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## **Seeding Shakespeare and Drama in Diverse 21st-Century Classrooms through a Cross-National Partnership: New Teachers' Challenges and Early Practices**

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### **Abstract**

Classroom drama holds promise for student learning across disciplines. When Shakespeare's works are included in diverse classrooms, supported by drama activities, students can embody, voice, and explore themes and societal issues, bringing such themes alive. This study documents challenges and opportunities reported by teachers in their first-year teaching as they participated in an innovative cross-national partnership between Globe Education, Shakespeare's Globe, London

and the School of Education, University of California, Davis. Survey results found new teachers' value exceeded their self-confidence in implementing Shakespeare and drama-based practices in their teaching. Teachers managed to infuse drama activities in classrooms, conducted inquiry into students' responses, and reported the need for further preparation to enact program practices. Two vignettes of classroom work further illustrate challenges and possibilities of partnership practices, and highlight needed adaptive work for successfully incorporating drama and Shakespeare in classrooms to explore social, cultural, and historical conflicts, themes, and dilemmas.

### **Seeding Shakespeare and Drama in Diverse 21st-Century Classrooms through a Cross-National Partnership: New Teachers' Challenges and Early Practices**

In a world fraught with cultural conflicts, inequities, and tensions, the arts in educational settings hold possibilities to create visions of problems warranting redress and images of caring, equity, and problem-solving within relationships and communities. Dramatic arts hold particular promise for such work. Beyond theatrical productions in professional and community spaces, theater-related work within formal K-12 schooling presents potentially far-reaching impact for many children and youth in 21st-century culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms, as they voice and embody diverse stories, characters, themes, and social and historical conflicts.

Classroom drama activity (hereafter, drama-based pedagogy or DBP) situates embodied, active, aesthetic approaches in classrooms to engage students in academic content and to support learning through dialogic meaning-making (Dawson & Lee, 2018). Drama as a pedagogical tool assumes many forms with many definitions. Some include: Story dramatization (Ward, 1986), drama-in-education (Bolton, Davis, & Lawrence, 1987), theater-in-education (Jackson, 1993), process drama (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995), creative drama (McCaslin, 1996), enactment strategies (Wilhelm, 2002), drama-based instruction (Lee, Cawthon, & Dawson, 2013), and dramatic inquiry (Edmiston, 2014). As an organizing definition, aligned with Heathcote and Bolton's (1995) process drama, and as defined by Weltsek (2005), DBP practices are activities performed and embodied in the classroom, used as tools for learning, featuring critical understanding of text without intention of "formal play production" (p. 76). Performative elements in non-theater K-16 classrooms designed to support learning may include storytelling, spontaneous oral readings, dramatic improvisations, scripted group performance of literature, and solo performance of text (Athanases, 2008). Other drama-based activities include warm-ups and games as engagement techniques to support complex treatment of course content (Fennessey, 2006; Spolin, 1986).

Drama-based pedagogy in various disciplinary contexts has yielded varied student outcomes. Benefits include student understanding and retention of mathematical concepts (Kerekes & King, 2010; Seng n & skenderglu, 2010) and significant improvement in students' ability to offer explanation and interpretation of science concepts (Ødegaard, 2003). For English language arts (ELA), Podlozny's (2000) review of 35 years of research documents DBP benefiting integration and revision of ideas necessary for writing; assisting students in recalling details from texts that get enacted, with the possibility to transfer skills to other texts; development of oral language skills; and reading gains, especially among low-SES students. Additionally, drama-based practices encourage participation of emergent bilingual (EB) students (Lee, Patall, Cawthon, & Steingut, 2015; Medina & Campano, 2006). This may be due to DBP activities requiring repetition and embodiment of words and phrases, boosting language learners' confidence (Greenfader & Brouillette, 2013).

Despite potential affordances of such activities, several shortcomings exist in the literature documenting classroom drama practices. First, little work has examined potential of drama *across* grades and subjects, missing the opportunity to explore, for example, how young children may learn about human conflict or how social studies/history classes may use drama to humanize historical and cultural conflicts. Second, classroom drama studies have tended to feature single classes where teachers and guest artists embed drama activity (e.g., Athanases, 2005; Wolf, 1994) or special workshops conducted by guest educators (e.g., Enciso, Edmiston, Volz, Lee, & Sivashankar, 2016). The field has less documentation of ways in which newly developed approaches to drama pedagogy are sustained over time by teachers themselves. We need studies that explore drama potential across many classrooms, with attention to embedding such practices in classrooms of early-career teachers who may explore social, cultural, and historical conflicts, themes, and dilemmas in their curricula.

Our project responds to these needs. We feature a cross-national partnership that creates possibilities for sustained work, by developing teachers' knowledge and practices at the very start of their teaching careers. The partnership foregrounds Shakespeare's works and themes as sources with potential to speak across nations, cultures, and generations, and expose social, cultural, and historical conflicts and dilemmas. The partnership includes Shakespeare experts and drama practitioners of Globe Education (Shakespeare's Globe, London) in collaboration with the teacher education (TE) program in the School of Education at the University of California, Davis. The latter group includes scholars and practitioners of teacher preparation and development, several of whom have knowledge and experience in Shakespeare and classroom drama. The partnership recognizes the complexity of Shakespeare's works and uses drama-based practices that support comprehension and interpretation of complex texts, exploration of character development and conflicts, and socio-political themes. The partnership is grounded in the assumption that combining Shakespeare's work with DBP

creates rich learning possibilities for students. Participating teachers (approximately 24 annually) work with 5-18 year-olds primarily in California public schools. They are teachers across subject areas, who may have little drama background.

This is a particularly promising partnership, but for any such project to flourish, we need to learn how teachers—in this case, early-career teachers—reflect on the promise and pitfalls of trying to make such classroom practices take hold. Without such ongoing opportunities to tap teachers' conceptions, discoveries, and challenges, we risk sustaining a unidirectional approach that does not adequately tap teachers' perspectives. This is particularly important for our focal project, as we are supporting teachers across subject areas (English language arts, social studies/history, and multiple subjects), and who work in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms far removed from the spaces in which Shakespeare's works were situated and developed.

