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Drama and History: Teaching Historical Thinking through Role-Play

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Table of Contents

| Chapter | | Page |
|---------|--|------|
| I. | Introduction to the Study | 8 |
| II. | Review of the Literature | 12 |
| | Dorothy Heathcote and the History of Drama Education | 13 |
| | Drama and Role Playing | 15 |
| | Benefits of Drama-Based Role-Play | 17 |
| | Historical Thinking through Drama | 25 |
| | Conclusion and Summary | 29 |
| III. | Methods and Design | 32 |
| | Context | 33 |
| | Participants | 34 |
| | Questions | 35 |
| | Procedures | 35 |
| | Instruments for Data Collection | 40 |
| | Analysis | 42 |
| IV. | Results and Discussion | 44 |
| | Student Motivation and Attitudes | 44 |
| | Using Drama Strategies to Improve Instruction | 50 |
| V. | Main Conclusions | 57 |
| | Implications for Practice | 59 |
| | Limitations and Recommendations | 62 |

| | |
|---|----|
| References | 65 |
| Appendix | |
| A. Drama Strategy Lesson Plan: Teacher-in-Role | 67 |
| B. Drama Strategy Lesson Plan: Student Role-Play | 63 |
| C. Drama Strategy Lesson Plan: Meetings | 71 |
| D. Drama Strategy Lesson Plan: Role on the Wall | 74 |
| E. Drama Strategy Lesson Plan: Mantle of the Expert, Law School | 75 |
| F. Drama Strategy Lesson Plan: Mantle of the Expert, Elections | 76 |
| G. Drama Strategy Lesson Plan: Mantle of the Expert, the Senate | 77 |
| H. Drama Strategy Lesson Plan: Where do you stand? | 81 |
| I. Pre/Post Historical Thinking Survey | 82 |
| J. Interview Questionnaire | 84 |

List of Tables

| Table | Page |
|--|------|
| 3.1 Distribution of Participants by Class Period and Gender | 34 |
| 3.2 Implementation of Drama Strategies Action Research Timeline | 40 |
| 4.1 Frequency of Change between Pre-and-Post Surveys | 46 |
| 4.2 Attitudes toward the Importance of Learning Skills/Concepts in History | 47 |
| 4.3 Student Perception of “Thinking like a Historian” | 48 |
| 4.4 Importance of Learning History from Various Perspectives | 50 |
| 4.5 Ideal Group Size for Learning History | 52 |
| 4.6 Importance of Acting and Role-Play in Learning History | 54 |

Abstract

This action research project examined the effects of drama-based, role-playing strategies on student academic performance and motivation to learn history. This paper discusses the skills necessary to be an effective historical researcher and critical thinker. It analyzes various studies on drama-based practices and looks specifically at role-playing exercises with an emphasis on Mantle of the Expert. It provides challenges faced when implementing these practices to over 130 eighth grade students in an early American history classroom. Furthermore, the research highlights changes the teacher made during instruction days and how students responded to these changes. Student motivation was measured using a pre-project and post-project historical thinking survey. Student understanding and attitudes toward drama-based strategies were documented and evaluated through two sessions of student interviews conducted by the teacher. Student responses to the drama-based activities were documented in a teacher observation and reflection journal along with descriptions of the various strategies used. The first person perspectives of the teacher and students of the drama provides essential information into the value of drama-based education and how it can improve instruction to provide an environment conducive to the learning of history and exploration through inquiry-based learning and interpretation through various perspectives.

The research concluded that drama based strategies and Mantle of the Expert have a positive impact on student motivation and understanding of thinking like a historian. The results support the inclusion of drama based role-playing strategies and the Mantle of the Expert inquiry based approach to middle school social studies courses. This approach combines the skills needed for students to develop into independent decision-makers within a student-centered classroom environment that promotes social interaction when problem solving.

Chapter One

Introduction to the Study

To learn through history, educators often ask their students to reflect on the past. If we as educators were asked to do this by reflecting on our past experiences in the history classroom, what would be the result? Would we remember a classroom with a chalkboard, perhaps an overhead projector? Would we remember pictures of past presidents along the wall, and thirty perfectly aligned desks? Would we remember learning history through lectures, class discussions, memorization of facts and dates, and the emphasis on a white culture described in a textbook? Most importantly, would we even recall the historical content that was taught? Students should learn about the past through active engagement in historical accounts of history. By using the textbook as the main source of information, we as educators limit creativity, interpretation, and the attachment of meaning to historical content. The textbook should be used as *a* source, but not *the* source in a history classroom. When students are given the opportunity to participate in more active instructional methods, like role-play, they will become critical, historical thinkers and find themselves more motivated to study history. Furthermore, students who are given the opportunity to view history through drama-based strategies are more likely to retain the historical content and concepts they studied in history through the promotion of the acquisition of historical knowledge and historical skills such as empathy and understanding for interpretation (Goalen, 2001, p. 4).

As a history educator, I want my students to develop skills in the areas of inquiry-based learning, analyses of primary sources, the examination and interpretations of multiple perspectives, and critical thinking that will translate to the decision making skills needed to be productive members of a democratic society in the 21st century. When students are given a

problem and become the center of the process used to solve that problem, they become independent critical thinkers. Goalen (2001) believes that “history through drama is not about ‘flights of fancy’ but rather it is about making history, historical evidence and interpretations, more accessible to a wider audience than some traditional methods fail to reach” (p. 10). Therefore, in order for students to become successful historical thinkers, they need to be able to collect and evaluate historical evidence, activate background knowledge, draw meaningful connections, and debate their interpretations. It is through drama-based strategies that educators can provide the opportunities for contextualization and it is through the contextualization of historical events that students develop the skills to think like historians. When students become a part of history, or live through history, they are more motivated to learn it in school. Students find value in meaningful activities that they can connect to their own personal lives.

Drama gives students opportunities to explore, discuss and deal with difficult issues and to express their emotions in a supportive environment (Farmer, 2011, p.1). Through drama students can find comfort in expression. Teachers who use drama-based strategies in their history classrooms can improve their instruction by providing students with a stage in which they can generate ideas, worked cooperatively, and experience the lives of people from various cultures. Learning multicultural history through drama “provides students with insight into the experiences and challenges faced by people of color, women, working classes, non-western societies, and other groups typically excluded from school curriculum” (Maloy & LaRoche, 2010, p. 49). Furthermore, drama-based strategies can help improve instruction by providing opportunities for reflection. This can be accomplished through various small group activities and writing exercises.

There are various types of drama-based strategies for teachers to implement. However, when students learn through role-play, they are allowed to re-enact historical moments, and analyze pivotal events from our past. Many students like to “perform in front of an audience and the opportunity of playing a role produces greater involvement and discussion than when teachers lecture and ask questions” (Maloy & LaRoche, 2010, p. 57). Role-play is essential to the development of language skills. Students are encouraged to debate, exchange opinions, and share key ideas from their readings. Furthermore, role-play helps build students’ personal and social skills through group work because “group negotiation and discussion helps to encourage listening, working cooperatively, and learning to respect one another’s similarities and differences” (Farmer, 2011, p. 7).

Although Goalen (2001), Maloy and LaRoche (2010), and Farmer (2011) agree that active engagement is necessary in building a productive environment conducive to learning, active engagement strategies are broad and are applied in various ways across multiple curriculums. The goal of this action research project was to examine a specific form of active engagement, drama, and its use in a specific subject area, eighth grade early American history. This action research project was conducted from early September 2014 to late March 2015. The goal of this project was to analyze the impact of drama-based role-playing strategies on student motivation and teacher instruction in middle school history. Of the drama-based strategies, specific emphasis was placed on the use of the Mantle of the Expert inquiry approach, invented by Dorothy Heathcote in the 1980’s. Through this approach, the class did curriculum work as if they were an imagined group of experts (Johnson, Liu, and Goble, 2015, p. 2). Data related to student motivation was collected through pre-project and post-project surveys as well as student interviews. Data to assess instruction was recorded through observation field notes and

reflective journaling on student perceptions' of academic performance. I hypothesized that students would demonstrate a better understanding of what "thinking like a historian" looks like while becoming more motivated to learn history through the use of drama-based strategies. Patterns of student behavior and student changes in responses to interview and survey questions were carefully analyzed. I have identified similar behaviors and actions documented in field notes to interpret results and draw conclusions. Another goal for this study was to use the findings to improve instruction from the educators' standpoint while simultaneously improving the ways in which students learn by strengthening their desire to explore history. This action research project strengthens the field of drama education and sheds new light on drama strategies by adding to theories and the numerous studies conducted in the past. This project expands on past studies conducted using drama by exploring the outcomes of specific role-play strategies used in my middle school history classroom.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

A common topic in social studies education is the use of various active learning techniques versus that of traditional methods. Today, teachers are well aware of state and national standards and therefore, focus on the mastery of subject knowledge in the classroom. However, in many cases, it is left up to the teacher to decide how the material might be delivered to meet these state and national standards. As a result, teachers have struggled with the difficult challenge of fitting a large amount of content into a small amount of time. Teachers will turn to traditional methods or “chalk and talk” and their more imaginative and innovative teaching strategies are pushed aside at the expense of meeting state requirements (Goalen, 2001). This challenge leads to further questions about the effectiveness of traditional methods on content retention as well as motivation to study history. What types of instructional strategies can teachers use to enhance student motivation in history? Furthermore, what instruction strategies can teachers use to increase content retention and historical thinking skills in social studies classrooms, particularly history, while keeping students engaged and active in the learning process? The following research identifies specific drama and role playing strategies involved in historical thinking and motivation, including analyses of both student performance using various drama learning techniques as well as the teacher’s role and the implementation of drama in classrooms full of diverse learners.

More and more, researchers are analyzing the effects of drama strategies in the classroom. Drama is not a new method or strategy in the classroom, but its effectiveness and the amount of classroom time devoted to it is frequently debated today. The following sections provide an overview of the research that focuses on multiple theories of drama education and the

benefits and challenges of drama and role playing in the classroom. The findings take a close look at the link between drama strategies and knowledge acquisition and motivation, with outcomes that indicate positive results in the area of drama education.

Dorothy Heathcote and the History of Drama Education

Behind the use of drama in the classroom is the idea that students are “doing” education. Dorothy Heathcote used her theatre background and applied this to education in the 1970s with her idea of ‘living through drama.’ First, Heathcote believed that living through drama was primarily about “living through situations and the insight to be gained from them” (Anderson, 2012, p. 33). This set the tone for drama education in the following decades by focusing curriculum on action and role play as opposed to traditional knowledge-based strategies. Heathcote’s theory on ‘living through drama’ would influence fellow theorists throughout the next four decades.

Second, Heathcote contributed to the modern practice of drama education by creating a teacher-in-role experience. In this role, the teacher allows the student to choose the role of the character. This approach “depends upon the student to provide the content of the drama rather than the teacher controlling the lesson” (Anderson, 2012, p. 35). However, a major critique of this strategy was the idea that the teacher was stepping too far out of his role as the teacher by interacting with the students in the role rather than providing knowledge-based information as a teacher had traditionally done. Many drama theorists questioned whether or not this approach truly was a student-centered approach, as the teacher still maintained the leading role in the classroom as the expert.

Third, Heathcote provided a new concept called *Mantle of the Expert*. In this approach, Heathcote shifted the expertise from the teacher-in-role to that of the student participants.

Mantle of the Expert “creates roles for students that cast them as the ‘one who knows,’ instead of the teacher” (Anderson, 2012, p. 36). The overall goal of Heathcote’s work is to set up a classroom environment simulation that feels authentic and puts the students at the front and center of knowledge acquisition and problem solving. Theorists and drama educators after Heathcote would extend her groundbreaking ideas.

Jonathan Neelands, Richard Courtney, Norah Morgan, Juliana Saxton and John O’Toole were all influenced by Heathcote’s practice. Neelands took Heathcote’s ideas and focused on “reflecting through social interactions and human meaning,” Courtney looked philosophically at the use of drama to discover ‘the way things are’ or cultural order,” and Morgan and Saxton contributed to the field by researching the understanding of questioning in drama and how questions help structure and extend drama (Anderson, 2012, p. 46). Last, O’Toole was more concerned with drama and human behavior. He believed that social issues and social behavior were the “stuff of drama” (Anderson, 2012, p. 46). All of these researchers played significant roles in trying to bridge the gap between theory and practice from Dorothy Heathcote. The theories of these researchers suggest that Heathcote’s contributions, when applied in the classroom can provide social, emotional, and cognitive benefits. In Heathcote, “it is the social relationships, the ‘why’ rather than the ‘what,’ and the ‘we feeling’ in the construction of society” (Anderson, 2012, p. 34). Heathcote drama helps the teacher design a lesson that will provide a platform for students to appreciate and feel the relationships between groups of people in the past. The goal is for students to construct their own societies through questioning and interaction rather than simple identification.

