchen stove. She decides to help and find out which burner was left on and turn it off. Unfortunately, she does not understand the system of buttons that would tell her which burner was on. She decides to touch the four electric units to discover the heat source. The first three are cold but she still does not make the connection that the last must be the one that is on. She touches it and is of course burned. Active learning? In its essence, yes. She experienced a bad burn, quickly learning that touching the stove is not the best way to determine the heat's origin. She also got an immediate lesson from mom explaining the buttons. Most importantly she reflected on her experience and discovered how she learned the new information. She applied the lesson to her life, taking from it what she needed; do not touch burners to find the hot one. She experienced something--touching the hot burner--analyzed it and what it meant to her, "I don't like to get burned," and created a theory: "I better not touch the stove to find out which burner has been left on." In its most primitive form, this is active learning.

This learning system that I unknowingly used over twenty years ago is basic to children. A parent will tell a child to be careful of the hot stove, but experiencing "hot" makes a much stronger impression than mom's words. This is not to imply that children should be burned to understand "hot," only that experience leaves a lasting impression. This system of Experience, Analysis, Theory (EAT), or active learning that comes

naturally to children, is often the opposite of the traditional manner in which students are taught.

Information in most classrooms is conveyed through direct instruction, a teacher-oriented, lecture format. According to Donald Cruickshank in The Act of Teaching, direct instruction “Occurs when teachers control instruction by presenting information, giving directions to the class, and using criticism; associated with teacher-centered, teacher-controlled classrooms; an instructional procedure for teaching content in the most efficient, straightforward way” (469). Despite being the most efficient and straightforward way to convey a body of knowledge to students, direct instruction is not necessarily the best, nor should it be the *only* way to teach.

Another term for direct instruction is TAE: Theory, Analysis, Experience. Despite evidence that “students receiving ‘direct instruction’ tended to do better on achievement tests. . .” (Cruickshank 235), some challenge the use of TAE in predominantly objective classes such as math or physics. Even more question its place in courses that are more subjective, such as Social Studies, Drama or English. Direct instruction’s primacy is in question because students tend to do “. . . worse on tests of higher-order, abstract thinking involving creativity and problem solving” (Cruickshank 235). In addition, TAE is being examined throughout all of curriculum, based on recent research about how children learn best, through experience. There are many methods of teaching, and new information is opening doors to a myriad of learning and teaching styles. Active learning is an effective one of those styles that can augment direct instruction.

There are innumerable ways in which an individual acquires new information. The way a teacher approaches new material, whether EAT or TEA, influences how well a student masters it. The same material may be covered by two equally qualified teachers in the same amount of time and students from one class know the material only well enough to pass an exam, while the other class masters the information for life. When the latter is true, the student has made a connection with the material and found it relevant to his or her life. I believe that the best way for a teacher to achieve this with his or her students is to maintain a classroom based on active learning.

Active Shakespeare

I believe that teaching active learning is valid in any subject, but is especially effective when used in theatre classes. Specifically, actively teaching Shakespeare in high school theatre classes will greatly enhance students' understanding of the subject. Traditionally, Shakespeare is taught in high school English classes predominantly through direct instruction, rather than in theatre classes, and is frequently the only exposure that high school students have to drama. Generally, the approach is to read and discuss plays. Active learning will help students find meaning and contemporary connections with Shakespeare that this traditional approach does not allow.

Maintaining an inflexible teaching style based solely on direct instruction makes Shakespeare's works not only uninteresting but irrelevant. The inevitable outcome is students failing to see the meaning being communicated or how it is important to them.

As a high school subject, Shakespeare is maintained because society has deemed his works important examples of classical literature. Unfortunately, there has been relatively little change in teaching format since this judgment was made years ago. Additionally, as modern language moved away from the archaic, the meaning in the words became elusive to modern students. By using active learning techniques, teachers help students get beyond the difficult language to discover those meanings. Active learning directly engages students with the plays and allows them to see the messages there, as well as to formulate their own theories and to learn about themselves as learners. This active process makes Shakespeare's works more interesting and relevant than does direct instruction.

As both a student and teacher of Shakespeare, I believe great benefit comes from treating the subject in a manner that makes it relevant to students. In my experience, Shakespeare was dealt with in the traditional direct instruction form. I found no connection with the literature. In my freshman English class we read Romeo and Juliet. The process was simple and classically distant: we read an assigned number of pages at home and discussed them in class. On occasion the class read sections aloud as assigned by the teacher. I was once required to read the part of Juliet and was terrified by having to read this "foreign language" in front of my whole class. I was concerned mainly about pronunciation and rhyming words. As a result, I missed the entire meaning of what I read. In addition to the assigned homework and class reading, we were shown the film directed by Franco Zeffirelli. The movie helped us to understand the story but still did

little to make it relevant to our lives. All I cared about was knowing enough to pass the exam that was coming. It was a repeat performance my sophomore year with Twelfth Night. In the end, I felt I was the only one who did not “get” Shakespeare and that there must be something wrong with me. I am sure many of my classmates felt the same way but were also afraid to speak out.

As a student teacher in drama, I gave my students a new perspective on Shakespeare through active learning. I made his work more meaningful and relevant by giving them opportunities to experience his plays through performance techniques. By the time we completed the unit, students were no longer intimidated by Shakespeare. Whether they understood *every* meaning in Shakespeare’s words or not, they had found meaning for themselves through the exercises and rehearsals based on active learning. In this thesis I will further explore this active learning approach to teaching Shakespeare in high school.

Statement of Purpose

There is a need in the United States for a philosophical change in education. Many students schooled in the traditional manner of direct instruction simply are not graduating high school with adequate preparation for either a job or college. According to Cruickshank, there are many reasons for this ill preparation. The population has become more diverse, which in turn creates a population in the schools with a wide variety of cultural backgrounds. The make-up of the American family is changing with more

students coming from dysfunctional families. Studies show that students who have the greatest trouble learning come from families with problems ranging from abuse, to poverty, to a simple lack of support (21). Many children are growing up in poverty. Children often have little supervision if parents work. Frightening numbers of children are abused on a regular basis, “almost 2 million children are either abused or neglected *each year*.” (25) Finally, children today simply have more issues to deal with than children of earlier generations: “Today’s youth are more caught up in family discord, social problems, violence, and crime, and they are distracted earlier by their sexuality” (28). Due to these reasons, it has become necessary for teachers to explore instructional methods that will reach more students on a personal level. The largely impersonal method of direct instruction needs to be supplemented, and in some cases abandoned for teaching methods that focus on students’ meaning-making. By meaning-making I refer to active learning methods that allow and encourage students to discover how information is meaningful to them beyond just learning facts as direct instruction encourages. Active learning will help students to find the relevancy of information in lives that are often fragmented.

Studies show that students are not getting what they need from current teaching methods and are not prepared for demands the world will place on them. The following presents a startling view of what children are *not* learning. These statistics apply to twelfth grade students in the United States:

Reading & Writing. Two in 3 students can't meet suggested standards. Forty-five percent cannot craft a well-developed essay on a object and what it would reveal about current times if placed in a time capsule. Just 12 percent can write well on a subject like: Why students should be required to do community service.

Geography. Seventy-three percent can't meet suggested standards. Three of 10 cannot answer a question like: What do Rome, Jerusalem, Mecca and Benares have in common?

Mathematics. Eighty-four percent can't meet suggested standards. Over a third can't answer a question like: if x can be replaced by any number, how many values can the expression $x + 6$ have?

History. Eighty-nine percent can't meet suggested standards, and 57 percent can't answer basic questions like: Many American colonies believed the Stamp Act (1765) was a form of: (multiple choices are given). (Schrof 59)

From the above statistics it is clear that the traditional system is not working. Active learning will make some needed changes. A problem arises, however, when teachers who have little or no theatre training attempt to use drama as an active learning tool. Teachers need to create opportunities for meaning-making for their students while maintaining the drama's integrity and curriculum base. If they seek training, active learning through drama is possible. My purpose in this thesis is to illustrate how teachers

can attain their goals with drama in education and to suggest that active learning is one of the needed changes in America's educational system. I reach that aim by presenting a refinement of active learning techniques to be used in teaching high school Shakespeare: a dramatist who is frequently not approached in an active learning manner.

Contents

The problem addressed is how to make information, specifically Shakespeare, relevant to today's students. It is discovered how teachers can make a writer from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries relevant and interesting to today's students. Also explored is how students benefit not only from the content, but from the process of learning itself.

Chapter Two thoroughly explores philosophy of active learning. The term is defined and placed in relation to other important educational ideas, such as process education, adult education and facilitative teaching. It gives examples of active learning as used in both math and drama classes, proving that the method is useful with any number of subjects. My own experiences with student teaching are also examined.

Chapter Three is an overview of modern theatre education. Several leaders and their teaching methods are covered, thereby illustrating the evolution of teaching techniques to embrace curriculum-based active learning. Included are Peter Slade, Brian Way, Dorothy Heathcote, and Cecily O'Neill and their work in process-oriented theatre education. From the trend towards curriculum-based active learning, it is

clear that an active approach to education is the future of high school drama.

Chapter Four moves on to explore various approaches to teaching Shakespeare in high school. A history of the methods is conducted and the advantages and disadvantages are weighed. Finally, there is a look at the next step in teaching Shakespeare in high school: active learning.

Chapter Five concludes that active learning is a valid way to approach any number of subjects in high school. Specifically, Shakespeare is made more relevant to students while they learn about themselves as learners. Also discussed is how “user friendly” this system is. Resources and strategies for teachers wishing to implement active learning in their classrooms are examined.

An appendix is a series of process-based lessons and activities appropriate to various stages of a unit on Shakespeare. The activities are valid for a variety of classroom situations, ranging from beginning drama to advanced English courses. The exercises are based on active learning and focus on making Shakespeare relevant to students and helping them become life-long learners.

Making it Relevant

Students too often learn facts as isolated bits of information that tend not to relate to themselves or the “real” world. Information in many classes is presented because someone long ago decided it was important. Often knowledge passed from generation to generation through high school is not updated in either content or format. I learned high

school algebra, English, history and literature in essentially the same fashion that my mother, grandmother and probably great-grandmother did, through direct instruction. However, solely using this “fill the empty jug” approach is not best today. Educators must focus on teaching students how to learn rather than teaching them as many facts as possible. The world is becoming a smaller and more personal place. Children in the United States can literally communicate with children in Japan, or college professors in Germany, or for that matter, anyone who uses a computer with a modem. If it is to be as effective as possible, information needs to be more personal as well. This is one major problem facing today’s educators. How do we make information that society deems important relevant to today’s student?

Students master new material thoroughly if allowed to experience, rather than simply be exposed to it. The active, experience-based approach goes beyond traditional teacher presentation and student absorption allowing students to learn the *process* by which they learned. In addition to getting the teacher’s “reading” of information, students assess their learning process through gaining their own interpretation of information. Therefore, by using active learning, students learn not only the material, but how they learn and what the information means to them, much like my experience with the hot stove.

II

Active Learning: What and Why

Before discussing how to implement active learning, it is necessary to define it as concisely as possible, and discuss related concepts. A difficult idea to reduce to a definition, active learning includes many different aspects of teaching, learning and experiencing. Active learning is a concept referred to by many names and encompassing many theories. I see it as an umbrella covering and including the following concepts: experiential education, process education, collaborative learning, discovery learning and more. Although the terms are not one hundred percent interchangeable, the following description of process education explains much of my educational philosophy:

Process education can best be described as distinct from content-transmission education. Transcendent to content transmission, it includes the idea of learning-how-to learn, not merely learning a given body of information, discipline or set of skills. Process education is not a replacement for content-transmission education any more than holistic medicine is a replacement for therapeutic medicine. It should rather provide a larger framework, a more inclusive set of concepts at a higher level as we move further into the complexities of the communication era.

Process education is more related to the “how” than to the “what,” more to the question than to the answer, more to the trip than to the

destination. It includes such processes as learning to think, to value, to relate and to feel. (Johnson 36-37)

Johnson further defines the concept of process education in the following manner:

Process education is based on experiential learning. It emphasizes helping students to learn-how-to-learn from their experiences, using their own experiences as the basis for educational growth. By evaluating one's own experiences, the student becomes a learner, not merely learned. The learner is his/her own theoretician- thus a part of the flowing, self expanding, experiential cycle of learning. (37)

Johnson's theory of process education deals primarily with adult education, another concept important to explore prior to discussing implementation of active learning in high school. Many of the most innovative and exciting active learning techniques are utilized solely in community colleges and universities. Bringing those teaching styles into high school classrooms and giving students more responsibility for their learning will generate educational dividends for students and teachers.

Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson's theory of self-fulfilling prophecy is powerful. They claim that if teachers expect a student to do poorly, s/he generally will realize that expectation (Arends 149). The reverse is also true: if a student is expected to do well, s/he will. Therefore, if teachers approach high school students as having the capability to be a part of their own learning process, they will, I believe, meet the challenge more often than not.

