

***Drama and Global Citizenship in the High School Classroom:
Student Response and Teacher Growth***

The Dream

One night, I had a dream that I was a double agent: student and researcher. It all started the day before, when a professor from my freshman year of college told me that she was using theater games in one of her freshman seminar classes. I immediately realized that this could not be a coincidence, I ran into Dr. Quenby Hughes for a reason, and that reason was to help me inform my research. That night, as I got ready to go to sleep, I sent an email to Dr. Hughes asking if I could observe or even take her class next semester. As I fell asleep, I began to imagine myself as a spy, searching for the truth and seeking out connections between drama pedagogy and theater games in the classroom, and the idea of our students as global citizens.

There I was, sitting in the classroom, surrounded by what looked like, uninterested college freshman that were half-listening to the lecturing professor. A student in the front row kept turning around and glaring at me with suspicion in his eyes, and I knew that he was on to me; I had to hide my intentions. I secretly took notes on student behavior and responses to the teacher as she transitioned into the theater game that accompanied her lecture. She passed out a script about the Boston Tea Party and asked for volunteers to read for the parts, one girl reluctantly rose her hand, so the professor picked students out of the crowd...

As the students began to read the lines, they became more engaged. The comedic relief worked into the script eventually got the crowd of students laughing, and before I knew it, the entire class was participating, reading out lines of bystanders removed from

the scene, and calling to actors to use classroom objects as props. Flash forward to the end of the scene and everyone claps. The young man who had glared at me gives a standing ovation, and I saw that we had finally broken through to them. The tired professor seems content in her abilities and the enjoyment of her students and leads a lively conversation about why the Boston Tea Party is important and what events it is relevant to today. One student draws conclusions between the Black Lives Matter protests and the Boston Tea Party, but before I hear her rationale, I hear an alarm. As I lay in bed, I realize that I'd had a breakthrough; I finally busted through the block I had been coming up against for a while in my research, I determined who I wanted to be as a researcher – and it all happened while I slept.

The Perfect Classroom

I think that, as a future teacher, I imagine my perfect classroom. The classroom from my dream is literally my “dream” classroom! It is important to recognize my own wants and needs for a classroom. Every action that I take is driven by my teaching identity and my personal pedagogy. I hope that my classrooms will be areas of discovery through alternative learning methods, but ultimately, it will depend on the classroom chemistry and the hopes of the students.

I have had an interest in theater as an educational tool - specifically the use of theater games - ever since I was in the 5th grade at the Henry Barnard School. My classroom teacher, Sharon Fennessey, introduced drama pedagogy into our classroom. Dr. Sharon Fennessey wrote several books in the 1980s on drama and theater games in the classroom, the most prominent of which is titled: *History in the Spotlight: Creative*

Drama and Theatre Practices for the Social Studies Classroom. We used techniques from her book and learned the history of the American Revolution through drama and theater games over the course of that school year. This culminated with a play, which Mrs. Fennessey had written, that we performed about the Boston Massacre. My creative 5th grade class made me want to not only participate in theater throughout the rest of my educational career, but also created a drive in me to become a social studies and history teacher, a dream which I am in the process of actualizing today.

I love and respect history, but I am *not* a history teacher, and it is important for me to make the distinction between history and social studies, because they are not the same (Evans, 2006, pp. 317). In the simplest sense, history is seen as a basic, traditional study of past events – all of which have contributed to shaping our world. Social studies, on the other hand, does not just look at accounts and descriptions of people who lived thousands of years ago. It looks at how their societies were shaped by their sociocultural, economic, and political practices; it looks at how the physicality of place changes the lives of people, and how and why people did what has been recorded in history; “social studies...[is a] “social stew”,” (Evans, 2006, pp. 319). When I say that I have always been interested in history, I don’t just mean looking at what happened – I am interested in the analysis of and connections between the past and present.

Purpose of the Study

As a future social studies educator, I am very invested in the theoretical frameworks of social justice, social action, and global consciousness. I would like my students to leave my classroom mindful of their standing in the world around them – the

situations in their homes and communities, but also in the region, country, and world today – and for them to have practiced the basic skills of verbalization that would help them to have mindful discussions. In this ever-globalized world, I want to prepare students who can understand and be active participants in situations going on across the planet. Global consciousness involves being in tune with things occurring in the world around you (Robertson & Inglis, 2004), and is a simple practice in our ever-connected global society. In their article, “From Teaching Globalization to Nurturing Global Consciousness,” from the book *Learning in the Global Era* by Marcelo Suarez-Orozco, Mansilla and Gardner define global consciousness as “a mindful way of *being* in the world today,” (2007, p. 48). Social justice, however, is nothing without action; students can discuss the inherent wrongs in our society, but that does not help anyone if no action is taken to reverse it! Fostering this classroom atmosphere should not be difficult, but encouraging our students to develop their “global citizen identity” is a bit more challenging. I plan to begin addressing this preparation of global citizens from a research standpoint.

Drama and Global Citizenship in the High School Classroom will hopefully answer the following question: *How do students respond to the use of social justice informed drama pedagogy to introduce or strengthen the concepts of global consciousness and global citizenship?* I would like to see how high school students respond to the usage of these drama techniques in their social studies/history classroom. I traveled to a high school and created a partnership with a teacher who would be willing to implement drama techniques her classroom. I informed teachers, students and parents

about the implementation of these techniques, and obtained surveys, collected reflection journals, taught the lessons and observed reactions of students, and interviewed the teacher. I simultaneously acted as a participant researcher (Mack, 2005, p.13) in a college class using similar techniques.

The Question

Crafting my research question was a long and tiring process that took months to complete. I finally formed and operationalized my question in November 2017, the day of the Presidential Election, because that day that helped me to recognize the fact that global consciousness is extremely important for our students. How can we expect these young people to be future leaders if they are not taught what the rest of the world is like? After watching Chimamanda Adichie's "The danger of a single story" TED talk, I realized that the single American perspective is not the answer for our students, and in my ideal classroom, I hope that my students will be conscious and motivated to make a change (Adichie, 2009). I arrived at the final iteration of my question after asking myself the following: How does the use of drama pedagogy in the 7-12 classroom (especially in the form of role-play) foster a sense of global community? How do students feel connected, and what connections do students have to the history of a group of people or a place after performing such activities? How do students try on the identity of global citizens? How do students see themselves as global citizens? How and why do we nurture global citizenry, and why is it relevant now? And what factors do enacting agency and co-constructing a community with our students play in these questions? Would students be able to use drama pedagogy to learn about or reinforce the ideas of global

consciousness and global citizenship? I believed the answer would be yes, I felt as though the question I settled on could be operationalized and would yield interpretable results.

Key Terms and Definitions, Literature Review:

The idea of using drama pedagogy to foster global citizenship in a college or high school level classroom is something that I did not find a lot of research on, but all of these ideas - including drama pedagogy and role-play, senses of community, citizenship, and globalism, identity and lenses of power, place, and agency - are grounded ideas, as we will further explore. My research uses these definitions and research studies as a framework.

Drama Pedagogy

Pedagogy is defined as the “processes and practices or methods of teaching and learning,” (Koehler & Mishra, 2009, p. 64). The application of certain methods to education falls under categories of different types of pedagogical approaches. For example, if a teacher pairs subject matters to make a topic more relevant, he or she uses the pedagogical approach of interdisciplinary learning (Learning for a Sustainable Future, 2016). Drama pedagogy is a type of differentiated instruction – the use of drama and theater to teach lessons within a classroom setting. This system can range from theater improvisation games to role-play activities, like the one used in this study.