In this article, we provide our theoretical framework that situates our project within literatures on DBP and teacher inquiry. We view inquiry as a process to explore practice, examine student learning, and reflect on opportunities and challenges presented by classroom innovations. Drawing upon data from the first two project cohorts of early-career teachers (N=46 total), we report teachers' early and evolving values and self-confidence related to this work as they encountered the teacher development opportunities and reflected on ways to take up relevant innovative practices in their classrooms as new teachers. Through survey, written reflections, and classroom observations, we report the challenges and promise of the overall partnership work. The challenges point to themes that other project designers may wish to consider as they explore arts in general--and Shakespeare and drama in particular--as vehicles to advance young people's appreciation for and understanding of persistent socio-historical themes and how these inform our ongoing life experiences. We also highlight particular concerns for teachers such as those in our project who are developing innovative practices even as they are learning to engage with the multiple and complex demands of becoming new teachers.

We then present vignettes of a first-year teacher in our partnership as he implements DBP with diverse 12-13-year-old students. The classroom vignettes include engagements with historical content, Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, and drama practices espoused by the partnership. We conclude with recommendations for deepening such work to prepare children and youth to reflect on cultural and historical themes.

## **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

### ***Drama-Based Pedagogy and Shakespeare in 21st-Century Classrooms***

When considering drama practices applied to classroom enactments of entire or excerpted Shakespeare plays, questions and tensions arise among teachers and students about the relevance and accessibility of Shakespeare's work and language. Shakespeare has been contested in Great Britain and the US, the two national contexts for our partnership. In many cases, students have little to no interest in reading about those far removed from their own present lives (Almansouri, Balian, & Sawdy, 2009; Lighthill, 2011). Still, Shakespeare remains a requirement in British curricula and in some U.S. regional standards (Dutton, 2009). In Ohio, for example, PSTs have been required to study Shakespeare as undergraduates if they want to teach high school ELA. Shakespeare continues to be "institutionally central to both cultural heritages [British and US-American], even as both of those heritages are being reshaped by [albeit different versions of] multiculturalism" (Dutton, 2009, p. 197). However, Shakespeare's plays are fitting examples of complex texts that invite dramatic enactment, open up possibilities for character study, and provide examples of histories and themes that can serve multiple instructional goals (Blockside, 2005; McLuskie, 2009).

Belliveau (2012) argues that Shakespeare's works and language should be taught at an early age, suggesting that "young children are not intimidated by Shakespeare" (p. 170). Other studies have found that Shakespeare's texts present opportunities for young students to explore and discuss complex ideas and themes, and engage with difficult texts from an early age (e.g., Lee, Enciso, & Sharp, 2019). Through Shakespeare, students may be able to explore the "complex human dilemmas" (Edmiston & Mckibben, 2011, p. 87) and "human conduct" (Lighthill, 2011, p. 40) present in his plays, especially when enacted themes and plotlines are complemented with reflection and drama inquiry (Boal, 1985; Edmiston, 2014; Heathcote, 1981). Inquiry and reflection after dramatic play "promote more complexity of meaning" (Edmiston & Mckibben, 2011, p. 99) and students can ask questions and learn from conflicting viewpoints.

### ***Teachers as Key Levers for Change: Teacher Agency, Reflection, Adaptive Expertise***

Undergirding our work is an assumption that education is a key lever for advancing equitable civilization and opportunities for all. Schools hold responsibility to embrace diversity and foster equitable opportunities for learning and citizenship. Many out-of-school opportunities exist to support such work through community-based clubs and activities (Heath & McLaughlin, 1995; Hull & Schultz, 2002; Nasir & Hand, 2008). However, schools and classrooms can infuse creativity and the arts for reflecting on many themes. Dramatic arts offer particular opportunities through embodiment, voicing, and transforming spaces to depict conflict and challenging life circumstances. Across school subjects, DBP can engage young

people in social concerns, infusing life into the issues and making ideas and themes from course texts and topics come alive.

However, drama enactments frequently get cast only as creative outlets and play, to engage students beyond conventional curricula. Such work misses the opportunity to treat enactments and embodied activity as both forms of creative expression and elements to explore a range of social issues. Issues may include social inequities and justice (Enciso et al., 2016), as well as empathy and perspective-taking (Athanases & Sanchez, 2020). As we envision such themes, our project considers the *glocal*, or dialogue between global and local concerns where: “local events can have globalizing tendencies and globalizing effects, accomplished often through the mediation of globalizing technologies” (Brandt & Clinton, 2002, p. 347). For this study, we consider local engagement with an innovative cross-national project. We highlight challenges and problem-solving strategies within the work of the partnership, to foster engagement with drama-based practices for relevant use in diverse classrooms.

A focus on early-career teachers reflects our commitment to seeding innovative pedagogical practices early in a career, before countless constraints of standards, school guidelines, and complex teaching demands overwhelm a teacher’s vision of effective practice. The project incorporates teacher reflection on practice (Schön, 1983) and teacher inquiry in which teachers, in partnership with research team members, examine learning potential of the work. New teachers in this partnership engage in guided development of teacher inquiry through coursework in their credential program and through an MA inquiry project focused on DBP and Shakespeare.

Teacher inquiry facilitates a “learner focus” with teacher as both instructor and researcher, intentionally, systematically collecting and analyzing classroom data, ideally developing an inquiry stance on schooling and social justice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Fecho & Allen, 2003). Inquiry positions teachers as agentive in designing practice, in learning more deeply about their culturally and linguistically diverse learners, and in documenting and analyzing how their students respond to focused classroom activities (Athanases, Wahleithner, & Bennett, 2012, 2013). Such inquiry is especially valuable in the context of our partnership which has explored innovative practices that need documentation and study at both individual classroom level and across cases in multiple diverse classrooms.