Adult educator Malcolm S. Knowles feels the same way. In his book The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy Versus Pedagogy, he says the following about traditional high school teaching techniques: “One of the tragic aspects of traditional pedagogy is that it has so often imposed principles on inquiring minds and has therefore denied them the opportunity to mature in the ability to discover principles” (28). I find active learning techniques are often based on adult education ideals rather than on the traditional pedagogy Knowles refers to here. Applying adult education techniques to high school students will allow them to become partners with teachers in education.

In addition to his views on pedagogy, Knowles describes the multi-faceted role of adult educators. Reading his concept of adult educators, I wonder if the same could be true for high school teachers. The following is Knowles’s list of six requirements of an adult educator.

- 1.) helping the learners diagnose their needs for particular learnings within the scope of the given situation (the diagnostic function);
- 2.) planning with the learners a sequence of experiences that will produce the desired learnings (the planning function);
- 3.) Creating conditions that will cause the learners to want to learn (the motivational function);
- 4.) selecting the most effective methods and techniques for producing the desired learnings (the methodological function);
- 5.) providing the human and material resources necessary to produce the desired learnings (the resource

function); 6.) helping the learners to measure the outcomes of the learning experiences (the evaluative function). (22)

The only of these six functions needing modification for high school students is the first. There is given material that high school students must master. The diagnostic function needs to be a process of leading students to realize why the material is important and make it something they truly want to learn.

Closely associated to Knowles's concept of the adult educator and to aspects of active learning is the idea of facilitative teaching. It is, as Johnson says, an "important but little understood concept" (37). Used in conjunction with active learning, facilitative teaching encourages students to be part of the learning process moving the teacher into the role of facilitator rather than lecturer (and sole knowledge source). To clarify this philosophy I again turn to Dr. Johnson:

The facilitative teacher assumes a role more supportive of the process of learning, the ability to help the learner ask the appropriate questions, and to orchestrate resources for the learner's use. The learner's experiences are validated. The student becomes more of an active seeker, not an empty jug to be filled. The teacher becomes a co-learner and facilitator; one who makes the learning easier, not merely an expert who fills jugs (MPAEA 37).

A final concept requiring definition here is cooperative learning. Cooperative learning, a function of active learning, is defined by Donald R. Cruickshank in The Act of

Teaching in the following manner: “Instructional procedures whereby learners work together in small groups and usually are rewarded for their collective accomplishments” (469). Cooperative learning is frequently used in active learning as a tool to further establish group cohesion and accountability.

I find it necessary at this point to elaborate on one of Johnson’s points. Like he says of holistic medicine being used to supplement, rather than replace, therapeutic medicine, I do not suggest that active learning *replace* direct instruction. Direct instruction is useful in imparting knowledge to a group of students and is necessary to maintain when facts and statistics need to be presented. However, I do suggest that direct instruction needs to be augmented with other teaching methods, specifically active learning, in order for students to connect with the material.

Having explored the concepts of active learning, adult education, facilitative teaching and cooperative learning, it is now possible to discuss applying active learning to high school.

Active Learning at Work

The previous descriptions reduce rather complex concepts, making them seem simple. However, a problem occurs when one attempts to put active learning into practice. Often, teachers think they are using active learning techniques when they create participation activities. However, activities alone do not constitute active learning. The activity must be tied to the entire process of EAT in order for students to benefit fully.

Participation activities are a step in the right direction but need the context of an entire lesson involving students in the learning and evaluating process if they are to generate their own theories.

The following examples of active learning strategies illustrate the idea of tying activities into an experiential lesson. They are clear instances of active learning because they are not simply activities; they ask students to evaluate their work and to assess themselves as learners. The diversity of these lessons also suggests that any content area can benefit from active learning.

Math is a fairly straightforward subject most often taught in the traditional manner of direct instruction or TAE. Students are taught a *theory* which they *analyze* as a class. Finally, they *experience* the theory by working a problem based on it. It is possible, however, to teach the same theory and content by using an EAT model generating a more meaningful experience for students.

The following example is based on a video I viewed in a student teaching seminar. Two high school math classes at the same level approaching the same material, graphing shapes on a plane, were compared. The traditional teacher presented information in a straightforward manner. Students were lectured in order to receive new information. The teacher explained graphing as students sat at their desks and took notes. Next, the class did several board problems with the teacher asking various students to come up and work the problems. Finally, they were assigned homework covering the subject.

In the other class, cooperative learning was used. Students were paired with desks pulled together front to front. Between them was a wooden board with nails hammered in a grid and a handful of rubber bands. The problem given by the teacher was to figure how to create the desired shape by plotting points on the grid. Students had to work together and actually use the grid to graph their shape with the rubber bands. The teacher circulated through the room while students worked the problems and was available to help if needed. When the exercise was complete, students compared boards with others in class. Some answers varied and they were helped by teacher and peers to discover the corrections needed. They all experienced graphing shapes on a plane and all had a concrete idea of what a graph was. The class then discussed the exercise and their understanding of graphs. They discussed how the exercise worked and what it meant to them. Whether they knew it or not, students used the EAT method of learning. Finally, they were assigned homework covering the material.

The second class covered essentially the same material as the first but in a manner allowing students to experience the process themselves. They experienced a graph rather than being told about one. In addition, this was not simply an activity; it was a process that included student evaluation and reflection. Because students did hands-on work as well as form their own theories through evaluation, the second class had the more meaningful experience. Again, as Johnson says in defining process education, "By evaluating one's own experiences, the student becomes a learner, not merely learned. The learner is his/her own theoretician- thus a part of the flowing, self expanding,

experiential cycle of learning” (37). Students in the second class, through direct participation understood what a graph was which is far superior the outcome of the first class, students who are simply able to plot points on a graph.

The following is an active learning example in drama. Considered here is the preparation and performance of a monologue. There are many facets of preparation and, done actively, a monologue is a very complex undertaking. Approaching a monologue with active learning, the first step should be a brainstorming session about students’ concepts of what a monologue is and why it is useful to have the skill to deliver one. Some leading questions are, “What do you think of when you hear the word Monologue?” “What is the purpose of a monologue?” “Is it important as an actor to know how to effectively deliver a monologue?” “How about as a person entering the workplace?” “What are examples of well and poorly delivered monologues in real life?” Answers would be recorded for comparison to duplicate questions after completion of the unit.

Next, the class would perform a monologue selected by the teacher. All would work on the same monologues-- one for boys and one for girls. The monologue should be one available on video tape. For example, with Shakespeare as the subject, there are numerous versions of Hamlet available on video and plenty of monologues for both genders. Students initially perform the monologues based only on their present skills. Two to three days of in-class preparation are spent in preparation with the teacher available for answering questions but not giving implicit directions. Monologues are then

presented in class with no teacher critique. The process concludes by showing versions on video of the monologues. It is important not to suggest that the video is the “correct” version, only that it is one interpretation.

After viewing the video, a class discussion is held. It should focus on what the differences were between student performance and professional performance. Again, the point must be made that the video is not “right” because it is professional, rather that the interpretation was different than the students’. Questions for this discussion might be, “What are some of the steps the actor had to take develop this performance interpretation?” “What kind of character analysis might an actor need to do to get to know the character so well that he/she is able to know how to interpret the monologue?” “What process of script analysis might be necessary to get to that point?” “Did the actor really understand the monologue?” “Was his or her understanding different than yours? What did he/she clearly establish that you did not? Were either of you wrong?” The important point is that interpretation is individual and to interpret a monologue, an actor must know the script and character inside and out. As Miriam Gilbert says in her article “Teaching Shakespeare Through Performance,” “Our aim becomes not the teaching of *an* interpretation, but the explanation of how interpretations can be found, and how the text often supports more than one reading” (607-8).

Next, students do a script and character analysis based on the previous discussion of the video versus their own performance. After the analysis process, students prepare the same monologue while incorporating the analysis they have done. Monologues are

performed and this time, they are critiqued. The critique process is not based on performance “quality.” Rather, it focuses on the process of getting to the product which is a well thought out and analyzed character monologue. The critique could even be a question and answer session with the performing student remaining in role (a process where the student acts as his or her character, ad-libbing responses as though s/he was actually that character) to answer teacher and peer questions determining how interpretation was derived.

A final step is a written self-analysis. In this analysis the student reflects on his or her learning. What did the student learn about himself or herself as an actor? What was discovered about the process of analysis? What steps were most useful in discovering the character in the monologue? What changes will the student make next time? What purpose was found in the process of preparing a monologue as an actor and as a person? These questions ask students to reflect about themselves as learners and to bring the process to a close.

This monologue approach emphasizes active learning because it focuses on students learning not only the material, but also on how to discover an interpretation that works for individual actors. It asks students to experience a monologue, to analyze the process needed to interpret a character, and to come up with a theory about creating a believable character in order to make the monologue meaningful. This active EAT approach helps the student become not only learned, but also a learner.

An experience that illustrated the power of active learning to me, was in one of my most challenging and useful courses at the University of Arizona. It was my first course ever in theatre education, and within the first few weeks of class I was required to create and teach a drama lesson for my fellow students. Never having done this, I was apprehensive to say the least. I was given examples of previous students' work and left to myself. I wound up creating a lesson based primarily on a subject that I felt comfortable with, Indian theatre. Though terrified, I taught my lesson and I learned much more than if had I been asked simply to turn in a paper outlining a lesson; I was forced to experience teaching rather than to theorize about it. It was not an entirely successful first attempt at teaching, but my second attempt was far more informed due to that initial experience. In one assignment I learned to plan an effective lesson, to teach, and to evaluate my work. After delivery, the class discussed my lesson and critiqued me along with the instructor.

At the semester's end and after many similar projects, we evaluated our growth as learners and teachers through written and oral self-analysis. This made me reflect on my strengths and weaknesses, my learning process, and on what information was most relevant for my style of teaching. This class's experiential approach required self-evaluation, made my learning personally meaningful and relevant, and helped me become a learner beyond just learning the subject. Now, whether required to or not, I use the same process of self-evaluation for class work and projects.

The Trend of the Future

In addition to being a *personally* effective way to learn, active learning is the trend of teaching in the future. This conclusion is drawn in the 19 February, 1996 issue of Newsweek in an article by Sharon Begley. The article, based on in-depth studies about the process of children's brain development, laments the fact that more teachers and administrators do not apply the science of brain study to education. If they did (and *some* do), the make-up of classrooms would be much different.

The article asserts that there are "windows of opportunity" for such skill development as language acquisition and mathematical ability. If missed, these windows do not open again, making learning the skill more difficult. In addition, these skills are best learned when taught through *direct experience*. According to University of Oregon education professor Robert Sylwester, "Knowledge is retained longer if children connect not only aurally but emotionally and physically to the material" (qtd. in Begley 59). The Newsweek article continues, "Good teachers know that lecturing on the American Revolution is far less effective than acting out a battle. Angles and dimensions are better understood if children chuck their worksheets and build a complex model to scale" (qtd. in Begley 59). Sylwester describes active learning here.

In addition to the growing study of brain development, there is a nationwide trend in elementary and secondary schools towards "whole language instruction." In The Unauthorized Teacher's Survival Guide by Jack Warner and Clyde Bryan with Diane Warner, whole language is described this way:

Whole language is a philosophy, a set of beliefs; not a single approach to teaching. Whole language is characterized by children learning naturally, with the learning progressing from whole to part. This literature-rich environment places an emphasis on use and meaning of the language. Skills are not taught in an isolated, sequential way, but in the context of what's going on in the classroom. (Warner and Bryan with Warner 29)

To further clarify, whole language touts the following characteristics in the Fall 1995 Curriculum Update: a focus on meaning, not just the component parts of language; and teaching skills in context, not just in isolation. In addition, whole language exposes children to plenty of good literature; gets children writing early and often; accepts “invented spelling;” and allows pupils to make choices. This trend again points to a future for the theory active learning in education. The movement has recently come under fire for not producing students who earn desired standardized tests results, but it remains popular with progressive, future-looking teachers.

Also indicating an educational future of active learning is the fact that students themselves are changing which requires change in teaching methods. In The Act of Teaching, Cruickshank refers to a 1986 study conducted by H. Zimiles in which “Teachers and principles who had been working with K-12 children twenty years or more were interviewed and asked to compare today's youth with yesterday's” (28). The study revealed the following:

Children know more today because of increased mobility, travel, publications, toys and games. Unfortunately however, that knowledge is often fragmentary, random and not organized or integrated. Relatedly, youth are reported to be less ready to acquire new knowledge introduced by adults and teachers and are less responsive to typical school instruction. . . Accordingly, children today are less willing to face the tedium of academic activities that require concentration, attention to detail, repetition, memorization, and computation auditorily. (28)

These changes in the make-up today's youth require that traditional direct instruction be augmented with other teaching methods. Active learning is one method that takes the above changes into account, pointing once again to a future of active learning in education.

Shakespeare v. Spiderman

As history proves, any new concept is met with both enthusiasm as well as skepticism. From industry to politics to education, innovations that are a step away from tradition are often frowned upon by conservative, change-averse individuals or groups. Such is the case with active learning. There are those who ardently support active learning and are attempting to utilize it in their classrooms; those who are ambivalent about the idea and could take it or leave it; and those who are adamantly opposed to it.