The usage of drama pedagogy in the classroom, specifically theater games such as role-play, helps improve student concentration, confidence, cooperation, and problem solving, and builds both an individual’s verbal and nonverbal communication skills among groups (Fennessey, 2000; Thomas & Mulvey, 2008). This method of teaching is

not only useful, but receives great responses from students. Dr. Quenby Hughes, a professor at Rhode Island College who uses drama pedagogy in her classroom (personal conversation, October 2016), said that it, “keeps students engaged, even if they were not truly prepared for class.” Drama pedagogy is an easy way for teachers to be creative in their lessons, and helps in making overarching ideas and attitudes more concrete in the mind of the student. Theater games are a simple way to incorporate drama pedagogy in the classroom; the technique I am focusing on is role-play.

Role-play

Role-play games are adapted from the Piagetian theory of assimilation (Blanter, 2009). During a role-play game, students will use what they know and what they have learned about a given topic to respond to the stimulus in an appropriate way. Role-play can be improvisation or script-based.

Global Citizenship

According to Lynn Davies (2006), citizenship “has implications both of rights and responsibilities, of duties and entitlements.” Citizenship is a state of belonging, you can be the citizen of a country, but it is hard to conceptualize being a citizen of the world – especially because the scope of being an active member is so large. Oxfam International is a British-based non-governmental organization that started in 1942, but was formalized in 1995. Oxfam envisions “a just world without poverty,” and their mission is “to create lasting solutions to poverty, hunger, and social injustice” (Oxfam, 2016).

For this reason, I believe that Oxfam is the perfect organization to introduce our students to the idea of global citizenship. Oxfam’s 1997 “Curriculum for Global

Citizenship defines a global citizen “as someone who ‘knows how the world works, is outraged by injustice and who is both willing and enabled to take action to meet this global challenge’ (Richardson, 1997, p. 1).” This definition proves that empathy is not a driving force for change, which may upset the educational balance focused around exams that we have established in this country (Davies, 2006).

Oxfam states (1997):

We see the Global Citizen as someone who:

- is aware of the wider world and has a sense of their own role as a world citizen
- respects and values diversity
- has an understanding of how the world works economically, politically, socially, culturally, technologically and environmentally
- is outraged by social injustice
- participates in and contributes to the community at a range of levels from the local to the global
- is willing to act to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place
- takes responsibility for their actions. (Davies, 2006)

This specific set of standards helps us to conceptualize the seemingly daunting idea of global citizenship, but if these standards have to be expressly met, it will be difficult to prove that students are acting as global citizens. That is why this study aims to allow students to try on the theoretical identity of a global citizen. With these specific traits (some of which are hard to quantify/qualify), it would be hard to find someone who fits every description, therefore based on Oxfam’s definition (which is a supported classification), it can be concluded that it is very difficult to find a perfect example of a global citizen. For this reason, I believe that we should strive for our students to achieve at least three or four of the qualities listed above; I used this goal in structuring my lessons for the study.

Community

The term “community” is relatively unique in that the same term is often used universally for groups of people that vary in size, scope, and context. Simplistically, community equates commonality, and what is more common than being a member of the human race? In their article on community health, Thomas and Mulvey (2008) argue that using the arts in classrooms can enhance student learning as well as foster a sense of community.

...the arts promote student understandings of the values, goals, and practices of culturally competent work and enable constructive partnerships with diverse community groups...to more fully participate in their learning, take more risks, and grow more comfortable and capable dealing with difficult concepts and contentious social issues...facilitates successful experiential learning outside the classroom...raise questions about power for partners and students...in the pursuit of social change (Thomas and Mulvey, 2008, p. 239).

Thomas and Mulvey show in their article that they wish to incorporate elements of a student’s neighborhood, city, or state “community” into the classroom by having partnerships between community members, students, and teachers. My study aims to see what happens when students are introduced to the topics of citizenship and participating in their communities, but on a bigger scale than Thomas and Mulvey had set out to examine. What will happen if teachers prepare students to interact in their communities, without a teacher provoking the action? This is where students' reflection journals – and guiding questions – will play a part. The whole concept of global citizenship revolves around the agency and creativity of the student themselves.

Identity and Agency

While the teachers did a large majority of the paper work and planned lessons, the implementation of these values will be in the hands of the students. They must be guided by willing individuals in order to successfully enact these virtues within their own lives. Before students can participate in these global community activities, they must first be able to identify some of the lenses through which they see the world so that they may become aware of their personal biases and how their lives affect their beliefs and opinions.

Lenses of Power

I know that I have bias and privilege. I look at the world through the lens of a cis-gender white Christian woman from an upper-middle class family, and I was privileged enough to have an education that has allowed me to see – but, have not been privileged enough to directly experience - the injustice, racism, and prejudice of the world from many points of view. I consider myself lucky that I have friends of many races, genders, ethnicities, and socioeconomic standings, from many places all over the world. I learn about their experiences to help enhance and expand my worldview on a daily basis, and this is a privilege that not many people have. My skin tone, facial structure, and multilingualism (that I learned in school), has had me confused for other races in the past, and I just last year I experienced minimal (comparatively to some of my peers) racism while traveling through the Southeast United States (specifically Alabama). But I do not claim to have experienced true racism or sacrifice. When I have experienced racism in my world, it has not usually been directed at me, because I am usually perceived as white. Racism seems to me something that one must endure every day of their lives, and

that occurs no matter who you are with. My parents have worked hard so that I have very rarely made sacrifices in my life; I live my life comfortably with infrequent worries about my personal or familial financial situation, health, etc. I have nonetheless had these experiences, and they have contributed to my worldview. I hope that my students may also be able to experience the power that race and privilege have, but in a safe classroom environment where students can attempt to correct inherent wrongs.

My family, starting with my paternal great-grandparents who immigrated here from Italy, and my maternal ancestors who founded the religious freedom found in Rhode Island, helped me to get where I am today. My grandmothers both had parents who died when they were young, and they stopped their education during or right after high school to support their families. My parents, who worked during their secondary education, have contributed to get my family to where we are, and I am a proud second-generation college student whose maternal family has been in America for hundreds of years.

My parents have been self-proclaimed Civil Rights advocates since their youth in the late 1960s, so I had the privilege of growing up in a household that valued multiple perspectives. My parents taught us how to treat those who seem “different” than we are, and often used their life experiences to show us that we are all unique, but we are all the same. Due to my education both at home and in my classrooms, I also recognize that the students that I will work with will be a unique set of people. Just like me, they will all have their own unique lens with which they view the world, and that’s why this research will not be perfect. It will not be universal, but it may help to find a place for educators to

begin. I want my students to understand their history and their standing in life and use the privileges they have to make a difference in the world, and that starts with this research.

In the journal that I kept throughout this research process, I recorded an entry on community and its effects on my study. As a member of the *Knightstown community, a graduate of Knightstown High School, and student at RIC (the alma mater of the assistant superintendent), there were existing conditions that would allow for my research to be accepted more easily than “an outsider” – this is basically what I was called when I approached the administration of *Heron High School about conducting research there. Even though I grew up in Heron, and spent most of my life there, I was never a part of the school system and participated in the community in a very minor way. When I approached Knightstown High School’s administration, I was welcomed as “one of their own.” Although I worked hard to put together this project, I do believe that a bias existed that allowed me the privilege of conducting my research in Knightstown High School.

Knightstown is one of the largest towns in Rhode Island, and Heron is one of the smallest. Though Knightstown is large in size, the sense of community in the town is very powerful. People really get to know one-another in Knightstown, but I never really felt that community bond in Heron, maybe because I was not as involved as I was in Knightstown. This sense of community helped foster the connections that helped me to get a meeting with the administration and pitch my idea, and the experimental nature of the school assisted me in my pitch for this project being so quickly and widely approved.

