"THIS AIN'T A GHETTO CLASS; THIS IS A FINE CLASS!": DRAMATIC ORAL READING FLUENCY ACTIVITIES IN THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF A NINTH-GRADE CLASSROOM

by

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B.A., Washburn University, 2000
M.S., Kansas State University, 2005

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine what social factors influenced ninth-grade students asked to participate in dramatic oral reading activities in the context of their high school English classroom. Participatory action research was completed in cooperation with a classroom teacher and his student teacher. A grounded theory design advised the transcription, coding, and data analysis of the study.

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Data revealed fourteen categories during the open coding stage that contributed, through axial coding, to three different themes: family versus dysfunctional family, positive performance conditions versus adverse performance conditions, and literate identity versus anti-literate identity. These three themes and each respective antithesis were progressively contingent on each other when laid out in a lateral manner with the results of the project being that students either developed a literate identity when the conditions were in place or developed a decidedly anti-literate identity. This theory, grounded entirely in data collected during the study, provided an understanding of the social context at play in this classroom. This study provided qualitative insight necessary for continuing to explore dramatic oral reading fluency at the high school level by revealing the importance of community in asking students to perform in front of their peers, a potentially socially jeopardizing situation.

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Dedication

I dedicate this to my grandmothers. Dorothy attended the ceremony when I earned the Master's degree but passed away suddenly as I was embarking on this journey. Mary Louise has been a constant source of inspiration and support to finish this journey.

CHAPTER 1 - Introduction

The goal of oral literacy in the context of school can be traced back to the very roots of education in colonial times through the end of the nineteenth century at the inception of English becoming a school subject in the late nineteenth century (Applebee, 1974; Hyatt, 1943; Smith, 2002). Applebee (1974) notes that even Harvard University required "reading English aloud" as early as 1865 (p. 30). Here, a university is requiring an entire course on how to read aloud well. It was, in fact, necessary for the educated to be able to read well orally due to the lack of readily available reading materials or readers (Hyatt, 1943). Most houses would only have a few books and one reader so reading orally was essential (Hyatt, 1943). At the end of the nineteenth century oral reading served as the primary indication of schooling. Philosopher William James (1892) believes, "the teacher's success or failure in teaching reading is based, so far as the public estimate is concerned, upon the oral reading method (p. 422).

The prominence of oral reading, however, faded under academic challenges early in the Twentieth Century (Hyatt, 1943). Scholars believe too much emphasis was being put on the mechanics of oral reading; Horace Mann (1891, cited in Hoffman & Segel, 1983) asserts "more than eleven-twelfths of all the children in reading classes do not understand the meaning for the words they read" (p. 4). Consequently, the Committee of Ten, headed by the president of Harvard, focused its recommendations for secondary English in 1894 on college preparation and literature reading lists, a significant shift away from the performance-based curriculum of reading, writing, and oration; college English began to drive what was taught in the high schools (Hawisher & Soter, 1990). The performance aspects of secondary English, such as rhetoric, public speaking, elocution, and dramatics were separated into extra-curricular activities. "The advent of 'studying literature' caused a decline in rhetoric, grammar, and analysis" (Squire, 2002, p. 4). At the dawn of the twentieth century "oral reading had become an activity that was found only in schools" (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003, p. 511) which caused policy makers to shift towards a silent reading curriculum. The life of performance in secondary English classrooms had been effectively extinguished because "in everyday life, and consequently in schools, silent reading and comprehension predominated" (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003, p. 511).

As public education became widespread in America though, it was apparent that reading was a key cog to the system. While, "the teaching of reading for all children…was largely ignored as a subject for the secondary, although remedial or corrective reading was a matter of continuing concern" (Squire, 2002, p. 4), no amount of school work can be completed without the ability to read the written word. Considering the fact that "until World War 1, and for a time thereafter, few students other than the college-bound completed high school" (Squire, 2002, p. 4), widespread reading instruction past the elementary grades was a new phenomenon based on psychological and pedagogical understanding of reading less than 30 years old.

Recently, transformations in education brought on by the National Reading Panel Report (2000) and No Child Left Behind (2001) legislation vaulted literacy instruction in America to the forefront of importance. These changes have left secondary schools with little choice in the areas of reading and math—get students to 'proficient' or else. While many schools have implemented various programs to help with the problem, much more could be done. Suddenly, reading is an important topic again in secondary schools and one area of renewed emphasis is that of oral reading fluency, a reportedly "neglected" slice of the literacy instruction pie (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 3-5).

The participatory action research study employed qualitative research methods grounded in social psychology to examine the pressures adolescents face when participating in oral reading fluency activities. Discussion in this chapter is organized in the following sections: (1) background to the study, (2) overview of the issues, (3) statement of the problem, (4) research questions, (5) definition of terms, (6) significance of the study, (7) methodology, (8) limitations of the study, and (9) overview of the study.

Background to the Study

There is an ever-expanding body of research into what abilities are necessary for successful reading. Vocabulary acquisition, phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension and reading fluency are five key areas to successful reading in elementary grades according to the NRP Report (National Reading Panel, 2000). In fact, most of the emphasis on learning to read occurs in grades 1-4 where most students reach an acceptable level of literacy. Nevertheless, the study focused on the social context of students participating in oral reading fluency activities in a high school classroom.

The New York Times article "Literacy Falls for Graduates from College, Testing Finds" is one of many examples that the popular media and broader society is focused on a literacy crisis. The article begins in an alarming fashion, "the average American college graduate's literacy in English declined significantly over the past decade" (Dillon). The article cites assessment data from The National Assessment of Adult Literacy stating that overall literacy rates had declined from the 1992 assessment of 40 percent to 31 percent proficient in 2003 (Dillon). These results can be discussed alongside the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) scores covering a similar length of time. The NAEP reading scores are largely unchanged for fourth and eighth graders between 1992 and 2005 (www.nces.ed.gov). The perceived literacy crisis is one of increasing demands of communication skills and new literacies for adolescents navigating "a complex and sometimes even dangerous world" (Moore, et-al., 2000, p. 3). Regardless of the reality of the "crisis," students are not performing at the levels desired by policy makers and employers. The reading abilities of the American public must increase and at the time of the study there was little to no attention or money being given to secondary schools. Adolescent literacy lacked respect and focus.

Certainly the background in literacy policy was essential to the central argument here, but it was also critical to examine the social aspects of adolescents in order to fully understand their literacy struggles. Brown & Theobald (1998) indicate a peer culture develops in secondary schools as adolescents have the physical place to socialize, be teenagers, and ultimately be around other teenagers with common beliefs, interests, and sayings. In fact, students perceived school more "as a social rather than strictly a learning environment" (124). These social institutions do not merely exist in a void circling with spit wads and dry erase markers. "What is taught in school, the ways that the material is taught, and how much the students learns are all affected by social contexts" (Dornbusch & Kaufman, 2001, p. 61). One such context was risk. Would there ever be a clearer case of social risk in a high school than a struggling reader being asked to read aloud by an unsuspecting teacher? What happens to adolescent students socially when they are, in essence, asked to perform in front of their peers?

Overview of the Issues

Here, I offer an anecdotal perspective based in my high school teaching experience. It was written from the perspective of a teacher wanting to know what to do with his students in his

classroom. While this could narrow the scope of the study, it served here, rather, to provide a better overview of the issues facing high school teachers.

A Teacher's Perspective

After teaching for five years at a high school it was increasingly apparent that my students still struggled with reading. I witnessed this while teaching simple activities and while teaching longer novel studies; I rarely had an experience where a freshman, sophomore, or junior student simply could not read what I had given to her. These students had an abundance of opportunities to be successful readers—highly qualified teachers, supportive parents and community, and libraries of books all at their fingertips. I remember well my days as an undergraduate preparing to be an English teacher; I had no idea that I would be teaching high school students who honestly struggled to read. I remember seeing advertisements about illiteracy and did not believe that it was possible that in the twenty-first century upper-middle-class American high school, students would be in this state. High school students who cannot read are a problem for society as a whole and it is painful to witness firsthand. These students "entering the adult world in the twenty-first century will read and write more than at any other time in human history" (IRA Position on Adolescent Literacy, 1999, p. 3). I observed two specific qualities in my students' reading abilities that were concerning. First, when I asked students to read aloud in class, many often struggled with oral reading fluency. They stammered about and often sounded completely unintelligent. I offered excuses for them to the class trying to save the last few ounces of their dignity, acutely aware of the social ramifications of high school students lacking the skills necessary to read a short passage aloud. Second, nearly all of my readers either could not or would not read expressively. I asked, pleaded, threatened, and bribed them to add enthusiasm and expression to their reading. My efforts were to no avail. It was painful to listen to them reading, and I often wondered what more I could do as their teacher. The issues concern skill levels, students lacking the necessary ability to read with fluency, and social factors, students not feeling comfortable reading in front of others.