In the 1 April, 1996 issue of U.S. News and World Report, author John Leo speaks for those who believe in traditional instruction in his article “Shakespeare v. Spiderman” (61). Leo chronicles an institution called Barclay School in Baltimore. The school is a successful one with a student body comprised primarily of underprivileged children who routinely, according to Leo, surpass standards set by their grade level. Leo believes in the school’s approach to instruction. He says:

Barclay ignores whole-language theory. It believes in ‘direct instruction’ (a dismissive educational term for actual teaching). It doesn’t build self-esteem by excusing or praising failure. It ignores ‘learning strategies’ and multicultural claptrap. All it does is churn out bright, achieving kids.

(61)

I feel that Leo and many other educators misunderstand active learning.

In this article Leo implies that experience-based education places equal emphasis on all forms of written material (he includes graffiti in this list) with no inherent meaning other than in the students’ minds. He also suggests that in active education “books have no inherent meaning and nobody can say that Shakespeare is more worthy of study than a baseball card or a cola jingle” (61). This, of course, is not what active learning is all about. However, if a baseball card or a cola jingle is what students can identify with, why not start by putting Shakespeare in that format so it is familiar and approachable for students?

It appears to me that Leo may be unfamiliar with some of the aspects of active learning. He raises valid issues that anyone not intimate with active learning might raise. However, upon closer study of the style, I believe that his concerns would be addressed and possibly even abated.

Conclusions

Whether the topic is drama, math, literature or physics, approaching material in a manner that allows the basis of learning to be structured around experience is effective teaching. Active learning crosses content barriers and provides a valuable learning environment, one in which students apply experience to material to find personal meaning. Active learning can be used in virtually any subject matter and is particularly effective in a subject that is difficult and intangible for students, such as Shakespeare.

In a Shakespeare Quarterly article, Ellen J. O'Brien, says the following about hands-on, experienced based techniques in the classroom.

. . . the most efficient means of dispensing information is not necessarily the most effective means of teaching. Students who see themselves as passive receivers of packaged wisdom are likely to learn less than those who find themselves actively engaged in a process of discovery. This is true not only because they are more apt to remember what they have struggled to learn than what they have been told, but to put it even more positively, if they are simply to absorb what I say, they can never learn

more than I know; but if they are asked to search for themselves, they may find something I have overlooked. (622)

A difficult concept to define, active learning can be found in many forms in many classrooms. The previous examples are ways in which it has been or could be used. As an educator, it is my goal not simply to impart my theatrical knowledge to students, but to help them learn how to learn and gain the ability to find information they need to grow. If my students realize they have the ability to become knowledgeable individuals (rather than having to relying solely on the “all-powerful” teacher), then I have been successful. I believe an effective way to do this is to teach through active learning--specifically, to use drama as an active learning tool.

III

Active Learning: The Leading Edge in Drama

The first teachers to see theatre as an educational tool, and leave a legacy for others to follow are for the most part twentieth century Britons. Certainly there were teachers who used drama prior to the twentieth century and out of the confines of England but most turned to today as leaders in drama education have their roots in England. Beginning with Peter Slade's reaction to Speech and Drama experts promoting affectation in the 1940s and 50s, and continuing most recently to Cecily O'Neill and process drama, there has been a shift in ideology. Drama in education has grown from "child centered" classroom activities to successfully interfacing drama with a broad curriculum base. This evolution in drama proves active learning is not just a theory; it works and is where all of education is headed.

In the 1930s and 1940s English classroom theatre activities were labeled "speech and drama." In speech and drama child-centered activities promoted the ability to communicate. This approach materialized from a dual need: Culture in children's schooling, and bettering children's communication skills. Teachers knew that better learning comes of *doing*, but it was still a new model and had its flaws. The individual child's needs and bettering his or her communication skills was the core philosophy. Not a flaw in itself, this philosophy necessitated less group focus, which in turn created problems. According to Gavin Bolton in Drama as Education, "In other words, there

was a subtle switch from ‘drama is about a play’ to ‘drama is about *me* in a play’- and much showing-off we got as a result” (25).

Also, acting styles were stilted and affected. Teachers imposed styles of speech on students as good communication and acting skills. “And motivated pupils, forever good mimics, adopted what was required and enjoyed adult approval” (Bolton 25). Peter Slade took exception to this teaching style.

Peter Slade: Dramatic Play and the Personal Circle

In 1954, Slade who became the “City of Birmingham local education adviser” (Bolton 23-4), wrote Child Drama, promoting his drama education theories. Slade’s proposal was not entirely embraced. He felt that child drama was not necessarily about performance and both teachers and students found it difficult to consider drama that was not geared for performance. In reconsidering acting style Slade believed the attempt to create “a resemblance of the detail of everyday actions” (Bolton 26) should be abandoned for a less naturalistic (attempting to exactly replicate life on the stage) but more *natural* approach. He felt an appropriate model was one that had as few conventions as possible and focused on students and what they were comfortable doing on stage.

Slade’s opinion that children’s theatre should be less about performance spawned a term for what he felt was more appropriate for children: dramatic play. Slade’s dramatic play was the ultimate expression of a child’s soul where children act out scenarios in order to please themselves rather than an audience (Bolton 28). Giving

children this opportunity is what Slade believed the function of drama in education ought to be. What became known as the Sladian method was his way to get dramatic play going. The teacher, who Slade saw as a guide rather than a traditional teacher, solicited three students' ideas to create a story around. The teacher narrated the story while students acted it out. The final step was dramatic play; students elaborated on the created story without teacher intervention. Slade saw the purpose of such "play" as an intention *to be* something or somewhere else. In performance the purpose is *to communicate* something or somewhere else (Bolton 32). He saw the former as more natural.

In addition to children's dramatic play, Slade saw the symbols children use in their play as important, with the most important of those symbols being the circle or ring. Following Jungian thinking, there is an innate power in a circle of people and always a desire to be within it if one is without (Bolton 29). Circles in children's play are numerous and according to Bolton epitomize the power and collective nature of drama (29). Slade saw the child at the center of his or her own circle. Gavin Bolton believes this is the foremost idea utilized from his work. Bolton also believes that the importance Slade placed on the child's personal circle "has taken Child Drama along the path of individualisation (sic) which, as we have seen, for very different reasons, Speech and Drama exponents also followed" (Bolton 30). Slade moved drama in education out of the realm of cliché and into child-centered drama.

Despite improvements Peter Slade made in the arena of child drama, it remained somewhat shallow and undeveloped. "The activity of Child Drama appeared to be

without content and without form and the drama lesson without structure apart from a loose sequence of relaxing and releasing activity followed by unfettered dramatic playing” (Bolton 35). It would be a slow evolution to curriculum-based drama education. The next step in that evolution is child drama expert and Englishman, Brian Way.

Brian Way: Develop the Child Not the Drama

In the 1960s and 70s, teachers were more ready to hear and use the methods outlined in Brian Way’s 1967 book, Development Through Drama, than they had been in previous decades to hear Peter Slade’s message. Several factors made teachers more tolerant of Way’s message than Slade’s. First, teachers were more accepting when Brian Way came along because Peter Slade helped to pave the way. Now, because of Slade and like-minded theorists, child-centered education was no longer just acceptable, it was respectable in teachers’ eyes. In addition, creative drama, as it began to be called, fit nicely into the realm of progressive education which was by that time nationally recognized as good teaching. Finally, there was a movement in teacher training colleges away from speech and drama techniques to seeing “drama as the basis for the students’ own personal development” (Bolton 44). Development Through Drama was, and remains, a text to follow in these courses on how to teach drama.

The slow evolution of drama in education saw Brian Way using Peter Slade’s work as a stepping stone to new thought. Way, like Slade, believed in the importance of child-centered drama, however his emphasis was on the *group* of individuals rather than

the individual. Bolton believes that Way “knows that child-centered drama in its pure form cannot work” (47) because theatre is not about individuals, rather working together to create drama. Way also taught “a new set of skills, not the skills to do with refinement of speech that the speech and drama experts had a vested interest in, but *life-skills*” (Bolton 47). Another differing point from earlier work is Way’s interest in children’s emotions and how they express their feelings. He used teacher-led exercises encouraging students to perform actions and emotions. Such exercises are tools for practicing dramatic skills that provide boundaries while allowing students freedom to explore their capabilities.

I find that Way’s most appealing and important idea, and what sets him apart from his peers, is his idea of experience equaling education. His book clarifies this point and his stance on the function of drama in education.

The answer to many simple questions might take one of two forms - either that of information or else that of direct experience; the former answer belongs to the category of academic education, the latter to drama. For example, the question might be ‘what is a blind person?’ The reply could be ‘A blind person is a person who cannot see.’ Alternatively, the reply could be ‘Close your eyes and, keeping them closed all the time, try to find your way out of this room.’ The first answer contains concise and accurate information; the mind is possibly satisfied. But the second answer leads the inquirer to moments of direct experience, transcending

mere knowledge, enriching the imagination, possibly touching the heart and soul as well as the mind. This, in over-simplified terms, is the precise function of drama (1).

Way's concept, experience equals education, goes beyond beliefs held by Speech and Drama experts that doing means learning and even beyond Peter Slade's dramatic play. According to Way, *doing* and *playing* are not enough, students must *experience*.

Brian Way's effects on child drama are numerous and far reaching. However, in addition to his idea that experience equals education, I feel Way's most important drama education contribution is his belief in developing students, not drama. The title of his book, Development Through Drama not Development of Drama speaks volumes. He is clear that the purpose of drama is to help promote life-skills, not simply a performance-gear activity. In his book he says this of drama: "The aim is constant: to develop people, not drama. By pursuing the former, the latter may also be achieved; by pursuing the latter, the former can be totally neglected, if not nullified" (6-7). He is interested in using drama to help develop life-skills for a group of individuals. This step in the evolution of drama in education is followed by Dorothy Heathcote's more curriculum-based theories.

Dorothy Heathcote: The Mantle of the Expert

Fellow Briton Dorothy Heathcote's is perhaps the most difficult of drama in education experts' methodologies to reduce to an explanation of philosophy. To

summarize anyone's lifelong work in a few pages is to do them a disservice. In Dorothy Heathcote's case, it is especially so. To explore her work, it is necessary to go into more depth than with Peter Slade and Brian Way. Heathcote's is a complex system called Mantle of the Expert Approach (MEA), which combines the arts and sciences to thoroughly explore a topic by having teacher and students in role as "experts" on the given subject.

In Drama for Learning: Dorothy Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert Approach to Education, by Heathcote and Gavin Bolton, the three main aspects of the approach are outlined. The following three conditions are the *what* of MEA: the philosophy. The *how* will follow.

One: The specific thing you are setting out to teach *emerges* from curriculum tasks. Two: The students must be conscious of what they are learning, as they continually record and assess newly acquired knowledge and skills. And three: they must become *responsible* for what they learn, that is, *they* must make it happen (18).

This sounds simple but becomes more difficult when the four main teacher guidelines are added: the *how* of MEA. To teach Mantle of the Expert, there are four guidelines: presentation, fiction, dynamic of action and a past history and implied future. These guidelines do not necessarily have to happen in a prescribed order. They are simply teacher guides when working with MEA.

The first guideline, presentation, deals with how the teacher presents a new subject. Effective MEA has carefully planned initial presentation with no attempt at early instruction. The desire is to allow for students an “entry into the affective framework” (Heathcote & Bolton 25). This is “often done through teacher talk accompanied by an image in the form of a picture, diagram, map, etc.” (25). Using both explanation and visual stimulation lets students “buy in” without the pressure of instruction.

The second guideline, fiction, must be introduced early so children realize that this is indeed a created exercise. Students must believe in what they are doing without thinking they are actually setting up a new firm or going on a journey to Africa or building a skyscraper. Such phrases as “Suppose that. . . If we could. . . If people would let us. . . I bet if we tried hard we could. . .” (26) are used to set this tone of fiction in the MEA philosophy.

The third guideline, dynamic of action, gives students the “power to operate” (27). One example is a lesson Heathcote did with elementary students during an ambulance worker’s strike in England. The circumstances had students as a mediation board between the bosses and workers. Students had the *power* to make changes within the created situation. In MEA, there must always be the ability of students to act upon the problem at hand.

The final guideline of MEA is a past history and implied future, which is also a basic theatre rule. “Characters are engaged in an event when they and the audience meet

in the play. . . thus the present time summons the past and presages the future” (28). As with any play, there is a past and a future, so it is with Mantle of the Expert.

An abbreviated example of the *what* and *how* of MEA working together is explained in Heathcote and Bolton’s book. The issue at hand is bullying in an elementary school. Rather than putting students in circumstances dealing directly with bullying, a situation is created that eventually works around to topics of tolerance, the issue at the heart of bullying. Specifically, Heathcote has students design a firm to help other companies solve problems associated with running a business. First, students generate a list of what they perceive as problems a business might have. Next, students give this company life and make it believable by creating a name, letterhead, an advertising campaign, roles within the company and problems to solve. The problems eventually lead to discussion of tolerance, either naturally with students realizing the dynamics of groups or with Heathcote carefully introducing tolerance as a topic. By solving a problem of tolerance, these children in essence solve their own problems with bullying. This is a simple but valid example and gives an idea of what MEA is about.