Power

My study at its roots is investigating the power dynamics that have been instilled in American high school students who I believe are products of their society. Our students will attempt to identify and hash out an understanding of power, privilege, and hierarchical systems that exist not only among them in a “successful” RI high school, but also in the greater scheme of things, in their world.

In my research for this project and throughout my life studying history, one person who stood out for his narrative on power is Niccolo Machiavelli. Machiavelli is well known for writing *The Prince* (1532), an investigation of power written in Renaissance-period Italy, which is directed at Lorenzo de Medici, a man from the most powerful family in Venice at the time. Machiavelli investigates the dynamics between “the people” and “the nobles.” He poses the question to Lorenzo: Who wants you in power? The majority or minority? This “guide” to ruling is quite important to analyze when discussing power in the way this study does, as the book was written by a man who had no relative power until he spoke out.

One of the most interesting quotations comes from Chapter IX of *The Prince*: “...people do not wish to be ruled nor oppressed by the nobles, and the nobles wish to rule and oppress the people; and from these two opposite desires there arises in cities one of three results, either a principality, self-government, or anarchy,” (*The Prince*, Ch. IX). Machiavelli offers three options to a group of people who are divided by socioeconomics, and uses monetary or fiscal power to guide his analysis of the power dynamics. But the prince was written to correlate directly to Venice and the problem of the Medici family’s rule. Power does not necessarily have to be fiscal, it is just a common and easily

quantifiable measure of power, other types of power are physical, intellectual, and persuasive; it can be argued that *The Prince* demonstrates that Machiavelli's handle on intellectual and persuasive power.

Another man who uses Machiavelli to discuss his own take on power is Augusto Boal. Boal explains in his book *Theater of the Oppressed* (1974, p. 23-65), that power can be monetary or fiscal, and that in the past, fiscal power has been used to support the arts. The "formalization of arts" can be exemplified by such activities as going to an art gallery or to the theater, but Boal poses the question: where does the theater actually exist? Art is driven by power, and therefore is popularized. Boal believes that theater is a "tool of the bourgeois," that represented (in the past) only what was funded. Other instances of this can be seen in the use of the arts in the Dark Ages (Medieval times); what survived then and was produced were art pieces relating to the Church, because the Church had the fiscal power (1974, p.62).

Boal's idea, and something that I used in this research project, focuses on "flipping the system on its head." Using theater in a public classroom, with minimal structure, allows all students in that class to participate, and encouraging creativity. Of course this is difficult to execute due to the restrictions put in place by the high school, such as: the school administration choosing the classroom to participate, parent permissions, curriculum standards, and the like. Boal suggested giving power to the powerless, citing children's natural usage of playing and role-play in their daily lives. I believe that all people, regardless of age or education, have power in some shape, they

just need to learn how to utilize it; however for the argument of power in my study, the “powerless” shall be considered children and students.

Boal also analyzes the term “Bourgeoisie God” and explains their role as the proprietor, having been granted riches by God’s will or plan (1974, p.60). He emphasizes the difference between noble power and bourgeoisie power, bourgeoisie power is not noble power given by god, it is monetary power, virtu, and praxis. It is the seizing of power by someone who “has no right,” to do so, and that is the type of empowerment that I believe students should be shown, and encouraged to enact using their own agency.

This study will allow students to try on theoretical identities aimed to liberate them from the preconceptions in which they live. My goal is to allow students the opportunity to try on the identities or roles of global citizen and artist, in a broad sense, and open the pathways for them to discover the conclusions about life that I have reached: that the world does not belong to you, you belong to the world, and that perfection is not realistic.

Another take on power discussed by Boal in *Theater of the Oppressed* comes from the Greek philosopher Aristotle, who suggests that there is inherent injustice in the world, and that the solution is not equality, but proportionality. This is an idea very similar to one I was introduced to in my Foundations of Education course at Rhode Island College, which focused on equity in public schools or school systems rather than equality. During the course term, we had many discussions. Topics included a duty to act on behalf of students in the classroom, and for lack of a better term, to “fight the system.” Boal discusses the repressive function of theater, and its ability to create “catharsis” in

the people. Aristotle believed that sometimes, war is necessary, and in this context that war would be carried out by the lower class in the form of rebellion against injustice (1974, p.47).

Boal and Oxfam

Where Augusto Boal and Oxfam's definition of global citizenship intersect is interesting, because while either can exist without a frame of reference for the other, they also coexist rather well. The Oxfam's Curriculum for Global Citizenship states that a global citizen holds these values: the desire to eradicate poverty, is enraged by social injustice, knows how the world works, is willing and enabled to take action. Boal believes that education is the enabler and that empathy is not a driving force.

Boal (1974) equates the rise of individualism to the bourgeoisie class, when he suggests that man became his own master when feudalism ended and the free market system began. This is where I find a difference between Boal's philosophy and my personal philosophy - one that I see as more of a modern idea. In the United States, individualism is highly valued, and many people tend to think of individualism as a powerful tool that leads to personal success, and in turn the success of the nation. This idea has been challenged in recent years, specifically in 2012 by William E. Hudson in *American Democracy in Peril: Eight Challenges to America's Future*. One of the main issues that Hudson discusses in his book is what he refers to as "Radical Individualism." In essence, this idea is that the more people begin to think solely about themselves, the less effective democracy is. Hudson suggests that if the pattern of "radical individualism" - and the idea that one's civil rights matter more than their neighbors' rights - continues,

democracy in and of itself will cease to exist due to a lack of participation and sacrifice of one's personal beliefs for the rights of another.

Implementing Power: Propaganda

When studying Soviet history over the past year, I wondered: How do you implement power and use it to manipulate your constituency? In his article, *New Thinking in Soviet Propaganda* (1969), Benn writes: “‘Pedagogy’, [Stepakov] explains, is in its modern social understanding: the science of instructing and educating people, the science of the all-round moulding of the personality and of the collective. And propaganda? This is a powerful instrument for the ideological enlightenment of the working people, for their communist education. This means that to conduct propaganda activity successfully without relying on pedagogy is utterly impossible,” (Benn, 1969).

Reading about Soviet propaganda made me think of this project, and while I agree with Stepakov and Benn about the nature of pedagogy and propaganda, I realized that I do not want to attempt to use the students' education as a weapon against them. My goal is to give these students a free space that attempts to separate from the society in which they have been placed, but is this just another form of propaganda? Is my project just trying to force new “moulding” on these students? What instruments am I using?

The Gendered Struggle

While researching and reading through literature for this study, I realized that the female researchers, while strong and intelligent, were all educators, and the male researchers were all the framers and thinkers. As a young woman growing up in the United States, I have always looked for strong female role models, and while I found

some around me, I realized many years ago that I felt most moved and empowered by male thinkers, which could be due to the volume of research done by men.

It is a strange realization for me that the majority of my role models are men. When asked who I would love to go back into the past and meet, my answer is Mahatma Gandhi. When asked who the most influential person in American History was, I respond either James Madison or Thomas Jefferson (both men were brilliant thinkers and incredible writers, social lives aside). The most influential teacher in my life was a man. I say that this is surprising because, as a woman and a feminist, I see the things that women are capable of, and want their power to be strengthened, especially as a future classroom teacher.

During my literature review, I came to the conclusion that there is an inherent problem in academia. Women still have the frame of “teacher,” while men are allowed to be the “free thinkers.” I hope to change this with my research and my study. Perhaps one day, a student will name me as their favorite teacher - but how incredible would it be if a young woman who is an aspiring educational researcher could name me as a thinker in her literature review? I will be the woman implementing as well as researching, and that is something that I have not come across in any of my research.