Drama and Role Playing

Using drama and role play as a central technique in the classroom requires a significant change. Heathcote and Herbert (1985) suggest that role and task go hand-in-hand and does not necessarily indicate a portrayal of fictitious characteristics (Heathcote & Herbert, 1985, p. 174). In other words, role play consists of the teacher providing a task that allows students to generate an answer to a specific problem or question. In this case role play is about an attitude shift that gives students the opportunity to become the expert problem solvers. This role-reversal is integral to the Mantle of the Expert methods Heathcote developed.

In a case study conducted by Kerekes and King (2010) a new way of thinking emerged in regards to teacher and student relationships in drama play. In this study, student teachers designed a dramatic role play experience that provided an opportunity for students to solve a math problem. Students were given a basic outline of the skit, but were allowed to add their own lines in the skit. The data collected through observations suggested that a teacher-student co-learning relationship had emerged. One teacher described the relationship by stating “we allowed our students to discover the reasoning behind the standard measurement without having to intrude every moment” (Kerekes & King, 2010, p. 49). The teachers in this case study realized that through dramatic role play, students lead the exploration and the teacher asks the questions, provides praise, and then steps out of the way so the student can continue to lead and share their learning. This is an important component of process drama education.

Process drama is educational drama for awareness and conflict resolution through the creation of a dramatic exploration of moral values (Gervais, 2006, p. 1). Gervais (2006) conducted a four month qualitative, arts-based case study focusing on process drama as a tool to identify young adolescent values strategies. The researcher observed participants’ reactions to

problems introduced in multiple role-playing scenarios. This dramatic engagement was intended to provide a personal story so the students could experience moral issues that many people face in the real world. Gervais identified an “increased awareness of human interconnectedness and the impact of one’s words and deeds upon others” (Gervais, 2006, p. 25). Through the use of process drama, students were experiencing real life examples and were given the opportunity to investigate the real world. Kerekes and King (2010) observed similar findings in their case study by noting the power of real life examples and how this helped internalize learning.

As indicated from prior studies, drama process has an impact on students because it reverses the traditional classroom roles of the teacher and student. It also provides the platform for students to take the lead in their education and inquiry-based learning. However, there are challenges that educators face when using drama-based strategies. For example, the role students’ play could reflect the opposite of their personal views, thus making it challenging to “play” the role. Second, some students may not be comfortable playing roles or speaking publicly in front of their classmates. Brash and Warnecke (2009) surveyed students after carrying out role plays in a language classroom and found positive responses to these challenges. One student stated that “role playing can give you insight into different viewpoints and forces you to think differently and potentially gives you a better overall understanding of things” (Brash & Warnecke, 2009, p. 105). Even though role-playing may not always be comfortable for students, the impact of role playing can outweigh this discomfort. Role playing allows students to venture out of their comfort zones in a more controlled manner for shorter periods of time (Brash & Warnecke, 2009, p. 106).

Benefits of Drama-Based Role-Play

Although there will always be challenges teachers will face when using drama approaches in the classroom, recent studies have shown there are multiple benefits of using drama in the classroom. Based on the findings, students will benefit from drama-based strategies in the areas of cognition and knowledge acquisition, identity creation, and an increase in motivation to learn by applying meaning to their education.

Cognition and knowledge acquisition. Drama based instruction calls for learning in authentic contexts in situated learning. There are several psychological benefits to situated learning within an authentic context. These areas include acquiring implicit knowledge, grounding theoretical knowledge, learning in everyday rather than academic contexts, facilitating transfer across domains, and acquiring habits of mind (Andersen, 2004, p. 283). In this study, the researchers compared two groups of students, one who engaged in traditional science inquiry and one who engaged in the task in the context of an “as-if” drama world. The study was done on second-grade students in suburban U.S. schools. The task was to find out everything they could about snails. Both groups were given a wide variety of resources in the room to help guide their inquiry. However, one group was engaged with the teacher in improvised roles as expert zoologists. This was done to help build student acceptance of the context and frame their roles as experts (Andersen, 2004, p. 284). The findings of this study indicated that the inquiry+drama group performed significantly better on several measures of cognition, including writing and the accuracy of anatomy in diagrams of the snail (Andersen, 2004, p. 285). This framing of the roles provides enough cognitive structure and support to allow students to become engaged in meaningful roles.

McMaster (1998) found that drama is “one of the few vehicles of instruction that can support every aspect of literacy development” (p. 574). One example of this is the development of vocabulary through drama. McMaster (1998) observed a teacher who paused from reading a book out loud to her class in order to teach the kids a new word, bulldogging. During the pause, she had her students act out “bulldogging” by playing the role of a rodeo star in the book. By doing this, the teacher simply provided the students with a strong association for their new vocabulary word (McMaster, 1998, p. 578).

Classroom drama based instruction has been found to strengthen verbal skills in students as well. Podlozny (2000) conducted a meta-analysis of 80 studies completed on either drama or theater. The authors used four strings to identify relevant studies. These strings included studies of drama, studies of academic or cognitive outcomes, empirical studies, and studies addressing transfer across domains. Podlozny found that drama is an effective tool for increasing achievement in story understanding, reading achievement, reading readiness, and writing (p. 242). Furthermore, the results also indicated that drama has a positive impact on student learning in the future. Drama not only helps children master the texts they enact, but also often helps them master new material that was not even enacted. For this reason, drama has a positive impact on student verbal skills in the long run.

In the Kerekes and King (2010) study, the teacher’s and the professor’s observations of the King’s carpet drama play provided multiple references to the impact of drama play upon student learning. These findings included deeper understanding of each of the content areas, power of real life examples helping internalize learning, and student creation of their own understandings of the need for studying advanced math topics (Kerekes & King, 2010, p. 46).

Drama in the classroom also fosters metacognition. After engaging in problem solving while in role, “learners have been able to then step out of the role and examine their prior thinking in a critical way” (Andersen, 2004, p. 282). Students do this by simply role-playing a character and then analyzing their part. The teacher can provide questions to students after they have played a role to examine whether or not they were convincing in their roles and what kind of changes they could have made while in their roles (McMaster, 1998, p. 580). Students who are involved in drama have to continuously ask questions about what they know in order to make decisions about their performances. Another major component of metacognition is taking risks. Drama requires students to take risks. Students do this by “creating an action in the imagination and on stage simultaneously, making commitments, resolving conflicts, and being involved in experiences over long periods of time” (Gay & Hanley, 1999, p. 366).

Last, in regards to cognitive acquisition, drama is crucial in assessment of progress of student learning. Cockett (1999) conducted a team research study with teachers who use drama as a teaching method across curriculum to identify a range of specific criteria falling into different categories of knowledge and skill that might contribute to the assessment of progress of each participant. The researcher gathered data through observations of lessons, one-to-one interviews with the teacher, reflections on the interviews, and group discussions with the full drama team. The criteria were coded according to the following categories; knowledge of material, group skills, expressive skills, knowledge of dramatic form, and thinking skills. Within thinking skills, it was found that teachers could build a picture of the progress of each individual within the class. The evaluative criteria found were the pupil’s ability to listen and pick up on other people’s contributions, contribute and develop thoughts and ideas, imagine and visualize possibilities, empathize with other people, express values and attitudes, and observe and reflect

critically (Cockett, 1999, p. 69). Therefore, through the use of drama, teachers can use a checklist of these thinking skills to evaluate achievement in student progress.

Identity construction. Drama based pedagogy and role-play has also been linked to identity construction. Social constructionists believe that our identity is constructed subjectively in response to the situations we are in. Therefore, knowledge is constructed and gained through members of a social system which are created through the stories we tell others and ourselves (Brash & Warnecke, 2009, p. 101). By creating authentic, social situations within drama, students construct and create their identity in the classroom. This identity is a social identity characterized by how one responds to specific situations or problems in society. This influences students to think of themselves as confident decision-makers that can solve problems in society as well as historical thinkers who may begin to view themselves as competent learners.

It is important to identify the various areas of learning drama can positively effect, based on these findings. In past studies, drama and role-play strategies have produced an increase in literacy development, verbal skills, identity construction, deeper understanding of concepts, internalized learning, and the assessment of progress of students learning. However, the second step in implementing these strategies, and therefore seeing the productive results, is getting the students to want to learn.

Motivation and attitudes. Drama based strategies like role-play are effective in education because students feel engaged and connected to the content. Andersen (2004) found that working within an authentic context changes the purpose and motivation students have for learning. The primary purpose of acquiring knowledge “is to perform well on evaluations, but in authentic drama based context, knowledge is acquired to solve problems, build explanations, and satisfy curiosity” (Andersen, 2004, p. 283). Drama methods where students are “doing”

literature increase interest in literacy. Drama is such a valuable tool because it supports every aspect of literacy development and perhaps more importantly, students experience positive effects in the areas of self-confidence and self-concept. In a study observed by McMaster (1998), students expressed their motivation to learn drama by stating “I didn’t think anybody would listen or care, in drama you realize nobody will criticize, I can now talk in a group even if others disagree with me” (McMaster, 1998). When students are comfortable in a learning environment they will become more interested in learning and participating in the content.

When drama is used as a pedagogical tool, educators recognize that the emotional nature of drama can lead to change and understanding in students. It is role play that brings out emotion in students because they are placed in a position or situation that allows them to comprehend problems through the lives of a character. Heyward (2010) found that “the use of group roles reduces the anxiety students often have about role-play, as they feel supported by their fictional colleagues” (Heyward, 2010, p. 199). This allows students to express themselves about a genuine challenge in safe and trusting learning environment.

Student motivation increases when they find value in an experience and can relate that experience to their own lives. McNaughton (2004) researched educational drama in the teaching of environmental sustainability. The researcher conducted a small-scale qualitative research study to examine the impact of student reaction to dramatic lessons through role-play. Students were cast into roles and given situations where they would have to make decisions in their town regarding local “dumping” issues and its effects on the environment. McNaughton (2004) found that when students put themselves in “others’ shoes,” they become so actively involved in the meaningful context, they start to feel concern for the topic, in this case the environment (McNaughton, 2004, p.148). This authentic environment or simulation proved effective to boost

student motivation to become actively involved and to contribute to the investigation of solutions to societies' challenging problems.

Huizenga, Admiraal, Akkerman and Dam (2009), using a quasi-experimental design with 458 pupils, investigated the use of a role-play based simulation mobile game and its effects on engagement, historical knowledge, and motivation for history in general and the Middle Ages in particular. The participants in the study ranged from 12 to 16 years. The participants in ten classes played the mobile history games, whereas the participants in ten other classes received a regular, project-based lesson series. Engagement in the game was measured using observation forms that included items on how often specific game activities occurred or how actively pupils were involved in a certain game activity using a 5-point Likert scale. On the scale, 1 indicated "not at all" and 5 indicated "very often." Motivation was measured using a 6-item questionnaire directly before and one week after playing the mobile game, Frequency 1550. A Likert scale was used on the questionnaire with 1 indicating "never" and 5 indicating "always." Historical knowledge of Amsterdam was measured using three multiple choice questions and two open-ended questions for each of six themes concerned with medieval Amsterdam. The four dependent variables in this study were motivation for history, knowledge of medieval Amsterdam, and attitudes towards collaboration.

The results showed no significant differences between the two groups with respect to motivation for history. Mean scores in the experimental group for motivation for history subject was 3.02 versus 2.80 from the regular project-based lesson series. However, the results showed those pupils who played the game were more engaged and gained significantly more knowledge about the historical content than those pupils within the control group. Although many of the pupils did not complete one of the post-tests, a significant effect of the intervention was found

for knowledge of the historical content (medieval Amsterdam) in the analyses of covariance. The mean score of the intervention group was 60% answered correctly versus 36% from pupils in the regular project-based instruction. As both studies on simulation indicate, greater knowledge was gained because the information was presented in a realistic, meaningful context and because the participants had to actively work with the learning content within a historical context.

Corbeil and Laveault (2011) set out to study the relationship between learning and students' motivation to participate in simulation games. The participants were 65 college-level students in a History of International Relations course, with two groups totaling 44 students participating in a simulation game and one group of 21 serving as a control group. The two experimental groups participated in the simulation game in four scenarios of increasing order of difficulty while the control group attended its ordinary lectures. The students in the experimental groups each received a collection of historical documents. Instruments used to measure the variables were the LAM-30P questionnaire to identify learning styles, a questionnaire on attitudes, an objective test to measure students' knowledge level at the end of term, and a five-series test of comprehension in historical analysis.