Using this approach covers a broad curriculum base and can delve into the arts and sciences. Teaching the discovery of America for example, using drama as a base, gives a different look at “old” material. “This is a *literary*, thematic way of looking at content. Just as a novel is about characters in a story sequence and at the same time, at a different level, about many other things, so drama has more than one level of meaning” (Bolton 52-3). MEA encourages exploration of the levels Bolton refers to in drama.

Using MEA students become experts on a subject or an object using drama.

Asked to look at a situation or thing objectively they see beyond the obvious. Bolton attempts to explain this approach in Drama as Education. Here he uses not an event, but an object as an example. The object is a surgeon's knife. With MEA, "Each child is to function as an 'expert' with all that implies of seeing the surgeon's knife as a specimen, as a tool, as a crafted artefact (sic), as having a history of metal from the earth, of man's invention, of factory organisation (sic), of training in high-quality skills" (Bolton 56). In this examination process, Heathcote differs significantly from her predecessors.

Despite some common ground with Brian Way, namely a belief in the importance of intuition on the part of both student and teacher, Dorothy Heathcote is quite different approaching drama in education. She believes more in group power than individuals within groups, more in using drama to teach content than teaching life-skills through drama, and more in the importance of combining "the scientist's and artist's conception of knowledge" (Bolton 59) than in *feeling* the process. With her Mantle of the Expert Approach, Dorothy Heathcote moved drama in education from a "touchy-feely" exercise, into a more concrete, curriculum-based subject. Dorothy Heathcote exemplifies active learning, as does most recent individual in drama education evolution, Cecily O'Neill.

Cecily O'Neill: Process Drama

Cecily O'Neill, a native Briton who is currently an assistant professor of speech/theatre at Ohio State University developed the system, that as a drama teacher, I

find most appealing. It is called process drama and focuses on actor training. Whereas Slade, Way and Heathcote all use drama primarily as a tool to teach other curriculums, O'Neill uses other curriculums to teach drama. Despite this major difference, O'Neill's work is based largely on Dorothy Heathcote's and her student, Gavin Bolton's, theories. Similarities include a focus on a group rather than an individual, a strong base in curriculum, and a system based on un-scripted material.

With this grounding in Heathcote's ideas, O'Neill developed a process superior to what is often required of student actors. She feels too often students are asked to perform before being sufficiently prepared. This generates feelings of inadequacy and can turn them off to drama. Process drama on the other hand does not ask for performance, rather participation in a dramatic creation. It "permits direct engagement with the event, a range of role taking, and an encounter with the power of drama without necessarily demanding the immediate display of sophisticated acting techniques" (xiv). Hence, O'Neill's system is based on improvisational work with ties to formal theatre practice.

Also like Dorothy Heathcote, Cecily O'Neill's philosophy and system are difficult to reduce. Process drama, as the name indicates, is based not on product such as performance, but on the process of creating. It is rooted in improvisational work and asks, as the Mantle of the Expert Approach does, for the assumption of roles by teacher and students. O'Neill introduces the system in her book Drama Worlds: A Framework for Process Drama.

Process drama is a complex dramatic encounter. Like other theatre events, it evokes an immediate dramatic world bounded in space and time, a world that depends on the consensus of all those present for its existence.

Process drama proceeds without a script, its outcome is unpredictable, it lacks a separate audience, and the experience is impossible to replicate exactly (xiii).

O'Neill believes the approach she developed is a genuine theatre experience for all involved, despite its lack of audience.

Process drama involves four main characteristics. First, there is no written script. However, unlike traditional improvisation, there are rehearsed scenes. "It includes important episodes that will be composed and rehearsed rather than improvised" (xvi). Second, there is an extended time span meaning that as participants engage in the creation of the dramatic world, it is "extended and elaborated" (xvi) as opposed to the generally shorter activities associated with improvisation. Third, O'Neill uses pre-text, "the source or impulse for the drama process" (xv). This pre-text may be anything that will spur a dramatic event. "The dramatic world may be activated by a word, a gesture, a location, a story, an idea, an object or an image, as well as by a character or a play script" (19). The fourth aspect of process drama is engagement of all participants at all times. In process drama, the actors are the audience who also make suggestions and changes while engaged in the event. To best illustrate the four process drama characteristics, I use an example called *Frank Miller* which O'Neill gives in her book.

Frank Miller: A Process Drama

There was a tense atmosphere in the circle of chairs. Each of those present had received an urgent message. The leader glanced around ‘I hope no one saw you come here. I sent for you because I thought you ought to know about it as soon as possible, since this affects us all. We are all involved. I received this note today. It says that Frank Miller is coming back to town. (vii)

It was an improvisation session with high school students led by Cecily O’Neill and this pre-text is how *Frank Miller* began. The in-role leader helped set the tone of the event by creating a tense atmosphere and establishing group history. From there, students in role discussed the implication of Frank Miller’s return. This concluded the first session.

Out of role, the group made several important decisions that affected the improvisation: they were in a small western town around the turn of the century, why each of them had reason to fear or hate Frank Miller, and that they framed and sent him to prison ten years earlier to get him out of town. Based on these decisions, the next step was small group work exploring Frank Miller’s past. Through tableaux, students depicted his life from childhood to adulthood.

Next was small group improvisations of townspeople. The task: to discover whether or not Frank Miller was already in town and if so, who had seen him, and what

Pairs then improvised confiding in a friend why he or she had reason to be anxious about Frank Miller's return. Through these improvisations, students reached consensus that many townspeople took part in framing Miller and any one of them might be an object of revenge. Based on what the group discovered about Frank and his community relations, students decided a postmistress named Sarah was most likely why he returned. She and Frank were involved in the past and had a ten-year-old son together. So he would not be affected by her bad reputation in the town, Sarah always told her son his father was dead. Frank was now back to claim his family.

After taking a break, to re-establish the tension created by the last round of improvisations, the group played a game called the hunter and the hunted. They worked in pairs as Frank and Sarah. Both were blindfolded while Frank tried to capture Sarah. Once the tension was re-created, O'Neill narrated the story to this point giving students opportunity to clarify details and make desired changes.

All decided the next improvisation must be between Frank and his son. In pairs, students worked a meeting between the two at the livery stables where the child worked after school. One pair had the boy innocently ask Frank to dinner not knowing he was his father. The rest of the group liked this and decided to have the story incorporate the twist.

Students conducted the next encounter between Sarah and her son through forum theatre. This format allowed audience members to "freeze" action and give suggestions about scene direction. In the scene, Sarah's son told her about the stranger coming to

dinner. Tension grew as the group wondered how Sarah would tell her son about his father.

To create the next scene, students separated into three groups to create a dream sequence. Each group improvised a dream about the impending dinner, playing out the wishes or fears of a main character. Once these fears were explored, students remained in their groups and improvised the dinner without watching the others. Students next wished to reenact this central scene for all watch. Three volunteers came forward and the remaining students watched and gave input. As the scene progressed, the group decided that hearing the characters' inner thoughts would enhance the scene. To create the three inner voices, three additional students volunteered. The scene continued with six actors portraying all aspects of the three characters and concluded with a almost violent confrontation between Frank and Sarah and the boy running out of the house.

The final episode recalled the earlier tableaux pictures of Frank's life from childhood through adulthood. The chronological pictures ended with a new one of Frank reaching out for his son, showing future possibilities.

I quote at length Cecily O'Neill's summation of this event.

In this extended "process drama," it is possible to see a dramatic world come into being, an imagined elsewhere with its own characters, locations, and concerns, developing in accordance with its own inner logic. This world manifests tension and complexity, and employs devices similar to those appropriate to dramatic worlds arising in more

conventional theatre settings. It is apparent that all those involved in *Frank Miller* were caught up in a dramatic experience that they created and maintained, yet which possessed no prior script, fixed scenario, or separate audience.

This process drama generated a text in action, appropriated the space in which it occurred, required the participants to project into a number of roles, and moved toward an unknown horizon of possibilities. Its duration of almost three hours allowed the pressures of the past as well as complex expectations about the future to develop in a dramatic present including elements of composition, spontaneous encounters, and group contemplation. The experience was its own destination and the group an audience to its own acts (xi).

Frank Miller is one process drama example, but there are as many possibilities as imagination allows. It is a theatre event, a teaching venue, an actor training session and an example of active learning techniques. Through process drama, Cecily O'Neill has taken drama in education from using theatre to teach other subjects to using active learning to teach drama.

Conclusions

The twentieth century has seen many changes in drama in education. From the early speech and drama experts who believed that *doing* meant better learning, through

the evolution of educators, active learning is becoming standard in theatre classrooms and should be considered by teachers of all content areas. Effective in drama, active learning is also a way to teach other curriculum, as shown especially through the work of Dorothy Heathcote and Cecily O'Neill.

Active learning is a goal for educators in many subjects and is called by a variety of names. Drama, due to its nature and used as exemplified through the leaders discussed in this chapter, is in many ways a model of the potential of active learning in all of education.

Specifically, by applying the active learning theories of Slade, Way, Heathcote and O'Neill to Shakespeare, worlds of opportunity open. All aspects of Shakespeare are available through active learning: history, costuming, society, other writers of the time, social make up, scientific practices and on and on. There is no limit to what can be studied and accomplished through active learning. The leaders in this chapter see the potential of active learning in drama education and continue to promote its possibilities in their work with students and other educators in drama and other content areas.

IV

Approaching Shakespeare in High School

Shakespeare has been a cornerstone of every American high school student's experience for many years, usually in an English class reading Romeo and Juliet or studying Julius Caesar. Shakespeare has for the most part been taught through direct instruction. This method, however useful in supplying a body of knowledge to a group of people, allows little room for personal analysis and experience and for that reason, needs to be supplemented. On the other hand, active learning provides an opportunity for students to learn the content as well as analyze what it means to them making it personally relevant.

Whether in the form of whole language, an experiential approach to a math class or teaching Shakespeare, active learning is the teaching trend of the future. In order to analyze this and the specific application of active learning to Shakespeare in American high schools, it is necessary to explore briefly how it was introduced into the school system and the various ways in which it has been handled. Several approaches will be examined and the advantages and disadvantages of each will be weighed.

Shakespeare in Early America

The introduction of Shakespeare to the American culture was a surprisingly slow one. When the Jamestown Settlement was established, the colonists knew of Shakespeare

and some had even seen his plays at the Globe theatre. However, several factors kept Shakespeare's works from thriving in the new world. Living conditions were harsh, playwrights and the stage were believed to be immoral, and there was little leisure time and few urban centers. After initial American establishment in 1607, Shakespeare was all but forgotten for over 100 years (Frey, Experiencing 125-26). Survival was paramount with little thought given to niceties such as reading or theatre. As time went on and American culture began to take shape, leisure time was more available. Shakespeare returned, and in some cases was introduced, to the settlers through books.

In the late eighteenth century, Shakespeare communicated with American society through "elocutionary readers" (Frey, Experiencing 126). These readers approached him not so much as a dramatist but a morality writer. By the mid nineteenth century, entire versions of Shakespeare's plays made their way into secondary school text books, establishing his works as central to education. At this time, a man named Henry Norman Hudson created a series of school edition Shakespeare texts. Hudson was interested in character analysis and the truths in Shakespeare diverging from the colleges' focus on linguistics and rhetoric. The universities' focus dictated how to teach Shakespeare in secondary schools since entrance exams to such prestigious institutions as Yale and Harvard included his work. It is interesting to speculate how the development of Shakespeare in the school system may have been different had Hudson's views rather than the colleges' curriculum influenced its growth.

In the early days, teaching Shakespeare in American schools was, according to Frey, problematic due to two differing reasons for it being taught. First, it could be viewed as an instrument of class oppression. The upper class “imposed” itself on others through college exams focused on Shakespeare. If you did not know Shakespeare, you did not go to college. Second, Shakespeare could also be seen as a tool for democracy, inspiring readers to strive for greatness available to all in Shakespeare’s plays. Two questions stood, “Were the schools and colleges there and was Shakespeare there, to acclimatize diverse peoples to upper-class conceptions of civility and wealth, gentility as class-standing, and nobility as economic and political power?” (Frey, Experiencing 128) or, “Were the academies and Shakespeare there to inspire a democratic populace toward visions of the classless nobility and ‘stainless gentility’ potentially available to every person through a radical, egalitarian humanism?” (128). Whatever the initial reason for Shakespeare entering the American school system, it has remained since early American history.

Early Teaching Techniques

Early approaches to teaching Shakespeare were fairly straightforward. Although there are few written examples of approaches used in traditional classrooms (I have found that these are not the teachers writing about their work; it is the teacher who is doing something out of the ordinary who documents), there are references to them by those wishing for change. In a 1954 book by A.K. Hudson, he explains his aim to make

Shakespeare more interesting for students. Prior to this, there was apparently little change in the way Shakespeare was taught. It was done in formula fashion direct instruction. Hudson believes there is nothing essentially wrong with a formula that works, but frequently it does not work. Hudson states that students are generally introduced to Shakespeare in a manner which generates little interest and is difficult to understand. In searching for a more successful method to teach Shakespeare, he says, "The unsuccessful methods normally display two features; they are non-dramatic and they reflect a tendency to regard school children as textual scholars in embryo" (Hudson X).