Statement of the Problem

Several issues influenced the problem in both the areas of oral reading fluency and social structures influencing adolescents, but a lack of relevant research underlined each. Experts have known that reading fluency is a key to learning to read proficiently for several decades. It

remained unclear, however, how reading comprehension was affected by explicit work with oral reading fluency. If one added to the equation that there was practically no research about using explicit oral reading fluency activities with high school students, the problem was magnified (Goodson & Goodson, 2005; Rasinski et-al., 2005). Despite this lack of research and the fact that fluency instruction is largely ignored past fourth grade, it was clear high school students struggle with literacy and that one limiting factor of learning to read is fluency (Rasinski et-al., 2005). When the issues with fluency were coupled with the social nightmare struggling readers faced when asked to read aloud in class, the problem is compounded further because the students that needed extra work on fluency were reluctant to engage in activities where their weaknesses were brought to the forefront. These readers typically avoided public speaking, forensics, debate, and theater opportunities.

Central Research Question

How does the social context of the high school classroom influence high school students' participation in dramatic oral reading?

Subsidiary Research Questions

1. How does the social context of the classroom act to inhibit student participation in dramatic reading?

2. In what ways can the social context be manipulated to encourage student participation in dramatic readings?

Definition of Terms

Dramatic oral readings – Oral reading that added purposeful theatrical elements to a particular text. Dramatic reading is rehearsed, free of errors, at an appropriate pace, and full of expression.

Social context – The complex interpersonal interactions that act to encourage and discourage certain behaviors by individuals within a group.

Significance of the Study

Several recent national reports on adolescent literacy provided ample cause for concern. According to the American Institutes for Research, only 13% of American adults are capable of

performing complex literacy tasks. A report by the Alliance for Excellent Education claims nearly 8.7 million secondary school students are unable to read and comprehend the material in their textbooks. Still another report from the 2005 ACT College Readiness Benchmark for Reading established that half of the students that took the ACT were ready for college level reading. The combination of these reports should be a call for action to focus a different approach to adolescent literacy. One such approach could be a new focus on fluency.

Rasinski, et-al. (2005), in their study of fluency rates of ninth-graders in a Midwestern high school, clearly demonstrates that fluency remains a concern. The study indicated, through quantitative procedures, a significant relationship between students success on a state reading test and their fluency rates ($p < .001$; $r = .530$). Fluency accounted for 28% of the success rate on the test, a reading comprehension test. "Although clearly not definitive, this study suggests that fluency needs to be a concern for teachers at all grade levels, not just teachers of beginning readers" (p. 27). Research studies are beginning to explore the potential for oral fluency instruction to help older readers become proficient. This study examined older readers working with oral reading fluency through a qualitative lens. While research started to suggest the value of repeated, dramatic oral readings by students, it was reasonable to assume adolescent culture would not always be supportive of these activities. This study sought to examine the context of the culture and these potentially valuable activities.

Methodology

This study employed participatory action research that used qualitative methods to explore the social aspects of asking students to participate in oral reading fluency activities. One classroom was the subject for the study that occurred at a single high school. There was no sample selection process as the participants were enrolled in one ninth-grade English class by a computer program. Since oral reading fluency activities were not widely used in the general English classroom, it was necessary, with the aide of school officials, to select a specific teacher to participate. In discussing this study with an assistant principal and a clinical supervisor, the liaison between the university and the public school responsible for placing and partially supervising student teachers, it was ascertained what the students would be doing and asked which teacher's classroom would be most suited for such activities.

The study began on the week of March 5th and concluded on April 28th and the research occurred over twelve class periods, an hour and a half each. In a week at this school, students met with four block period classes each day for ninety minutes. This meant that the students would work with this particular class every other day. Additionally, all students in this study were part of a nationally recognized ninth-grade academy, which served to help students find success as they entered high school. The sessions varied between 25 and 60 minutes. The performance portions of class were videotaped for more detailed analysis. The dramatic oral fluency materials used in class were taken from the National Endowment for the Arts Poetry Out Loud program, a National Recitation Contest. Since the focus of the research was on fluency, students did not memorize and recite the poems but used cooperative repeated reading, a strategy where students read and provided feedback to each other, to engage the texts.

Data sources included the video and audio recordings, researcher field notes, student interview transcripts, and teacher interview transcripts. The researcher field notes were taken before, during, and after each meeting. These notes focused primarily on the social context the students in the classroom created as well as reflections of the researcher. Next, the interview provided another source of information and insight. Six students participating in the activities were selected and interviewed. These interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. The students were selected with the input of the classroom teacher and the student teacher. Further, the teachers were interviewed to help provide different perspectives on the research and about the social context. Finally, both performances were recorded for further analysis.

Data were carefully collected and organized before being analyzed. The researcher selected a computer aided qualitative data analysis software package, HyperResearch, which allowed simultaneous coding of video, audio, and written data. The grounded theory qualitative research design called for open coding and axial coding before determining an overall understanding of the data.

Limitations of the Study

Action research using qualitative methods, by nature, accepted certain limitations. These studies do, however, offer an essential method of examining a problem, especially one in its early stages of being understood.

Additionally, the researcher elected to be a participant-observer in this study. This was the most appropriate method of handling the instruction portion of the research. Specific reasons behind this were detailed in the methodology section of Chapter Three.

The research occurred in a single classroom in a single high school. Inherently limiting, the in depth analysis of this situation as it related to dramatic oral reading provided a critical understanding of the social context at play during performance based learning, which served to inform further practice and research.

Overview of the Study

Chapter One serves as the introduction to the study by offering a background to the study, overview of the issues, statement of the problem, research questions, definition of terms, significance of the study, methodology, limitations of the study, and overview of the study section that guided the research at hand.

Chapter Two provides a broad theoretical framework that focused on oral reading fluency and social psychology. The chapter reviews theory and research in order to place this study amongst other similar endeavors.

Chapter Three details the methodology of the study through a detailed description of the daily lessons of the Poetry Out Loud Project. The chapter describes the research methods to be used in depth and made plans to follow IRB recommendations.

Chapter Four consists of a complete and accurate description of the data collected in the study. This data includes coded field notes, coded videotape transcripts, and coded audiotape transcripts from the data collection process. Chapter Four concludes with a description of the grounded theory.

Chapter Five utilizes the technology of Hyper Research Software qualitative data coding system, in part, to reveal, interpret and understand the thematic strands present. Implications for further research and recommendations for practitioners are presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2 - Review of Literature

In order to fully appreciate the combination of oral reading fluency theory in light of social constructivist and socio-cultural theories, it was necessary to examine, in depth, the research that supported each. This chapter provided the theoretical foundation for the study in addition to providing the research basis for the methodology. It was divided into the following sections: 1) Defining and Redefining Fluency 2) Theoretical Framework 3) Historical Context of Oral Reading Fluency 4) Methodology—Repeated Reading 5) Understanding the Social Context 6) Summary.

Defining and Redefining Fluency

There were two problematic aspects of reading fluency that recurred through all work and research on it. First, the very definition was often argued and changed drastically over the past twenty years. Second, the method of assessing reading fluency, critical to the definition, was also debated and changed radically. For the purpose of the study, it was necessary to carefully examine these historical changes and present a clear picture of reading fluency. The extended metaphor of learning to drive a car served to explain, at an introductory level, the nature of reading fluency.

Driver Education

Learning to drive a car provided an analogous example of how one becomes fluent in reading. To drive a car, one must first understand the working parts of the car—the gas pedal, steering wheel, brake pedal, speedometer, and turn signals. If one does not understand that the brake pedal stops the car, he or she will likely not receive a license to drive. Just as a driver must understand the workings of a car, the workings of the road are critical too. The stop lights, stop signs, double yellow lines, turning lanes, one way streets, and speed limit signs are just a few of the many rules of the road. In a similar fashion, one learns to read by acquiring vocabulary, recognizing phonemes, using phonics, comprehending chunks and eventually conquering the ability to read fluently or automatically. Those parts of the car are necessary but nearly meaningless unless the driver also understands the rules of the road. From pausing when there is a comma or yield sign to stopping at the stop sign or period, if one reads a sentence or attempts to drive without knowledge of these cues, comprehension and fluency are impossible while

traffic tickets, accidents, and high insurance rates are likely to affect the driver failing to heed the rules. When all parts of the car and conditions of driving are natural for a driver, a person can easily drive the car in a variety of situations and move gracefully from place to place, accelerating, braking, and turning when it is appropriate. The fluent reader will use the skills gained and navigate the written word in a flowing, effortless manner all the while paying close attention to rules of reading.