The results revealed the experimental groups had higher scores on a test of comprehension compared to the groups who did not participate in the simulation game. Additionally, learning style was an important variable in explaining motivation toward a game. The study indicated that 64.7% of the students found the stimulation game to be more motivating and more diversified than a lecture course; 20.6% found it equally motivating and 23.4% found it equally diversified. The significant relationships between attitude and learning styles were as follows: sensory-motor, kinesthetic, and proprioceptive students enjoyed being able to study

abstract matter with tools appropriate to their styles. Transactional students reacted favorably to the possibility of controlling their environment and their learning activity. Therefore, active involvement was an affective factor significantly linking to learning. The authors generalized this by concluding that the simulation can help motivate social-minded students to become more productive and independent managers of their learning (Corbeil & Laveault, 2011, p. 474).

Hernandez-Ramos and De La Paz (2009) focused their research on the learning experience of students and how project-based, group collaboration can affect their attitudes and values towards the subject they are learning. One hundred seventy middle school students from two schools participated in this study. All of the participants were eighth grade students from one district in Northern California. Hernandez –Ramos and De La Paz (2009) conducted a quasi-experimental study using a pretest-posttest design. The first research question was, is historical thinking evident in the multimedia mini-documentary projects created by students, as a result of a six-week collaborative unit on westward expansion? The second question posed was, do eighth grade students who learn history through technology-assisted project-based learning experiences develop positive attitudes and beliefs about social studies and the study of history in particular?

Hernandez-Ramos and De La Paz (2009) concluded that most students did not limit themselves to merely reporting acts and only 11% of the total scenes in the projects had no interpretation of information. Of the remaining 89%, 44% students attempted to interpret evidence but gave no supporting evidence, while the remaining 45% provided some evidence in the form of a quote, example, citation, or student awareness of historical significance beyond a single event. Results of the opinion survey indicated that “attitude toward social studies” and “social learning” opinion measures showed significant interaction effects, indicating a positive

shift due to condition. The survey revealed that students “like studying with others” and that understanding history and social studies was very important to the students (Hernandez-Ramos and De La Paz, 2009, p. 166).

Although the previous studies Huizenga, Admiraal, Akkerman and Dam (2009), Corbeil and Laveault (2011), Hernandez-Ramos and De La Paz (2009), did not specifically mention drama-based strategies, they did conduct experiments on the use of major components of drama. These components consist of simulation, role-play games, and group work, which are believed to be major contributors to student engagement and increased motivation found in drama.

Historical Thinking through Drama

The use of drama and role playing has a significant impact on student social development. When students work on the “process” of education, they are “doing” their learning with others. Drama requires the use of group work, cooperative learning, collaboration, discussion, and negotiation. These various activities, if conducted properly, can lead to positive effects on student social behavior and development. These are the fundamental behaviors that many social studies teachers promote explicitly. In social studies, drama is valuable because of its promotion of empathy in students, negotiation and healthy debate, openness to multiple cultures, and the explorations and questioning of moral values and issues.

Small group work and collaboration is a major component of many dramatic strategies and contributes to the social development of students in social studies education. Process drama provides an important model for collaborative work which makes it possible to introduce students rigorously and realistically to the building block of historical thinking and raises the stakes of historical inquiry. Mattson (2008) found that drama and collaboration asks students “not to be simply tolerant of difference but rather to understand mechanisms that create power

differentials, inequality, and injustice” (Mattson, 2008, p. 108). In the carpet drama model, Kerekes and King (2010) found that peer learning was an effective small group reflective post-drama exercise (p. 46).

Multicultural education plays an integral role in the development of thriving social studies classrooms. According to Gay and Hanley (1999) there are three instructional tasks a teacher needs to integrate into the classroom in order to empower middle school students to value and promote cultural and ethnic diversity. Two of these tasks relate to drama and one to social studies (Gay & Hanley, 1999, p.366). One task was to select a theme, preferably by the students themselves. Within this social studies task, students needed to research and analyze to make certain they have a complete understanding of the concepts and key ideas. The two drama tasks consist of improvisation and techniques of stage performance. Through improvisation, “students learn to use their intuitions, imagination, voices, and bodies to express their personal knowledge, ideas, and emotions” (Gay & Hanley, 1999, p.366). Techniques of stage performance require more preparation. These techniques include characterization, working with script, vocal projection, timing, and relating to many people (Gay & Hanley, 1999, p.366). Through improvisation and stage performance, students are given an opportunity to express themselves and navigate potentially problematic issues more in depth. Providing a comfortable atmosphere for students to expand on their personal views is critical in social studies because it counteracts tendencies of embarrassment or fear regarding public disclosure of information like their ethnic information or cultural heritage (Gay & Hanley, 1999, p. 365). Drama-based strategies such as improvisation can help reveal the diverse views within a classroom through the integration of culture-based interpretations of history.

Developing perspective and the respect for others' views is a component of multicultural education and another possible outcome of drama based pedagogy. This is especially important in history education. History should be understood as a debate and how historical events were experienced should be viewed through multiple perspectives (Mattson, 2008). This is crucial to process drama because it cannot be implemented without the use of multiple perspectives. Realizing that "the world is full of differing perspectives allows great possibilities for developing ethical understanding" (Wilhelm, 2006, p.76). As students try to solve problems through the eyes of others, they begin to develop empathy.

Negotiation and compromise are important skills taught in social studies. Through traditional lectures, students rarely get to practice or participate in negotiation. Through dramatic role-play strategies they are given this chance. For example, Shaw (2006) designed a three-way civil war role-playing exercise to advance student understanding of negotiation and potential outcomes of negotiation. Each student was given a role within one of the three ethnic groups in a fictional country. Their task was to negotiate a settlement within the country for their ethnic group. Each group was given a negotiation stance with specific guidelines. However, the dynamics of the settlement agreement were left open and flexible. Shaw (2006) found that "students came to recognize that there is no "right way" to negotiate that guarantees an agreement" (Shaw, 2006, p.62). More importantly was the students learned to listen, strategize and to advocate their own position. In this case, students did not become experts due to the role play, but they did gain valuable skills that they will one day use in their daily lives.

Through the use of drama and role play, social studies teachers can use simulation to provide genuine learning environments. DiCamillo and Gradwell (2012) set out to describe the purposes teachers adopt for implementing role playing simulation and to add to the sparse field

of simulation research by providing educators with what is pedagogically possible in teaching history. The participants in this year-long qualitative study consisted of two teachers purposefully selected because they were identified by local teacher educators and district administrators as effective or “wise” teachers. Both teachers taught 10 and 14 years respectively and sought information on the purpose and implementation of simulations in U.S history. The authors observed the combined classes participating in three types of simulations; role-play, game, and trial, on ten different occasions. Qualitative data were coded based on initial themes and patterns, such as teachers’ purposes to engage students, development of historical empathy, and connecting history to current events. During the various simulations, students took on the roles of attorneys, justices, immigrants and investors. The goal was for students to feel and experience the problems the various groups faced during major events in history.

Although major themes were not explicitly identified, results of the trial simulation indicate that the teachers’ discovered it helped students remember the information from the cases. In the role play simulation, the teachers expressed that the students were able to internalize the experience of an immigrant. Months later, they remembered their immigrant names and the stories they created, and so it became part of their deeper memory. Furthermore, the authors found that students performed similarly to their peers in other districts on a statewide standardized test. Therefore, the use of role-play simulations did not impede their students’ success on the eighth grade state test. The authors conclude that the teachers’ students in this study performed as well as their peers in traditional classrooms (DiCamillo & Gradwell, 2012, p. 15).

As opposed to historical textbooks, students can make connections between themselves and past people and events through engagement and performance. Sam Wineburg, a

psychologist and historian suggests that “in order to overcome inherited notions of past events, we must create dialectic by engaging with contemporary narratives and exploring the ‘less-familiar past’” (Chappell, 2010, p.253). Students make this connection because they are not allowed to sit back, but are given the opportunity to put themselves in the place of others in the past. Drama based strategies and role play take students beyond the textbook by living through history. Students can perform in a historic role and at the same time combine their experiences to make connections between then and now. Wilhelm (2006) also studied the connection of learning to life through the use of drama. He suggests that “creative drama strategies frame learning as a form of inquiry, connect curricular material both to students’ lived realities and to broader world issues, and help students become competent in strategies of inquiry” (Wilhelm, 2006, p. 77). Therefore, drama strategies bridge the gap between active learning and inquiry, which provides students the opportunities to think critically while adding value and purpose to their learning process.

Conclusion and Summary

Previous research has covered a variety of variables related to instructional strategies that focus on the effectiveness of drama, simulation, and role play in education. The research emphasizes important skills like openness to diversity, acceptance of multiple cultures and perspectives, and empathy, which are required for students to be successful citizens in the 21st century (Gay & Hanley, 1999; Cockett, 1999, Wilhelm, 2006, Mattson, 2008). The research supports the claims that drama-based role play strategies increase student engagement and motivation to learn (Hernandez-Ramos & De La Paz, 2009; Corbeil & Laveault, 2011, McNaughton, 2004). This interest and engagement leads to development of student cognitive skills, knowledge acquisition, and literacy (McMaster, 1998; Huizenga, Admiraal, Akkerman,

and Dam, 2009; Kerekes & King, 2010; Podlozny, 2010; DiCamillo & Gladwell, 2012; Anderson, 2012). Finally, the research indicates drama based education helps produce historical thinking skills that are essential to social studies education such as group negotiation and compromise, inquiry-based problem solving, and making connections (Shaw, 2006; Wilhelm, 2006; Chappell, 2010).

The previous research on drama strategies and specifically, the use of role-play to create authentic environments is extensive. However the research is limited in a number of ways. First, few studies on drama based strategies and outcomes have been conducted specifically in eighth grade American history classrooms. The research primarily focuses on math, science, or language coursework and in many cases in elementary or college-level pre-teacher courses. Second, the research provides various studies on simulation and the use of gaming and technology but does not connect this to student motivation to participate and how the integration of technology, role play, and drama in the classroom contributes to thinking like a historian. Third, very few studies researched the effectiveness of specific role-play strategies and the impact they have on students when drama is used on a consistent basis. Future studies should be conducted to test duration and frequency of drama based role-play strategies in the classroom. An essential question the research leaves out relates to student development and growth. How do students grow in their understanding of what it means to think like a historian?

Thinking like a historian requires a combination of careful skills that develop over time through practice, patience, and motivation to discover the past. Various studies have been conducted on these historical thinking skills. First, historical thinking requires using evidence to support claims (Hernandez-Ramos and de La Paz, 2009). Second, studying history through a multicultural lens allows students to view situations from multiple perspectives (Mattson, 2008).

Third, developed historical thinkers can learn from and with their peers through effective group work (Kerekes and King, 2010). Fourth, historical thinking requires students to construct a social identity by responding to specific problems in society based on challenges they have investigated from the past (Brash and Warnecke, 2009). Last, to come full circle, as Dorothy Heathcote believed, if students are to become historical thinkers they must become front and center in an inquiry based acquisition of knowledge and problem solving. The use of drama-based strategies in social studies can help in the development of these skills in our young historians.

Chapter Three

Methods and Design of the Study

As indicated in the previous chapter, the evidence found in recent studies conducted on drama-based strategies shows that there are numerous ways educators can use role-play and simulation-based drama strategies to improve instruction. Much of the literature indicates that drama connects students' learning to their lives (Wilhelm, 2006, p.77). Many researchers have pointed out the benefits of drama education on student motivation and engagement, academic performance, and identity creation, but fail to narrow down this practice in middle school history. Furthermore, the use of drama should be further documented as to provide analyses of specific strategies as well as frequency and duration of drama based strategies and their impact on student motivation and academic performance.

This action research project included the implementation of drama-based strategies in my classroom. It is important to note that I have used a year-long, simulation-based project in my classroom throughout the past two years called *Living through History*, or LTH. LTH is a project based simulation where students are required to assume the role of various characters in history and apply concepts throughout the year as they are introduced through traditional methods. *Living through History* activities primarily focus on student imagination and requires students to think as if they are living in a given time period, however, they are never required to physically act or role play in front of a small group or whole class. Through the integration of role-playing activities and Mantle of the Expert lessons, the students went beyond imagination and into the world of enactment. In addition, the drama strategies implemented in this action research project span across the history curriculum and connect key concepts. Students were required to reflect on previous drama strategies from prior units and then apply those concepts to

the drama strategies in the later units. It was through my own personal reflection of LTH from prior years that I decided drama-based strategies would be a positive addition to the curriculum by adding the phases of enactment and reflection to imagination.

The goal of this qualitative action research study was to gather information on student academic performance and motivation as it applied directly to the studying of middle school American history. Through the implementation of drama-based strategies and observation of student responses and behavior, it was the goal of this study to improve instruction and provide further analysis of drama-based education, middle school instruction, and history curriculum to add to both the teaching of historical content and to the further enhancement of the student's educational experience. In this chapter, I will describe the environment in which the action research was conducted as well as the basic information regarding the student population who participated. Furthermore, I provided a description of how the qualitative data was analyzed to address both sets of research questions.