In my study, most if not all roles given to the students are male roles, because the “major players” in this conflict are men holding a political office, or male fighters. In order to carry out this activity, and have it be more realistic, students must take on the roles available. Unfortunately, the scenario being looked at does not have many female roles, so this can be expected to affect the outcome. Students will be given the

opportunity to face gender imbalances that are ever-present in their world head on. In giving the students knowledge about these situations, which I know the classroom teacher has already done, and in creating a space for them to guide the role-plays and decide the outcomes, I hope the students will be presented with a new perspective, so that they may challenge and possibly help change the societal role system we have in the United States for the future.

Drama and the Arts

Funding for arts in schools is decreasing at an alarming rate, and may be in danger of losing public support all together (Hambek, 2016; Naylor, 2017). I believe that it is the duty of teachers whose main subject is not traditionally considered “Art” to increase their support, and find a way to incorporate the arts into their classrooms. That is one of the many motives behind this project. The administration at Knightstown High School is attempting to introduce alternative methods into their classrooms, while increasing approval for subjects that lack funding and support.

The arts are an important outlet for students, especially those who feel as though school is too structured for them. I spent many years trying to find a method of expression for myself, and after trying visual arts, music, and singing, I found theater. Many students need to find a way to express themselves, especially after sitting in a classroom day after day for 6 hours. This is why arts education or even after school organizations are so important. Students who need that creative venue should be provided with the opportunity to get it. So whether it is through music such as orchestra or band, visual arts like photography or painting, or the dramatic arts, schools should always try to

encompass some type of art program into their curriculum. I know this is a sensitive topic today, and that funding for public schools is in question as it is, but if schools are not able to afford those programs, they may be able to incorporate something like this project into a classroom.

The School Scenario

Knightstown High School consistently scores above average when compared to other schools around the state of Rhode Island on the NECAP exam (a requirement for all in grade 11) and AP Exams, and when compared nationally on the SAT (RIDE [InfoWorks](#), 2015). It is strange that student achievement means the *school* scores well and that the *school* is among the top in the state - not the *students*. This is just another example of the students' loss of recognition, and a possible attempt to group students into an undifferentiated body, which results in a loss of student-owned power.

The atmosphere and school communities in Knightstown are welcoming, in my personal experience, and successful, and the teachers and administration seem to truly care about the students and families who are a part of the town. Knightstown is the type of place where everyone knows everyone, and privilege is not hard to find. They do not *need* to incorporate the arts into their core classes because they have a wide variety of arts classes that students are able (and usually required) to choose from. The administration has decided to begin implementing the arts in their conventional/core classes because they believe it will further the quality of education for their students. How do I know all this? I graduated from Knightstown High School in 2014, my younger sister attends the school now, and my family thrives in the community to this day.

Giving Power Back to Students

The structure of the school and classrooms of Knightstown High School are important, but at its root, this study is not about what the school is like or how the administration feels about their students. It is designed to give an opportunity for a small group of students to take their power back by letting them decide what happens in their classroom. Students will be given this opportunity, because they are inherently among a minority. As students in the tenth grade, it is easy to assume that these students have never had to make decisions on the scale that they will be emulating, but it is important to remember that nothing can truly be assumed or implied; my personal biases must be pushed aside to make room for concrete observation.

One of my hopes for this project is that in placing the students in an environment where they help to decide what happens, they can learn what making decisions looks like. They may see the difference between using that power to make decisions, and having those decisions made for them, and will see how their decisions affect their lives. After all, can it really be considered a democracy if students have no role in their education? Giving them the power to be active and hold roles in their education may be the push these students need to begin thinking about taking what they see they deserve.

Power is the most important factor in this study. Students will not only be investigating power in practice when looking at the way roles play out in the Syrian Civil Conflict, but will also be able to hypothetically connect their own experience with power in their reflections.

Methodology and Procedure

As an undergraduate student proposing a project of this size, I am new to the field of educational research. It is for this reason that I plan to use grounded theory as the fluid method to help me enter this field that I am so drawn to. Grounded theory is a research methodology that allows simple generation of data to build “knowledge about the behavioral patterns...that shape social processes as people interact...in groups” (McCallin, 2003, p. 203). I have already had to create a question that I believe can be answered and provide new data to the area of study. Initially, I weighed the costs and benefits, and decided that I would play the role of an observer rather than a teacher when entering the classroom setting. I believed that asking a more experienced educator than myself to implement the methods I have described above would be beneficial. After meeting with the teacher of tenth grade Global Studies at Knightstown High School, *Anne Stryker, we decided that this big idea would be better executed by me, because the ideas were all in my head. Instead of attempting to translate them to Mrs. Stryker and have her interpretation become the reality, I created and executed the lessons myself, running my ideas past Mrs. Stryker for approval, and she assisted in classroom management and clarification, setting up her class for the activity with background information, and collecting data on student behavior, as well as her thought process.

In addition to implementing this study at Knightstown High School, I also enrolled in a college class where I acted as a participant researcher (Mack, 2005, p. 13). The class was a European History course focused around the French Revolution that used role-play activities as a main method of learning. I took the course for credit, and

observed and participated in the drama pedagogy activities conducted in the classroom. Dr. Hughes, who I mentioned in the introduction of this study, taught this class. She provided me with information that I needed to be able to conduct this research myself, including the introductory activity that I used with students in the high school setting.

Procedure

Initially, I met with Knightstown administrators, including the high school principal and assistant superintendent to propose my idea. After this meeting, my proposal went to the Knightstown Town Council for approval. The IRB for this research study was then submitted, edited, and resubmitted before being approved. After being approved for research on all fronts, I met with the assigned high school teacher, Mrs. Stryker, and we went through and established our expectations for this research. I then built 5-day span of lessons that incorporated role-play, while helping students learn about global citizenship. Much of the lesson planning was done the night before the actual class took place, to account for what got done the previous day, and student response to the lessons. Then, I taught five days of lessons on the Syrian Civil War and Crisis, a unit based on drama-pedagogy and focused around global consciousness and global citizenship.

Data Collection

Data	Who completed it?	What information was collected?	When the data was collected?
Pre-survey	Students who agreed to study	Demographics, clubs and organizations, outlook on social studies classes, past history with Syrian Civil Conflict	April 7, 2017
Reflection Journals and Work Samples	Students who agreed to study	Personal emotions, thoughts, connections, and questions they had. Answered specific prompts based on lessons.	April 7-13, 2017
Post-Survey	Students who agreed to study	Demographics, clubs and organizations, outlook on roles and activity, role in global events, actions to be taken.	April 13, 2017
Teacher Interview	Mrs. Stryker	Feelings about activity, observations about student behavior, lessons learned, use in future.	May 2017 due to extenuating circumstances
Personal Journal	Me as a researcher and participant researcher	My personal thoughts, interesting observations	October 2016-April 2017

In terms of data collection, a pre and post-survey were conducted with the tenth grade Global Studies students which included information such as demographics, relevant clubs and organizations, outlook on social studies classes, and past history with

the subject matter of the Syrian Conflict. Students were assigned reflection journals, which were a place for them to tease out the characteristics of their role, and write down emotions, thoughts, connections to their lives, and any other information that they had when acting and reacting to the stimulus (ie. role play activities) in class. Students who agreed to the study were observed in class, and the journals they kept over the course of the week were analyzed. During the lessons and discussions I attempted to take notes, and focused mainly on student responses and behaviors. I also kept a journal to record my own feelings and behaviors while I participated in the activities in my own class, as well as reflecting on the observations I made in the high school. Finally, I conducted an interview with the high school classroom teacher, Anne Stryker.