Definition

Reading fluency was defined by the National Reading Panel (NRP) as "the ability to read text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression," (pp. 3-5) lends itself most readily to oral reading applications (National Reading Panel, 2000). This focus of oral reading was one reason experts believe there has been a significant lack of focus on fluency (Chard, Pikulski, & McDonagh, 2006; Pikulski & Chard, 2005). The oral interpretation and expressiveness (prosody) was not a skill often practiced by adults, and the NRP definition is somewhat misleading. Oral reading was, however, an observable reflection of a reader's ability to decode and read fluently, both absolutely necessary for reading comprehension (Pikulski, 2006). Another argument for a definition of reading fluency lay in the speed and accuracy a reader used to decode words (automaticity). Yet other leading researchers in reading fluency believe that this stage of reading meant that a reader could comprehend what it was they were reading in order to be a fluent reader. Rasinski (2006) believed the link between fluency and overall reading proficiency was supported beyond doubt and pointed to several significant research studies that established this. Ultimately, this study focused on oral reading fluency and adopted Rasinski's (2006) definition, "It deals with reading words accurately and with appropriate speed, and it deals with embedding in one's voice elements of expression and phrasing while reading" (p. 18). While limiting the definition to the oral aspects of reading fluency might seem troublesome, the only observable measure of fluency was through oral reading. Rasinski (2006) continues, "Fluency essentially deals with the surface-level and easily observable aspects and characteristics of reading" (p. 18). The broader term "reading fluency" was here different than "oral reading fluency" as the study was not attempting to make claims based on the ability of readers to comprehend work through silent reading fluency.

Theoretical Framework of Study

The theories of Automaticity and Prosody were keys to understanding the background of oral reading fluency as it existed in the study. These two aspects of the current construct served to provide a broader understanding of oral reading fluency. While the methodology relied on these two theories, the lens that the study employed was that of social constructivism as it leads to socio-cultural theory in order to define and understand the social context of the situation.

Automaticity

Musicians and athletes know the best method of improving their skills in performance based activities is practice. Basketball coaches and band teachers alike are constantly asking, prodding, begging their subjects to practice more and more. For most musicians and athletes, learning an instrument requires an incredible amount of focused practice. For example, a trumpet player can never reach her potential until fully understanding the instrument and hitting the various notes become automatic. A player that has to watch her fingers and attempt to read the music would never keep up with the tempo. Her brain would be giving too much attention to watching her fingers and she would miss notes or vice versa. In much the same way, LaBerge & Samuels (1974) theory of automaticity simply states that readers cannot complete the complex task of reading until reaching a stage when decoding, metacognition, comprehension and attention occur simultaneously and automatically. Hinging on the idea that the human brain only has a limited ability to grapple with a numbered amount of stimuli at the same time, the theory states that fluent reading cannot occur until these processes become automatic. "Automaticity involves the processing of complex information that ordinarily requires long periods of training before the behavior can be executed with little effort or attention" (National Reading Panel Report, 2000, pp. 3-7). The idea of extended practice is a key cog in order for automaticity to happen in reading, football, or band class. Clearly, without practice a reader cannot reach automatic levels of processing.

At the general level, automaticity exists in a simple and understandable idiom: practice makes perfect. It is necessary to understand it at a deeper level and several researchers have attempted to do exactly that. One perspective on automaticity suggests three separate cognitive conditions must exist and reading will occur "without immediate intention, without conscious awareness, and without interfering with other processes that are occurring at the same time"

(Posner & Snyder, 1975). Two properties were added when Schneider and Shiffrin (1977) included extended practice as necessary and suggested that in order for something to be labeled as automatic, it had to be completed with skills that would not easily erode. Reading must be extensively practiced to become an automatic skill (Ackerman, 1987). Venezky (2002) also found that adult learners still struggling to read needed more focus on automaticity to become successful readers.

The necessity to complete the lower order skills with ease and speed is particularly important when trying to complete intricate tasks (Anderson, 1985). This is the case for reading as well according to Perfetti (1985). In fact, Venezky (2002) believes adult educators "should be debating how to build up rapid word recognition" (p. 410). It is clear that automaticity is still important amongst adults still learning to read.

Prosody

Schreiber (1991) describes fluent oral reading as "smooth and expressive" which supports another theory about reading fluency (p. 161). Shifting the focus from the cognitive aspects of reading fluency to the extroverted, observable features, the elements of prosody in reading fluency must be examined. Schreiber (1991), contends three aspects of oral language— stress, intonation, duration,—signify prosodic reading. Prosody is a linguistic term for the "rhythmic and tonal features of speech" while "prosodic reading is the ability to read in expressive rhythmic and melodic patterns" (Dowhower, 1991, p. 166).

Six markers, or prosodic indicators, can be directly linked to expressive reading. Pausal intrusions, length of phrases, appropriateness of phrases, phrase-final lengthening, terminal intonation contours, and stress, as set up by Dowhower (1991) provide a comprehensive examination of prosody as it relates to reading instruction. 1) Pausal intrusions can most readily be described as pausing in the incorrect place. Beginning readers who read behind grade level insert as many as three inappropriate pauses into each sentence (Dowhower, 1991). 2) Length of phrases is simply the number of words a person can read before pausing. Beginning readers (age 7-8) in New Zealand had a range of 7.4 words without a pause all the way down to 1.3 words (Clay & Imlach, 1971). 3) Appropriateness of phrases can be described as reading groups of words in the correct phrases and comprises a more significant gauge of fluency. Dowhower (1991) offers examples of inappropriate phrasing as those that cross a punctuation mark, divide

prepositional phrases, or split a determiner and a noun. 4) Phrase-final lengthening is when a reader holds the final syllable of a phrase longer because it is the final syllable. According to Snow and Coots (1981) pauses alone can be unreliable in terms of determining prosodic reading. 5) Terminal intonation contours are the melody or variation of tonal qualities of the words and phrases. As students read with more fluency they begin to naturally use a rise of intonation as a phrase begins and then that falls as the phrase ends. 6) Stress in oral language occurs when a reader accentuates a syllable or word with certain intensity. Clay and Imlach (1971) determined proficient readers added stress to every 4.7 words they read. These markers all serve as signs of prosody and therefore fluent oral reading. Much, if not all of the research available on prosody focuses on beginning readers (grades 1-4).

Social Constructivism/Sociocultural Theory

"There is no knowledge independent of the meaning attributed to experience (constructed) by the learner, or community of learners" (Hein, 1991). Constructivism, the grandfather of social constructivism and cognitive constructivism is based on the concept that learners "construct their own knowledge" (Sener, 1997). It is characterized by placing the learner at the center of knowledge and truly valuing the idea that each learner has a different and valid experience in the learning process because they are different people. Ultimately, the social interactions a child has perform a key role in their cognitive development. Vygotsky (1978) affirms "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level" (p. 57). This development in the social context of a classroom is critical to the study. A key concept to understanding social constructivist theory is considering Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). Essentially, the ZPD asserts that children can learn concepts out of their realm of understanding through help from others. Three categories separate the aspects of ZPD: child can complete the task on their own, child cannot complete the task on their own, the child can complete the task with help from peers, teachers (Vygotsky, 1987). As Vygotsky (1987) explains, "What the child is able to do in collaboration today he will be able to do independently tomorrow" (p. 69). In the study, this idea of modeling is key to the

success of students' dramatic performances. Without a positive model provided by a teacher or peer, many students would lack the capacity to add the various aspects of prosody to poetry and therefore fall into Vygotsky's second realm of ZPD where the child cannot complete the task asked of them as Vygotsky (1987) claims is necessary to reach the ZPD. What is left then is zone three, the middle ground of the theory where a child is in between being able to complete a task autonomously and needing assistance. This understanding of the social educational development of children also plays a significant role socially. Students from zone one paired with students from zone two would likely be incompatible because their differences are too vast. Since the researcher is examining the social context of a partially group based activity, the ZPD is particularly important. Just as in Vygotsky's example, if a national qualifying forensics student is paired with a student that struggles with oral reading, too much difference will occur.

Vygotsky (1987) relates a Sociocultural viewpoint as a continuation of social constructivism theory which is especially relevant when literacy activities are involved. Tharp and Gallimore (1988) assert:

> This view [the sociocultural perspective] has profound implications for teaching, schooling, and education. A key feature of this emergent view of human development is that higher order functions develop out of social interaction. Vygotsky argues that a child's development cannot be understood by a study of the individual. We must also examine the external social world in which that individual life has developed...Through participation in activities that require cognitive and communicative functions, children are drawn into the use of these functions in ways that nurture and 'scaffold' them" (pp. 6-7).

The Poetry Out Loud Project required students to participate in activities utilizing both cognitive and communicative functions in a social context. Here, the experience of performing dramatic oral readings results in a deeper level of understanding because of the contextual factors at play. This sociocultural theory provides the basis to understand the social context.