Context

The research in this project was conducted in my Early American History classroom during the fall and winter trimesters. As a social studies teacher, I taught five courses of American History throughout a seven-period day. The school is a medium-sized suburban middle school. There were 770 students enrolled in grades 7 and 8. The make-up of the school is primarily Caucasian with 93% of the students in this category. The remaining 7% of the students fall in to the categories of Hispanic (3.8%), Asian (1.2%), Black (0.8%), or American Indian (0.6%). Furthermore, 15.2% of the student body was considered economically disadvantaged and 13.5% were students with disabilities. The population of the village in which the school is located was 7,430.

Participants

The participants in my study were students enrolled in my five courses of Early American History. The participants were all members of the same academic house; therefore, they had the same set of teachers for all academic core classes. There were 132 students in the five courses with a range of 24 to 28 students per course. The five classes were made up of 67 male students and 65 female students (see Table 3.1). Eighteen students were identified as special education students or students who were receiving additional help through the academic support program. To help meet the various needs of these students, an instructional aide was present in my second hour class. My American history course is the required eighth grade course in the district and maintains the correct social studies track for entering high school the following year.

Table 3.1

Distribution of Participants by Class Period and Gender

| <u>Class Period</u> | <u>Females</u> | <u>Males</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1 | 11 | 13 | 24 |
| 2 | 9 | 17 | 26 |
| 3 | 12 | 15 | 27 |
| 5 | 19 | 9 | 28 |
| 7 | 14 | 13 | 27 |
| ----- | | | |
| Totals | 65 | 67 | 132 |

Questions

There were two main sets of research questions addressed in this action research study. The first set of questions were based on student attitudes towards studying history. Does the implementation of drama strategies increase student motivation to learn history in middle school? Two additional sub-questions addressed were, 1) how do students view the process of thinking and studying like a historian, and 2) do students value the need to learn social studies to prepare them for their future? I addressed the first set of questions through the pre and post-surveys at the beginning and end of the project time period. Questions regarding attitudes towards history were also included in the interview process as they related to specific drama-based strategies.

The second research question set asked how does the implementation of drama-based strategies improve classroom instruction in a middle school history course? Three sub-questions addressed were, 1) how will the students react academically to drama-based practices, 2) what challenges did I, as the teacher, face, and 3) how did I change the instruction to meet these challenges during the administration of drama-based strategies and role-playing practices? The level of improvement was measured through student perception of academic performance that I gauged through the interview process. I also kept a set of notes and observation records in a reflective teacher journal throughout the project, primarily on drama days.

Procedures

The procedure for implementing this action research project began on the third day of school, Thursday, September 2, 2014. All students were introduced to the project when they were introduced to the *Living through History* year-long simulation project (Hollister, 1994). Through the introduction presentation, students were introduced to drama-based strategies and

how they differ from traditional strategies in the classroom. On the fifth day of school, students completed a “studying history” pre-survey to measure student attitudes, motivation, and perceptions of studying history. Throughout the next three units, students participated in four different drama strategies that focused on role-playing in history. The drama strategies varied and depended upon the content that best fit the concepts of the unit. The first four drama-strategies were teacher-in-role, student role-play, meetings, and Role on the Wall.

Teacher-in-role. In this strategy, I played the role of the King while my students played the roles of serfs within my kingdom (see Appendix A). Throughout the first unit on exploration, I stepped in and out of my role by placing a crown on my head and using a throne as a prop. The goals in teacher in role include “presenting challenging and controversial points of view and to stimulate thought, discussion, and action by pupils” (Farmer, 2011, p. 20). I wanted to model role play early in the year so my students would be exposed to the strategies that would follow. The first unit in the eighth grade early American History curriculum is designed to introduce students to the different societies in the world and how they interacted. This particular lesson introduced the students to the manorial system in England and eventually led into lessons that focused on the reasons why people chose to explore new lands outside of Europe.

Student role-play. This procedure requires that the students take on a role of a character in history to explore a point of view (see Appendix B). In this drama strategy several students took on the role of advisors to a King in the 1500s, soldiers heading out to the Crusades, and explorers preparing to head east in search of goods to bring back to the kingdom. In this lesson students were given a skit to read from and had the opportunity to elaborate through improvisation. This served as a precursor to a longer activity in unit two when students played the roles of early American colonists building their towns in the new country.

Meetings. The drama strategy *meetings* is a useful procedure when the goal in the classroom is to have students participate in a debate over controversial issues. This strategy “enables students to present, appreciate, and interpret different points of view while maintaining a role over a period of time (Farmer, 2011, p. 37). I used this strategy in a three day lesson where I facilitated a debate over taxation imposed on American colonists prior to the American Revolution (see Appendix C). The students played the role of colonists and I integrated the teacher in role strategy as I facilitated as a representative from the mother country.

Role on the wall. Role on the wall is an effective strategy to use when teachers want to generate information collaboratively as a group. In my classroom, I used role on the wall in a lesson designed to describe the experiences a Revolutionary war soldier would have at the winter encampment at Valley Forge (see Appendix D). Words and phrases were then listed around the silhouette or picture of the person on the board. I chose to organize the list by writing positive versus negative phrases or experiences in various colors. However, other methods can be used with role on the wall including descriptive words on the inside of the picture and questions on the outside as well as writing facts versus feelings. I used this strategy in my classroom to generate ideas for journal writing as students were to describe the experiences of the soldier as if they were at Valley Forge.

Following the first three units of instruction and the implementation of four different drama-based strategies, eight students were interviewed to measure student perception of academic performance and attitudes towards the four drama-based strategies. Four males and four females were randomly chosen to participate in the interviews. I noted their responses in a journal and included observation field notes taken throughout the four drama-based lessons. This process was then repeated for a second time and included the implementation of four

different drama strategies during the fourth and fifth units. The fifth, sixth, and seventh strategies were all Mantle of the Expert strategies with different topics of study used for each. The final drama strategy was a non-role playing strategy called Where Do You Stand and was implemented to expand upon drama-based education outside of role-play.

Mantle of the Expert: Law school, elections, and the senate. Mantle of the Expert is an inquiry-based drama strategy that includes the students assuming the roles of experts in designated fields. I chose to implement three Mantle of the Expert lessons during this study as it is driven by student creativity, teamwork, communication skills, critical thought, and decision making (Farmer, 2011, p. 25). These skills are collectively crucial to the development of students as historical thinkers. In the first Mantle of the Expert lesson, students assumed the roles of constitutional law school students (see Appendix E). In the second Mantle of the Expert lesson, students became presidential and vice-presidential candidates as well as an informed member of the electorate (see Appendix F). Last, students assumed dual roles as senators in their fictional country's lawmaking body as well as leaders in various industries of the 1800s (see Appendix G). The key to Mantle of the Expert is that it is most effective when used over an extended period of time. Student learning is enhanced as they gain knowledge as experts and build on their prior knowledge. As the teacher, I guided the drama strategy and stepped in and out of the lesson as needed with the goal in mind that students construct solutions to the challenges and tasks presented within the activity.

Where do you stand? In this procedure, students are given a topic or issue and are asked to form a stance or opinion on the topic. Next, students express their views by choosing where to stand on a line representing a continuum or opinion. During this procedure it is important to "emphasize that everybody's point of view will be respected and to encourage

students to decide for themselves how they feel about the issue” (Farmer, 2011, p. 90). I taped a line across the front of my classroom floor and posted signs on each end of the spectrum. On one side I labeled a sign with “yes” and on the other side I labeled a sign with the word “no.” As my non-role play strategy topic I chose the U.S. government’s decision to drop atomic bombs on Japan in 1945. I presented the students with background information as well as common arguments for those who agreed with the decision to drop the bomb versus those who disagreed. I tied this into a discussion on current events and how it relates to foreign policy today (see Appendix H).

Following the second set of drama strategies, eight different students were interviewed regarding their experiences as participants in the final four drama-strategies. The second set of students included four different males and four different females from the first group interviewed. On the final day of interviews, all student participants were given a post-survey to measure student attitudes and motivation towards history and the drama-based strategies. I compared student responses to the surveys completed prior to the research project to check for patterns and changes in perception.

Last, on Sunday, March 22, 2015 I began analyzing survey responses and notes taken from observations and interview sessions. Through the identification of patterns of behavior and comparisons of student responses to both survey and interview questions, I began to interpret the results and drew conclusions.

Table 3.2

Implementation of Drama Strategies Action Research Timeline

| Dates | Description |
|-----------------|---|
| Sept. 4 | Introduced drama strategies project to student participants |
| Sept. 5 | Administered pre-survey in classes |
| Sept. 16-18 | Unit 1, Drama Strategy 1: Teacher in Role |
| Sept. 23 | Unit 2, Drama Strategy 2: Student Role Play |
| Dec. 4-5, 8 | Unit 2, Drama Strategy 3: Meetings |
| Jan. 14 | Unit 3, Drama Strategy 4: Role on the Wall |
| Jan. 27-29 | Conducted Student Interviews: Session One (n= 8 students total) |
| Feb. 2-5 | Unit 4, Drama Strategy 5: Mantle of the Expert: Law School |
| Feb. 11-13 | Unit 5, Drama Strategy 6: Mantle of the Expert: Elections |
| Feb. 26-Mar. 10 | Unit 5, Drama Strategy 7: Mantle of the Expert: The Senate |
| Mar. 13 | Current Events, Drama Strategy 8: Where Do You Stand? (non-role play strategy) |
| Mar. 18-Mar. 20 | Conducted Student Interviews: Session Two (n= 8 students total) |
| Mar. 20 | Administered post-survey in classes |
| Mar. 22 | Scored and analyzed post-survey results Analyzed journal observation notes and interview notes |

Instruments for Data Collection

The instruments used in this action research project included a pre-study survey and post-study survey to measure student perception and attitudes toward thinking and learning as a historian (see Appendix I). After each of the two drama-based instruction sessions, eight students (16 total) participated in interviews about their experiences using the drama activities. The responses to the interview questionnaire (see Appendix J) were documented in the teacher's reflection and observation journal.

The pre and post-surveys were designed to gather student perspective on studying history. The first part of the survey consisted of closed questions. Students were required to answer questions comparing the various subjects they learned in school using a rating scale. The second part of the survey consisted of open-ended questions, allowing for student explanation of

learning strategies. In this part, students explained the value they put into various types of learning strategies. The survey did not change in its format or questioning, as the same survey was given at the conclusion of the project.

The interview in this project was developed as a method of data collection and relies on a semi-structured format that includes a list of questions (see Appendix J). The interview was semi-structured so that each student was asked the same set of core questions in the same way. However, follow up questions were asked for clarification or further explanation. I assumed the differences in the answers to the core questions were real and not due to the interview instrument itself. Students were interviewed individually in my classroom with no distractions. Sixteen total students were interviewed within a week after each of the two drama-based sessions; eight different students were interviewed at each session. Two students were chosen from each class period with two students considered extra in case of schedule conflicts. The two extra students were not needed for interviewing in either sessions. All five class periods were represented by at least one student for both interview sessions. The teacher chose students based on availability to interview them during their study halls as many students do not have this time available. No audio or visual instruments were used in the conducting of the interviews or collection of the data. All responses were documented in a teacher reflection journal.

The reflection journal was intended for teacher use only. I used this instrument to reflect on student behavior and reactions to drama-based strategies. I used the journal to document challenges and obstacles faced during the implementation of various strategies and the changes made to improve the instruction. The journal included entries for each of the eight drama-based strategies throughout the five classes, notes from sixteen interviews, and two entries from the pre-project and post-project survey. I also indicated the quality of student interactions, the

degree of involvement in higher order thinking, and insight into the causes of the unexpected patterns of behavior.

Analysis

Careful analysis of qualitative data was conducted to address both research questions separately. I analyzed data from the surveys by comparing the frequency of responses to each item on both surveys. Then I computed the percentage change of frequency for each item between the pre-project survey and the post-project survey. Combinations of all three instruments were used to address both questions. Therefore, the analysis of the data was reviewed together. Student motivation and attitudes toward history were primarily measured through the comparison of responses from both surveys, responses to interview questions, and notes taken in the reflection journal. I also examined the data from all three instruments; searching for patterns, and I suggested several possible interpretations of the data before stating a preferred interpretation.

Student academic performance data, such as development of literacy skills, social skills, and student perception of knowledge acquisition, was collected and analyzed through a comparison of the responses to interview questions and observation notes from the journal reflection. Similar to the analysis of student motivation, I searched for specific code words that develop into patterns and compared the responses from the interview questions to that of the observation field notes (Henning, Stone, and Kelly, 2009). I identified notes from my observation journal that addressed the two sets of research questions.