One example Hudson gives, he calls The Construe Method. As a hypothetical example, Hamlet's "to be or not to be" soliloquy is being studied in a boys' high school classroom. The scenario begins with the teacher asking a student if he has read lately. The student says no and the teacher asks him to begin reading aloud first having to define the word soliloquy. After the first line the teacher stops him and asks what Hamlet is talking about. The student says "He's thinking about doing himself in" (7). The teacher criticizes his choice of wording and asks him to continue. The student does so for two lines and is again asked to stop since "half of the class is asleep" (7). As punishment to reader and students not paying attention, all are required to spend ten minutes writing a paraphrase of the soliloquy. When done writing, several students are asked to read theirs aloud. Eventually the teacher required students to memorize the soliloquy and in an exam are graded upon their ability to exactly copy the speech, punctuation included (6-8).

In a similar scenario a girls' classroom is studying a speech of Portia's in the Merchant of Venice. The teacher begins by reading the section to the girls. She asks them to "feel the prayer" (Hudson 9) and inquires if they did when she finishes reading. Of course they say, yes. Next they are asked to write what they felt were the two most beautiful lines and in their own words what exactly one line chosen by the teacher meant. This is a different approach than for the boys and just as deadly.

In both these situations students will know the story and be able to recite lines from the play. Students will also be able to define obscure words used in Shakespeare's works but most likely will have no concept of the metaphors, images or meaning. Such concepts as modern implications and personal relevancy are not thought of let alone discussed. Hudson, when discussing these early systems of teaching Shakespeare, had this to say; "And so the cold blooded business goes on. Jocular and don't-take-this-too-seriously in the case of the boys. Earnest and be-sure-you-don't-miss the beauty with the girls. Both come to the same thing- a profound contempt for Shakespeare" (Hudson 10). Although these are extreme examples of instructional methods, this was the state of Shakespeare in American high schools in our early history.

Early 1900s to the Present: The Analytical Approach

In the early 1900s Shakespeare's works were taught "primarily in terms of how plot and scene construction contributed to revelations of character and message" (Frey, Experiencing 129). Surprisingly, there was some introduction of "student performance,

visual aids and dramatic readings by teachers” (Frey, Experiencing 129). However, the norm remained based on what was being done in the universities. Professor George Lyman Kitteredge, who taught Shakespeare at Harvard from 1888 until 1936, developed a system where “he explicated the text line by line” (Frey, Experiencing 130). This system influenced many secondary school teachers’ approaches to Shakespeare. However, by the 1930s because of its problematic nature, Shakespeare’s viability in the secondary school environment and, how the works could be made “livelier for students” (Frey, Experiencing 129) was in question.

Kitteredge successors moved from this analytical approach to examining the “broader rhetorical and interpretive study. . . During the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. . . occurred that remarkable flowering of Shakespearean interpretation. . . promoting fresh interest in the vitality and accessibility of Shakespeare’s language, ideas, and theatre” (Frey, Experiencing 130). They believed that Shakespeare’s works should be more accessible to students and his works not so daunting. Secondary school approaches had teachers focusing on symbols, image clusters, word patterns, metaphors and ironies (Frey, Experiencing 131) and was dubbed “close reading.” “A new confidence in the interpretability of Shakespeare swept over both high school and college teaching” (Frey, Experiencing 131). There was no longer a question of whether Shakespeare would be taught. This era introduced the idea that Shakespeare should be accessible to everyone. That idea attracted teachers to his works even more than in earlier years. This close reading trend lasted through the 1950s and most of the 1960s.

By the close of the 60s however, “teachers began to question, more and more seriously, the primacy of a stainless Shakespeare objectively interpreted through ‘close’ readings promoting approved values” (Frey, Experiencing 133). In addition the problem remained of encouraging study of works with unresolved conflicts between the upper and lower classes. It is at this point that teachers sought ways to promote student analysis and critical thinking when approaching Shakespeare that went beyond the formalistic approach of close reading. J.L. Styan among others suggested that student performance would bring Shakespeare to life for them. He said in the 1974 issue of Shakespeare Quarterly devoted to teaching Shakespeare, “This is not the place to pursue theories of sensory perception, only to urge that whenever the classroom ceases to insist upon the same means of communication as that is intended for the play, it risks its distortion and death” (Styan 198-99).

Widely embraced by high school and college teachers, there remained resistance by those who were interested namely in text. According to Edward Partridge in the same Shakespeare Quarterly teaching issue, “Our business is finally critical and scholarly and analytic. . .” (206-7). According to this line of thought, students should be taught to analyze rather than to explore Shakespeare’s works. They were viewed and “Taught as if they were fixed and objective containers of meaning to be scientifically studied for authoritative results” (Frey, Experiencing 136) rather than seen as infinitely interpretable and changing works of drama. This trend continues in some English classrooms.

Today

Despite some teachers clinging to the relatively safe technique of analyzing text, many more are exploring new ways to approach Shakespeare. Teaching through performance is one of many active techniques used to make Shakespeare come alive for students and help them to find his relevancy in their modern lives. Performance techniques meld the ideas held early in our history as important with the concept of giving students an opportunity personally to find the meaning. "Performance makes students close readers and exact speakers, and it does so without actually calling attention to those ends. Aiming at coherence, they usually achieve detail, specificity, even power" (Gilbert 603-4).

In addition to English classes, drama classes, which are a relatively new development in American high schools, are beginning to tackle Shakespeare. If approached actively, the drama class will provide a true hands-on approach to Shakespeare. I do not suggest that drama classes replace the English class approach, only that it is possible to consider alternatives to standard approaches.

Unfortunately, a drama class performing Shakespeare often does so for the sake of "doing Shakespeare" and not for the purpose of active learning. Students become only actors doing what the director tells them. Often line readings are given to students with no self-discovery intended, which is surprisingly similar to the analytical approach taken in some English classes. In situations like this there is little student understanding of material. The language remains foreign and there is no role or play "ownership." In

some cases teachers do go beyond the surface and ask students to determine character motivation, but with little direction. There are a select few who even go beyond the “what’s your motivation” position to actively explore the whole play: language, history, characters, costumes, Shakespeare himself etc. This is closer to a union of the English class analytical approach and the drama class approach of doing a play. This active learning style gives students an opportunity to understand truly the works of Shakespeare and is the direction I hope to see Shakespeare take in the future.

Active Learning With Shakespeare

In the April 1993 issue of English Journal, Allen Carey-Webb documented his success with uniting the two aforementioned approaches. Carey-Webb discussed how The Tempest can be timely and relevant for students in the 1990s. Issues such as multiculturalism, slavery and European supremacy are abundant in the text. “Well-known texts of the canon can be reexamined and can serve as entry points to issues of race, gender, and culture” (Carey-Webb 34). Carey-Webb even “discussed the Rodney King beating and the LA riots and their relationship to characters and themes of The Tempest” (34). With a combination of such in-depth study of text and performance techniques, students find individual meaning through the mere experience.

There are many other active learning examples when dealing with Shakespeare in either English or drama classes. Some of the most important work in the field of teaching Shakespeare comes from the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington DC The

library's education department has a trilogy of books called Shakespeare Set Free. The books were created by high school teachers attending a series of workshops on teaching Shakespeare through performance and edited by former Folger head of education Peggy O'Brien. The books include detailed accounts of how to approach teaching Shakespeare so students will be involved in the performance of the plays being covered. Michael Tolaydo, a workshop participant and instructor, has this to say about teaching Shakespeare through performance:

Warning: it is important to note that when I speak of performance I am not speaking about creating a scene for stage performance, nor am I suggesting that this work involves acting skills. I am rooted in the notion that, in getting up on their feet and *doing* a scene in the classroom students will discover that most of the baggage list that begins this chapter (Shakespeare is hard to understand, they talk too much, the words are archaic, it's written in old English and needs to be translated, why not read a modernized version, you need to be English to do it, the characters talk too much, the plays are too long) is, in fact, myth. . . In addition, learning in this way can also open up the play and provide the basis for further active exploration of plot, character, structure, language, genre, or What You Will. (O'Brien, Teaching Romeo and Juliet 27-28).

As an example of active learning with Shakespeare, two days of lessons for A Midsummer Night's Dream are examined here. The following example lessons are based

on pages 48-54 of the first in the Shakespeare Set Free series and could be used in any drama or English class approaching Shakespeare with novices.

On the first day after the class reads the play, students pair up and conduct a “silent” conversation. They write back and forth about anything they wish but must remain in complete silence for the required five minutes. Students save the recorded conversation for the next day. Next, the class creates living pictures of various scenes.

To clarify the court relationships in I.1, let students use each other to create living pictures—what audiences in earlier centuries called tableaux vivants. Pick two students; one will be Theseus and one Hippolyta [Hermia and Lysander]. Let the other students arrange them in poses suggesting romantic longing. For example, they might stand a bit apart and gaze at each other with arms outstretched. Then ask two other students to read lines 1-20 while the picture figures hold their poses. (O’Brien 49)

This type of activity will help students see character relationships, as well as physically support the text. After completion, others might be staged as well to clarify characters and relationships by adding props and hats. Each student is asked to wear a hat or use a prop which identifies that character in some way.

The next day, after asking students to find a modern correlation for the relationship between Hermia and her father Egeus, students complete the second step in their “silent conversation.” It begins with a lesson on the use of Elizabethan forms of

verbs and pronouns. An example is to have students make modern sentences sound Shakespearean. “Example: Why do you have a pumpkin in your locker? Ask students to make these sentences sound Shakespearean. (They may respond with something like ‘Oh, Romeo, I do entreat you—why doth you have a golden pumpkin in your—er—satchel!’)” (O’Brien 51-2). Next, after reviewing a handout of the second-person pronouns and verbs-- are, does, and has-- with the students, “ask them to revise the sentences on the board, concentrating on the pronouns and verbs. (This time they may come up with ‘Why dost thou have a pumpkin in thy locker?’ If so, praise them liberally)” (O’Brien 52).

After completing the sentence conversion exercise as a group, students work with their silent conversation partner. The pairs rewrite previous conversations using Elizabethan verb forms and pronouns, and read the conversations aloud. This exercise helps students better understand the often complex language Shakespeare used.

Next is the establishment of “acting troupes” that will work together for the remainder of the unit. With a purposeful variation of gender, culture and ability, the teacher assigns students to troupes. Each group chooses name and meeting place as well as a responsibility rotation schedule for the group. Each group receives a folder to contain all the group paper work. The groups will do such things as review and clarify class activities, paraphrase difficult phrases, and shorten scenes into modernized versions. Essentially, the acting troupes provide support and peer feedback reinforcing cooperative learning.

This is a two-day example of an English class based on ideas generated in the Folger Shakespeare Library's teacher workshops. There are many other systems using active learning in approaching Shakespeare.

For example, when I student taught at Sahuaro High School in Tucson, Arizona, I used active approaches throughout the nine-week unit. I designed the unit around the culminating event, performance of the collage style script Such Stuff as Dreams are Made On. The script is a scene and monologue compilation broken into a theme for each act. The first act, "Lovers and Fools," is the more lighthearted of the two. Scenes such as the rustics' and excerpts from the four lovers in A Midsummer Night's Dream, and the wooing scene from Henry V, are central to this act. Intermediate students performed this act. The second act done by advanced students, "Crowns and Farewells," is the heavier of the two. Central are the parting scene from Romeo and Juliet, Lady Anne's "God save the Queen" monologue and other excerpts from Richard III, as well as cuttings from Henry IV parts one and two and Henry V.

As with any play, the first step is auditions. Generally, students prepare monologues on their own time and present them for an audition. With high school students' typically limited Shakespeare exposure in mind, I had students do things a bit differently. I chose four monologues from each act, two male and two female. I then separated students into four groups to analyze the monologues. Groups were not broken down by gender; I simply mixed copied monologues and passed them out asking students to group themselves with others who got the same monologue. The next instruction had

students break the monologue into titled beats (smaller ideas within the monologue--I think of and explain a beat as a paragraph in an essay). They could have as few as three beats, but I told them they were more likely to have five to seven. For the most part, that was accurate. The next step was creating frozen pictures that captured the essence of each beat. I asked them to create a live "snapshot" of that beat and the feeling they got from it. The intention was not staging what they thought the scene would look like, rather creating a stage picture that conveyed the feelings they got from individual beats. They should use the whole group except one, a different person each time, in creating the picture. As a group, they next paraphrased each monologue beat and wrote it down. The final step was presenting the monologues. Students created the frozen picture while the one left out of each snapshot read the paraphrased monologue. This exercise took two full class periods to complete.