Historical Context for Oral Reading Fluency

Despite several calls over the years (Allington, 1983; Rasinski & Zutell, 1996) for more attention on oral reading fluency in America's classroom it is widely accepted that the National Reading Panel Report (2000), coupled with the onslaught of No Child Left Behind legislation,

particularly reading improvement as a precursor to control state funding, have brought fluency to the forefront of literacy education. Just as certainly as oral reading fluency has gained momentum in the realms of educational research and practice, much is still unknown. The NRP Report offers the perspective of several top literacy researchers and the mass of peer reviewed studies on literacy to date. The work is widely criticized because it only included results from quantitative studies, but it absolutely brought significant attention to fluency, a part "neglected" component of learning to read (NICHD, 2000).

> It appears that oral reading practice and feedback or guidance is most likely to influence measures that assess word knowledge, reading speed, and oral accuracy. Nevertheless, the impact of these procedures on comprehension (and on total reading scores) is not inconsiderable, and in several comparisons it was actually quite high. (National Reading Panel, 2000, 3-18)

> These (instructional) procedures help improve students' reading ability, at least through grade 5, and they help improve the reading of students with learning problems much later than this. (National Reading Panel, 2000, 3-20)

When considering the scope of the research available was limited by the lack of focus on fluency, these findings lend support to continued research of the possible applications where fluency instruction could be critical. Research into the textbooks and instructional materials aimed at literacy teachers up to 1995 found little to no attention to reading fluency (Rasinski & Zutell, 1996). Teachers did not have the tools or knowledge presented to deal with fluency or understand that it "is key to success in reading" (Rasinski, 2006, p. 5).

Just as reading fluency has returned to paramount importance in today's educational climate, it once was a main focus of reading instruction in America. Early in American history and before books were mass produced, most households and schools indeed had only limited copies of these costly texts. Without enough books, sharing the contents of the books available took the form of oral reading and often fell upon the shoulders of one person per house. Being that the need in society was for oral reading, it quickly found its place in schools of the time. Writing in 1835, Lyman Cobb (cited in Smith, 2002) offers a valuable description of the ideals of oral reading of the time.

A just delivery consists in a distinct articulation of words pronounced in proper tones, suitably varied to the sense, and the emotions of the mind; with due attention to accent, to emphasis, in its several gradations; to rests or pauses of the voice, in proper places…and the whole accompanied with expressive looks, and significant gestures…(pp. 40-41)

This concept of oral reading certainly places it into the context of performance as the focus on "looks" and "gestures" suggests. Spotlight on the external nature of oral reading is evident in Cobb's description. Reading, defined as it is here, is something easily measured, evaluated, and valued. The very prosodic nature of speech performance such as pausing, inflection, and stress as well as oratory devices such as gesturing and expressive looks allow an audience to understand a piece read well in a different context, in the context of a performance.

This focus on performance did translate to the schools in the form of recitation lessons but not for long. While the distinction between reciting and reading something aloud should be pointed out, a focus of reading instruction was the aspect of reading aloud well in front of others. Rasinski (2006) recalled "oral recitation lessons became prominent in instruction through the middle and late parts of the nineteenth century" (p. 10). Though a focus on reading comprehension existed in the form of questions about the text following the performance, this focus on "pronunciation, emphasis, inflection, and force" (Hyatt, 1943, p. 27) was looked down upon in the context of reading instruction as "action of organs of speech" instead of the valued "exercise of the mind in thinking and feeling" and led to a vast decline in oral reading.

The act of reading or reciting was ultimately valued and implemented widely by schools, which caused great concern for educational scholars of the day (Hoffman & Segel, 1983; Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003). One such scholar was Horace Mann, who, according to Rasinski (2006) "led the attack on reading instruction that he felt was too focused on the mechanical and oral aspects of reading" (p. 7). Others seriously questioned how well students could comprehend what they were reading when the central approach was through oral reading. One such person, Francis Parker questioned the validity of oral reading in the context of education.

Many of the grossest errors in teaching reading spring from confounding the two processes of attention and expression. Reading itself is not expression… Reading is a mental process… Oral reading is expression, and comes under the heading of speech… The custom of making oral reading the principal and almost the only

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means of teaching reading has led to many errors prevalent today (Parker, 1894, cited in Smith, 2002, p. 150)

Just as the educational community questioned the validity of oral reading practices in the school, the onset of the Industrial Revolution and trans-continental railroad brought more books to the masses of people (Hyatt, 1943). As the written word became more readily available and accessible, "the need for oral reading for imparting information declined" (Rasinski, 2006, p. 8).

Silent reading practices, coinciding with the advent of English as a discipline which included heavy focus on literary analysis, became prominent. As Squire (2002) relates "children were to be taught to read in the grammar school; they then read to learn in the secondary" (p. 4). For the first time, reading left the curriculum almost entirely for secondary students as reading activities shifted to reading and analyzing literature. Any reading instruction, in fact, was "inevitably related to literary analysis" (p. 4). Edmond Huey (1908) continued the barrage of criticism of oral reading.

> Reading as a school exercise has almost always been thought of as reading aloud, in spite of the obvious fact that reading in actual life is to be mainly silent reading… The consequent attention to reading as an exercise in speaking, and it has usually been a rather bad exercise in speaking at that, has been heavily at the expense of reading meanings from the first day of the reading, and by practice in getting meanings from the page… the rate of reading and of thinking will grow with the pupil's growth and with his power to assimilate what is read. (cited in Hyatt, 1943, p. 16)

Thus, the direction of reading in education, under the criticism of the oral focus and without the societal pressures to produces oral readers, turned, in the matter of only a generation, to completely silent.

As proficient 12th grade readers today read an average of 250 words per minute silently compared to 150 orally, the schools found that more ground could be covered in literature instruction, thus a large increase in the number of books taught was observed. Pedagogically, silent reading was easier to orchestrate for teachers short on training in methods. "In oral recitation reading activities, only one student read at a time, the remaining students served as an audience for the reader" (Rasinski, 2006, p. 11). To say that this approach isn't, in and of itself,

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efficient would be accurate. By 1923 Buswell and Wheeler (cited in Hyatt, 1943) openly criticized, within their instructional texts, schools that still used oral methods of reading.

> In contrast with this, in the modern school, which emphasizes silent reading, a great many books are read in each grade… It (silent reading) is the complex process of getting thought from printed page and involves an entirely new pedagogy. Silent reading objectives will never be attained by oral-reading methods. (pp. 39-40).

Oral reading clearly had a place, at least according to Buswell and Wheeler, outside the doors and walls of public schools where it would remain for the majority of the twentieth century. "Silent reading focused readers' attention on the apprehension of meaning – the goal of reading, while instruction in oral reading tended to focus attention on word perfect, accurate, and expressive recitation of the text" (Rasinski, 2006, p. 11). Clearly, the dagger in the heart of oral reading had not missed its mark. The continued criticism of the practice combined with more literature for which to read and pedagogical pressures to leave oral out of reading instruction effectively left it out of focus of researchers and hands of practitioners. Rasinski (2006) laments "early in this country's history oral reading for elocution (i.e. reading fluency) was a focal point of instruction. However, by the later part of the 20th century, oral reading fluency was relegated, at best, to secondary status in reading instruction" (p. 10).

Today, the current status of reading instruction has moved back towards the inclusion of oral reading into the curriculum, even beyond the primary reading instruction years of first through fourth grade. Despite the recent attention, Pinnell and Jaggar (2002) offered the insight that "as students advance through the grades, opportunities for them to use oral language in the classroom appear to decrease" (p. 902). Classrooms are controlled by a single teacher who, in keeping the students orderly and quiet "ignore[s] the learning potential of students' own spoken language" (p. 902). The fact remains that many adults, products of the status quo in reading education, struggle with reading ability. As Venezky (2002) believes, it is through a failure in American education to meet students at their skill level.

> The root of this problem is centered in two time-honored school practices. The first is basing reading instruction primarily on narrative fiction; the second is isolating reading practice from the content areas. Learning to read legal arguments, editorials, repair manuals, and the like is at least as important for

success in school and later life as learning to read and enjoy "good" fiction, yet the latter is favored disproportionably over the former for reading instruction (p. 410).

One potential solution is oral reading, as mentioned in the introduction to this section of Chapter Two, didn't come out of the shadows and into educational research and practice until at best the early 1980's but it was the NRP Report that has left fluency on the edge of the reading world's tongue.