I went into this study with prior knowledge and experience dealing with role-play in a classroom, as I explained earlier. Specifically in my college class, I observed that many students were engaged with the material when they were acting in role. The engagement I saw from peers in my class gave me the belief that this type of pedagogy works. I hoped to see high school students as engaged as my peers had been when participating in the role-play games, because it would affirm my belief, and mean that this study was successful.

I began my lessons and research at the high school on April 7th, 2017 and ended on April 13th. Halfway through the study, the teacher asked me to add an extra day onto the end, which resulted in 5 class periods of data collection. The timeline of activities was presented to the students in the form of a shared Google document on their Google

Classroom drive, which was convenient, as the students are provided with computers when they enter the high school as freshmen. The entire week of lessons and sources used can be found in the PowerPoint [here](#). Throughout the days of lessons, I not only led the activities, but also created them and observed them, which proved to be difficult, as I wore many hats at one time – this is of course what a teacher does, with the added element of collecting research data. For this reason, student quotes were difficult to record, so paraphrase was utilized both during and after the class period.

I went through the student work samples, first based on who turned their documents in first, and second based on student identification number I assigned, and third based on students' gender, as this seemed to be a prominent distinction that students made in their surveys. The first time I went through I underlined interesting quotes or ideas, the second time I circled important words or phrases, and the third, I made comments on the margins. Students will not see the work again so these comments are to help me clarify and to document my thought process while reading. I also starred or put asterisks next to words, phrases, or ideas that stood out and that I wished to use directly in my analysis or conclusions. Only some of the students left responses that I could analyze, and that were relevant to the study's objectives. Language used by the students, as well as broad statements made from personal perspectives tended to be what I recorded or labeled "important." To make the analysis easier, I went go through the student samples in numerical order, and selected data points that I felt directly related to the study.

When I reviewed everything again after the initial process, I did so in order of what I had passed out, and then by who had handed in the work first. So, the order in which student work was reviewed was scrambled, but I did the pre-surveys first, followed by the work samples, and finally the post-surveys. I went through everything multiple times, first in pencil, then by circling in pen, then by underlining in pen and making personal comments in the margins. This was the natural way in which I reviewed my data. In reading through responses, I looked for keywords such as: act, role, action, feel, justice, global, citizen, world, connect, along with other terms that align with Oxfam's global citizenship definition/curriculum (Davies, 2006). This is because these words or phrases will play a vital role in the creation of student self-named identity. I oftentimes was drawn towards single words or short phrases used by students. When going back to translate my notes into analysis, I needed the context of the sentences, but usually it was only a few keywords in the sentence that I was drawn to. I believe that the study was a success, because the overwhelming majority of students liked and actively participated in the activity, and students hit the buzzwords for Oxfam, not always individually, but as a whole group. This study turned out to be more group based than individual, even though students answered a lot on their own. They shared their knowledge in class and helped others to grasp the material and see it in new ways.

Analysis and Themes

Throughout this long week, students were able to create a multi-faceted data set that explored many ideas and presented potential themes of the study and theories of the

classroom itself. Going through these sets, I came across a lot of repetitious language and ideas that I then organized into themes. I had to set aside minor data points, which were interesting, but not supported enough to be considered a theme. The themes have been created based on the amount of evidence that students presented to support them, and their relevance to the question: *How do students respond to the use of social justice informed drama pedagogy to introduce or strengthen the concepts of Global consciousness and Global citizenship?* My personal growth showed up a lot in my journals, and in some student data as well, so I have decided to incorporate it as a theme. After reorganization, the major themes that came out of the data were: Engagement & Participation, Power & Ownership, and my personal journey throughout this project. *Engagement: Participation, Connections, Mimicry, and Comedy.*

For the purposes of this study, engagement with the material will be considered an overarching category, with specific examples to support its main idea. Engagement was an extremely important factor in this study, and students were expected to play active roles in conversation. Students had very positive responses to the role-play activity, which led to the conclusion that it was an interactive way for students to learn that led to active engagement. This was first seen in the introductory role-play activity, where students immediately began asking provoking questions. Many of the students showed excitement and interacted very well with their characters. One male student spoke a lot more than anyone else; he had a lot of provocative ideas that encouraged other students to be engaged and speak aloud, but also started some arguing between character roles. While some students required prompting, the “wait time” – a term which refers to the

time between a teacher or student prompting a question and a student answering the question without further prompting – was relatively low, showing that the students are engaged (Rowe, 1986).

Comedy

Comedy arose from the student engagement in the classroom and some written engagement with the material in student journals. Male students more often utilized comedy, and it was very often the same group of five young men who sat in the back of the room that played off of one another. Students utilized comedy to break “awkward” silences or lulls in conversation, asking questions like: if I am a Russian character, “does this mean I have to speak in a Russian accent?” They also used comedy to lighten the tensions. The most compelling example of the use of comedy was in a student’s Letter to ISIS, when he used humor to appeal to the “bad guys,” the student signed “Anonymous” at the bottom of the page, in parentheses he wrote: “because I wouldn’t really care for a bombing of my town.” When writing to his character, and about his character, he used a comedic stance: “I know you think beheadings are cool and all...you can get the point across with just a warning in my opinion.” The use of comedy in the classroom has often been discussed as an effective way to encourage student engagement (Garret & Schmeichel, 2012, p. 212). This use of comedy served as evidence that students were engaged with the material, because they were able to apply their knowledge in a creative way, making connections between their own beliefs. Comedy was most often utilized to talk to or about the “bad guys” in the conflict. The use of sarcasm and satire helped students connect with the material, while showing that they did not support the ideas they

were presenting to the class. This granted students an element of distance from the material, which is evidence of the proximity issue that will be discussed later.

'Fake News'

Another grouping of evidence that showcased student engagement and interaction with the material was the connections that students made to the 'fake news' issue in the United States. One student explained that many news sources that she analyzed, presumably not American, "have described the US media's take on [the Syrian conflict] as an advertisement...slanted to what the country believes." Though she never goes on to explain what those specific beliefs are, it is clear that her take on the media has been effected by the US turn against *'fake news.'* Another student discussed her belief in the superiority of American news in her journal, saying: "This may also be because I am an American, so I am almost bound to have similar feelings and thoughts on these issues as other Americans." She believes that because she is American, she is required or maybe expected to hold similar beliefs on certain issues as "other Americans," but she never specifies what these beliefs are. She also said that it is "likely that an American news source will be biased even if they deny being so." Yet another student discussed the use of "real quotes" in media sources, which made me think she had also been affected by the *'fake news'* hysteria in US media. She pointed out the difficulty in determining "what information was true or not." These students used the assignment to engage directly with the material, making connections to their personal beliefs and lives, while also making good points about the dissemination of information and the global importance of news.