This pre-audition introduction helped students do several things and proved to me this active Shakespeare approach was the most effective I had encountered. The first thing it did for students was put them on a level playing field. They had to work together analyzing monologues I purposely chose as less well-known selections. This itself utilized cooperative learning strategies with students responsible not only for their own learning, but their fellow students' as well. In addition, students made personal connections with the meaning behind the words that so often gets tangled on the tongue and therefore in the mind. I anticipated some pretty off-base interpretations and was ready to lead discussions back to what Shakespeare probably meant. However, I was

happily surprised that with this active learning approach, students were for the most part, right on the money. Students also had a real feeling of ownership and material comprehension. They could “do” Shakespeare!

After this exercise, students auditioned by performing one of the four examined monologues. It was interesting (but not surprising) seeing differences between students who participated in this exercise and those who were absent. Students who missed the lesson gave typical presentations. They found few levels of interpretation and were anchored to the rhyming verse. Those who participated were more able to find meaning and explore beyond the words. Also interesting was how readily students responded to my questions about the material during rehearsal periods. They were ready to explore and discover meaning. Students were undaunted by Shakespeare. It proved that Shakespeare was approachable and amazingly (to them) relevant.

The remainder of the unit was similarly based on experiential activities with the addition of written and oral presentations. In order that students get an understanding of all the plays in the collage script, not just the initial monologues, I required in-depth script and character analysis. Each student chose one of his/her characters in the collage on which to base a character analysis. The analysis included fifty questions ranging from physical appearance to their life goals. In order to answer these questions it was necessary to read and comprehend the entire script. In addition, with reading the script, I had students do a script analysis that they shared in an oral presentation to the class. I used this process because it was unreasonable in the amount of time available, nine

weeks, to expect students to read and understand all the plays in the collage. Both analyses worked well to augment the other performance based activities in the unit. I concluded the nine weeks with a group discussion and analysis of the unit and the performances. The conclusion was that the students and I found that active, experiential approaches to Shakespeare focused on meaning-making, make the project challenging, exciting and personal.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Despite the fact that I am a proponent of active learning, I must give weight to the few advantages of using direct instruction with Shakespeare. The following are the advantages and disadvantages that I find in the two styles of teaching.

Advantages of direct instruction are as follows. First, exposure to good literature. Whether or not the literature is meaningful to students is questionable, but they do have the opportunity to become exposed to classic authors and playwrights. They will recognize good literature and presumably be able to intelligently discuss it. Students gain a foundation in what American society considers important literature. Some students may go beyond what they are presented with in this straightforward approach and draw their own conclusions to become critical thinkers on their own. The majority though simply remember what the teacher said about particular works without drawing their own conclusions.

A second advantage to direct instruction is exposure to *more* literature than through an active approach. The latter of the approaches is more time-consuming and therefore does not expose students to as broad a literature base. In this vein, the only other advantage to direct instruction that teachers may find is that it takes less time to plan and implement lessons. Teachers may find this easier than the more complex active learning avenue.

The list of disadvantages of teaching direct instruction is more lengthy. First, students are not prompted to personally find meaning in literature. They are generally told what the play, metaphor, or image means and usually accept as truth what the teacher says, without questioning. Second, students are not asked to find relevance to their own lives through direct instruction, which would clearly make the material more meaningful. Third, direct instruction does not allow students to experience Shakespeare in the manner intended, performance. This is not to imply a full-blown theatrical production is necessary for student comprehension, only that performance techniques enhance understanding. Fourth, with direct instruction there is little active engagement with literature which could be interpreted as less “fun” than active learning. As a result, enthusiasm is often low. Finally and most importantly, with direct instruction, students are not asked to analyze their learning experience. They are not asked to consider their learning process and therefore do not progress effectively as learners. Due to its “successful” track record, direct instruction requires little risk-taking on the part of either teacher or student. However, as the saying goes, “nothing ventured, nothing gained.”

Moving on to active learning approaches, the advantages are numerous. First, students find personal meaning through participation. They are asked to analyze works rather than being spoon-fed a teacher's interpretation. Second, working in a hands-on manner actively involves students. By participating in their learning process, students find relevancy to their own lives. Whether through learning the performance process or through discovering how Juliet felt swallowing the potion, students connect more completely with Shakespeare than in direct instruction where they often view plays as out-dated literature. Third, students work together using performance techniques to uncover meaning in the plays. This does several beneficial things for students. It gets them working for a common goal, it generates enthusiasm for the project, making it more "fun" for students, and it lets students experience Shakespeare the way it was intended, through performance. Performance techniques also take advantage of the many benefits of group learning. Fourth, students gain confidence in their ability to analyze literature, creating desire to continue learning and experiencing. Finally, students become learners in addition to being learned. They analyze the unit upon completion and determine what of the material is most relevant to them and what processes they used to learn. According to Johnson this is the type of conclusion that encourages students to become life-long learners.

Also in support of active learning, Nancy King, author of Storymaking and Drama, has this to say about the process:

By supporting a collaborative environment where students are encouraged to consult each other, competition is reduced, and ideas of failure and success can be defined more broadly. This does not mean students take their work less seriously; quite the opposite. When students realize you want them to consider their ideas and experiences as being important, their attitude about learning often changes radically. (75)

Active learning requires student participation in the learning process. They are engaged in lessons rather than being solely recipients of information. It is through this participation that students are forced to realize what the words mean to them. It is this realization that brings both comprehension and meaning to the play and its relevance to their lives. Shakespeare wrote plays based on human behavior, which is a constant unchanged by time. This is clarified to students through participation in active learning.

There are few disadvantages to active learning however. One is students may grumble at a seemingly heavy workload. They are required to experience Shakespeare which in turn requires some performance and they may consider this more work. In addition, students are more actively involved in the entire process of questioning, discovering and exploring with less direct transferal of information on the teacher's part, which may be viewed as more "work." Another disadvantage is that active learning is more time consuming than direct instruction which leads to less breadth but more depth of study (which actually may be considered an advantage by some). Therefore, complete coverage of a play is virtually impossible. Due to its complexity, active learning

necessitates that some issues receive less attention than others, hence allowing less than total coverage. Finally, teachers frequently have not had experience teaching active learning, which is a disadvantage for both teacher and student. In this situation, teachers must seek training prior to indoctrinating students in the new format. Despite mostly time and training oriented disadvantages, the positives much outweigh the negatives for both students and teachers of active learning.

Conclusions

Students must “own” material they learn and understand the process they use to acquire new information in order to be life-long learners. In order to accomplish this goal, teachers must create opportunities that make experiences tangible and meaningful for students. Creating an atmosphere of participation allows and encourages students to see themselves as learners involved in the educational process rather than sponges absorbing information. By using active learning rather than relying solely on direct instruction, teachers instruct students in meaning-making and help them to discover Shakespeare themselves, which makes the experience and the literature, relevant.

As Charles H. Frey says, “Still, despite what their generally right-minded fellows think are intolerable dangers to be expected when one sets the magician playwright free, those teachers who do release Shakespeare to their students’ own hands may sometimes discover untold rewards” (Frey, Experiencing 143).

V

Implementation

In a 1984 issue of Shakespeare Quarterly, Charles Frey quotes Dr. Henry W. Simon who said in 1932, “in another half century Shakespeare in the high school curriculum [will] have gone the way of Greek and Latin” (541). Sixty-four years later, Simon was proven wrong. Unlike Greek and Latin, Shakespeare remains a viable and important part of virtually every high school student’s experience. Nonetheless, to avoid Dr. Simon’s prophecy materializing in the future, educational philosophy must change.

I believe the American educational system is in trouble. The 1 April, 1996 issue of US News and World Report indicates my beliefs are well founded. The statistics quoted indicate that the pre-eminent practice of direct instruction is not working; students are not learning what they need to learn. There is a need for philosophical change in high school teaching strategy. Active learning can be more effective than direct instruction and should be employed more often: it could be the needed change.

History demonstrates a shift in high school Shakespeare teaching techniques. Initially direct instruction was the only accepted approach. Over time, and after attempts at other teaching strategies, there is a trend towards more student involvement in the learning process. During the twentieth century, drama in education theorists switched teaching strategies from direct instruction to include curriculum-based process drama. Finally, based on the above mentioned, it is strongly suggested that changes in teaching Shakespeare and drama can benefit all subject matters. The question remaining then, is

how are teachers to make needed changes? To answer this question, I again use Shakespeare as a specific example.

In America's early history, teachers approached Shakespeare in the expected method: via direct instruction. Taught primarily as language, rhetoric and morality through direct instruction, the early approach to teaching Shakespeare left students uninvolved. Students absorbed information and became "learned" because the teacher told them what it all meant. If they did not tell students the meaning of words, images and metaphors in Shakespeare's plays, teachers led students to interpretations they wanted. This approach, although acceptable for some, frequently generated, and unfortunately still does, a contempt for the Bard.

To supplement and broaden direct instruction, teachers need to consider alternatives. Teaching through the methods of drama education is one alternative but, unfortunately, teachers frequently do not actively seek information about this, nor do they seek new teaching strategies. I believe many teachers want to make changes that will more actively engage students in the learning process but are so busy keeping up with the daily grind that reform gets postponed. Suggestions for teachers who want to take the first steps toward teaching active learning are needed.

Strategies and Resources

One first step interested teachers can take is requesting in-service training about active learning. Teachers need to talk to school administrators and to indicate an interest

in learning more about active learning techniques. In turn, administrators can call a local university and ask to speak with the education department and someone who has a background in active learning. Administrators can arrange to either have that person come for an in-service training session (time taken from the normal school dedicated to updating all the teachers' skills) or to provide suggestions about materials available for such an in-service. I am reminded of an in-service I attended as a student teacher. The faculty gathered in a large music room, the vice-principal gave an introduction and a video was shown on the topic of the day, Goals 2000, an attempt to initiate new, more progressive teaching styles occurring by the year 2000. Several local specialists gave interviews and suggested strategies. There were also handouts with specific steps teachers could take to initiate change. This was a successful approach with strong positive teacher response. With enough interest shown, this type of in-service is possible with active learning.

In addition to in-service training sessions and without having to return to college, there are other ways to learn about active learning. Primarily, teachers must read. Dorothy Heathcote and Cecily O'Neill should be given special attention by anyone interested in teaching active learning. Their theories are useful for teachers of all subjects. Heathcote's book, Drama for Learning: Dorothy Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert Approach to Education is an excellent source, as is Cecily O'Neill's Drama Worlds: A Framework for Process Drama. Books by the other theorists in Chapter Three

are an excellent place to begin as well. Brian Way's Development Through Drama is particularly good for teachers with no drama background needing a foundation.

There are also constantly updated materials in journals, books and magazines dedicated to education, for example, English Journal. Specifically looking at trends in theatre education, one can turn to the journal Stage of the Art, formerly known as The Drama Theatre Teacher, put out by the American Alliance for Theatre and Education. The journal is dedicated to "providing the theater artist and the theatre educator with a network of resources and support" (Stage of the Art 2). Drama Theatre Teacher volume 6, number 2, Winter 1994, is dedicated entirely to using Shakespeare in the classroom and has an excellent section on available resources as well as several articles giving real-life examples of teaching Shakespeare. Youth Theatre Journal by AATE is a source for current trends in theatre education as well.

A recent resurgence of Shakespeare interest is reflected in the abundant information specifically on teaching Shakespeare in high school. There are a myriad of resources to turn to, such as the lessons suggested in the Shakespeare Set Free series prepared by the Teaching Shakespeare Institute at the Folger Shakespeare Library. There are interactive Shakespeare CD ROM's as well as books and games for students of all ages. The Internet also has many Shakespeare sites as well, where students can post questions to be answered by teachers or simply browse and read. There are companies specializing in reproducible activities for individual plays, as well as entire units available from sources such as the Center for Learning.

The actual scripts of Shakespeare's plays are becoming more "user friendly." There are many new script editions geared for specific age groups. Alfred A. Knopf out of New York has a series of illustrated scripts based on *Shakespeare: The Animated Tales* done by HBO that are appropriate for elementary and middle-school students. There are also comic books available through the Folger Library that introduce Shakespeare to young students.

Beyond Shakespeare, one basic necessity is the teacher's ability to establish an environment conducive to active learning and to get students used to the teaching style. One cannot effectively go from straight direct instruction teaching to active learning without providing a framework for students. One way to bridge the gap is through teaching improvisation. Any subject, especially drama, will benefit from work in improvisation which is, "the impromptu portrayal of a character or scene without any rehearsal or preparation" (Schanker & Ommanney 517). One popular improvisation source is Improvisation Through Theatre Sports by Lynda Belt and Rebecca Stockley. Other sources are Viola Spolin's Improvisation for the Theatre, Keith Johnstone's IMPRO, Improvisation in the Theatre and Augusto Boal's Games for Actors and Non-Actors. Any combination from the above authors serves to introduce teaching via active learning.

Teachers should also educate themselves on active learning teaching strategies by reading such educators as Malcolm Knowles and Philip Johnson. Although these two are adult education specialists, much of their work can be applied to high school students.

The Act of Teaching by Donald R. Cruickshank, Deborah Bainer and Kim Metcalf is an excellent source as well and has a chapter that deals specifically with “instructional alternatives,” (209) including active learning (referred to as “discovery learning” in the text). In addition, companies specializing in education techniques, such as Cooperative Learning Resources in California and The Cooperative Learning Trainers in Tucson, Arizona provide literature and seminars for interested teachers.