Methodology of Repeated Reading

Classroom Applications

Before delving into the particulars of repeated reading, the chosen oral reading fluency method for this study, it is appropriate to list and explain, albeit briefly, what oral reading fluency activities look like in a classroom. Rasinski (2003) created a list of possible activities for oral reading which included "reading stories, reciting poetry, performing scripts, giving speeches, singing songs, announcing public proclamations and pledges, offering toasts, reporting news, telling jokes, shouting cheers" (22) to name a few. In fact Rasinski believes many texts are meant to be read aloud and "stories, poems, scripts, speeches" should be a natural part of any reading program "worth its salt…and reading them orally should be a natural part of the program" (pp. 22-23). He continues to suggest to teachers four ways to build reading fluency in their students. First, by modeling good oral reading teachers have the first opportunity to impress on their students what good oral reading looks and sounds like. Second, another method to build reading fluency is through providing oral support for readers. Here, Rasinski (2003) suggests choral reading (all students reading simultaneously), paired reading (one proficient reader reads simultaneously with a developing reader), and using recorded materials to help students hear fluent reading while they are reading. In fact Topping (1987a, 1987b, 1995) demonstrated that in these situations, students' comprehension and reading fluency improves. Third, Rasinski (2003) recommends using multiple opportunities to practice oral reading in the context of the classroom. Specifically, repeated reading (Samuels, 1979; Dowhower, 1994; National Reading Panel, 2000; Strecker, Roser, & Martinez, 1998) is recommended to improve fluency by providing sensory reinforcement for the reader. Finally, the fourth linchpin in creating better oral readers exists in the form of phrasing. Relying on the work of Schreiber (1980, 1987, 1991; Schreiber & Read,

1980), Rasinski argues that reading fluency cannot be complete until readers chunk words into appropriate phrases. This approach to enhancing oral reading is both practical and evidence based.

Background of Repeated Reading

Just as the example of the musician or athlete earlier in this chapter, the idea of repeating an activity, whatever it might be, is here relevant to the oral reading fluency methodology of the study. The very idea of practicing an activity to become proficient at it is time-honored in athletics, music, and reading. Huey (1905) states "repetition progressively frees the mind from attention to details, makes facile the total act, shortens the time, and reduces the extent to which consciousness must concern itself with the process" (p. 104). Certainly, Huey provides ideals very similar to Samuels & LaBerge (1974) Theory of Automaticity on which Repeated Reading largely rests. Additionally, Snow (et-al., 1981) believes "adequate progress in learning to read English (or any alphabetic language) beyond an initial level depends upon sufficient practice in reading to achieve fluency with different kinds of texts" (pp. 3-4). Thus the idea of practicing reading a text multiple times would lend itself to a reader improving her oral reading of that text but would that transfer to other texts?

Repeated reading is a systematic, well-defined and practiced, approach to having students read a short passage enough times until they can do it fluently. In its purest form a teacher will sit with a student for 15-30 minutes and have them read a passage of 50-500 words close to their own reading level until they reach a predetermined level of accuracy and speed; once that level is reached, the teacher will assign a slightly more difficult passage all the while the child's results are being recorded and tracked (Rasinski, 2003). As one might imagine, this is not a terribly practical method for classroom application and several alternative methods have been developed and found successful. Radio Reading (Greene, 1979; Opitz & Rasinski, 1998; Searfoss, 1975) was originally developed as an alternative to Round Robin reading, probably the widest used and most criticized from of oral reading. In Radio Reading, the teacher assign the passages to be read the day before the actual reading so students can practice and bring in questions for their group of four to six. When the students arrive, the teacher reminds them to read expressively and the students take turns reading before a discussion to end the session. Yet another variation of repeated reading is Cooperative Repeated Reading (Koskinen & Blum, 1984; 1986) where pairs

of students practice reading a passage with a peer during a 10-15 minute period. The peer is asked to provide feedback on a simple form (see Appendix A). Other variations of repeated reading include Mumble Reading (Hoffman, 1987), Say It Like the Character (Opitz & Rasinski, 1998), Book Buddies, Recorded Books, and Reader's Theater. For the purpose of this study, Cooperative Repeated Reading is the exact selected methodology which will be used in conjunction with Poetry Performance (Perfect, 1999).

A significant amount of research has been completed on repeated reading since its inception in 1979. Dowhower (1989) contends repeated reading "helps good and poor readers recall facts from their reading [and] aids good readers in focusing on and remember higher-level, important information" (p. 503). Specifically, Morgan & Lyon (1979) found that middle school students improved reading comprehension on unpracticed passages following repeated reading activities. Dowhower (1989) explains "in the Morgan and Lyon study, for example, struggling readers in junior high made gains of over eleven months on a standardized comprehension test in slightly over six months of repeated reading instruction" (p. 504). This might be even more significant since struggling readers gain less than a month of reading level per month. Additionally, repeated reading assists students to recall critical information when encountering technical and new reading material (Bromage & Mayer, 1986; Mayer, 1983). Moreover, according to multiple researchers (Carver & Hoffman, 1981; Chomsky, 1976; Dowhower, 1987; Herman, 1985; Neill, 1980; Samuels, 1979) repeated reading not only increases the speed of reading, it also improves comprehension and word recognition. Evidence of the success of repeated reading is far reaching and well supported by quantitative and qualitative research studies alike.

Understanding the Social Context

The American high school might be one of the most intriguing social structures available to study. Dornbusch & Kaufman (2001) agree "The American high school is a microcosm of the wider society. Numerous diverse forces affect the high school and produce competing views as to what is appropriate or significant in that specific type of organization" (p. 85). The high school is where adolescence meets adulthood and combining the awkward nature of this stage of life with routines, structure, and academic pressure of the high school curriculum makes for as interesting a situation on which to complete a study. It is in this context of a high school that

literacy events can alienate and deify students simultaneously. Brown & Theobald (1998) believe "people look to the secondary school as the social institution that must grapple with these challenges and successfully shepherd young people into adulthood" (p. 109). It is in the high school where socialization is far more important than math, science, and certainly reading; it is where the capital of cool is in constant flux as students shuffle through classes, peer groups, and the pages of American history. Three main factors contribute to the social context of school. Adolescent's going through adolescence, approaches to teaching, and the idea of school itself combine to create a unique social experience for each student at each high school in America.

Adolescents

With an understanding of the adolescents involved in the study and as adolescents in the broader sense around the world, it will be more possible to understand their social situations and context. Dornbusch & Kaufman believe "adolescence is viewed as a time of increasing knowledge and developing social skills... The primary arena for the development of those social skills is the high school" (p. 63). The students that walk through thousands of high school classroom doors each school day around America are different yet many characteristics of their situations are similar. Each generation worries about the students in school yet the product is largely the same. As adolescents today face a variety of pressures, their parents, grandparents, and great grandparents faced many similar strains. Capturing a picture of the adolescents is Brown & Theobald (1998):

> Young people are exposed to gangs and violent behavior, pressure into using drugs or engaging in sexual relationships, unnerved by tensions among ethnic, socioeconomic, political, and religious factions within the community or society, and unsettled by divorce or the absence of parents or economic pressures that shake the foundations of family life. They are rushed to maturity before they are ready (or even permitted) to assume adult roles and responsibilities. (p. 109)

Adolescence is a unique time of life as two separate worlds, the adult and child, collide together with sometimes catastrophic results. Without question, adolescents even since Brown & Theobald's publication have changed, maybe even radically, in just ten years. With instant messaging, internet bullying, cellular telephones, Mp3 players, laptop computers, and host of electronics now commonplace both in the school and out of it, students are faced with more

stimuli than ever before. All at the same time, the pressure of school has increased more dramatically in the past seven years than at any other time in American history. Assessments and preparation for those assessments have altered the landscape of school culture and the social context in which students exist. Pressure for all students to become at least proficient in the areas of math and reading has increased the focus on students unaccustomed to academic attention and it is certain that all of the attention isn't positive.

Another way to understand adolescents and the social context in which they exist is to consider their perspective about school and their peer relationships. It can be said with a degree of certainty that those relationships affect all facets of their lives. Beach (1993) believes "a student's social identity as 'student' is shaped by various cultural institutions—home, community, and peer-group allegiance—creating tensions between the kinds of socialization occurring in schools versus those in "real world" contexts" (p. 25). These peer group allegiances, often referred to as cliques, extend much deeper than the "in" crowd and "out" crowd. If it is true, as Savin-Williams & Berndt (1990) report that adolescents spend twice as much time with their peers as they do with all of adults in their lives. To say that peers significantly influence the ultimate outcome of any adolescent would be an understatement. Ultimately, adolescents struggle to relate to adults and vice versa yet are too old for younger siblings or friends so it is only with their understanding peers, in a somewhat isolated manner, where adolescents feel like self expression is safe (Savin-Williams & Berndt, 1990; Youniss & Smollar, 1985). This isolating behavior serves to characterize adolescents at their core. Feelings are kept from adults and questions go unasked while the literal and figurative bedroom doors are shut with only the sometimes lost soul inside. These feelings make school, in and of itself, critical to any child's development. The social education students receive that is not part of the curriculum might very well be more important than what they teachers say and what they ask students to do. When Brown & Theobald (1998) asked over 1000 teenagers "what's the best thing about school?" the answers, not surprisingly were dominated by "'being with my friends, meeting new people, spending time with my boyfriend'" (p. 110). It was clear in their study that math, science, and English were not the most important part of school for students, rather, Bridgette, Lauren, and Jordan proved much more influential. Within these findings lie a challenge to teachers and to school in general to respect, promote, and nurture the peer interaction that often is the source of problems in schools. Especially important to the study is the finding that "references to peers

overshadowed references to academics at every grade level, but especially in the early high school years (p. 110). These ninth-grade students truly stand at the social crossroads of their lives. To understand adolescents is to truly examine the context within which they talk, make friends, try to join certain peer groups, and generally interact with others their age.