The final goal of the analysis was to report out findings that help support other teachers who hope to implement drama-based strategies in history. I searched for common patterns and challenges faced throughout the project. The goal was to explicitly list findings that teachers can

use to better implement drama-based strategies in their own classrooms. This analysis included justifications for changes made throughout the project and student response to those changes.

This action research project aimed to determine what effects drama-based strategies and role-play activities have on student motivation and the development of historical thinking skills. By the end of the fifth unit, students had participated in eight drama-based strategies and a pre and post survey regarding attitudes towards studying history versus other academic courses and their personal perspectives of what it means to think as a historian. Sixteen students participated in interviews regarding student perception of academic performance as well as reflections on their experiences with drama-based education. Throughout the action research project, I documented observed behaviors and responses to instruction through field notes in a teacher reflection journal and drew conclusions and my own interpretations.

Chapter Four

Results and Discussion

The results of the surveys, student interviews, and journal observation notes were used in combination to address both sets of research questions. First, to measure student motivation and attitudes toward the studying of history and its importance in academics, I documented the frequency of responses to items found on the surveys given before and at the conclusion of the action research project. Change was determined by the percentage change of frequencies of response from the pre-survey to the post-survey for each item on the surveys. I then combined these responses with responses from multiple interview questions. Second, to improve instruction I used responses from the surveys and interviews in addition to the journal notes I took during the eight drama strategy lessons conducted throughout the study. I present the results based on the two sets of research questions below.

Student Motivation and Attitudes

Students were asked a variety of question on the pre-survey and post-survey regarding their views of the studying of history as an academic class in middle school. Students were asked to reflect on the importance of studying history as it applies to college preparation and career readiness as well as their motivation to learn history compared to other subjects taught in middle school. In addition to motivation, through the interview process students were asked to explain what it means to study like a historian and how they prefer to learn about history.

Student effort and enjoyment. As a result of drama-based role playing strategies students tended to enjoy the learning of history. Thirteen of the sixteen students interviewed indicated that they enjoyed drama strategies over traditional methods. Those thirteen students indicated it was easier to pay attention and grasp concepts through the practice of viewing

history through multiple perspectives. Nine of the 16 students interviewed enjoyed student role-play because they felt like they could all contribute and express their own opinions on divisive issues. Six of 16 students enjoyed Mantle of the Expert the most because they felt value in their role and gave them the opportunity to succeed independently but also for the good of the class.

However, students interviewed recognized the importance of traditional methods as well. Five of the sixteen students interviewed identified traditional strategies as effective because they felt they could take down more information in notes and it was less tiring of a strategy than the drama-based activities. Last, on the post-survey, two additional students indicated the highest level of importance for the amount of effort they give in studying history and nine additional students indicated that they tremendously enjoy learning history (see Table 4.1).

Importance for college and career readiness and daily life. Although students recognized the amount of effort needed to be successful in history, many students did not place as much importance on studying history for college or career preparation as they did with their other core classes. Although they enjoyed studying history they saw the application of history as more applicable to their daily lives than to college or career readiness (see Table 4.1). The number of students who indicated a four or five level of importance of learning history for college and career readiness decreased by twenty students on the post-survey. The most common reason cited for the importance of learning skills and concepts in history was so we as people can avoid making the same mistakes in the past (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.1

Frequency of Change between Importance of Learning History as Indicated on Pre-and-Post Surveys, Items 1-5

| Survey Item | Least | | | | | Most |
|----------------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Effort | NC | -3 | +1 | -7 | +2 | |
| Enjoyment | +1 | -8 | -5 | -3 | +9 | |
| Importance for College | NC | +1 | +2 | -8 | -3 | |
| Importance for Career | -2 | +3 | NC | -10 | +1 | |
| <u>Importance for Daily Life</u> | <u>-4</u> | <u>-11</u> | <u>+3</u> | <u>+3</u> | <u>+7</u> | |

NC= no change in frequency between pre-survey and post-survey student responses.

n=132 students

Note. One student participant did not complete the pre-survey, items 1-5, and nine student participants did not complete all items 1-5 on the post-survey.

Additional survey data (not included in the tables) showed that most students thought that classes other than social studies required the most reading and writing to be successful. On the post-survey, ten percent of the students indicated social studies required the most reading and writing to be successful, a decrease of two percent from the pre-survey. Sixteen students indicated social studies as their top choice on the pre-survey whereas thirteen students indicated the same on the post-survey. On both surveys, a majority of students indicated language arts and math as the classes that require the most reading and writing to be successful. Although McMaster (1998) found that drama is one of the few vehicles of instruction that can support every aspect of literacy development, students are failing to connect this to the study of history. Students commonly cite language arts and math as the sources of literacy development as well as the subjects in which they most often apply their literacy skills.

Table 4.2

Student Attitudes toward the Importance of Learning Skills and Concepts in History

| Student Response | Frequency of Response | | Change (%) |
|--|-----------------------|------|------------|
| | Pre | Post | |
| To avoid making the same mistakes, learn from the past and apply it to the future. | 39 | 38 | +1.2% |
| Skills needed for assessments and college/career readiness | 31 | 16 | -10.8% |
| To learn more about the past, make connections, in-depth thinking. | 22 | 19 | -1.3% |
| To understand how the world and the United States was constructed. | 19 | 25 | -2.3% |
| To apply these skills to our daily lives and conversations. | 5 | 14 | +7.7% |
| Other/various responses. | 13 | 9 | -2.6% |

n=132 students were given both surveys

Note. Three students did not complete item #8 on the pre-survey; eleven students did not complete this item on the post-survey. To account for students who did not complete item #8, change in percentage was calculated (f/n post – f/n pre = % change).

Thinking like a historian. Student perception of what it means to “think like a historian” varied at the beginning of the study. However, both at the beginning as well as at the conclusion of the study, the most common response was that students believed thinking like a historian meant to think like someone from the past. Similar to the McNaughton (2004) findings, on the post-survey, 43 students used either the phrase “to put oneself in another’s mindset or shoes” or “to think like you were living in a particular role in that time period.” This was an increase of sixteen students (14.8%) who indicated the same on the pre-survey (see Table 4.3). As seven of the eight drama strategies focused on role-playing, I believe this helped transform students’ views on what it means to think like a historian. Furthermore, seven fewer

students (-4.5%) indicated that “thinking like a historian” consisted of the student becoming an expert in history. It is important to note here that three of the final four strategies focused on Heathcote’s strategy of Mantle of the Expert, which put the student in the role of the expert in a particular field.

Students in both the pre-survey and the post-survey stated that they believed “thinking like a historian” meant to avoid mistakes that were made in the past (see Table 4.2). Thirty-nine of the 129 students who completed the pre-survey indicated this as the importance of learning skills and concepts in history. Similarly, on the post-survey thirty-eight students of the 121 who completed the survey indicated the same response, an increase of 1.2%.

Table 4.3

Student Perception of “Thinking like a Historian”

| Student Response | Frequency of Response | | Change (%) |
|--|-----------------------|------|------------|
| | Pre | Post | |
| To think like someone from the past, in a specific role. | 31 | 47 | +14.8% |
| In-depth thinking about history and how the world and the United States was constructed. | 25 | 10 | -10.8% |
| Thinking and acting like you are an “expert” historian. | 21 | 14 | -4.5% |
| The ability to relate history to the present, or our daily lives. | 11 | 10 | -0.2% |
| The ability to recall past information and seek answers. | 13 | 16 | +3.1% |
| Other/various responses. | 30 | 25 | -2.4% |

n=132 students were given both surveys

Note. One student did not complete item #7 on the pre-survey; ten students did not complete this item on the post-survey. To account for students who did not complete item #7, change in percentage was calculated (f/n post – f/n pre = % change).

All sixteen students interviewed stated that drama based strategies helped them retain information or acquire historical knowledge because they were able to gather information and then were given opportunities to make their own decisions in the project. As indicated in an earlier study conducted by Brash and Warnecke (2009), this creation of an authentic, social situation within drama, students construct and create their identity in the classroom. When students were asked to solve problems within the drama strategy, they were asked to become informed and confident decision-makers to solve problems and think as historians. Students began to view themselves as competent learners, thus creating an identity in the history classroom. Furthermore, all sixteen students interviewed after the drama strategies were implemented stated that drama helped them think like a historian by reviewing content through multiple perspectives.

Studying history through various perspectives. In addition to studying history through a role in the past, many students recognized the importance of learning history through various perspectives (see Table 4.4). However, six students indicated on the post-survey that they believed “thinking like a historian” consisted of thinking of things from various perspectives and having an open mind when thinking about different points of view in history. This data was included in the “other/various” column of Table 4.3. This should not go unnoticed as zero students indicated this on the pre-survey before the drama strategies were implemented. Of the sixteen students interviewed, twelve stated they felt this because they were able to see multiple sides of an issue and could then gain the mindset of an unbiased historian. Student responses in this study are similar to those found in prior studies. For example, Maloy and LaRoche (2010) found that drama “provides students with insight into the experiences and challenges faced by people of color, women, working classes, non-western societies, and other groups typically

excluded from school curriculum” (p. 49).

Table 4.4

Importance of Learning History from Various Perspectives

| | Pre-Survey | Post-survey | Change (%) |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Yes, Important | 119 | 115 | +2.8% |
| No, not important | 5 | 3 | -1.4% |
| Unsure/Maybe | 5 | 3 | -1.4% |

n=132 students were given both surveys

Note. Three students did not complete item #9 on the pre-survey; eleven students did not complete this item on the post-survey. To account for students who did not complete item #9, change in percentage was calculated (f/n post – f/n pre = % change).

Using Drama Strategies to Improve Instruction

Throughout this action research project, students were faced with many challenges and scenarios where they were required to take ownership of their own education. In general, I found that these drama-based lessons helped me transform the learning environment to a more student-centered atmosphere. As I implemented, facilitated, and participated in the eight drama strategies, I recorded student reactions to these challenges and to changes I made during the lessons. Overall, drama strategies did improve my instruction of history in my middle school classroom in a variety of areas. First, the drama strategies helped me gather input on how students enjoy learning history and in what type of learning environment students are most comfortable learning history. Second, this action research provided me with information on how role-playing strategies and traditional methods in the classroom can work together to meet a diverse set of learning needs found in my students. Third, I was able to identify areas I need to improve upon with the Living through History simulation project I have been conducting in my

classroom for the past three years. I was able to identify key areas to focus on as I continue teaching students how to think like responsible, open-minded, critical thinking historians.

Learning environment. Students overwhelmingly saw the benefits of learning about history through acting and role-playing strategies. Based on survey results as well as interview responses, many students indicated that history is more beneficial and more enjoyable to learn when it is done together. Students expressed their willingness to experience history through drama together. As Farmer (2011) indicated, drama gives students opportunities to explore, discuss and deal with difficult issues and to express their emotions in a supportive environment (p. 1). In addition to Farmer's analysis, I found that all sixteen of the students interviewed after the eight drama strategies had been conducted believed that drama-based strategies helped with their social skills through public speaking, finding a comfort level that built confidence, and communicating and compromising when there were disagreements. Similarly, Farmer (2011) found that role-play helps build students' personal and social skills through group work because "group negotiation and discussion helps to encourage listening, working cooperatively, and learning to respect one another's similarities and differences" (p. 7). Students in my study revealed similar challenges. Six of the students interviewed saw challenges with group dynamics and disagreements, but believed it helped them learn to compromise. Four of the sixteen students saw this as a problem because many students were off-task or did not pay attention to the group or to what the group was trying to accomplish.

In addition to group dynamics, all 132 student participants were asked to express the ideal group size of the learning environment they believed was the most conducive to learning history through drama. Ninety-two of the students on the post-survey stated that they preferred either small groups of about 3 to 6 students or the whole class when learning history (see Table

4.5), this was an increase of 3.8%. Of the sixteen students interviewed after the drama-strategies were conducted, three specifically indicated they wanted drama to be conducted in large or whole class more often, especially when the teacher was in role. They believed it was helpful to see the fun side of the teacher and it helped them find comfort in role-playing. This response is similar to earlier findings by Brash and Warnecke (2009) who found that even though role-playing may not always be comfortable for students, it allows students to venture out of their comfort zones in a controlled manner (p. 106).

Table 4.5

Ideal Group Size for Learning History

| Student Response | Frequency of Response | | Change (%) |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|------|------------|
| | Pre | Post | |
| Individually | 14 | 10 | -2.5% |
| Partner Work | 19 | 19 | +1.1% |
| Small groups (3-6 students) | 52 | 53 | +3.8% |
| Whole class (24-28 students) | 45 | 39 | -2.4% |

n=132 students were given both surveys

Note. Two students did not complete item #10 on the pre-survey; eleven students did not complete this item on the post-survey. To account for students who did not complete item #10, change in percentage was calculated (f/n post - f/n pre = % change).