Role Engagement

Students demonstrated engagement with their roles in class discussion by backing their statements with evidence they had found during their research. The student who was “playing” The White Helmets spoke out and said: “[Humanitarian aid groups] can’t [get in to the areas where they’re needed most]. No one will stop fighting to let them in. People steal resources, how do we know it will even get to the people that need it?” She then pointed at “Russia” who had begun to sit near one another in the classroom. She said that Russia keeps stealing humanitarian resources, and that it was unfair and called for them to stop. Vladimir Putin replied by asking her to “prove it.” In the main activity, students could not come up with solutions, and just argued about possible outcomes. Even when stopped and prompted by Mrs. Stryker or myself, students seemed distressed, annoyed, and “hopeless,” as one female student described. Many students said things like: “This war seems like it will never end,” or “everyone wants something different.” I asked my students what they (acting as their role) wanted to see happen in the group’s decision. One female student’s answer silenced the class, as she had not yet spoken. As a White Helmet, she responded by taking ownership of the conflict: “I guess I just want peace – I help anyone, no matter who they are.” At this point in the activity, students were tired of the discussion, and were beginning to lose their interest. This student, while speaking in her role as a member of the white helmets, may have also been speaking from her personal perspective in saying she wants peace, not only for her class (in coming to a decision), but in general. Her answer was not a divisive one, peace is the ceasing of war, and that is what the majority of the class (in accordance with my observations) seemed to

want as well when thinking both in role and out of role. On the post survey, one student suggested “more engaged students,” would help make the activity better. Though I do agree with this student that more students being actively engaged may have helped the role-play scenarios develop better, it is worthy noting that true engagement (Rowe, 1986) cannot be forced, but must develop as a natural element of student behavior in response to the stimulus.

Participation

The theme of student participation – which needs to be motivated by student power (Waggett, Johnston, & Jones, 2017) – presented a bit of a problem at the beginning, and came up a few more times before the end of the study. Due to the nature of these activities, participation was crucial. I made a mental note and wrote lesson plans that incorporated prompting students so that each one may make a comment. The classroom teacher suggested I call on students we had not heard from, and ask them guiding questions. By the end of the day, Mrs. Stryker and I agreed that students had “really gotten into it.” When the activity had reached its end, the students reached a consensus on how they thought the lessons and my teaching could improve, which I could tell based on positive body language and verbal language, such as nodding and saying “yes,” “I agree,” or repeating peer answers. Students asked for more time in role, and said that less preparation time was needed. Students also acknowledged that this was a hard task. The roughly six students who verbally responded used the word “hard” in the first half of their sentences, which reaffirmed student frustration. Mrs. Stryker and I

noticed that students participated less when there was less structure, which Mrs. Stryker said in our interview can be expected from high school students. However, when students were active with the subject matter, which in her classroom happened when students used their computers to look at online resources, or when they were active in their role, the active engagement led to a better understanding and more participation from all students, which helped to progress the class. For this reason I created the master PowerPoint presentation which all students accessed on Google Slides from their Google Classroom.

Stryker said in her interview that “hands on activities are really good, kids seem to enjoy them, and if you can role-play, and participate in a real life situation, its beneficial to everyone.” She noted that “[the students] did do well, did participate, and they were actively engaged for the most part.” Both Stryker and I agreed that when it came to this type of lesson, participation was crucial. She did not hesitate when she said that the students participated more than usual in class, so I asked her to elaborate. Mrs. Stryker said that they “had a job and they realized that if they didn’t participate, [the game, and activity] wouldn’t work.” She said that it placed a comfortable sort of pressure on them, “because they knew what was going on and that other people were counting on them, some of the quiet kids were still able to participate and elaborate,” but there was still a sense of “teamwork, not a ton of pressure [was placed] on people who may be anxious or shy.”

Mimicry and Terminology

Another example of engagement with the material was the students’ language when answering questions. Even in the pre-survey, students began using terminology and

vocabulary that had been presented to them in class, whether by Mrs. Stryker and myself, or by our sources. Students answered the question: What do you know about the Syrian Crisis/Conflict? This made me realize that the language I used was important, and that I may influence student answers before the study even started, by choosing to utilize specific sources. Students included biased answers such as: “I know that Assad needs to lose,” used terms like: “war by proxy,” and repeatedly mentioned chemical weapons in their answers. In their work samples and on post-surveys, students mimicked the language that I used in class while speaking to them. They took what I said and used it as a “script” or prompt, and sometimes used the exact vocabulary I did to answer questions, both in class and in their writing. Student #2 said: “I would take what I learned and voice my opinion any chance I have to help people around the world,” which mimicked the language I used in class.

Going Forward

On the last day, I explained that the root of my study is based on the principle of Global Citizenship, and explained the definition of this term based on the organization Oxfam, which some students had heard of. I then asked them: “What does this mean?,” hoping that the students would answer from their perspective. A majority of students who answered the question used the term “active” in their answer, i.e. “Being an active citizen.” One student said it meant “helping people in other places who are less fortunate than you [are].” This answer not only affirmed my belief that students would discover the need for action, but also hit one of the major points of Oxfam’s global citizenship

definition that I used as a goal to reach through the lessons: “is willing to act to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place...takes responsibility for their actions,” (Davies, 2006). Mrs. Stryker stated in her interview that she would be welcome to using this type of drama pedagogy in the future, primarily because of its interactive nature. She said that engaging students in something tangible is important, because “there’s only so much I can do inside a classroom. When you can bring the outside world in in a way that is meaningful and pertinent to what’s going on, I think it’s important.”

Engagement and Privilege

A depiction of engagement that could also be described as privilege arose when students used their computers to look at interactive maps with built in data sets of where people are “under siege.” Based on discussion, I was able to see that students had begun to understand the fractionalization of the rebel group, which was previously hard for the students to comprehend. This example also showcases one of the privileges that all KHS students have; they are all given computers as incoming freshmen. According to Bonds & Inwood, privilege is defined as “[emphasizing] the social condition of whiteness, rather than the institutions, practices, and processes that produce this condition in the first place,” (Bonds & Inwood, 2016, p. 716). Due to this privilege, students were able to make up for lost time and complete assignments in class, which may have previously needed to be done at home or in a computer lab.

White Privilege

Though it is not a major theme, privilege must be discussed before we end this section and begin the next analysis. Of the 19 students that filled out the pre-survey¹⁴

students listed their race/ethnicity as “white,” which was expected based on the racial breakdown of the school as a whole. All but one student in the class, who identified herself as “American + Thai,” should be considered white, whether they referred to themselves as “white,” “Caucasian,” or “American.” This is important because these students, in conjunction with other elements of their lives, hold power solely because of their race. Certain students recognize the privileges that they have been granted because of their race, but this privilege was never discussed in class because of our focus on the topic of Syria. Mrs. Stryker is a self-proclaimed proponent of social justice education, and told me before the study that she has discussed power and privilege with this class in the past.

Power: Ownership and Proximity, Privilege, Age

The themes of Power and Ownership came up a lot in student responses, and were especially prevalent when students had engaged in their role. When students named the “major issues” presented to them in the activity, group ownership of the activity was claimed, which gave students power to name and make changes. ‘I’ statements and first person language were used by students to take ownership of their ideas and feelings. During the main discussion day, students took ownership of the situation, using phrases like “I want,” and “I wish,” while speaking in-role to explain her frustration, and that she felt powerless in the situation. In her personal writing, another female student said: “you could probably have guessed this, but I'm not at war, nor have I ever been in one.” She recognized her lack of experience in this subject, but persisted nonetheless by saying: “to take down your enemies, it helps to have some leverage.” This student gave a “fighting”

response to the Rebels, and urged them to continue. It seemed as though acting in role may have also helped give power to her voice.