The partnership is grounded in works and themes of Shakespeare and other thematically linked and culturally situated complex texts. While many consider Shakespeare’s works holding possibilities for thematic explorations across histories and cultures, our work foregrounds the need to forge *explicit* links across centuries and national and cultural contexts, linkages to make 400-year old works and DBP meaningful for 21st-century diverse youth. Adaptations may be necessary due to local engagements with seemingly distant texts and

ideas (Athanases & Sanchez, 2020). For this reason, we draw upon research on adaptive expertise and adaptive teaching (Parsons et al., 2018). With adaptive expertise, learners use experimentation, data, models, and reflection to stretch competencies as needed, losing efficiency short-term but gaining deeper and broader expertise over time (Hatano & Oura, 2003; Martin & Schwartz, 2009; Schwartz, Bransford, & Sears, 2005). These concepts of adaptive expertise frame our reporting of ways teachers began to both adopt and adapt partnership-supported practices in service of meeting the needs of their diverse students.

We asked the following research questions. What did new teachers report about value they placed on infusing Shakespeare texts and drama-based pedagogical practices into their teaching, and about their self-confidence in enacting such practices? What concerns did new teachers raise about adopting such practices? In what ways did teachers' early attempts at such practices evidence adoption and adaptation of practices for diverse students?

## Methods

### *Context and Phases of Teacher Development Activity*

Our study is set in and beyond a post-baccalaureate teacher credential/MA program at University of California, Davis. The program historically has prepared 150+ teachers annually to teach and advocate for equitable learning opportunities for culturally and linguistically diverse students (Athanases & Martin, 2006; de Oliveira & Athanases, 2007). The program has a strand of courses focused on teacher inquiry. Within this context, the partnership established an Academy for prospective teachers interested in exploring Shakespeare's works and themes and drama-based pedagogy to explore such works. The partnership embedded these foci into work of teacher education and early-career development. In this study, we feature work in what we refer to as three I's: initiation, immersion, and inquiry.

The *initiation* phase included preliminary exposure to partnership foci and practices during preservice teachers' (PSTs') teaching credential year. Globe Education practitioners from London, who are also professional performers, annually visited the California campus and facilitated 2-3 active and reflective workshop sessions for PSTs during their credential year. Sessions included DBP practices for use in engagement with Shakespeare.

For the second phase, all newly credentialed teachers in the program were invited to participate in a voluntary *immersion* experience hosted by Globe Education, an international center for teaching Shakespeare and other texts through the dramatic arts, part of Shakespeare's Globe, London. Of these teachers, 22-24 annually were accepted into the program in roughly equal numbers across middle/high school social science (teaching students aged 12-18), middle/high school English language arts, and multiple subjects/elementary

education teachers. Partnership funding from donors helped support course fees and dormitory housing in London, with additional need-based travel scholarships awarded to a subset of the group. During the 5-day summer immersive experience, practitioners guided teachers--grouped by subject-area--through drama-based approaches anchored in Shakespeare's texts. Approaches include warm-up and vocal exercises, storytelling and puppetry (e.g., an abridged, age-appropriate version of *The Tempest*), and enacting and analyzing complex text (e.g., excerpts from different Shakespeare plays). Other activities featured embodying characters and emotions (fictional and historical, e.g., Queen Elizabeth I) and enacting and reflecting on themes within and across texts (e.g., gender norms and misogyny). Texts explored during the week drew especially from a repertoire of plays by Shakespeare as particularly fitting examples of complex texts that invite dramatic enactment, open up possibilities for character study, and provide examples of histories that can serve instructional goals for history/social science teachers.

Six weeks after the *immersion* experience in London, these newly-credentialed teachers began their first year of teaching. As part of their ongoing professionalization, they enrolled in an optional two-quarter MA-based *inquiry* course. Inquiry coursework designed specifically for these teachers who had participated in the London course featured drama-related teaching and learning across subjects and grades. Inquiry work also encouraged teachers to include Shakespeare study. The final portion of the MA inquiry work involved presentations on inquiry findings in an evaluative and public event. The present study features survey data from the inaugural year of the Academy, supported by vignettes of practice from inquiry and observation data of one teacher in the second year of Academy work.

### ***Data Collection***

#### *Surveys*

For the first strand of our work, we surveyed teacher-candidates about applicability of Shakespeare's works and the relevance of his plays to 21st-century culturally and linguistically diverse students in California classrooms. We sought to understand any value teachers placed on DBP and Shakespeare in their diverse classrooms. Additionally, we sought to understand teachers' self-confidence related to their perceived capabilities of enacting particular activities--in this case, exploring Shakespeare's texts and drama activity in their instruction. Using Rea and Parker's (2005) guide for survey design, we formulated 30 Likert Scale questions plus additional open-ended and multiple-choice questions; each Likert Scale question had a score range from 1 (does not describe my feelings) to 5 (clearly describes my feelings). We included several relevant open-ended items including these: (a) Is there any additional knowledge, skill, or experience you need in order to successfully use drama and performance in a future classroom? If so, please specify as much as you can; (b) Why, if at all, should we teach Shakespeare in 21st-century culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms

in California? Be as specific as you can. We administered the survey three times over a single year, after each phase described above. We asked participants to include name and information contact for follow-up, then we masked identities before data analysis.

### *MA-Inquiry*

Our second dataset features teachers' work in their classrooms, including several assignments submitted for grades within their inquiry coursework, which included data of students' work collected by the teachers (e.g., video-recordings of DBP activity, student write-ups, and surveys). Also included as part of their assignments were teachers' reflections about their work and data analysis of their students' work. Final reflections of their MA-inquiry discoveries and final symposium posters were included. The total number of assignments submitted was 12, varying in length from approximately 2 to 12 pages.

### *Classroom-related*

We continued our work with teacher-participants (by then, also MA students) by observing classroom work during early implementation of DBP practices and Shakespeare's texts. During this strand of our work, we observed teachers who felt ready to include practices they had learned in prior partnership activities. We administered a short questionnaire before each classroom observation where teachers explained rationales for including DBP practices and the manner in which such practices would be included. We took fieldnotes following qualitative ethnographic methods (Heath & Street, 2008), and collected samples of students' work. Finally, we audio-recorded short debriefing sessions with teachers after class.