As indicated in the table above, students enjoy learning history through drama in groups. Similar to results of the opinion survey conducted by Hernandez-Ramos and De La Paz (2009), my survey also showed positive student interaction effects, revealing that students “like studying with others” (p. 166).

Improving instruction through drama and role-play. Based on the journal observation notes I recorded during the implementation of the drama strategies, I was able to successfully make connections and draw conclusions to help improve my instruction as a social studies teacher as well as a facilitator of drama strategies in the history classroom. First, student behavior indicated that the more outgoing and involved I was in my role, the more students reciprocated. If I “bought into” the role students became more engaged in the skit as well. As each of my five classes participated in the lesson, I tried to become even more engaged and motivated each class. I observed more student enthusiasm as the day went on. During the Mantle of the Expert-elections activity, some students transformed into young politicians. In two separate classes I overheard students promising others jobs in their cabinets if they promised to vote for them. The students knew the cabinet creation would be part of the next unit, Mantle of the Expert- the senate. I noticed that students tie concepts to emotion which leads to memorable experiences. For example, during the Meetings strategy, one student became visually angered with the “king” in the activity raising by raising his voice and looking flustered as he exclaimed that “we have a right to privacy in our own homes” when referring to his opposition to the Quartering Act. Competition can breed motivation, engagement, and the desire to do succeed and provide an answer to a particular problem. This put the students at the front and center of their knowledge acquisition, as this is precisely what Heathcote’s Mantle of the Expert was designed to do. The transformation to student-led dramatic inquiry occurred throughout the duration of the action research project. Through this transition, I recognized the importance of modeling expectations for students in role and providing the scaffolding needed for students to actively pursue answers to historic issues using their own thinking and decision making processes. This had a positive impact on student engagement in problem solving, as opposed to simply providing

information as a “sage on the stage.” In addition to students taking ownership of their learning, they also overwhelmingly identified acting and role-playing strategies as an integral part of learning history. On the pre-survey (item 11), 102 students of the 128 total participants indicated such, and on the post-survey this number jumped to 110 students of 12, and increase of 11.2% (see Table 4.6). Also, thirteen of the sixteen students interviewed said role-playing was important because it helped them make comparisons between life in the past and daily decisions they make in their lives.

Table 4.6

Importance of Acting and Role-Play in Learning History

| | Pre-Survey | Post-Survey | Change (%) |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Yes, Important | 102 | 110 | +11.2% |
| No, not important | 20 | 10 | -7.3% |
| Unsure/Maybe | 6 | 1 | -3.8% |

n=132 students were given both surveys

Note. Four students did not complete item #11 on the pre-survey; eleven students did not complete this item on the post-survey. To account for students who did not complete item #11, change in percentage was calculated (f/n post – f/n pre = % change).

This study also informed me that it is important to use drama-based strategies in combination with other learning strategies, including traditional methods. Four of the students interviewed stated that they learned from both types of strategies equally. The traditional methods, such as note taking and using visual chart and tables, helped them more with basic facts, while drama-based practices helped them develop empathy and apply multiple perspectives to their thought process. Goalen (2001) also recognized that drama helps students acquire historical skills such as empathy and understanding for interpretation (p. 4). Six students stated they believed they learned more through drama-based strategies. Six students said they learned

more through the traditional methods. Four students indicated they believed they learned about the same using each method.

Through the journal observation notes, I found that using drama strategies in combination with traditional means helped with test preparation. Students were able to gather data and comprehend reading assignments and could then apply these to the drama strategies. Twelve of the sixteen students interviewed stated similar feelings. They believed drama-based strategies helped them prepare for the unit test because the experience was memorable and it provided the opportunity to connect items on their test to the experience in class. Two of those students also indicated that it helped them provide an educated guess on the test when they were uncertain about a question.

Students also found that they faced many challenges within the tasks of the drama strategies. To improve instruction six of the students interviewed wanted me to push students through more role-playing activities and more challenging situations. For example, students wanted to be faced with more real-life disasters or issues that would require more in-depth decision making as colonists within their town building activity in the *Living through History* project. From this response, I learned that it is important to set individual goals as well as group goals and to not lose focus of those objectives because many students will start to lose sight of the main objective of the lesson. Every class responds differently, so it is important to make sure to scaffold and facilitate discussion-based questions to keep students attentive. Last, I noted that I need to give students an incentive to participate in hopes of building a desire to do well. It is important in history and drama to allow for students to choose their means and to gain control of their own education. It is my job to be a facilitator, as they become experts.

Thinking like a historian includes patience and careful examination of sources.

Time is of the essence, but the quality of the lesson should be valued over the quantity of information given. Through the Mantle of the Expert Senate strategy (see Appendix G), the students helped me recognize the importance of quality instruction and the experience is more important than the quantity of the material. Students were taking their time to ensure they passed the bills in the form they desired while respectfully challenging one another and debating the topics. It was important that I add two full days to the end of the project to ensure the completion of the senate meetings. History teachers face the challenge of fitting thousands of years of historical content into a small amount of time. As Goalen (2001) indicated teachers will turn to traditional methods and their more imaginative and innovative teaching strategies are pushed aside at the expense of meeting state requirements. It has become my goal to make sure this does not happen in my classroom.

Chapter Five

Main Conclusions

The main conclusions that can be drawn from this action research project apply to both the attitudes and motivation of students to learn history through drama strategies as well as the multiple ways in which drama strategies help improve instruction in middle school social studies classes. First, based on the student interviews after the eight drama strategies were conducted and including the post-survey results; students enjoyed learning about history through drama. Throughout the school year, as noted in my journal, I noticed students talking more frequently with one another about the skits and role-playing strategies they participated in in class. During the drama lessons students seemed to be more engaged in the lesson and seemed to have a personal interest in their ongoing *Living through History* (LTH) projects. My students constantly wanted to know when the next LTH day would be.

Second, learning history through drama is a journey the teacher and students should take together. Learning through drama helps students “think like a historian” by developing strong social skills, feeling empathy, viewing history through multiple perspectives, and forming an identity in the classroom through confidence in their decision-making skills. During the interviews and after collecting survey data, I noticed students commonly identified the ability to have an open-mind and an unbiased approach to seeking answers from our past are keys to “thinking like a historian.”

Third, more students viewed learning through drama as helpful in preparing them for every day interactions, conversations, and effective decision-making. Furthermore, many students indicated that their experiences as participants in drama based history lessons were more

important for situations they may face in their daily lives than for preparing them for college and career readiness.

Fourth, students believed learning history through drama was beneficial when used along with traditional methods. I found that after I conducted the drama or *Living through History* lessons, students were more willing to learn through traditional measures on the following days. It is important to differentiate lessons and try to target the various learning styles in the classroom. I believe the combination of these strategies kept students engaged throughout the six units of the school year.

Fifth, the students and I have recognized that the challenges they faced in participating in the historical drama lessons helped them in the long run to becoming better historical thinkers. The students were faced with difficult decisions to make regarding their projects and were asked to work with others to negotiate and compromise on various issues. Furthermore, through this study students recognized the importance of studying history as it affects our future. Students overwhelmingly indicated that the skills and concepts in history are important to learn so we as individuals in a society do not repeat the mistakes that were made in the past.

Lastly, I made a positive change in my teaching by using drama in addition to *Living through History* curriculum and differently through student-centered activities. At the beginning of the project, and therefore the school year, I played a major role in the drama activities. For example, I played a king in the first unit and a representative to the king in the second unit, usually dressed up in a costume and leading the activity until we completed the task. Students would imagine we were a role in history and then complete a traditional method of historic study. Now, I have transitioned my teaching style to provide students with the opportunities to imagine, enact, and reflect on their own historical learning process through drama. As Johnson,

Liu, and Goble (2015) state, my goal was to use drama “as a more inclusive role-playing activity in which students with diverse drama abilities can participate in inquiry learning by engaging in a real-life situation” (p. 1).

Implications for Practice

Based on the findings from this study, I suggest teachers in middle school history classes implement drama strategies throughout the school year, at a minimum of once per unit of study. As Goalen (2001) indicated, teachers should make history in their classrooms by providing lessons where students can activate their prior knowledge and then construct opinions after carefully interpreting the information. Furthermore, teachers of history through drama should provide multiple opportunities for students to share their interpretations and respectfully debate their opinions. Teachers can do this by stepping out of the authentic situation created through role-play or Mantle of the Expert, and conducting other drama strategies to deepen understanding. For example, *Thought Tracking* can be used to have students verbally express their thoughts without rehearsal (Farmer, 2001, p. 31). This can be used when the teacher would like deeper discussion on an event or perhaps a still image, like a primary source in history. Another type of drama strategy outside of role-play is *Conscience Alley*, a decision-making strategy within drama. This strategy could be useful in history as it helps students explore a dilemma or a decisive moment in detail while listening to contrasting opinions (Farmer, 2011, p. 87). This type of strategy helps build the skills needed to think like a historian by considering multiple viewpoints on controversial issues.

Next, Mantle of the Expert should be the driving strategy behind the use of drama in history. Within the Mantle of the Expert realm, student become front and center, they become the experts. Mantle of the Expert provides students with the opportunity to take responsibility

for their education, to gain confidence in a social situation, and to analyze a problem in history from the standpoint of someone who lived during the time period. Anderson (2012) stated that Dorothy Heathcote created Mantle of the Expert to create an authentic environment within a classroom where the student becomes the leader of content acquisition rather than the teacher. Mantle of the Expert requires students to actively seek answers to challenging questions through research, discussions with classmates, and interpretations of multiple sources and perspectives.

Through the Senate, Election, and Law School Mantle of the Expert lessons conducted in my classroom students had the opportunity to be experts in specific industries during the westward expansion era of the United States as well as Senators, members of the electorate, and Constitutional law students. During the Senate project, every student in the classroom had their own responsibilities unique from their classmates'. Throughout the election project, students had the opportunities to take on leadership roles by running for president or vice-president of their project country. For those students who did not run for an elected position, they were able to form their own opinions on issues presented in class and then vote based on their personal beliefs and what they thought was best for the country. During the law school project, students carefully analyzed the United States Constitution and interpreted in their own way by applying it to specific cases presented to them during their BAR exam. Heathcote's goal for Mantle of the Expert was for students to construct their own societies through questioning and interaction rather than simple identification. This is essential in creating a drama-based environment that teaches student to think like historians.

In addition to the elements of Mantle of the Expert described in this action research project, there are additional elements I would utilize to improve my curriculum in the future. First, it is important to remember that the students as experts work for clients in a specific

enterprise. I would like to create an “arts establishment” enterprise within my curriculum. I think students (as experts) could integrate historical events, images, photography, etc. into their creation of an art gallery or a museum of historical artifacts. Second, I would like to implement symbolic words and writings into my curriculum. Through Mantle of the Expert, students can write from a perspective or role, and then another student can read that writing from a different role. For example, a student could play the role of a Civil War soldier reading a letter from home to his fellow soldier who has been injured in battle. Third, to improve my curriculum I want to put more emphasis on reflection to make meaning. This can be done through drama strategies as well as formative assessments and traditional methods. I will continue to vary the size of the groups in which students participate in reflection based activities as students indicated the need for this in this study.

Adding social issues to drama and social studies brings the classroom to life. As Anderson (2012) stated John O’Toole was concerned with drama and human behavior. He believed that social issues and social behavior were the “stuff of drama” (p. 46). After integrating role-playing drama strategies in the classroom, I used my last strategy on a current events lesson. I found that eighth grade students are more than willing to express their opinions and it is the role of the teacher to facilitate this expression with evidence. For example, before the implementation of drama, current event debates and discussions usually consisted of a reading of common arguments for and against something. Then students would raise their hand and give their opinions. I typically got the same students raising their hands to share their ideas. With the use of the Where do you Stand non-role play drama strategy, students were able to physical locate themselves on a line on the floor. Once the student was on this spectrum line, they felt more confident and willing to share their interpretations of the issue. Teachers within

all the social studies (geography, sociology, history, economics, psychology, etc.) can use both role-play and non-role play drama strategies. There is flexibility within drama; therefore it can be used throughout multiple disciplines.

Limitations and Recommendations

After the implementation of this action research project, I have identified a few limitations to my study specifically. First, I found it difficult to track all observations for my journal due to time constraints. I tried to take quick notes on a notepad and then transfer those notes to a typed document at the end of the day. It was a challenge trying to document all of the changes I had made from class period to class period as well as changes I had made to the lesson throughout the day. On several occasions I realized at the end of the day that I was hurried and could not read what had been written in my notes. If conducted again, I recommend using a laptop computer to type with as I am conducting the strategies.