One of the hopes I had in this activity was to give students access to their own power, and this student discovered her voice in this topic over the course of the unit, and used her power to speak up. During the introductory role-play, students took ownership of the activity by naming the major question, which they determined was: “lives versus culture, which is more important?” Students used the evidence they had been given to name a question, which gave them power over the direction of the conversation. In her reflection on the activities, one student said she enjoyed playing roles. She believed that the introductory activity “was a scenario we could realistically think about and put ourselves in our character’s shoes,” but she believed the “second part...involving actual people was frustrating because you can't actually think like your character.” This is interesting, because the student had previously taken ownership of her role by using information she had learned in her biographical research to critique the Syrian government based on her personal opinions. She seemed positive, yet firm in her answers, and used her knowledge to present the information in a powerful voice. This student found the activities difficult, but was able to own her role while also critically thinking about it from her own perspective, which was an objective of the lessons. One student wanted to be given the “choice of who we want to act out,” which would defeat one of the purposes of the role-play activity itself, which is designed to get students out of their comfort zone and into a place where they are able to discover things they did not know. This comment was notable, because it showed that this student (and presumably

others) may have felt more powerful in the activity if they had been allowed to choose which character they portrayed, because they may have had more interest and gathered more knowledge of the subject material. Though this response of interest would be a great benefit to the study, the diverse roles added more depth to the activity.

Privilege

When asked on the pre-survey about a time students were brushed to the side, one student who was female explained that at her job, old male customers “flirt” with her, and “kiss her hand...[but] I’ve lived a fairly privileged life.” This answer was especially interesting; though she experienced strange behavior - presumably because she is female - she still recognized her privilege and realized that she may have it better off than someone else, who is not in her position or has not led “a fairly privileged life.” This is an interesting comment; the student presumably made the assumption that she is better off than someone else, even though she has been marginalized. In making this comment, the student made a generalization about privilege. It is possible that this student does not believe that you can be privileged in some ways but not in others, but that privilege is an over-arching fact of her life. An interesting fact about this question is that only female students gave lengthy responses to specifically answer this question; male answers read “no” or “not really.” This could be another comment on the privilege of these male students, who all identified themselves as “white,” “American,” or “Caucasian” on the pre-survey. Had none of these young men experienced something they would deem

worthy of mentioning, or had they not wished to share? It was one of these young men who brought up the issue of age in our closing discussion.

Age

The power and privilege that comes with age played a major role in the creation of student opinion when discussing these issues, but it was not brought to my attention until after the activity was over. One female student wrote about her relationship with her brothers in the pre-survey, starting her answer with “Being a woman...” and ended her answer with the phrase “because I’m a girl.” Her brothers treat her differently not only because of her gender, but also because of her age. This student may see herself as older or more mature young “woman,” but her brothers see her as a “girl.” This transition was interesting, because it showcased a difference in terminology, which may refer to age as an important factor in this student’s life. Another example of age came when wrapping up the unit. I asked: “Has this activity changed the way you feel?” I was met by overwhelming silence. This was the first time that my response time, or “wait time,” was high and it took me by surprise, because in my experience with the class, students had been responding quickly. I could tell students were thinking, so I decided to rephrase my question: “Do you feel like you want to do anything about this situation in Syria?” The answers came quickly: “I feel like I can’t do anything about it”... “I want to help but I don’t know how”... “I can’t do anything that will change it.” The male student who had answered “no” when asked about different treatment in the pre-survey spoke up in class. His tonality changed from his previous comments, and he asked: “How can we help in a

war? We're just kids." This was the first time during class that someone had brought up age as a major player, and then students agreed with him, leading to the general consensus of the class that age mattered. These students have been given the idea that they cannot make big changes because of their relative power in being young. One of the things that this study aimed to do was open access to students, so that they may begin to discover the power that they have been cut off from because of their age and gender.

It seems as though some students realized the ability they had on the concluding day of class. In the post survey, one student defined global citizenship as "the responsibility people have and the role they have in events around the world." This definition added the word "responsibility," which implies the ownership of the action described. "I understand how everyone can play a role if they decide to get involved," which left the ownership of the action to each individual. Another student took a more direct approach, saying: "...we all have a part in the world and the role playing helped me realize that." The language of this answer did not leave the ownership up to each individual, but instead, this student recognized that everyone has the ability and the duty to play their part, regardless of their age or privilege. In the post-survey, one student said: "I'm not sure what I, personally could do..." What would make them think that? Is this more of the "just a kid" mentality? Are they too far removed from this situation?

Proximity

Students very often discussed proximity – "being close to something measured on a certain dimension" (Knoben & Oerlemans 2006) – to the Syrian Civil War when

assessing their understanding of the conflict or media sources. Three students believed that Middle Eastern sources would have the least amount of background information, because “most of the people already know it,” which implies that this student (along with some others) believed that proximity is a major factor in comprehension of issues. This student believed that the U.S. would have the most informative and least biased articles because it is furthest away from Syria. In her post-survey, one student commented that Proximity also played a role in her final answers: “I wish there was something that I could do to help these people that are so far away.” Proximity was a factor not only in comprehension, but also in their discussions of bias in the media.

Proximity also played a physical factor in the classroom in terms of student partnership. I realized that students were divided in the classroom. Desks were set up in rows facing the middle of the classroom, so there were obvious sides created. Female students tended to sit towards the front of the classroom, and male students sat towards the back corners. Within these groups, you could see obvious friends. At first, students were very reluctant to move around the room and speak to one another, and just spoke to their neighbors while sitting in their desks. Once Mrs. Stryker and I realized they were not moving around the classroom, Mrs. Stryker instructed them to “get up and move around, talk to someone you’re not right next to.” Eventually, over the course of the week, students began to move around the classroom, students began to change seats to sit closer to their constituents in the role-play activity. Soon, ISIS sat together, Russia sat together, the Rebel group was nearby, and US officials sat close to the UN Council. This helped students to create a visual representation of the “sides” in the conflict. Students

began discussing “strategies” in small groups made up of other roles that shared similar opinions.

Notable Observations

The “Bomb the Church” activity evidenced a behavioral pattern that occurred again in the full activity: active student engagement → drawn out discussions where information is repeated → student frustration and lack of motivation or “hope.” The only difference being the Church activity found a resolution whereas the Syrian activity did not. Students expressed their belief that one peer’s response can change the dynamic of the group very quickly, whether positively or negatively. When asking personal questions, the wait time was high, and students required more probing or rephrasing of questions to help make questions less complex. Some interesting, but minor observations, which did not provide concrete evidence that warranted the creation of themes were: when resolutions were reached, they were met with positivity from all “sides,” the idea that the media is spreading “fake news,” the struggle of good vs. evil and students wanting to know which side they were on, female students giving more detailed answers when discussing lack of power, peer interactions informing student responses, the belief of US superiority in military and media, and a possible correlation between ownership and bias. All of these points require further investigation to be proven concrete ideas.

My Personal Journey

For one reason or another, I was not able to focus on my physical material for a long time. I hit a point in my analysis where I felt myself giving up, getting frustrated, and losing confidence in myself. I knew that this must be the important transitional step

described by Tina Cook (2009), and that Dr. Horwitz attempted to prepare me for on her self-described rollercoaster. I was not prepared for the fact that I needed to stop my ride, and take a break, in order to regain my focus and excitement, and get back on. The project itself then shifted slightly to be not only an endeavor of student and teacher discovery, but also of personal discovery. This incident allowed me to learn a lot about myself, and I was then able to see my materials with fresh eyes, which already has opened up questions as to why I did certain things and phrased questions certain ways.

During my analysis, I immediately noticed that students began mimicking my language, and it concerned me, because I did not want to cause bias in this study. This could be considered a factor that may have changed the outcome of the activity, or at the least some student answers. One student expressed her belief that “European news sources are the most reliable because they have a better reputation for being more informative and unbiased,” which made me think that I may have projected this belief in my presentation of news sources. Another student suggested that “nothing will move forward” until “something drastic...rattles either the US or Russia (the two major parties in this conflict).” This comment was especially interesting, because she implies that Assad and the Rebels are not the major players. Did I say something that made her believe this? Was it the talk of conspiracy or war-by-proxy? Though it concerned me in terms of bias, mimicry served as a personal victory for me, because it was either an auditory or visual representation that students were internalizing what I had been teaching them.