Conclusions

Active learning is a technique teachers can chose to use with great success, regardless of previous experience. However, success will not happen overnight. Establishing any new teaching style necessitates a continually evolving process of trial and error. Although I believe active learning is a extraordinary educational philosophy, not *every* teacher will be comfortable with it. However, weighing the risks versus benefits of trying active learning, Ellen J. O’Brien says in Shakespeare Quarterly:

Unfortunately we have no guinea pigs but our students, and this predicament makes many of us wary of radical shifts in methodology. Yet without experimentation we can only recycle the same old methods, protected alike from radical failure and radical discovery. (630-31)

Educators owe it to students to make a shift in methodology and to risk failure, for in the process there are radical discoveries.

Appendix A:

SUGGESTED LESSONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR AN ACTIVE LEARNING UNIT
ON SHAKESPEARE

To clearly illustrate active approaches to teaching Shakespeare in high school, I list a series of activities that could be incorporated into a unit. The activities are broken down into four categories: warm-up exercises; introduction to unit/play; body of unit; and conclusions. I will also indicate which class and age would most benefit from the lesson. Of course, categories are subjective and teachers may find other uses for the lessons and activities provided. The following lessons are intended for the *process* of meaning-making not necessarily for a final *product*. They could be applied to any work with Shakespeare and are not geared for a specific script.

Warm-up Exercises

Hi My Name is Will

This warm-up was initially called “Hi, My Name is Joe.” It’s purpose is to warm up the body, mind and voice of the student. A friend of mine, John Salmon, adapted it to be relevant to Shakespeare.

Have students stand in a circle and teach them the following words and rhythm;
Hi (pause) my name is Will (pause) I work (pause) as a poet and a bard, one day (pause)
the Queen came up to me and said “Will (pause) are you busy?” (pause) I said “no”
(pause) so I started writing couplets with my right hand. Students make an in and out

movement with their right hand and keep it going while reciting the words over again, with each cycle adding a new and different body part. A good order of adding action is as follows: left hand, then right knee, left knee, rump, head and finally tongue. The last time when the queen asks if Will is busy the response is a loud “YES!”

This warm-up is effective with any age group working on Shakespeare.

Line and Movement

This is a good warm-up just prior to a rehearsal or performance that helps generate energy and gets students to begin to get into character as well as get a feeling for the other characters in the play. Students generally enjoy a fast paced “acting” warm-up. It is best used with student actors who have a part in a play during the rehearsal process.

Actors/students stand in a circle. The first person (a volunteer or picked by the teacher) chooses a short line or phrase of theirs from the play and says it and does a gesture associated with it. The rest of the group immediately repeats both the words and movement. *Example:* Lysander’s line to Hermia in Midsummer Night’s Dream, “Away you Ethiop!” coupled with a grand arm movement. Continue around the circle until all have gone twice or more picking up speed and intensity each time around the circle.

Freeze Tag

Two people start a scene by getting a suggestion from the other players, like ‘Give us a relationship between two people?’ or ‘Give us an outdoor

activity?’ or ‘Give us an occupation?’ Anything will work as long as it gives them an idea for a scene. . .the scene continues until someone from the sidelines says, ‘Freeze.’ The players freeze exactly as they were and stay that way. The new player comes in and looks at the player whose place they are taking, tags them on the shoulder and takes their position exactly, including facial expression and muscle tension. The tagged player leaves and the new player starts a new scene with new characters and a new location. The new player should try to establish, where, characters, and relationship as clearly as possible (Belt and Stockley 71).

Freeze tag is from Improvisation Through Theatre Sports. A variation of this warm-up is to have students play in character. So, for example, Romeo and Juliet might be improvising a scene when the nurse sees something interesting and calls “Freeze.” In character, the Nurse would tag one of the players “out” and then she would change the scene but would remain in character. This adds an interesting twist to the popular warm-up and gets students in the frame of mind to rehearse or perform.

Introduction to Unit/Play

The following are lessons/exercises/activities that should be used either to introduce a new unit on Shakespeare or to do early in the unit, establishing a tone of active learning..

Audition

This exercise is an effective way to introduce a Shakespeare play and/or to hold auditions for a Shakespeare play. It could also be used simply to introduce a unit in either an English or Drama class. I have used an abbreviated version of it in high school drama workshops successfully. It is very versatile. I will include the entire lesson, which was preparation for later auditions and lasted two full days.

DAY ONE

I. Introduction students to the unit with the following:

1. We're beginning a new unit on Shakespeare which will culminate in a performance of a collage of his plays called Such Stuff as Dreams are Made on.
2. Shakespeare does not have to be unapproachable. My hope is that we will all gain some appreciation for his works and his times and find a new joy in his language rather than be intimidated by hi
3. If the messages in Shakespeare's plays are made personal rather than lofty, actors can become more 'real' and the message more understandable to the audience.
4. This is a learning process for all involved. One does not have to be a scholar or a genius to do Shakespeare.
5. Any questions or concerns?

II. Brainstorm about Shakespeare. Questions to use are: What do you think of when you hear the word "Shakespeare?" What are some common beliefs about him if your thoughts are all positive? Write students' conceptions down for a comparison at the end of the unit.

III. Warm-up: "Hi, my name is Will"

IV. Monologue breakdown

1. Have students divide into four groups
 1. Hand out monologues--one to each group. (Here I picked four monologues from the script we would be using--two for the boys and two for the girls. However, in this initial group work, genders was disregarded).

2. Instruct students to break them down into beats and to title them.
3. Instruct students to create a frozen picture (tableaux) for each beat using the whole group that exemplifies the title/feeling assigned to the beat. For each beat one student should stand apart from the picture who will paraphrase the beat in the next step. There should be at least 3 beats but probably more like 5 or 6.

V. Freeze-frame presentations

1. Each group presents the tableaux they created for the monologues to the class.

DAY TWO

I. Paraphrasing

1. Back in their groups, instruct students to go over the monologue. Others perform the “frozen picture” created yesterday. (Make sure students know that the meaning of individual words is not the important part at this point. Just capture the essence and the emotions to share with the audience.)

II. Paraphrase presentations

1. Each group goes onstage and presents its paraphrased monologues, along with tableaux.

III. Wrap up

1. This is an example of a way to approach Shakespeare. Questions to ask are: Have any preconceptions changed? If your preconceptions were positive, would a person afraid of Shakespeare have changed his/her mind at all?
2. Making the message in some way personal helps clarify the message for both the actor and audience.

IV. Individual work on monologues. Instruction to students:

1. The rest of the time will be spent on individual work on monologues. The boys will choose from the two men’s monologues and use one tomorrow for an audition piece, and the girls will choose from the two women’s monologues and do the same.
2. You may come onstage and do the monologue for me and I will gladly give you some pointers or you can get into groups for each monologue and help each other. In any case, work with others. This should be a time for group work then tonight work on it on your own.
3. Questions?

Three-Dimensional Shakespeare

Conceived by Michael Tolaydo of the Teaching Shakespeare Institute at the Folger Shakespeare Library, this lesson is published in Vol. 6, No. 2. Of The Drama Theatre Teacher. Here I condense Tolaydo's five-page article about how he likes to introduce Shakespeare to his students. It has become known as the Tolaydo Method as is an excellent way to start an English or drama class with Shakespeare.

Tolaydo begins a new play by handing out reproductions of group scenes that are easy to understand and in very large, bold type so that they are easy to read. For the purpose of example he uses the rustics' scene from A Midsummer Night's Dream.

First, Tolaydo hands out a copy of the scene to students, asking them not to look at it yet. Then he does not ask for volunteers but rather he assigns readers to the parts, being careful not to select only strong readers and actors for the more substantial parts. He also disregards gender, asking boys to read girls' parts and vice versa. Of this initial step, Tolaydo says, "I am not casting a play, but involving students in the text and its meanings and along the way hopefully breaking down a few stereotypical presumptions" (Tolaydo 10).

With parts assigned, Tolaydo asks the initial group to read the scene aloud while the others are asked to listen. The aim is not correct pronunciation but to get a sense of the scene. Students are also asked not to worry about acting the parts at this point (as that is not important yet), and also to read loudly enough for all to hear. Once the initial reading is completed, Tolaydo praises the students and selects another group of readers.

The second reading is not to better the first reading but done to familiarize students with the material. Listeners are asked to note differences in readings and new information they discover in the scene.

Tolaydo's next step is to begin a discussion with answers coming from the copied script. The scene is to constitute the entire script and "Students must find lines and ideas in the text to support their views" (Tolaydo 10). Questions he starts off with include the following:

Who are these guys? How do you know? What is going on here? Do these guys know each other? Are they comrades or are they just getting together for the first time to put on a play? Who is the boss of the group? How do you know? Who would like to be the boss of this group? How do you know? Why are they putting on a play? (10)

Next, Tolaydo has a third group read through the scene while the remaining students make notes of new information and circle words or phrases they do not understand. Next is another discussion round with more in-depth questions. The focus remains solely on the copied scene. Tolaydo asks:

Who wrote this play they are going to do? If Quince wrote it, has he written it all himself? Has he adapted some of it? Is it an original story? What do Snug, Snout, Starveling, and Flute think of the play? What do they think of the tension or lack of tension between Quince and Bottom? Why might they be so quiet during the scene? What are they doing during

the scene? Do they want to be in the play? What about their characters? Is Bottom a bully? A loudmouth? An egomaniac? A good actor who wants to help? A leader? Is Snug stupid? Nervous? Slow? A new member of the group? Extremely shy? You can ask similar questions about the other characters...It is IMPORTANT to note that there are several choices of equal value. (Tolaydo 10-11)

Next students are asked to comment on any other aspects of the scene and characters. Finally in this round of discussion, specific and words of trouble are dealt with by peers and teacher. Those words that cannot be defined, the teacher should direct students to a Shakespeare glossary or to the Old English Dictionary.

The next step is to do several more read-throughs and questioning sessions. Students are encouraged to ask questions. At this point Tolaydo sometimes does fast read-throughs in a circle where every student is involved by reading only as far as the next punctuation with the aim of clarity and smoothness. After this round of read-throughs and questions, Tolaydo has students put the scene "on its feet" (Tolaydo 11).

Tolaydo selects a group of students to act while the remainder direct the scene. All are involved in this process. Before the scene is actually staged, several questions must be answered using the script as a guide. Locale and time need to be established as well as entrances and exits and even what the location specifically would look like. Also discussed at this point is who is the most important person in the scene and how does the group implement the decisions made earlier about the various characters?

Using the directors, advice, actors perform the scene. This run-through is followed by a discussion of what worked and did not work and what needs to be changed for the next time. A second run-through is done and changes are added based on the earlier discussion.

Tolaydo wraps up the class by discussing the process of putting on a scene. “Is it as complicated as they would have thought? Why? Why not?” (Tolaydo 12). He also suggests discussing the process they used to create the scene and its advantages. A possible follow up to this lesson is assigning students to present the scene in a different location and with different characteristics.

Tolaydo sums up his article with a paragraph that is an explanation of active learning:

The students- without the aid of notes, translation, or ‘helpful’ explanatory material from the teacher- have come to understand what’s happening in a scene from a Shakespeare play by working through the process of getting the scene from the page into performance. During this process students have acquired important tools and experience: they have acquired Shakespearean language, acted out parts, engaged in literary analysis of a scene, and begun to establish a collaborative and energetic relationship with the playwright. (Tolaydo 12)

The Tolaydo method is a long and complex one with teacher preparation necessary. It is also an excellent example of active learning and a way to start a new unit on Shakespeare or one of his plays.

Monsters (By Elizabeth Oakes)

This exercise was created specifically for an introduction to The Tempest and could be used in either drama or English classes. Variations on it could be used for other plays. “Revenge” could be the topic for Hamlet or “jealousy” for Othello. Oakes’s exercise is as follows:

Write the word ‘monster’ on the board and ask students to free-associate.

What word comes to mind? . . . After the students know the play from reading, viewing, or enacting it write the word ‘Caliban’ on the board, and ask them to give a description (one word if possible) that fits him.

Compare this list of words with the first list(s) and see where they coincide and where they diverge. Is Caliban a stereotypical monster or savage, or has Shakespeare made him a more complex character? . . . One might also discuss Prospero. How is he different from today’s characters who must fight monsters? How are the monsters of our time controlled? By magic? By force? With human ingenuity? (Oakes 36)

This is an exercise for discussing the mood of a play and getting students to think about subjects dealt with in the play. It will also help students to see links between the world of the play and their own world.

Pre-play Scenes (By Elfie Israel)

This exercise, as with the previous one, was created for a specific play covered in an English class, Macbeth, but could easily be adapted for other plays and for a drama class. Israel's pre-play activity for Macbeth is the following.

Before seeing *Macbeth* the students wrote and acted out their own skits on ambition, power, fair, foul, betrayal, wife, fortune. *Fair* and *Foul* became two spectators at a baseball game, yelling the words out and commentating on the referee's calls. *Power* showed the incremental abuse of it. How much better this was than a lecture on themes! (Israel 69)

As an introduction to the themes in Macbeth, Israel piqued students' curiosity and gave them an opportunity to find Shakespeare's relevancy for their own lives.