A common source of social interactions between students in a secondary school takes the form of group work and other classroom activities. While some teachers pick groups for students and others allow the students to select their groups, it is never without the potential of social conflict. Brown and Theobald (1998) relate:

> Individuals from one crowd may balk if cooperative group assignments force them to work with members of another group with which they have hostile relationships. Students may even sign up for a class for the exclusive reason that their close friends are doing so. Thus, teachers are confronted with peer group or peer culture dynamics, whether they like it or not. (p. 130)

These peer culture dynamics often leave teachers with a particular class that is unruly, incorrigible, and/or unmanageable. Whether the classes were purposefully loaded by students selecting them or through random assignment, few, if any, teachers would argue that this is often a problem. These very peer culture dynamics can be damning for an adolescent that doesn't fit with a crowd but can be used by effective teachers to their advantage as Mehan (1979) states:

> Students not only must know the content of academic subjects, they must learn the appropriate form in which to cast their knowledge. That is, competent membership in the classroom community involves employing interactional skills and abilities in the display of academic knowledge. They must know with whom, when, and where they can speak and act, and the must provide the speech and behavior that are appropriate for a given classroom situation. (p. 135)

When classroom situations and school situations are not conducive to social interaction, often negative consequences erupt. The well documented case of the Columbine High School shootings was blamed, in part, on the idea that these two young men felt like outcasts. They didn't fit socially and while every school in America has similar students, most students don't react in the manner that Dylan Klebold and Clark Harris did. Whether there was a social context existing at that school that promoted or nurtured this behavior will never be known but the possibility is strong. Social conflicts, according to Perret-Clermont (1980), may be figuratively

likened to the catalyst in a chemical reaction: it is not present at all in the final product, but it is nevertheless indispensable if the reaction to take place" (p. 178). While Columbine and other school shootings serve as a constant reminder of the serious nature of the context of groups and classrooms and peer interactions, they are extreme examples.

Social Literacy

More specific to the study was the idea that the social contexts of a literacy based classroom, in this case a ninth-grade English classroom, were worth examining more closely. While the foundations of literacy are built, nurtured, and often honed before students leave elementary school, the high school classroom provides one more opportunity to examine and note the impact the ever changing social nature of high school and adolescence has on their literacy worlds. Many times, these potential social factors are at the height of peer interactions and performances. What happens when a student that is not a particularly strong writer is asked to write an example sentence on the board to teach a certain grammatical concept? According to Beach (1993) "literacy is a social act" and "in order to understand the social dimensions of a literacy event, researchers focus on the ways in which social motives, goals, roles, attitudes, and conventions constitute the meaning of literacy events" (p. 22). The responses students receive during a literacy event in the classroom can be reaffirming and encouraging or damaging. The risks that students take to participate with one another in the variety of activities and lessons that exist in a literacy classroom are substantial. According to Bloome (1986), the very communications that students have with one another play an important role:

> As people come together and interact, they must establish a shared communicative context…Communicative contexts are established by how people act and react to each other's communicative efforts…. Literacy is not monolithic; rather, it depends on the community for its definition…within a community the nature of literacy is not static…people are continuously building and rebuilding literacy… On one hand, the nature of literacy has continuity across a community, while on the other, it is continuously evolving and situation-specific (p. 72).

Without the social interaction, a child will never know when to speak and when to be silent. More importantly, when students are asked to perform literacy, such as in the study, they have to consider the audience. If someone that could potentially say hurtful things is listening,

the idea of a student risking being wrong or good is unfathomable. As Lindfors (1999) relates, "to use language at all—to speak to write or sign—in conscious awareness of another's presence is to engage in an act of connection" (p. 11). The idea that students can connect as a part of their literacy experience in school is logical. As a student shares their writing through peer revision or an author's chair, they are essentially putting their self out for other to see. Just as that can happen and be extremely precarious, students often connect with others, especially when the writing is personal. These interactions, according to Pinnell & Jaggar (2002) are critical not only the development of literacy but to how students interact with one another:

> Children learn language and how to use it through social interaction in situations where spoken language serves genuine purposes for them and those around them. Through interaction with others, children learn the functions of language, the structure of different forms of spoken discourse, and the social rules that govern how language is used in different contexts (p. 896)

From the beginning stages of literacy throughout life, this could be the case. Authors and speakers experience this interaction, often positive, throughout their lives just as a businessperson using incorrect grammar in a memo could experience a more negative interaction. Regardless of the situation, it is hoped that the positive examples will continue and that the negative ones will desist.

It is with the potential positive and negative impact that the study will proceed with extreme caution and care for the social lives of the students involved. It is with the same degree of enthusiasm that realizing working with literacy bears an extremely important result—capable lifelong readers and writers. It is with careful and considerate teaching methods and compassion that such results are possible. Pinnell & Jaggar (2002) agree:

> All teachers, elementary or secondary, English language arts or subject matter specialists, can take advantage of the social and cognitive benefits derived from peer-peer learning by creating classroom situations that foster interaction around tasks, issues, and problems that are meaningful to their students. In such contexts, students are more likely to assume greater responsibility for their own learning. (p. 409)

Greater responsibility lies in the hands of students whose teachers are utilizing constructivist methods. Greater potential lies in what the students can do and not what the teacher knows.

Summary of Literature Review

Dramatic oral reading fluency activities often go unused by high school teachers if they know about them at all. Elementary teachers focus on teaching students how to read and write ultimately, but what happens when a student makes it to middle school or high school and is still struggling? Reading strategies march in a row from the state and federal education offices into the hands of teachers, which rarely use them. Few argue that improving the literacy abilities of high school students isn't important, yet the classrooms today are full of state mandated testing and false premises.

The study extends the current knowledge provided in the literature review. Three theoretical perspectives—social constructivist, automaticity, prosody—take the form of the time honored cooperative repeated reading as students will practice and perform poetry.

CHAPTER 3 - Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of the social context of a high school classroom on students' participation in fluency building activities. This chapter describes the research methodology at each stage of the study. This participatory action research study employed qualitative methods to examine the social context of a high school classroom while preliminary data analysis relied on social cognitive theory as it related to self-efficacy. The chapter was organized into the following sections: research design, practice informing research, site selection, teacher/student teacher participants, classroom setting, research process, selection of materials, methodological outline, role of the researcher, role of the teacher, data collection, data analysis, and summary.

As previously stated, the study examined three specific research questions:

Central Question

1. How does the social context of the high school classroom influence high school readers' participation in dramatic oral reading?

Subsidiary Questions

1. How does the social context of the classroom act to inhibit student participation in dramatic reading?

2. In what ways can the social context be manipulated to encourage student participation in dramatic readings?

The researcher gathered data from field notes, videotape recordings of class, transcripts of audio recordings of student interviews, and transcripts of teacher interviews to investigate the three questions directly.

Research Design

Participatory action research was the chosen method of inquiry for the study which employed qualitative ways of knowing to address the three aforementioned research questions. According to Atkin (1994), action research, by design, provides researchers "knowledge that is concrete, timely, prudent and particular to their own circumstance." Action research is the appropriate method of inquiry in this case because this is a new area of research focus and the "gap between academic researchers and practitioners [is] uncomfortably large" (Krathwhol,

2004, p. 601). In fact, the gap is immense. Without a deeper, broader understanding of the issues, future research will not be able to effectively inform practice. Many (Rasinski, et al, 2005; Goodson & Goodson, 2006) have called for oral reading fluency work in the high school classroom, though, it is largely absent from college methods courses and classrooms alike. These absences beg the question why? In considering that question and others, it is necessary to examine some of the issues at work here. Action research has been widely used and is respected in the realm of practitioners. Several academics (Hollingsworth and Sockett, 1994; Hargreaves, 1996; Altrichter, Posch, and Somekh, 1993) believe it to be the best possible manner of organizational reform in fields such as education. Krathwohl (2004, p. 603) offers several characteristics of action research:

- Action research provides professionals with a concrete, timely, targeted, pragmatic orientation toward improvement of practice.
- It involves systematic and intensive reflection and is characterized by the reflection-planning-acting-evaluation cycles.
- Each cycle provides a better understanding of an evolving cascade of problems.
- Keeping a journal of ongoing reflections and actions helps researchers see where they have been and where they should best go next.
- Researchers can call for specialized outside expertise as needed.
- Translating the journal into a written narrative helps others.

While often reserved for classroom teachers, here action research allows the researcher to be a participant observer, a critical perspective if this research and subsequent studies is to inform practitioners.