### *Data Analysis*

For survey data, we tallied Likert Scale responses, with mean score derived per survey item. We reviewed mean scores, high- and low-mean scoring items, and patterns across items within and across several survey constructs. For the present study, we examined responses regarding teachers' values and self-confidence related to classroom use of (a) drama and performance and (b) drama and Shakespeare. We triangulated data with analysis of open-ended items. We coded open-ended items for emerging patterns, organizing responses thematically following an inductive method (Strauss, 1987).

To construct vignettes of classroom practice, we reviewed classroom observation notes and classroom artifacts (e.g., student work, worksheets), and post-observation audio-recorded conversations with teachers. We identified examples of DBP implementation and uses of Shakespeare in diverse classrooms across data items. We selected a focal teacher for close examination. To complete vignettes, in addition to observation fieldnotes, we consulted Edward's (pseudonym) MA-inquiry submissions in consultation with our teacher educator/research collaborators, who guided our attention to portions of Edward's work that

could inform and enrich our vignettes. Edward was a first-year social studies/history teacher at the time of his inquiry project. Both authors decided on inquiry sections from Edward's work that illuminated our observation notes and conversations with the focal teacher.

A White male teacher, Edward worked with low-SES middle school students (age 12-13) in a culturally and linguistically diverse school located in a large city. His class had students from diverse sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds, with 24% classified as English language learners (ELs), or emergent bilinguals. A majority of his students identified as Asian of diverse ethnicity (65%), with smaller groups of Latinx, White, and African-American students. We selected Edward's practice and reflections for focused work for several reasons. First, we found that Edward took on the challenge of exploring DBP and Shakespeare in his social studies class, a seldom-studied site for such practice. Second, Edward's efforts in a pair of observations highlight themes in our results about the challenges and promise of taking up drama and Shakespeare as a new teacher. We see examples of ways in which Edward adopted and adapted partnership practices to fit local concerns of his students. In this way, Edward's early attempts at enacting partnership practices highlight elements of our framework and advance our understanding of both the promise and challenges of the partnership work. After several edits, we submitted vignettes to Edward for a member check to ensure our vignettes captured the classroom events as they occurred and provided further teacher insight on practice.

### ***Researchers' Positionality***

We are seasoned English/language educators committed to equitable learning opportunities for diverse students and to fostering teacher learning and innovation. In prior work, we have used drama to help students comprehend text, context, culture, and language. Steven is a White male who studied and fostered use of drama and performance in K-16 classrooms and extracurricular events in several U.S. states (Illinois, North Carolina, California). Sergio is a Latin American native Spanish speaker who used classroom drama in his English as a Foreign Language classes in an elementary school and several middle schools in his native Argentina. Two TE faculty (also former K-12 teachers committed to equity in teaching) were collaborators. Their insider status as teachers/researchers eased archiving of multiyear project data and enabled drawing connections not recognized by others (Lampert, 2000).

### **Results and Themes**

Our results suggest possibilities of this kind of partnership innovation for early-career teachers across grades, subjects, and cultural contexts. In addition, teachers' reflections collected in surveys and early practices during classroom observations illustrate creative adaptations of

partnership practices and also clarify the kinds of teacher development work needed in order for such work to take hold in some potentially far-reaching ways across many classrooms.

### ***Valuing Drama Practices and Shakespeare Exceeded Teachers' Self-Confidence for Enactment***

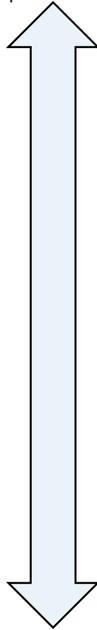
We present highlights from survey responses completed after teachers in our first cohort (N=22) had experienced the first two phases of the partnership work (*initiation* with visiting drama practitioners and *immersion* in the five-day London course). At this point, teachers were several months into their first year of teaching and several months into the *inquiry* phase of the partnership program. A pattern emerged of overall value placed on partnership practices with more moderate scores related to self-confidence for enacting relevant practices in classrooms.

#### *Drama and performance in the classroom*

Table 1 shows extremely high mean scores for values of drama and performance, partially attributable to the passionate and engaging practitioner visits that teaching credential students experienced, coupled with the five-day summer London course. The items clustered at the top of Table 1 received high mean response scores even at the first administration of the survey before the immersion experience, clustered then around scores of 4.0-4.2. Table 1 shows even greater mean values of 4.6 for these items about perceived values in use of drama and performance to support expressivity and creativity, student engagement, and socially relevant issues. The Table shows a gap between these scores related to teacher values of the work and their more moderate levels of self-confidence related to enacting relevant practices. Of particular note is that teachers' confidence in being able to guide linguistically diverse students to use the speaking voice as an instrument for expression received only moderate-level scores, dropping from 3.7 after initiation workshops, to a 3.2 mean, the lowest-scoring item after the five-day immersion course and two months into the inquiry phase.

**Drama and Performance in the Classroom**

*5-point Likert-scale mean scores*

|   |     |   |
|---|-----|---|
| • <b>I value drama and performance as means to promote student expressivity and creativity (Q1-1)</b>                               | 4.6 |  <p>HIGHER LEVEL OF VALUE CONFIDENCE</p> <p>LOWER LEVEL OF VALUE CONFIDENCE</p> |
| • <b>I value drama and performance as means to promote student engagement (Q1-4)</b>  | 4.6 |   |
| • <b>I am interested in using drama to explore socially relevant issues (Q1-7)</b>  | 4.6 |   |
| - I am confident I can teach students how to use performance techniques with different kinds of texts (Q1-2)                        | 3.9 |   |
| - I am confident I can establish a safe space for students to explore socially relevant topics through drama and performance (Q1-5) | 3.8 |   |
| - I am confident I can create a culture of play and expressivity within my classroom (Q1-8)   | 3.8 |   |
| - I am confident I can use drama and performance with different kinds of texts in the classroom (Q1-10)                             | 3.8 |   |
| - I am confident that I have the skill sets to engage in dramatic instruction in my future classroom (Q1-6)                         | 3.7 |   |
| - I am confident I can guide students to comprehend texts through performance (Q1-3)  | 3.6 |   |
| • <b>I am confident I can guide linguistically diverse students to use the speaking voice as an instrument of expression (Q1-9)</b> | 3.2 |   |

*Table 1. First-Year Teachers’ Values and Self-Confidence Related to Drama and Performance Clustered by Mean-Scores (N=22)*

The overall impression that emerges in responses to items here is that this cohort of first-year teachers who attended the summer course and who were exploring teaching and inquiry in their new teaching sites with some infusion of partnership practices felt an extremely strong sense of value of drama and performance for multiple purposes and for use with diverse students. However, use of drama and the voice for linguistically diverse students, including emergent bilinguals, seemed only moderately within reach, signaling a need for continued work in this area.