Second, as indicated on the tables in chapter four, many students did not complete all of the items on the survey. Several students did not hand in the survey at all at the end of the project. Many of my students who had been identified as having a learning disorder or in an additional academic support class took the survey in a different room and never returned it. Therefore, the data that was compared between the pre-survey and the post-survey consisted of missing data. I recommend taking more time to allow students to complete the survey and use the completed survey as an exit ticket to leave the classroom that day. If they do not finish, it could be used as the bell work at the beginning of class the following day. Furthermore, I recommend more follow up with the students on the completion of all items on the surveys and quick analysis before collection to ensure completion. Many students simply skipped items or did not finish and this went unnoticed until after the study had concluded.

Third, students were chosen simply based on previous effort in class and if they had free time, like a study hall, to be interviewed. Therefore, the selection of the interviewed students was not absolutely random. To get a wider variety of student in-put I would draw random names and then make time before or after school to interview. This could have given me a more accurate picture of how the 132 students felt about drama and history.

Fourth, I would like to assess primary source analysis more and the effects of drama on literacy. Of all the components of historical thinking, it was primary source analysis that this study was limited on. This goes hand-in-hand with the development of literacy skills in history. I would include multiple drama lessons the included the use of a primary source text.

Fifth, due to time constraints and curriculum requirements, I was limited on how many drama strategies I could implement in one study during one academic year. Many of the strategies I used required multiple days and even multiple weeks for the Mantle of the Expert lessons. Therefore, in addition to the extended activities, I would recommend conducting a study using more drama strategies as well as various types of drama strategies that could be completed in one or two days. I chose to study the effects of role-playing and Mantle of the Expert strategies because I felt it would work nicely with the *Living through History* curriculum. However, a future researcher in another field could focus on storytelling, physical, decision-making, or improvisation and performance strategies.

Sixth, I was limited on the amount of props and costumes I had available to use in the drama skits, such as teacher-in-role and student role-play. I found that the energy and attention in the room increased as I made it more visually stimulating through props. I used something as simple as a corduroy blazer to show I was a law school professor during the Mantle of the Expert: Law School lesson and the students generated positive comments and questions based on

a simple enhancement of my wardrobe. For my visual learners in particular, I would use more props throughout the school year and have more available to students.

Last, qualitative research was ideal for this type of action research study. However, I would like to see some form of quantitative research conducted on the effects of drama strategies and how they influence student content retention and literacy skills. It is challenging to quantify student perceptions and attitudes toward drama and history, and it is even more challenging to quantify student social interactions and experiences. Therefore, I believe it would be productive to conduct a quantitative analysis on the effects of drama strategies in historical content retention.

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Appendix A**Drama Strategy Lesson Plan:
Teacher-in-Role**

Tuesday, Thursday, September 6 & 8, 2014
8th Grade/Early American History

Unit Essential Question

How did American, African, and European societies differ from one another before 1500?

Lesson Essential Question

What key changes occurred in Europe between 1300 and 1500?

Objectives

1. Students will identify the significance of the Crusades, Marco Polo, and the manorial system.
2. Students will analyze the events in Europe leading up to exploration of the Americas.
3. Students will participate in a role-playing skit with the teacher acting in the central role.

Connections to State or Common Core Standards

B.8.2 Employ cause-and-effect arguments to demonstrate how significant events have influenced the past and the present in United States and world history.

B.8.3 Describe the relationships between and among significant events, such as the consequences of wars in the United States and world history.

Materials

Notebooks, writing utensil, smartboard, a chair or throne, a crown, three student volunteers, bag full of goodies that includes perfume, spices, soap, and silk, copies of role-play skit (attached)

Procedures

Introductory/Prior Lesson Activities: The teacher presented notes on Marco Polo, the Crusades, and the manorial system the day before the lesson.

Main Activity (Day 1)

1. Teacher will review the notes from the previous day.
2. Teacher will dress as King, ask for three student volunteers, 1 will serve as advisor, will serve as soldiers.
2. Teacher and students will read from the script in their role.
3. Lesson ends upon completion of role-play, student soldiers were sent to the hall (which will serve as the Far East.

Main Activity (Day 2)

1. Review the role play from day one.
2. Teacher will send soldiers into hall with a bag of “goodies” and their scripts.
3. Student soldiers will enter, and read from script; teacher will reveal the “goodies” from the bag that the soldiers found (silk, perfume spices, soap, etc.)
4. Teacher will announce as King “I will be looking for two brave soldiers to send on an exploration. This is a clue about the next LTH skit, which will be a student role-play lesson.

Assessment Plans

Summative: Unit one test will be given at the end of grading period one.

Project Skit

“Trouble in the Holy Lands”

SCENE ONE

(Enter King’s Advisor)

King’s Advisor: “King Cochran, there is trouble in the Holy Lands!”

King: “What Kind of trouble?”

King’s Advisor: “The Sac Rats have captured the Holy Lands.”

King: “What does this mean?”

King’s Advisor: “The Sac Rats will not allow people of our religion to enter the Holy Lands for visit or prayer.”

King: “What should we do?”

King’s Advisor: “We must join with other countries and send soldiers to fight the Sac Rats.”

King: “Excellent idea... We will drive the Sac Rats out of the Holy Lands. Send messengers to the other Kings, organize an Army, and march to the Holy Lands... This will be a Holy Crusade!”

King’s Advisor: “Yes your Highness.” (bow and exit)

Appendix B**Drama Strategy Lesson Plan:
Student Role Play**

Tuesday, September 23, 2014
8th Grade/Early American History

Unit Essential Question

How did Europeans transform life in the Americas?

Lesson Essential Question

Why did the Europeans want to explore the Americas?

What drew explorers to North America?

Objectives

1. Students will define and describe how to use the astrolabe, compass, and the winds to sail.
2. Students will generate a list of supplies needed for western exploration.
3. Students will debate and providing reasoning for their decisions.

Connections to State/Common Core Standards

B8.8 Identify major scientific discoveries and technological innovations and describe their social and economic effects on society.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

Materials

Smartboard with map of the “known world,” copies of King Cochran’s explorers questions (attached), two student volunteers

Procedures

Introductory/Prior Lesson Activities: Students completed a K-W-L lesson on Christopher Columbus prior to this lesson.

Main activity:

1. Teacher will give one copy to each explorer (two) of the King Cochran’s Explorers form
2. Students playing the role of the explorers will go to the library for 20 minutes to research sailing instruments, plan a route to the west, and generate a list of supplies for the journey.
3. While students are in the library, remaining students will construct a list of supplies with a partner in their notebooks.
4. Once explorers return, they will describe and answer questions regarding their plans/research to the class.
5. Remaining students can argue/debate decisions made. The teacher (acting as King) will grant final approval for the journey at the end of the hour.

Assessment Plans

Summative: Unit one test will be given at the end of grading period one.

King Cochran's Explorers

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR ROLEPLAYING

Answer the following: (you may use reference books or online resources)

Give the exact date Columbus left Spain. _____

Give the exact number of ships and men Columbus took with him on his first voyage. Ships
_____ Men _____

Give the exact date he landed in the New World. _____

Columbus requested to be made the _____ of the Ocean!

Explain what an **astrolabe** and **cross staff** are and how they work.

Astrolabe:

Cross staff:

What makes you think the world is round? Any way to prove it?

2. PLANNING A ROUTE:

You have been selected by the King to make a daring and historic voyage and try to reach the riches of the East by sailing WESTWARD. Study a current map of the world and use it as a guide for planning your trip. Decide the path your trip will take, and sketch it and explain it on the map provided.

3. MAKING DECISIONS AND PLANS:

Since I, the King, will grant permission and supply you with the money, ships, and men for your voyage, list for me the number of ships and men you will need. Also, list the equipment and other supplies (food, etc.) you will need for your voyage. Please be specific. Think carefully and plan carefully. You can use the back of this form if needed. You will be asked to report your plans to the King on Thursday. Good luck.

Appendix C**Drama Strategy Lesson Plan:
Meetings**

Thurs., Fri., & Mon. December 4-5 & 8, 2014
8th Grade/Early American History

Unit Essential Question

What drove the colonists to declare independence from Great Britain?

Lesson Essential Question

Why were colonists threatened by Parliament's new laws? How did colonists react?

Objectives

1. Students will record actions and laws taken by the King in the mother country.
2. Students will interpret actions and decide how it impacts their position as colonists.
3. Students will debate the laws with their classmates (other colonial leaders) and with the teacher (Lord Brunswick, colonial representative to the crown.)

Connections to State/Common Core Standards

B.8.4 Explain how and why events may be interpreted differently depending upon the perspectives of participants, witnesses, reporters, and historians.

B.8.5 Use historical evidence to determine and support a position about important political values, such as freedom, democracy, equality, or justice, and express the position coherently.

Materials

Smartboard/Presentation of the King's Actions, writing utensil, 3-day debate skit form (attached)

Procedures

Introductory/Prior Lesson Activities: Students worked on two-week project designing their colonial towns in groups of 3-6 students prior to this lesson.

Main activity:

1. Teacher will hand out one debate form to each student. Tell the students they are playing the roles of colonial leaders and are meeting in one of the town halls in their colony to discuss the recent actions by the King of the mother country. The teacher will play the role of facilitator and as a representative of the crown in the colonies (Lord Brunswick).
2. Teacher will present 3-5 facts about the colonists and their relationship to the crown. The teacher will also present 3-5 actions/laws that Parliament has passed. Students are to record both on the debate form.
3. The teacher will open the floor for discussion or debate on these actions. Students will be asked to provide reason, logic, evidence and/or alternative solutions to their grievances.

*Days 2 and 3 follow the same format with new/additional actions and laws passed by Parliament.

Closure: Students are asked to select which law from the three days seems to be the most offensive or oppressive and explain why on their forms

Assessment Plans

Summative: Unit two test at the end of the grading period.

3 Day Action Debate Skit
Unit 3

Day 1:

| King's Facts | King's Actions | Colonist's Reaction |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| | | |

DEBATE

Day 2:

| King's Facts | King's Actions | Colonist's Reaction |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| | | |

DEBATE

Day 3:

| King's Facts | King's Actions | Colonist's Reaction |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| | | |

DEBATE

Final Thoughts: Choose which law or action you believe is the most offensive or oppressive to your livelihood as a colonial leader. Explain why you made this decision.

Appendix D**Drama Strategy Lesson Plan:
Role on the Wall**Wednesday, January 14, 2015
8th Grade/Early American History**Unit Essential Question**

How was it possible that American Patriots gained their independence from the powerful British Empire?

Lesson Essential Question

How did Valley Forge transform American soldiers and the American army?

Objectives

1. Students will identify central ideas from a text regarding Valley Forge.
2. Students will construct a list of descriptive words about the experiences of soldiers at Valley Forge.
3. Students will apply the ideas/words generated to a RAFT (writing strategy).

Connections to State/Common Core Standards

B.8.7 Identify significant events and people in major eras of United States and world history
B.8.10 Analyze examples of conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among groups, societies, or nations

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge.

Materials

Smartboard, image or silhouette of a soldier, notebooks, writing utensil, textbook,

Procedures

Introductory/Prior Lesson Activities: Students will read textbook pages 207-209 on the winter encampment at Valley Forge.

Main activity:

1. The teacher will put the image of a Revolutionary Soldier on the Smartboard (attached).
2. As a think-pair-share, students will generate a list of words and phrases that describe the details of Valley Forge including emotions felt, challenges faced, and outcomes.
3. Students will share with their partners, then with the class. One student will record responses on the board.
4. Closure: Have students identify the most powerful word or phrase on the board and explain why? Extension- have them summarize the board in one sentence, write it down!

Assessment Plans

Formative: This topic will be assigned to Revolutionary War journal entry #6 (of 6). Students will write from the perspective of a soldier at Valley Forge during the winter of 1777-1778.

Summative: Unit three test will be given at the end of the grading period.

Appendix E**Drama Strategy Lesson Plan:
Mantle of the Expert- Law School**

Mon.-Thurs., February 2nd-5th, 2015
8th Grade/Early American History

Unit Essential Question

How has our 225-year-old Constitution remained a living document?

Lesson Essential Question

What are the main roles of the branches of government?

What are the chief purposes of the articles and amendments found in the U.S. Constitution?

Objectives

1. Students will read and record components of the U.S. Constitution.
2. Students will interpret the meaning of the articles and amendments of the U.S. Constitution
3. Students will apply components of the Constitution to real-life situations
4. Students will be assessed on the organization and operations of the U.S. government as stated in the U.S. Constitution.

Connections to State/Common Core Standards

B.8.5 Use historical evidence to determine and support a position about important political values, such as freedom, democracy, equality, or justice, and express the position coherently.

B.8.6 Analyze important political values such as freedom, democracy, equality, and justice embodied in documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

Materials

Constitutional Handbook (in textbook), Preamble-Articles-Amendments Workbook, writing utensil, Law Professor Blazer and Pointer

Procedures

Introductory/Prior Lesson Activities: Students participated in a jigsaw activity about the seven principles found in the U.S. Constitution.