The wording of one of the questions on the post-survey made me think that I could have influenced student answers. It read: Are there any actions you would like to take in your world based on what you learned from this unit? Why did I say “your world” as opposed to “the world?” Is my world any different than that of a high school student? What did I really mean, and how had the students read and answered that question? Many students answered in a way that can be perceived as responding to the world “as we see it,” but what affect does their perspective have on these questions? Each student’s scope of their world could be different, and therefore the wording may have altered the responses they gave. This taught me to look more closely at possible outcomes and influences that my language as a teacher may have, again language proved to be important.

On the final day of class, and in the post-survey, some students began to explain actions they would take going forward. “I’m considering looking into a career that involves global events because I realized how much I like the subject.” This answer was received as a personal victory for me as a teacher and a researcher, because a student came to a realization (presumably during the study) that led them to this possible job field. I, of course, believe it is important to get involved in global events, which is why I deem Oxfam’s action elements of its Global Citizenship definition to be extremely relevant to this study.

Interestingly, I found myself enjoying reading the female students’ responses more than those of the male students, because I perceived the young women to write

deeper and more meaningful responses. Alternatively, I may have enjoyed seeing these female students take control of their power and use their voices to convey their ideas. The role of gender in my mind while reviewing the data goes back to the aspect of power. As a woman, I enjoy seeing other young women show power and promise. These young women are, in my mind, just like I was seven years ago. The fact that I wanted to see them making deep conclusions and excellent points must have affected the way I read their responses. It is very hard to remove bias in any area, but especially in one where I had such a personal connection. With all of this said, it is a fact that comparatively, the female students wrote more lengthy responses that had a lot of detail, so that may have been why I enjoyed reading them more. These answers were not necessarily more “deep” than those of the male students, but they were definitely longer. Many male students participated in class discussions more than female students, even though the class had more female students than male students.

Throughout the course of this study and compilation of data, I have learned that it is ok to make mistakes, or to be imperfect, as long as you learn from those mistakes and make positive changes in the future. I have also learned never to put myself up to too much, otherwise important things will have to move to the side to make way for immediate problems. I have placed myself in too many boxes over the past year of my life, and I have since realized that I must focus on and prioritize things before taking on other responsibilities. This project suffered from a lack of progress due to my other commitments, and I do not want to make a mistake like this again, because this project is important to me, and implicates other people as well.

Findings

The major question in this study was: *How do students respond to the use of social justice informed drama pedagogy to introduce or strengthen the concepts of Global consciousness and Global citizenship?* Overall, the students demonstrated that the level of active participation while using role-play methods is not only higher, but also more enthusiastic. Students overwhelmingly enjoyed the activities that we did in class. This could be because they got out of doing “normal” schoolwork for a week, but in analyzing student responses, I believe that students enjoyed this method of learning. Students also demonstrated their ability to own ideas and take back small elements of power in their classroom, such as dominating the conversation and making connections. Finally, these tenth grade students showed that their age was a factor in how they respond to crises in the world. This encouraged me to begin thinking about ways to show students how powerful they are, regardless of their age.

The students also demonstrated that the physical elements of our classrooms are extremely important. When students are placed in a classroom orientation that creates divisions, they will adhere to these divisions; this is evidenced in my discussion of physical proximity in the classroom. Students began to move around the room to be near their constituents as the days went on, and this not only created a visual representation of the conflict they were mimicking, but also demonstrated that students naturally moved to where their “friends” sat, as they would in a normal classroom.

This study exhibits my personal error in the form of ignorance of school policies. I was unaware that Knightstown High School had a “no homework” policy, which dictated that students are not required to do daily homework if an assignment is not part of a “minor assessment” grade or something that “weighs more.” I learned that no student had done his or her homework, which may sound like an exaggeration, but it was not. Mrs. Stryker immediately apologized to me, stating that she thought I would have known about Knightstown High School’s “no homework policy” because my younger sister attends the school. This policy would have affected the work students needed to do outside of school to complete the lessons, so she made work for the research project count as a “minor assessment” grade similar to a quiz grade. This was unfortunate, because I did not want students to feel as though there would be any repercussions from agreeing to take part in the study, but was a necessary additional measure.

Oxfam’s Global Citizenship curriculum was a good framework to focus the lessons for this type of activity. Students demonstrated: an awareness of the “wider world...[and] their own role as a world citizen, [a willingness] to act to make the world [a better place]...responsibility [of] their actions...” and a drive to begin participating and contributing to their communities (Davies, 2006). This proves the effectiveness of the measures in Oxfam’s Global Citizenship Curriculum. Role-play was also evidenced to be an enjoyable and effective way to get students to engage with the material, just as the literature discussed in the review stated. I will most definitely be using Oxfam, role-play, and drama pedagogy in my future classrooms, and believe that others should as well. Not only did students have overwhelmingly positive response to acting in role, they were also

able to use the relationships between their role and themselves to make connections to the world around them.

In a way this thesis project taught me to think like a teacher. Students taught me new ways of looking at this conflict and at my own teaching within the classroom. While doing my analysis, a friend asked if I had used a flipped classroom model, where students do the teaching, I realized that I had used that technique as well. Students were given sources, but had to extrapolate their own information and make meaning out of it. Overall, students learned more from each other than they had from me, and they only used the sources I had compiled to make their own discoveries. I much more enjoyed the activity itself and the physical research than I have enjoyed writing about my findings, partially because I felt as though I did not know “how to write about research.” In other words, I found myself doubting at times, and lacking personal trust to be correctly accomplishing this paper. I “know” how to be a teacher, but I was just learning how to become a researcher. In the future, I hope to continue combining these two identities, and expand my own global citizenship by implementing them elsewhere in the world.

Appendix I: Students respond to the US drop of MOAB on Afghanistan

The wrap-up discussion was broken by a male student in the back of the room, looking at his cell phone who exclaimed: “Oh my God! I just got a breaking news update on my phone that says the US dropped the largest ever non-nuclear bomb.” The class began murmuring and talking among themselves. I asked where, and the student responded: “Afghanistan.” Absolute confusion ensued, I even found myself abandoning the study to figure out what was going on. We soon found out – after doing some research on our computers, that the US had dropped “M.O.A.B.” on the Afghani IS base. Mrs. Stryker took control of her classroom and broke into student conversation. She pulled up a video of the bomb being detonated, which after quick research I discovered was not footage from this year. All videos and images that we had found were from 2003. Students began engaging in a discussion of “conspiracy.” One student hypothesized it was to get us away from thinking about the recent chemical attacks in Syria and to draw our attention away from what was going on there. During this time, the post-survey was passed out to students in the study and completed. I noticed that one student spent the entire class doing the work that was supposed to be handed in at the end, and was completed the post survey one minute before the bell rang. I acknowledged that this was one of the dangers in making the homework count as a quiz grade – students may begin to stress about it and not put in sincere effort, for fear of being judged harshly while grading.

A discussion of the MOAB continued for students who were not participating in the study. One student asked: “Why are they doing this?” Mrs. Stryker suggested that it may be to “distract us from Russia,” as Rex Tillerson was meeting with Kremlin officials in Russia for the first time when the report of the bombing came out. Overall this was an interesting last day that had a very real world spin. As they left, students thanked me on their way out, and some tied their experience into the bombing that day, saying that they were knowledgeable about the situation and could come to new possible conclusions about real world events.

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