*Drama and Shakespeare in the classroom*

Challenges of incorporating Shakespeare in the classroom arose in open-ended survey responses after the early *Initiation* phase. After the London-based practitioner visits, some resistance emerged. One teacher argued against attention to Shakespeare, stating that including Shakespeare’s work in California’s diverse classrooms implies taking a “Eurocentric approach, particularly with culturally [and] linguistically diverse students.”

Several teachers took a critical stance towards use of canonical texts (usually written by White male authors) echoing concerns about the remoteness of contexts and language of Shakespeare's plays and possibility of perpetuating canonicity, in contrast to infusing more culturally diverse works in curricula. Several teachers reported that more urgent linkages to cultural experiences were needed, as argued by one teacher: "Most students don't get to read anything about people they can really relate to, or are written by people who share their culture." This teacher added:

To be brutally honest, I am not the biggest fan of Shakespeare, and, though I understand that his work is important to study, I would prefer to emphasize more diverse literature (i.e. literature authored by diverse authors), and even some young adult lit.

However, also after the *Initiation* phase, other teachers reported trying out program practices, highlighting their value for meaning-making of difficult texts and for contextualizing issues such as race, privilege, and discrimination. Several teachers endorsed inclusion of Shakespeare's works to explore some of these issues (T=Teacher):

**T1:** Shakespeare's plays contain universal human themes

**T2:** We should teach [Shakespeare since] it can expose kids to different cultural themes

**T3:** Shakespeare's themes on gender, race, and social justice are very relevant today

While universality of Shakespeare's treatment of themes has been contested (e.g., Thompson & Turchi, 2016), teachers in the focal project reported value of Shakespeare's plays mostly due to what they considered universality of themes (betrayal, romance, conquest, social conflicts, gender roles) relevant to 21st-century classrooms. One added that these themes are "relevant to every culture," enabling students from any background to relate to themes explored with peers.

Some teachers emphasized intention to include DBP practices that might promote learning opportunities for diverse students, creating space for sharing experiences and backgrounds to promote understanding across groups. A few expressed hope that Shakespeare's texts--and difficult language--would serve as an equalizing tool in a linguistically diverse class:

**T4:** When everyone is stumbling over the language, it levels the playing field a little for my ELs. Shakespeare also requires me to really slow down to ensure my students understand what is being said, whereas in other texts I tend to take the language for

granted and may move too quickly....Everyone benefits when we slow down and I love that Shakespeare holds me accountable to this practice.

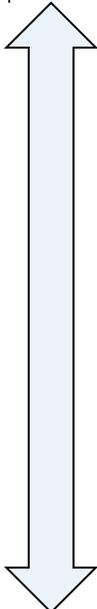
**T5:** Everybody will likely need breakdown of the text; this puts ELs and native English speakers on the same playing field and might therefore lessen their anxiety with the texts.

**T6:** Students are coming to California who have diverse backgrounds from all over. Their connecting to Shakespeare is indicative and helpful of their own linguistic and cultural journey navigating the foreign and familiar of a new space....Exploring what we know and why it differs, particularly in context of language, is super important to promoting inclusive and student-driven classrooms.

These teachers' remarks demonstrate creative thinking about how challenges of Shakespeare's language need not deter exploring the texts and, in fact, can level the playing field for all learners.

**Drama and Shakespeare in the Classroom**

*5-point Likert-scale mean scores*

|   |     |  |
|---|-----|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>I view Shakespeare's themes as relevant to today's world (Q2-7)</b> 4.8</li> </ul>  | 4.8 |  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>HIGHER LEVEL OF VALUE CONFIDENCE</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>LOWER LEVEL OF VALUE CONFIDENCE</b></p> |
| - I am confident I can help students understand Shakespearean characters in depth (Q2-5)  | 3.7 |  |
| - I feel prepared to guide students to understand and connect Shakespeare themes to today's world issues (Q2-1)                 | 3.6 |  |
| - I am confident that I am prepared to enact dramatic approaches to Shakespeare's work (Q2-3)                                   | 3.6 |  |
| - I feel prepared to help culturally diverse students relate Shakespeare's characters to their own lives and communities (Q2-8) | 3.6 |  |
| - I am confident I have the skills to facilitate students' to deep engagements with Shakespeare plays (Q2-9)                    | 3.6 |  |
| - I am confident I can help students perform scenes from Shakespeare with confidence and understanding (Q2-2)                   | 3.5 |  |
| - I am confident I have the skills needed to enact dramatic approaches to Shakespeare's work (Q2-6)                             | 3.5 |  |
| ● <b>I feel equipped to help linguistically diverse students engage with Shakespeare's plays (Q2-4)</b>                         | 3.2 |  |
| ● <b>I am certain I can explain and illustrate to students rhythm and meter in Shakespeare plays (Q2-10)</b>                    | 3.2 |  |

*Table 2. Teachers' Values and Self-Confidence Related to Incorporating Drama and Shakespeare in their Classrooms (N = 22)*

After joining the Academy and experiencing the London immersive course, these teachers, six months later and two months into their teacher inquiry, responded to survey questions about uses of drama and Shakespeare. Table 2 shows that teachers felt overall fairly confident about using Shakespeare's texts in their classrooms and that they had tools to implement different strategies to help their students understand Shakespeare's complex language and thematic ideas. Such tools were amply practiced in the London course. However, the Table shows a similar, if even greater, gap between teachers' values and their self-confidence related to working with Shakespeare's plays. The Table shows an extremely high score of 4.8 for "I view Shakespeare's themes as relevant to today's world." Scores are lower for teachers' confidence in helping students understand Shakespeare's characters and to perform scenes with confidence and understanding. Of particular note, the Table shows reported self-confidence scores of 3.5-3.6 for enacting the practices that could bring thematic relevance to life for students. These items include feeling "prepared to guide students to understand and connect Shakespeare themes to today's world issues" and feeling "prepared to help culturally diverse students relate Shakespeare's characters to their own lives and communities." Again, one of the lowest-scoring items revealed that novice teachers still did not feel equipped to help their linguistically diverse students engage with Shakespeare's texts.