Main activity:

1. Teacher will hand out one workbook to each student; students will sit next to a partner.
2. Students will navigate through all 8 sections of the handbook, identifying details found within the United States Constitution by working with their law school partner.
3. Teacher will serve as the professor and will provide guidance, assistance, and modifications for those who need it. *Days 2, 3, 4 will follow the same procedures.

Closure: At the conclusion of days 2, 3, and 4, students have the option of taking home practice problems. Students will apply concepts from the Constitution to real-life examples.

Assessment Plans

Formative: Daily application of the Constitution to various scenarios, ungraded quiz, open note.

Summative: *Living through History* Constitutional Law Bar Exam

Appendix F**Drama Strategy Lesson Plan:
Mantle of the Expert- Elections**

Weds.-Fri., February 11th-13th, 2015
8th Grade/Early American History

Unit Essential Question

What political traditions and tensions first appeared in the early years of the new republic?

Lesson Essential Question

What is the role of the electorate in a Presidential election?

How was the election of 1800 resolved?

Objectives

1. Students will analyze and form an opinion on several issues that U.S. leaders faced during the early 1800s.
2. Students will present their positions on serious issues from the early 19th century.
3. Students will participate in a democratic election of two of their peers.

Connections to State/Common Core Standards

B.8.4 Explain how and why events may be interpreted differently depending upon the perspectives of participants, witnesses, reporters, and historians.

B.8.5 Use historical evidence to determine and support a position about important political values, such as freedom, democracy, equality, or justice, and express the position coherently

Materials

Ballot box, paper ballots, writing utensil, Smartboard/access to Google drive, LTH Election Issues slide presentation

Procedures

Introductory/Prior Lesson Activities: Students were told one week in advance to decide if they wanted to find a partner and run for *Living through History* president/vice-president. Students are to have their names submitted for the campaign two days before the lesson begins.

Main activity:

1. Day 1- All students were given six issues to think about before deciding whether or not to run for LTH President/Vice-president. The teacher described all six issues to the class. Students are to record the issues in their notebooks. The issues were: location of the new capitol, the Army/Navy, revenue/taxes, a road system, foreign policy/trade, and slavery.
2. Day 2- Student candidates presented their stance on the issues to the class (their platforms). Students will share their presentations with the teacher using Google Drive. Non-candidates will record notes based on the presentations.
3. Day 3- (Closure): Students will participate in a democratic voting system. Students will vote by secret ballot and turn into the classroom ballot box.

Assessment Plans

Formative: Election presentations and stance on the issues chart.

Summative: Unit five writing assessment: early tensions and traditions.

Appendix G**Drama Strategy Lesson Plan****Mantle of the Expert- The Senate**

Thurs.-Fri., Feb. 26th- Mar. 10th, 2015
8th Grade/Early American History

Unit Essential Question

What forces and events affected national unity and growth?

Lesson Essential Question

How did the Industrial Revolution change the way Americans lived and worked?

How was parliamentary procedure used in the passage of laws in the U.S. Senate?

Objectives

1. Students will become experts in a specific field/industry and research the industry's history.
2. Students will prepare a presentation to deliver to the class (Senate) and propose a bill.
3. Students will use parliamentary to pass, deny, or amend bills for their LTH country (class).

Connections to State/Common Core Standards

B.8.8 Identify major scientific discoveries and technological innovations and describe their social and economic effects on society.

B.8.9 Explain the need for laws and policies to regulate science and technology

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information with other information in print and digital texts.

Materials

Job ranking form (attached), Senate meeting agenda (attached), LTH Senate folders (one per student, materials within folder will vary depending on job/industry assigned), classroom set of Chromebooks with access to Google presentation/drive, colored pencils and various art supplies if needed

Procedures

Introductory/Prior Lesson Activities: Students will identify which areas of interest they would like to be “experts” in. Students will use the job ranking form. Students who were democratically elected or appointed cabinet level positions will not complete this form.

Main activity: (12 days)

Industry Work Days (First 6 days of lesson)

1. Students will research their industry using their senate folder materials as guidance.
2. Students will design a plan for application of their industry to the LTH country.
3. Students will construct a presentation of their industry's history and its application.

Senate/Parliamentary Procedure Days (Second 6 days of lesson)

1. Each student will present their findings and propose a bill to the senate using their Google presentation slides, maps, charts, brochures, posters, etc.
2. The senate (students in the classroom) will provide questioning for the presenter.
3. Led by the vice-president students will debate each bill and call a vote.

Closure: The president will end the project with a State of the Union address, summarizing all the Senate had accomplished during the Senate meeting project.

Assessment Plans

Summative: Unit five, part one test approximately half way through the unit.

Unit 5 Ranking Jobs

Name: _____ Hour _____

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| President: | Elected by the People |
| Vice President: | Elected by the People |
| Secretary of State: | Appointed by the President |
| Secretary of Treasury: | Appointed by the President |
| Secretary of War: | Appointed by the President |
| Attorney General: | Appointed by the President |
| Chief Justice of the Supreme Court: | Appointed by the President |

Directions: Listen to the descriptions of the following job positions in class. Please rank your top six choices from number 1 (top choice) to number 6.

- _____ Anti-Slavery
- _____ Banking Industry
- _____ Blacksmith
- _____ Canal Builder
- _____ Capital Architect
- _____ Communications
- _____ Currency Maker
- _____ Frontier Explorer
- _____ Fur Trapper
- _____ Furniture Industry
- _____ General Store
- _____ Indian Affairs
- _____ Land Sales
- _____ Lumber Industry
- _____ Mining Industry
- _____ Plantation /Rancher
- _____ Public Education
- _____ Railroad Industry
- _____ Road Builder
- _____ Shipbuilding Industry
- _____ Textile Industry
- _____ Weapons Industry

Senate Meeting Agenda Hour _____***Vice President***

Name of Country: _____ Capital City: _____

Flag Design Approved? Yes or No

Capital Architect

Vote on plans for new capital city, COST \$ _____

Secretary of Treasury

REVENUE

New Taxes:

Did it Pass? Vote Totals:

1. tariff: \$ _____ Yes or No _____

2. excise: \$ _____ Yes or No _____

3. land: \$ _____ Yes or No _____

4. head: \$ _____ Yes or No _____

5. other: \$ _____ Yes or No _____

5. land sales: \$ _____ Yes or No _____

Explorer Report

Report on travel/discoveries, given new town names/loc. BILL \$ _____

Land Sales Director

Land sales system (map), price per acre: \$ _____

Fur Trapper

Information on furs/pelts/traps, trading, post locations BILL \$ _____

Attorney General

New laws for our nation, new prison BILLS \$ _____

Blacksmith

Information on metals, products, location of shop BILL \$ _____

Textile Industry

Information and products, location, BILL \$ _____

Road Builder

Show road map, motion to build, miles _____ BILL \$ _____

Railroad Company

Map of tracks, motion for land grant: _____ miles, BILL \$ _____

Canal Builder

Show map, miles _____, BILL \$ _____

Weapons Industry

Information and products, location, BILL \$ _____

Furniture Industry

Information and products, location, BILL \$ _____

Supreme Court

Description of court system and case decisions

General Store

Information on goods sold, prices, location of stores BILL \$ _____

Secretary of War

Proposed defense system with details, total BUDGET \$ _____

Banking Industry

Information and location of new banks, interest rate

Shipbuilding

Information and products, location, BILL \$ _____

Secretary of State

Proposed new treaties and alliances, countries, products

Indian Affairs

Description of Native American Treaties and land usage: _____ acres

Lumber Industry

Info. trees/wood, location of mills, services offered BILL \$ _____

Mining Industry

Info. on minerals and resources, location of mines BILL \$ _____

Public Education

Introduce system, proposed cost of schools: BILL \$ _____

Currency Maker

Show examples and explain the new design, symbols and color

Communications

Show telegraph, map of lines, routes, BILL: \$ _____

Plantation/Rancher

A plantation's owner report, defense of slavery argument BILL \$ _____

Special Senate Hearing

Report from abolitionist leader/discussion/debate

Presidential Summary

Closing remarks/state of the nation!

Appendix H**Drama Strategy Lesson Plan****Where do you stand?**Fri. Mar. 13th, 20158th Grade/Early American History**Unit Essential Question**

As part of an on-going analysis of current events, how do world events affect us individually, as a community, state, country, or world?

Lesson Essential Question

Should the U.S. have dropped the Atom Bomb?

Objectives

1. Students will read about the decision the U.S. made to drop the atomic bomb on Japan.
2. Students will form an opinion on the issue and use reasoning and evidence in the construction of their opinions.
3. Students will share their stance on the issue with the class and respectfully debate the topic.

Connections to State/Common Core Standards

B.8.2 Employ cause-and-effect arguments to demonstrate how significant events have influenced the past and the present in United States and world history.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8 Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

Materials

Copies of Upfront Magazine Debate Topic Arguments: The Atomic Bomb, painter's tape, two signs: one labeled "yes" and one labeled "no"

Procedures

Introductory/Prior Lesson Activities: Students will read an article from Upfront Magazine, which will provide background information and major arguments for and against the use of the atom bomb.

Main activity:

1. Teacher will tape a line on the floor and label each end of the line; one with a yes sign and the other end with a no sign to indicate the student level of agreement with the issue.
2. After the reading, student volunteers will position themselves on the spectrum line taped to the floor at the front of the classroom. The teacher will ask the students to explain why they chose that position using evidence from the text, or personal interpretation and reasoning.

Closure: Teacher will provide a closing question: Apply your arguments to issues today. If ISIS were to possess a nuclear bomb and threatened the U.S., would you agree to the dropping of an atomic bomb in the Middle East?

Assessment Plans

Formative: Current event topics and debate issues are ongoing throughout the entire school year. Students and the teacher will follow-up on major world issues on a weekly basis.

Appendix I

Pre-Post Survey

Historical Thinking Survey

The goal of this survey is to gain student attitude towards the studying of history, perceptions of what it means to think like a historian and the process you use when studying social studies content. Please provide a response to the following question by following the directions given for each section of questions. Note: all information given on this survey will remain confidential.

Part One

Directions: Please circle one number (1-5) for each subject.

1. How much effort do you give in the following classes?

| <i>Little Effort</i> | | | | | | <i>Tremendous Effort</i> |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------------|
| History (Social Studies) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Science | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Math | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Language Arts | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |

2. How much do you enjoy learning the following subjects?

| <i>Do not enjoy</i> | | | | | | <i>Enjoy Tremendously</i> |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---------------------------|
| History (Social Studies) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Science | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Math | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Language Arts | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |

3. How important do you think each subject is for college preparation?

| <i>Little Importance</i> | | | | | | <i>Very Important</i> |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-----------------------|
| History (Social Studies) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Science | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Math | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Language Arts | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |

4. How important do you think each subject is for career readiness?

| <i>Little Importance</i> | | | | | | <i>Very Important</i> |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-----------------------|
| History (Social Studies) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Science | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Math | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Language Arts | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |

5. How much do you relate your day-to-day lives to each subject?

| <i>Barely Related</i> | | | | | | <i>Very Related</i> |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---------------------|
| History (Social Studies) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Science | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Math | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Language Arts | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |

Part Two

Directions: Please read the question and provide a written response to each.

6. Based on the subjects listed in part one, which class do you believe requires the most reading and writing to be successful? Explain your decision.

7. What do you think it means to “think like a historian?”

8. Why do you think it is important to learn concepts and skills in history?

9. Do you think it is important to learn history through various perspectives? Why?

10. Which do you believe is the best method to learn history? (Circle One)

- a. individually
- b. partner work
- c. small groups of 3-6 students
- d. whole class

Why? _____

11. Do you think acting and role-playing are important in the study of history? Why or why not?

Appendix J

Interview Questionnaire

Drama-Based Strategies and History*Student Interview Questions*

- Question 1: Which drama-based strategy did you enjoy the most? Why?
- Question 2: Do you feel like the drama based strategies helped build your social skills? If so, in what ways? If not, why?
- Question 3: What were some challenges you faced when working through the activity? What changes would you like to see made if we do this again?
- Question 4: Throughout this unit, which did you enjoy more; drama-based strategies or the traditional strategies? (For example; teacher lectures) Why?
- Question 5: Did the drama-based strategy help you retain information or acquire historical knowledge? If so, how?
- Question 6: Do you feel you learned more about history through the drama-based strategy or the traditional methods? (For example: large group discussions)
- Question 7: How did the drama experience help you think like a historian? Describe your Experience or thought process?
- Question 8: Did the drama-based strategies prepare you for the unit test? Why do you say that?
- Question 9: How did acting or thinking from a role or perspective in history help you think about what life was like in the past? Explain.
- Question 10: What changes would you like to see made if we do this again in class?