Body of Unit/Play

The following exercises are useful during the body of a unit on Shakespeare or during the rehearsal of one of his plays. They could be useful in either drama or English classes.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is a simple but effective way to get students to really think about what they are saying. By no means original on my part, I found paraphrasing useful during the rehearsal process of Such Stuff as Dreams are Made On at Sahuaro High School. Students rehearse the entire play scene by scene by paraphrasing. This was a rather long process and used two to three class periods per act, but it was effective. Students were forced to put Shakespeare's words into their own words, thereby creating "ownership" of the lines. Surprisingly, students generally came up with accurate interpretations when faced with this task. When they needed it, I helped lead them in the "right" direction. At the time of the paraphrasing, I questioned the time involved in the exercise. Performances proved to me that it was worthwhile. Students had a feel for the material and were much more able to correct themselves if lines were missed than if we had not taken the time to paraphrase.

Paraphrasing is also useful in many other formats. Any exercise or lesson that asks students to put Shakespeare's words into their own words is useful in getting students to more clearly understand and "connect" with the material.

Journal Keeping

There are many different ways a journal can be used effectively in an active unit on Shakespeare. A journal can be used with adaptation in any type of class for any level of student. Here are a few journal uses that I find interesting.

The Production Notebook (From Teaching Shakespeare by Veronica O'Brien 78-81)

Students take on the role of producer for the play and keep a production journal addressing a different production issue each day. The purpose and focus is meaning making: "The emphasis is on meaning. For instance, whether Banquo's ghost enters or not is a legitimate problem; how he enters (if he does) or what to use for his 'gory locks' is not" (78). The focus then is to get students thinking about the meaning of the whole production and seeing the play from a point beyond the actor. In doing such a notebook, I would add to O'Brien's suggestions that students should discuss costume, set, and makeup choices, and how those choices affect the meaning of the play as a whole. With an approach such as this, the possibilities are virtually endless.

Pupil as Annotator (From Teaching Shakespeare by Veronica O'Brien 36-39)

Students keep a journal through the rehearsal or reading process (drama or English class). Each day the teacher poses a question to be answered there. For example, "What images do you notice associated with your character? And how do they affect your interpretation?" (36) or "What was your character doing prior to entering for the first time?" (36). These questions should be assigned as daily homework. Teachers occasionally could ask students to write about something in the play that is important to their character. One of the questions posed would be argued weekly in a panel discussion

with two or three teams of “experts” assigned to present opposing points of view, for example, “Is Prince Harry suitable to be King?” (39).

Character Journal (Loosely taken from Cheryl Christian in The Leaflet 24-26)

Students make daily journal entries from the point of view of their character. The teacher provides possible topics, such as: who you interacted with today, something interesting that happened to you today, how you feel about another person or how you came to be involved in a particular situation. Students would also be asked to conduct a dialogue between themselves and their character. Journal responses would be made by the character and then reflected upon by the student. This journal is also a place to have “silent scripts” conducted. With silent scripts, students are asked to write down their internal monologue (what they are thinking beyond the words they speak) for their different scenes.

Daily Dialogue Journal (From a class I took at the U of A)

This is a format for question and answer, and student dialogue, but is very useful only with very reliable students. In the final five to ten minutes of class every day, the teacher poses a question that students are to reflect about in their journals--for example, the earlier question, “Is Prince Harry suitable to be King?” Students should respond and then trade journals with another in class to take home. As homework, students read their peer’s response to the question and react to it. The following day, journals are returned to

rightful owners and the process continues. In order for this to be effective, several perimeters need to be set. Students need to exchange with the same person no more than once in a two week period; dialogue needs to pertain only to the topic and students need to return the journal even if not attending school that day. On a bi-weekly basis journals are collected for perusal by the teacher. This is a very rewarding process if done with mature students.

Character Trial (From Veronica O'Brien in Teaching Shakespeare pages 40- 46.)

An effective method for character analysis in either English or drama classes, O'Brien suggests staging a trial of a major character in a play using the whole class to make up the members of the courtroom. For example, Romeo would be on trial, and other characters would take the role of defense and prosecution lawyers and witnesses. The remaining cast members would serve as jury for the trial. This would be a way to get students to explore the minds of their characters effectively. Students could keep a journal of events and their reflections upon them.

Video

There are numerous uses for video in a unit on Shakespeare. Student performances can be taped and viewed in class for critique as well as professional video being shown. Professional video however, should be shown only after students have read

and discussed a play and had a chance to form their own opinions. Veronica O'Brien confirms this idea:

. . .there is much to be said for seeing a performance after, not before, a reading: they watch a play they know with more attentiveness, so that they see, hear, understand more. A television or video tape version should never precede an active classroom reading. The small translation is too reductive of the actual range of the original; the inevitable falsification of the stage picture hinders rather than helps efforts to develop the skills of inward seeing while the play is being read. (O'Brien 2)

O'Brien's comments are more aimed at English classes rather than drama classes but the same holds true for those.

The use of video, both professional and student, helps increase students' choices by allowing them an opportunity for meaning-making. They internalize information rather than learn a list of facts.

A Defense of Shakespeare (From Sidney Homan, ed., Shakespeare and the Triple Play. Chapter by Suzanne Burr)

This exercise created by Suzanne Burr suggests a writing assignment to get students thinking about Shakespeare's language and characters. Although most appropriate for an English class, drama students could be given this exercise as a possible journal entry assignment. Burr suggests having students write an essay about

Shakespeare “to defend his work to an imaginary board of supervisors seeking to eliminate this ‘obscene’ material from high school and college libraries” (211). In other words, this exercise is to be a discussion of the bawdiness in Shakespeare--why it is there and how similar or different it is from obscenities in books, TV and films (211). This exercise will get students involved not only in Shakespeare’s language and characters but in issues of censorship as well. It also has the potential of pointing out to students that Shakespeare is not an “untouchable” author. He has his light and bawdy sides as well.

Image Symphony (Developed at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, dictated by Joan Langley)

“In this exercise, students use their entire bodies to explore the sounds as well as the meanings of the words in the play’s imagery. You, as side coach, will conduct” (Langley 14). This eight step exercise is an excellent way to get students to “feel” Shakespeare. The following are the eight steps.

1. Ask students to go through the text you are studying and compile a list of the images.
2. Group five or six images together.
3. Divide the students into teams and assign each team a group of images. Each student within the team is given one image to work on. Each individual must devise a way to express her or his image vocally and physically. . .Allow five minutes for individual exploration. Once The individuals have worked up their images, each group puts all their images together...Allow

ten minutes for group rehearsal. 4. Have each group make their presentation with the other groups as audience. . .5. Place the teams in different areas of the classroom. Make sure each group has enough room to perform their images. 6. Conduct. Agree on signals for louder, softer, faster and slower so that as you conduct you can get variation. . .7. Ask each student to chose a single word from his or her image. Move the teams closer together and conduct the one word symphony. . . 8. Talk about the experience. What did you learn from bringing an image into the whole body? How did it feel? What did you learn from watching the other teams? What did the exercise reveal about the play? (Langley 14-15)

This exercise is a good way to get students to use their whole body to explore Shakespeare and makes his work less daunting by allowing a true “hands-on” experience.

Exploring Shakespeare's Language (Taken from Joan Langley describing an exercise in Cecily Barry's The Actor and His Text)

This exercise is a good one in either the beginning or body of a unit on Shakespeare. It is an excellent way to explore the rhythms in a speech, as well as a way to discover the nuances of a character. It also creates group cohesion. Here I quote the exercise at length:

1. Select a speech with a variety of actable images to work on. An excellent example is King Henry's speech from *Henry V* "Once more unto the breach, dear friends. . ." 2. Ask the entire group to form a circle. Assign each student a phrase of the speech (in sequence). Have them speak the speech through, each person saying their phrase in order around the circle. Ask the group to speak it through again, this time in a whisper. Next have each person sing the last word of the phrase. Then have them speak only the vowel sounds in their phrase. Then only the consonant sounds. Now speak the entire speech through again. Discuss what they discovered about the sounds and qualities of the piece. What did it feel like to only speak the consonants, the vowels, so sing, to whisper? What was discovered about Henry's emotional state? 3. Ask each student to find a place in the room to work on his or her own. Each individual is to select one word from his or her phrase and devise a way to express the word vocally and physically. The expression does not need to make literal sense, it can be abstract. Encourage them to be bold. After a few minutes ask the students to walk around the room and greet each other with the expression of their word. 4. Now ask the students to return to their place in the room and explore their entire phrase in the same manner. Allow about five minutes for individual exploration. 5. Now bring the entire group back together in the circle. Now you are going to put the speech

back together in sequence. Remind them that collectively they are Henry V, and their objective is to inspire the soldiers to return to battle. Then begin. After the speech is completed, talk about what was discovered in the language. How are the sounds as well as the words expressive? What did they learn from each others (sic) explorations? What did they find out about *Henry V*? (qtd in Langley 16)

In her conclusion Langley expresses her feelings about using such active learning techniques as *Image Symphony* and *Exploring Shakespeare's Language*. She says the following about the two exercises.

I have used these exercises with junior high and high school students and adults, and in every case, I have seen magic happen. I have heard the language spoken beautifully, soulfully. I have seen even the most resistant student blossom and make discoveries. Most importantly, I have seen students *own* Shakespeare. The images, the speeches become your students' words, thoughts, feelings. And Shakespeare is indeed ours to own, to love and to share. (Langley 16)

Conclusions

The following are a few ways teacher might consider wrapping up a unit on Shakespeare. In all cases, I suggest some kind of evaluation process, one by which students assess their learning process and growth as learners. What form that takes can

be flexible, but in active learning, this type of conclusion is necessary. Here are a few possibilities for concluding a Shakespeare unit as well as a suggestion for a final assessment.

Collage

In a drama class a good way to conclude a unit on Shakespeare is through a performance. For this I suggest a collage of his work. A collage gives students exposure to a wide variety of his work and his characters. The script I used during my student teaching was a superb example of this type of collage but is unfortunately out of print. It is called Such Stuff as Dreams are Made On, is edited by Anne Sandoe-Donadio, and covers a broad base of his plays. If a published collage is not available, teachers and students can work together to create their own. Themes or types of characters could be the focus. There are infinite ways to cut and paste Shakespeare's plays to create a desired compilation.

A Shakespeare Festival (As discussed by Tony Beaumier)

A middle school teacher described the evolution of his work with Shakespeare with sixth through eighth grade students in an article in English Journal. He worked specifically with middle school students, but his ideas could easily be adapted to work with elementary students through university students. He described a variety of activities

that happen in an annual, day-long event that culminates work on Shakespeare. Any or all of these activities could be used in either English or drama classes.

A school wide festival is held outside every spring. Three acting areas are roped off and named by students, for example, “Verona Stage or Birnam Wood Stage” (Beaumier 50), and different acting troupes from his various classes perform throughout the morning. They perform scenes taken from acting texts of Shakespeare’s plays designed for young students (the particular series he uses is *Shakespeare for Young People* from Swan Books in Fair Oaks California). After the acting concludes, there is a jousting competition using horses made of hula hoops and fabric heads, and wooden jousting sticks made of wooden poles with sponge tips. Teachers costumed in Elizabethan garb preside over the competition. Next is an “Elizabethan feast” of “roasted chicken and potatoes, corn on the cob, loaves of bread, cake and strawberries” (Beaumier 50) prepared by kitchen workers wearing Elizabethan-style hats. After lunch, an Elizabethan marketplace completes the day. Parents, students and teachers man craft booths, hold maypole dancing, play human chess and play carnival games with an Elizabethan theme. There are even booths with genuine Elizabethan food samples.

This festival is a wonderful way to conclude work on Shakespeare. For the author and his school, it has become a grand annual tradition. However, the same festival could be created in one classroom on a smaller scale. Although a fun and exciting event, the experience with Shakespeare is not lost. Beaumier said this of the event and the students’ experience:

Our students do master the language, the plots and the nuances. More importantly they will not think back on their sixth-grade experience with Shakespeare and grimace. . . They will remember a time of celebration, a (time) of performing in costume and on stage in front of an audience, the way Shakespeare himself would have wanted. (50)

Self-Assessment

The most effective self-assessment process can suggest came from a class I took at the University of Arizona from Assistant Professor Karen Husted. The class was on teaching methods and the assignment was a written as well as an oral assessment of ourselves over the semester. We were to turn in a paper of unspecified length about our growth as teachers and learners. The purpose was to force students to evaluate themselves and delve into their own learning skills and processes. After turning in the paper on the final day of class, professor and students sat in a circle and shared our thoughts on our growth. The wide variety of things individuals took from the same class was interesting.

This was an effective evaluation too. Students were asked to reflect on the learning process they used and to see themselves as evolving, life-long learners. Knowledge was not viewed as finite, rather something one continues to acquire. Using an active learning process and concluding with this type of evaluation, students became *learners* rather than simply *learned* in a subject.

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