### **Teachers' Calls for Greater Preparation to Realize the Promise of the Partnership**

Teachers who had experienced the *initiation* and *immersion* phases and were two months into the *inquiry* phase reported overall confidence in implementing DBP practices to introduce Shakespeare's themes in the classroom. However, they also reported the need for further professional development. Specifically, teachers reported a moderate level of confidence about how to make drama happen, identifying a need for more experience, knowledge, and tools to support their preparation for classroom drama and for how to engineer it and model it. For embedding Shakespeare's themes in curricula, teachers expressed concern that Shakespeare's texts did not fit their course content, they did not themselves have sufficient knowledge of Shakespeare's plays and poems, or that Shakespeare's language was difficult for their students.

Of particular note is that the teachers, upon completing the *immersion* phase of the five-day course in London, were excited by their new learning. However, upon return to California, the teachers had, on average, six weeks before starting their first year of full-time teaching and two months before starting their MA program with inquiry into their new students' responses to partnership practices. Retrieval of practices in which teachers had been engaged was difficult. One teacher reported: "Teachers NEED the handouts/lesson plans after we participate in the workshops. We are so focused [as we] acted as the 'students' we forget the important elements within the lesson itself." This teacher noted the value of support from mentors during the inquiry phase--more-experienced teachers who had participated in the

London course some years earlier, before the partnership developed fully with inquiry work for new teachers. This teacher added: “The handouts mentors give us are very valuable because we can change and adapt them on our own time later.”

Despite the promise of including social studies/history teachers in the partnership, a group seldom associated with including Shakespeare and drama in curricula, these teachers were particularly challenged in bringing partnership practices into reality within their early teaching. One of these teachers noted of the partnership workshops: “Some were very English-driven at times, so some could have been a little bit more neutral or social studies oriented to balance this out.” We found that despite teachers’ exposure during all three phases of the partnership-developed experiences, not much Shakespeare was taught or included yet in documented content and was particularly absent in inquiries conducted by history/social science teachers and multiple subjects teachers. Additionally, teachers reported challenges in discerning how and when to include DBP practices in already-crowded curricula.

Despite the challenge of infusing Shakespeare into their new classes and of deciding on locations within curricula for DBP practices, 100% of teachers in the inquiry coursework over the first two years (N=46 total) explored and documented uses of drama-based practices in their first-year teaching assignments. Patterns of use included (a) tryouts of three different drama practices, with documentation of what unfolded and impacts, or (b) repeated use of a single drama practice across different lessons, with documentation of students’ increased confidence and ability to work with the practices. Additionally, teachers pursued particular constructs in their inquiries, and worked to explore drama activities to support learning about these constructs. Sample constructs included: engagement in text, empathy, historical thinking, perspective, analysis, comprehension of expository text, argumentation, inferencing theme/main idea of primary sources, comparative analysis, evidence-based claims, and story in mathematical problems. Finally, MA students used scholarly sources that helped frame what they were exploring and finding through use of drama activity aligned with focal constructs.

### ***Adopting and Adapting Practices: Vignettes from Seventh-Grade Social Studies***

Because of particular challenges for social studies/history teachers, we present two vignettes of first-year teaching by Edward, our focal teacher. The vignettes highlight ways a teacher adopted and adapted partnership practices during his first year of teaching, while enrolled in the MA inquiry course experiences. The vignettes highlight both the challenges and promise of the partnership for early-career teachers. Edward--a first-year 7th-grade social science/history teacher--included DBP practices and use of Shakespeare in his middle school history classes. In the first example, he incorporated one quick DBP practice to explore cultural-historical themes from the Americas; and in the second, he attempted to integrate

Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* to discuss topics from the play (such as war and death) that appear in other historical texts, adopting and adapting two different partnership practices at different times in his social science unit.

*Adopting DBP practices to explore historical/fictional texts*

During a classroom observation, Edward started reviewing a previous class topic: Creation myths across cultures. As students recalled ideas, Edward jotted them on the board. Students reviewed creation myths from monotheistic religions such as Islam and Christianity, and polytheistic creation stories from the ancient Egyptian and Greek civilizations. Students concluded that all civilizations they learned about had a creation myth and that, in most cases, there were powerful beings (gods) that made humankind and all living creatures on Earth.

Edward introduced a DBP practice--*archetypes*--which guides teachers to present examples of characters (or people) appearing across stories. Such archetypes highlight dimensions of the human psyche and often illustrate social status. In this case, the main characters identified in each creation story were: God, king/ruler, men/women, and animals. Edward reviewed characters/archetypes and students brainstormed characteristics of each. As part of brainstorming, Edward asked four students to represent visually how each of those characters would move/ behave (without talking). One student placed her open hands on each side of her head pointing upwards, with fingers extended and open, to represent a crown; this was an image of a ruler. A different student mimicked a monkey jumping from chair to chair. After the first four students represented their character/archetype traits, Edward asked four other students to show their own versions of the same archetypes. After a few groups showed their archetypes, Edward asked all students to stand in a large circle, with him in the center. He then announced: "Now I'm going to tell you the story of the Incan myth of creation" and named four different characters: Pachamama (fertility Goddess/Mother Earth), Inti (early Inca ruler then turned into Sun/God), humans, and animals. He read the myth while asking groups of students to represent what he narrated.