While the overall research paradigm is action research, the specific research methodologies employed will be traditional qualitative methods including field notes, interviewing, transcribing video and audio tapes, and coding of emerging themes.

Practice Informing Research

During the 2005-2006 school year, the researcher became directly involved in an existing project working with struggling high school readers. The Fluency Project served as a portion of the Block Two (semester before student teaching) field experience which undergraduates at a

large, Midwest research university are required to complete. In this experience, the undergraduates served as mentors for the struggling high school readers and worked directly with the researcher to provide oral reading fluency support to these students. This project had existed for one semester prior to the researcher's experience with it.

During the first semester of the researcher's involvement with the Fluency Project, several problems were recognized. Attendance was poor. Several high school students only came once and no single student attended the project each time it occurred. Another problem existed with the activities of each meeting. Both administrators and teachers were not aware of the project at the beginning of the semester. Furthermore, an issue developed with notifying students of the meetings, and several times the researcher and undergraduates went to the school and the meeting was void of attendees. Repeated reading using young adult literature texts was the central strategy used, and little differentiation of the lessons existed. From this first semester, it became apparent several changes would need to be made to maximize the time spent with the struggling readers. The stakeholders, including both high school and college students, discussed possible changes to the project to improve it.

The researcher made several changes in the second version of the Fluency Project which began by building a relationship with the school. Specifically, the administrator in charge of language arts was contacted ahead of the semester. Dates for the meetings, goals for the projects, and expectations for the university and school were discussed and negotiated. Additionally, the researcher sought funding from the National Writing Project's local site in order to purchase incentive prizes for the participants. These incentives, Apple iPods, were reserved only for students that attended each meeting. The project itself was shortened to eight meetings (from 14) and the participants were selected by the aforementioned administrator and several teachers. Attendance jumped to 100 percent and the students participated in the variety of activities provided and received the incentive. While much can be said about the specific experiences of the high school students and the undergraduates, the highlights of the project are those that impact plans for the current work. Consequently, one change that directly informs the study is using poetry for repeated reading and performance. This change was welcomed by the students and seemed to relate to their lives directly. Several cited experiences attending local poetry slams and listening to poetic forms of music such as rap. Additionally, the researcher practiced taking

field notes and interviewing students as part of the project. These experiences were invaluable to the success of the present study.

Site Selection

Buffalo Mound High School (pseudonym) was the chosen site for the study. It was chosen for a number of reasons. The school is a large high school (over 1500 students) in a single high school district that serves over 6000 students. The district, originally organized in 1862, provided a particularly interesting stage for research due to its location next to a major military installation. Over 65 percent of the students attending the high school had at least one parent whom works for the government, mostly the military. During the 2005-2006 school year, nearly 40 percent of the students came from economically disadvantaged homes while just over 50 percent were part of minority groups. As with any school population reliant on a military installation, a large number of students transfer in and out each year. This transient population was recently boosted significantly by the return of a large military unit. The area's population was predicted to increase by nearly 30,000 people in the ten years following the study due to the reassignment of the large battalion nearby. The diverse and unique nature of the school district is one reason that the researcher purposefully selected this district as a site for the study. In studying a social context, a culture rich situation provided an important variety to the interactions of the students. While homogeneous situations are certainly worthy of studying, this district provided a culture and ethnic mix more often seen around the country.

Despite the considerable diversity, both economic and racial, the district and school have experienced academic success. For example, BMHS earned the standard of excellence in 2006, the state's top honor for eleventh-grade reading assessment scores and met the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirement of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Additionally, from 2004 to 2006, the school raised the percentage of eleventh-graders scoring at the "proficient" level on the state reading assessment over 25 percent, 10 percent over the state average increase. Nevertheless, work remained to be done. The school lagged behind the state average on reading assessments and the two middle schools feeding the high school failed to meet the 2006 standard of excellence in reading. In fact, one school experienced its' fifth consecutive year on improvement, a designation due to NCLB legislation. Certainly the district's focus on improving assessment scores was evident by the results, but the scope of school improvement far outreaches

a few assessment scores. The school had implemented a comprehensive professional development plan, much of which was focused on literacy education. This focus was another reason that the researcher purposefully chose this school as the site for the study.

The researcher's experience at this particular school also contributed to its selection as a site for the study. Through the researcher's work as a University Supervisor of block two and student teaching field experiences at this site, a relationship was established with several teachers in the English department as well as administrators and the site's clinical supervisor. Several invitations were extended to the researcher to do further work in the school. Of these relationships, working with the teacher and classroom of the study had not been part of the researcher's duties at the school. Three individuals, though, provided significant support over the past year and a half including the school's literacy coach, an assistant administrator, and the school's clinical supervisor. Through these gatekeepers, access was gained to the school, the teacher, and the classroom. While it is not accurate to say a pilot study was conducted, the researcher's previous work with the Fluency Project as a precursor to the present study clearly fits within the accepted structure and practice of action research.

Teacher/Student Teacher

Mr. Robbins (pseudonym) is the host teacher for the study. Currently in his ninth year of teaching at BMHS, Mr. Robbins was pursuing a Master's Degree in curriculum and instruction at a large Midwest university during the study and planned to complete a Ph.D. As part of this work, he had participated with the local site of the National Writing Project and had been professionally active at the district, state, regional, and national levels. Additionally, he was an active member of the Professional Development School (PDS) system in place at BMHS. One of his activities was mentoring pre-service and student teachers; he again had a student teacher, Mrs. Gruene (pseudonym), during the semester of the study. While this added some complexity to the situation, it also provided the beginning of an understanding in studying student teachers in these situations, an ongoing interest of the researcher.

Specifically, Mr. Robbins focused his instruction on adolescent literacy. He was a published author of a young adult novel and much of what he did in the classroom centered on enhancing and building his students' literacy skills. Considering this, his receptiveness to including oral reading fluency activities in his classroom was paramount of importance to the

study. One of his colleagues, Mr. English, described Mr. Robbins as a "truly caring teacher and one who puts students' best interest before anything else." Robbins' openness and interest in student success attracted the researcher to this particular classroom. Since the activities employed in the research study are different, it was necessary to select a teaching environment of total support. While some teachers might view a researcher teaching class as an opportunity to frequent the lounge, Mr. Robbins was the kind of teacher who not only stayed in the room but stayed active in the process. For this research to be taken seriously, the teachers' support was essential. Additionally, the fact he had agreed to take a student teacher was considered a benefit to the study. The student teacher was an important part of the classroom environment though at the onset of the study, the researcher had minimal knowledge of this person. This perspective of being new to the school and classroom was very different than the perspective of the tenured teacher. Furthermore, without a prior relationship built with the student teacher, the researcher expected her to provide a different perspective than the classroom teacher, with whom the researcher had worked previously. It was also important the researcher was not in a supervisory role over this student teacher during the study to avoid a conflict of interest by subjecting her to an unfair power relationship.

Classroom Setting

The study took place during one and a half months in this particular classroom. The social dynamics of the classroom were paramount of importance to the study as it focused on social contexts. Rather than randomly choosing a particular class with which to work, the researcher relied on the teacher and student teacher involved in order to get the best possible situation in regards to academic, racial, and economic diversity. The class provided rich diversity in three key areas: race, economics, and academics. Since the social context was the focus of the study, it was important for the students varied experiences, backgrounds, and expectations to play a role in creating such context. Just as the district was selected, in part, for its' diversity and unique connection with the military, the classroom of students was representative of the district. Students with parents involved in the military provided vast geographical diversity as many had been raised, in part, overseas. With the military connections also came racial and economic diversity not found elsewhere in the area. The teachers described several students with strong personalities in this class and believed the class would be willing to try new and different

activities. Since the study relied heavily on students' willingness to participate, this was a crucial reason to rely on the teachers to choose which class would work best. In this case, the cooperating teacher and student teacher agreed third hour would provide a socially rich context for research.

Research Process

Taking place over 12 class periods, the study was divided intro three separate sections: Acclimatization, Teaching, and Reflection. These three categories were designed to align naturally with the secondary school experience for students by weaving research into the classroom in the most unobtrusive manner. In order for students to participate in the process, it was necessary for them to feel the process itself is added to their learning experience rather than detracting from it. By dividing the process into three separate categories, the researcher assumed different roles and thus was able to reflect different experiences as they pertained to the study. From the perspective of silent observer in the first period to taking on a lead role during the second period to then phasing out of the classroom, a situation existed that was, by design, the least disruptive to the students.