Pointing at a female student, Edward narrated: "First, Pachamama made people," and three other students joined in adoration of the first student. The story continued while Edward signaled different students to play different archetypes. At one moment in the story, Edward called for a "pregnant woman," pointing at a boy. The boy held his belly and arched his back as if bent due to a heavy pregnancy. When the story concluded, Edward asked his students to write "the differences and similarities between the early creation myths we discussed two months ago, and the new Inca creation myths we have just performed." Finally, several students shared ideas to the whole class. One noteworthy comment Edward emphasized was that Incan myths had Pachamama--a female god--as the creator, while all other creation myths they learned about had a male god as the maker.

During post-observation debriefing, Edward commented on the importance of female students performing the god archetype (or Pachamama) since a “god” is usually associated with masculinity, especially in Abrahamic monotheistic religions, and women have only minor roles without power and usually are subjects of punishment or great suffering. Similarly, Edward mentioned how he wanted to choose a male student to play a female character. He purposefully singled out a male student who would not refuse to play a female archetype. Edward knew some other male students may not have felt comfortable portraying a pregnant woman, but he still wanted to make sure that boys at least observed a peer assume the role of a woman through enactment, without fear of ridicule in the classroom. Through this activity, Edward had students play roles not usually associated with their gender, in order to later engage in discussions about understanding people’s feelings and points of view.

*Drama-based practices and Shakespeare’s themes to promote historical empathy*

During one of his history lessons, Edward attempted to use excerpts from *Julius Caesar* to explore concepts of death and violence in times of war. Before he launched engagement with Shakespeare’s work and language, Edward incorporated a drama exercise to help his students explore how characters in *Julius Caesar* demonstrate power, a theme in the play. Edward implemented a *tableau* exercise, where students are assigned characters and their actions in the story/scene to present for the class as still-life action images or group portraits, followed by discussion of what was observable and how those performed behaviors linked to themes being analyzed. During implementation of the drama-based practice using *Julius Caesar* excerpts, Edward’s students giggled and commented jokingly about the enacted scene, instead of discussing themes. After several attempts to redirect for meaningful conversation, Edward felt his students were not ready to take the activity seriously.

The following week, Edward re-anchored the whole unit in empathy and socio-emotional learning. Edward believed that if students are unable to empathize with historical characters, they will not be able to empathize with each other, and vice versa. Edward collected material from online sources and his MA studies and devised a 3-day empathy workshop. Within that workshop, one activity he incorporated was *Walk of Shame*. Edward had learned this practice through Globe Education workshops (Banks, 2014) where teachers formed two rows facing each other, with one peer-as-character walking between the rows. As the character walked, those in the rows would “throw” insults, mostly bawdy language from Shakespeare’s plays, to explore ways in which people may make offensive comments to others. For Edward, implementing this activity was not possible, especially since his students were early adolescents, some of whom might enact peer pressure, insensitivity, and bullying, often associated with youth of this age group, and some of whom likely would be particularly sensitive to feeling victimized by such insults.

Instead, Edward adapted *Walk of Shame* into a *Compassion Walk*. He had students say words of encouragement they would like to hear in their everyday life. When they moved to discussion, Edward made sure to emphasize that students associated feelings with the words they heard or told the individual walking in the center. When it came to replicate his initial *tableau* exercise using *Julius Caesar* and subsequent debriefing, Edward asked students to think of the *feelings* that each word in the scene evoked in them. Similarly, when they revisited violence and death in the context of war, Edward had students reflect on what each word meant for them now, and what those words may have meant for the historical characters that lived through war times. Edward's adaptation of a DBP practice (*Walk of Shame*) moved his students from a state of superficial exploration of themes and laughter, to one of more respectful and empathic treatment of complex and serious concepts.

In the end, Edward returned to his unit and introduced new scenes and excerpts from different Shakespeare plays--paired with varied DBP practices--making explicit connections to different historical primary source documents. A core document used was Hernán Cortés' second letter to King Charles V of Spain where students identified themes of death, murder, and violence inflicted on Natives by the conquistadors.

*Across vignettes: Edward's adoption and adaptations of partnership practices*

In the vignettes above, Edward's work evidences some challenges and tensions of implementing DBP practices and Shakespeare across subjects. However, the vignettes also showcase possibilities for adaptive work, especially when teachers--like Edward--feel comfortable enacting and adapting practices for multiple purposes. Edward's first vignette did not include any Shakespeare text. However, he adopted the drama practice of *archetypes*, adapted to fit the content of his class (Incan myths). Although students did not read about Incan myths in that class session, Edward's use of *archetypes* helped him situate character analysis of previous (and maybe future) readings that his students might do. These may include reading of challenging texts from Shakespeare, or from historical documents/accounts from pre-conquest American stories and myths.

For the second vignette, Edward incorporated Shakespeare and DBP practices in a manner close to what he had learned in his program participation. However, the classroom context and students' reactions to the activity prompted him to rethink events, incorporating a second practice that needed to be adapted before implementation. Edward's ability to read classroom dynamics, his clear intentions with his teaching unit, and his knowledge of a variety of DBP practices made his adaptive teaching possible. Our data from teachers showed that in many cases they reported not feeling equipped to make Shakespeare clearly relevant to classroom content and context. Edward's use of excerpts from *Julius Caesar* to distill larger themes related to different historical documents and current 21st-century issues demonstrates creative

opportunities Shakespeare's works present when used as either anchored or supplementary texts. Given the prevalence of references to Shakespeare's works in mainstream media and current drama and film productions, themes arising from Shakespeare's plays and sonnets present fertile ground for fruitful discussions beyond the texts themselves in diverse classroom settings (Thompson & Turchi, 2016).

### **Contributions, Limitations, and Concluding Thoughts**

Our study makes several contributions to the literature. First, beyond guest lessons and workshops by visiting artists, our study reports how 46 new teachers across subjects and grade levels explored and documented uses of drama-based practices to support student learning related to a range of disciplinary constructs. A unique partnership structure (focused here on its first two years) enabled these practice tryouts by teachers who likely would not have used such practices, particularly in their first year of teaching. Accompanying the tryouts was teachers' documentation through inquiry of how the tryouts unfolded, how students responded, and ways the practices began to support student learning.

Second, despite preparation in uses of Shakespeare through an immersive experience at an international dramatic arts center, new teachers in our project reported challenges in trying to infuse Shakespeare into their first-year teaching. Our survey data revealed positive value in uses of Shakespeare, but self-confidence scores were not as high, suggesting additional support was needed in designing ways to infuse Shakespeare meaningfully into curricula. Despite this pattern, we found examples in the work of new teachers taking on uses of Shakespeare, and our vignettes from one teacher's seventh-grade class highlight a first attempt.

Third, we provide documentation of a partnership structure that enabled innovative work and uncovered challenges in bringing it to fruition. The program harnessed resources from two distinct institutions--an international dramatic arts program centered on Shakespeare, and a teacher education program with a history of preparing inquiring, reflective teachers for culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. The partnership between these institutions enabled development of innovative practices. Aligned with theories of distributed expertise, the partnership accessed the long history and knowledge-base of the London-based program *and* the teacher knowledge expertise and inquiry-infused practices of the California TE/MA program. The Globe Education program fostered pedagogical innovation and early-career teacher enthusiasm. The California teacher education program ensured the partnership was not driven by a unidirectional model of "training" teachers to use particular practices in narrow ways--instead embracing inquiry and critique, as well as creativity and growth in teachers. Our theoretical framework--which includes concepts of adaptive expertise and adaptive teaching--enabled us to view the partnership work as evolving and with potential impacts

needing attention to both the global dimensions of cross-national partnering and the local concerns of diverse communities. Our vignettes highlight how one first-year teacher both adopted practices and adapted some for use in his classroom, in the year following the London-based five-day course that immersed him in program opportunities.

Finally, we provide analyses of early-career teachers' reflections on the work. Our theoretical framework casts teachers as reflective and agentic professionals whose conceptions and insights can shape and impact professional work. Through such a frame, we sought teachers' ongoing conceptions of the values of infusing Shakespeare and drama-based pedagogy into their instructional practice and their self-confidence related to enacting partnership practices in their classrooms. This helped us to see, for example, a gap between increased values placed on the partnership work and teachers' call for additional resources to support retrieval of what they had learned during the program, including tools and scaffolds for infusing innovative practices into their classrooms. Despite challenges of this work, teachers remained committed to what they saw as highly valued texts and pedagogical possibilities, highlighting ways in which attention to early-career opportunities can seed these ideas for ongoing development.

Our study had several limitations. First, we documented and analyzed data from the earliest wave of the partnership, reporting new teachers' values, self-confidence, and early practices as the partnership was taking hold. Results of our study already have informed adaptations to the partnership design. For example, in response to teachers' concern about the need to forge greater links between the immersive experience in London and the inquiry work as beginning teachers, we developed a three-day summer institute at the California university site to further scaffold teachers' engagements with partnership practices, to increase teachers' self-confidence in enacting these practices, and to collectively explore creative adoption of practices and innovative local adaptations (Athanases & Sanchez, 2020; Jasper, Dvorak, Athanases, & Sanchez, in review). It is likely that results will differ and new themes will emerge in our follow-on studies as we continue to tap teachers' conceptions, self-confidence, and practices.

A second limitation is that the context for the project is unusual and fairly well-resourced. The partnership taps expertise of two institutions with reputations for excellence. Other programs interested in similar kinds of partnering may have less access to such opportunities and less funding to support teachers' engagement in such professional learning. This can particularly limit engagement of newly credentialed teachers who are on the cusp of earning their first salaries as full-time educators, many of whom are paying off college loans and many of whom come from low-SES backgrounds, without access to family support for course fees and travel. While our partnership needs to continually work hard to secure financial support for teachers,

we recognize the privilege associated with such opportunities and the limitations of our study for those working in less fully resourced contexts.

Despite such limitations, our study presents ideas and results that may prompt variations in development within other TE programs. Early-career teachers may hold the key for infusing the kinds of innovative practices we explored in our study. Early-career teachers are closer to their own educational paths and can become highly reflective and hyper-aware of their students' needs when TE/MA programs present tools and spaces for inquiry, professional development, and collaborative work. Additionally, drama practices may be more effective in K-12 classrooms when teachers themselves experience DBP practices during teacher preparation or professional development. Physically experiencing drama-based approaches creates additional teacher buy-in and increases self-confidence for DBP implementation (and needed adaptations) in future teaching. Teacher adaptations of pedagogical approaches are crucial for inclusive, equitable teaching, especially since classroom context matters and it defines the ways thoughtful educators approach teaching and learning. The drama practices our focal teacher used in the vignettes included embodied, voiced, and experiential learning components (Edmiston, 2014) that facilitate student empathic interactions with characters, self, and peers.

Language challenges related to exploring Shakespeare persist, and teachers often fear trying to make the works accessible to students. Teachers in our project were no different in this regard, and our data indicated that working with Shakespeare and drama pedagogy with emergent bilingual learners was an area where teachers felt least prepared and least efficacious. Both the Globe Education and California teacher education programs value and promote activities and pedagogies that foster attention to linguistic diversity among students. Nonetheless, teachers in our project called for greater attention to making these practices viable for all learners. This suggests an area needed for future study, including illustrative and analyzed cases of ways in which teachers in linguistically diverse classes support their students in engagements with the works and language of Shakespeare and with the interactive play and voicing of drama activity.

In addition, further work in our project and others would benefit from more critical reflections on these practices. For example, the notion of universality of Shakespeare's themes has been challenged. The search for unifying themes that can rally readers behind a common idea may lead to erasure of personal and cultural histories and experiences, particularly those of culturally and linguistically minoritized youth (Thompson & Turchi, 2016). Also, in drama-based pedagogy, engaging youth in critical dramatic inquiry, though relatively rare, opens up possibilities to explore social inequality and the need for justice (Enciso et al., 2016)--important goals that drama work can support. Our vignettes of Edward's early tryouts show

attempts in this regard, but they mark places for more extended treatment and depth in exploring social issues and equity and invite inquiry into how both Shakespeare's works and drama-based pedagogy may support such inquiry.

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