Acclimatization Period

Due to the nature of participatory action research, the researcher was a participant in the activities of class. It was therefore natural, as it would be for any teacher, for the researcher to spend time in the classroom prior to beginning the teaching. Understanding the study itself relied on students taking risks and performing poetry aloud in front of their peers; time to meet and become familiar with the students was a necessary part of the preparation for research. Rather than going out ahead of the study and spending time in the classroom, the researcher selected to incorporate a two class period (three contact hours) acclimatization period. During this time, the researcher spent time getting acquainted with the routines and procedures of the classroom. Additionally, the researcher learned the students' names and began studying the social context of the classroom. While this portion of the study does begin to establish rapport, the fact that the time spent was so short the relationships with students a non-factor. The field notes portion of the data collection began at this point to provide extra information about the social context of this particular classroom prior to beginning the teaching period.

Teaching Period

The researcher assumed the role of lead teacher for a portion of each class period during these nine days. This was where the researcher led classroom activities and when all three portions of the data collection occurred simultaneously. The videotaped portions of class also transpired and were recorded. Field notes were collected throughout this stage of the study. The researcher also interviewed a select group (selected by the classroom teachers) for interviews after day three of the teaching. Since the teaching only occupied a portion of each class, the researcher remained in the classroom for the entirety of the hour.

Reflection Period

Immediately following the end of my teaching, the reflection portion of the study commenced. The researcher continued the field notes throughout the reflection. Additionally, the researcher conducted individual interviews of the teacher, student teacher, and six individual students. These activities served as a method of phasing out of the classroom and classroom.

Selection of Materials

All materials used for the study were directly borrowed from the Poetry Out Loud (POL) Contest sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation. The poems (see Appendix B) were listed online and available in POL published anthologies. Four hundred and eighty one poems were available through POL and ranged from classic to contemporary. At each stage of POLP, the students selected poems for repeated reading and performances. The students were given the responsibility of selecting the materials in order to empower them and motivate them to participate. As Dana Gioia, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, explains "the memorization and recitation of poetry have been central elements of education since ancient times" (Teacher's Guide 2006-2007, 2006, p. 2). While the students in this study did not memorize the poems, they experienced the performance aspects of poetry recitation. Memorization in this case, while a valid and valuable activity as the National Poetry Out Loud Contest maintains, interfered with the goals of dramatic oral reading fluency. By reading the poems, students followed only a portion of the contest and stopped short of memorization and competing against classmates.

Methodological Outline for Teaching

What actually happened in the classroom during each day of the study is essential to understanding what can be learned. The following lesson plans in narrative form were the original plans for the study. They were not altered after the proposal to reflect what happened, therefore, they are written in future tense. Rather, Chapter Four contains a narrative of what happened for comparison purposes. Since this was action research, it was appropriate to include plans for each day the researcher was in the classroom. This served as a method of making the study repeatable and also to inform the teachers involved about what to expect. The paragraphs below are a narrative version of what was planned to happen in the classroom. All page numbers listed below were references to the methodology section of the Poetry Out Loud Teacher's Guide 2006-2007 (2006) unless otherwise noted.

Day One is part of the acclimatization period and will require the researcher to observe the class for 90 minutes. During this time, the researcher will take field notes and begin to interact with students to learn names and personalities.

Day Two is part of the acclimatization period and will require the researcher to observe the class for 90 minutes. During this time, the researcher will continue to take field notes and continue to interact with students to learn names and personalities.

Day Three is the first day of the teaching period and requires the researcher to assume a lead teaching role for 60 minutes of the 90 minute class period. During this time, the researcher will begin class by expressively reading a poem (p. 9). Then, the researcher will introduce the Poetry Out Loud Project (POLP) and preview the next nine days of class. Recorded examples of fluent oral reading will be played for the class and the teachers will give both a good example and bad example of dramatic oral reading (p. 10). Next, the class will use the mobile computer lab to search www.poetryoutloud.org for two poems with which to begin the project (p. 9). The researcher will continue taking field notes during the remainder of class.

Day Four is the second day of the teaching period and requires the researcher to assume a lead teaching role for 30 minutes of the 90 minute class period. During this time, the researcher will begin by expressively reading a poem for the class (p. 9). Next, the researcher will introduce, explain and model the concept of cooperative repeated reading. Then, the students will be allowed to choose a partner and practice reading both poems for fifteen minutes (pp. 9-10). The researcher will continue taking field notes during the remainder of class.

Day Five is the third day of the teaching period and requires the researcher to assume a lead teaching role for 45 minutes of the 90 minute class period. During this time, the researcher will begin by expressively reading a poem for the class (p. 9). Next, the researcher will explain the aspects of prosody as Schreiber (1991) sees them—stress, intonation, duration. Along with the teachers, the researcher will provide examples of each to the students before allowing them 15 minutes to practice with a new partner (pp. 9-10). Next, the students will join together in groups of three or four for a practice performance (p. 10). This is designed to help the students become more comfortable sharing in front of others. The researcher will continue taking field notes for the remainder of the hour observing the social context of the classroom.

Day Six is the fourth day of the teaching period and requires the researcher to assume a lead teaching role for 40 minutes of the 90 minute class period. During this time, the researcher will begin by expressively reading a poem for the class (p. 9). Next, the students will be given time to find two new poems. Then, the students will be allowed to choose a new partner and practice reading both poems for fifteen minutes (pp. 9-10). The researcher will continue taking field notes during the remainder of class focusing on the social context.

Day Seven is the fifth day of the teaching period and requires the researcher to assume a lead teaching role for 30 minutes of the 90 minute class period. During this time, the researcher will begin by expressively reading a poem for the class (p. 9). Next, the students will be allowed to choose a new partner and practice reading both poems for twenty minutes (pp. 9-10). The researcher will continue taking field notes during the remainder of class focusing on the social context.

Day Eight is the sixth day of the teaching period and requires the researcher to assume a lead teaching role for 40 minutes of the 90 minute class period. During this time, the researcher will begin by expressively reading a poem for the class (p. 9). Next, the researcher will allow the students five minutes to practice reading their poems. Then, the practice performance will be explained and occur. The performance will be videotaped and the researcher will continue taking field notes during the remainder of class focusing on the social context.

Day Nine is the seventh day of the teaching period and requires the researcher to assume a lead teaching role for 40 minutes of the 90 minute class period. During this time, the researcher will begin by expressively reading a poem for the class (p. 9). Next, the students will be given time to find two new poems. Then, the students will be allowed to choose a new partner and

practice reading both poems for fifteen minutes (pp. 9-10). The researcher will continue taking field notes during the remainder of class focusing on the social context.

Day Ten is the eighth day of the teaching period and requires the researcher to assume a lead teaching role for 30 minutes of the 90 minute class period. During this time, the researcher will begin by expressively reading a poem for the class (p. 9). Next, the students will be allowed to choose a new partner and practice reading both poems for twenty minutes (pp. 9-10). The researcher will continue taking field notes during the remainder of class focusing on the social context.

Day Eleven is the ninth day of the teaching period and requires the researcher to assume a lead teaching role for 40 minutes of the 90 minute class period. During this time, the researcher will begin by expressively reading a poem for the class (p. 9). Next, the students will make final preparations for the final performance (p. 10). The final performance will be videotaped and the researcher will continue taking field notes during the remainder of class focusing on the social context.

Day Twelve is the first day of the reflection period and requires the researcher to interview the group of six students about their experience in the POLP. The researcher will interview the group individually. The researcher will audiotape the interview sessions and continue with the field notes. In a time immediately following this, the researcher will also interview each teacher. While there was a classroom teacher involved with this study who was a key cog in making it work, the student teacher taught the portions of the class before and after the POLP as well as assisted with classroom management while I was teaching.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher donned several hats in the preparation and execution of this study. Assuming the role of a participant observer in this case required the teacher to be certified to teach this subject. As a 2006 National Board Certified teacher, the researcher was licensed to teach language arts in the state where the study occurred through 2016 and several other states recognizing the license. Additionally, the researcher had experience working with students in this school through the extra-curricular Fluency Project of the past year explained in the section Practice Informing Research.

In order to gain access to the classroom, the researcher gained permission with the Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects (IRB). When access to the classroom was granted, the researcher solicited permission from the students and their parent (s)/guardian(s). A letter (see Appendix D) accompanied the IRB consent form in order for all stakeholders to be fully aware of the research taking place prior to it commencing.

The researcher served as a participant observer during the course of the study. Serving as the lead teacher during segments of the research and as a silent observer in others, the variety of perspectives allowed the researcher to understand the social aspects of the classroom in greater depth. Creswell (1998) refers to this as a continuum where the involvement ranges from complete observer to complete participant.

Role of the Teachers

The teachers in the study, both the classroom teacher Mr. Robbins and the student teacher Ms. Gruene, were involved on a daily basis. In order to provide the most cohesive application of research as possible, the two teachers assisted the researcher throughout the teaching period. While portions of the POLP application were employed in class, the researcher, having taken the role of lead teacher, relied on the teachers' knowledge of the students, building, and district. Specifically, the teachers assisted by providing both good and bad examples of the oral reading of poems, monitoring the group work in progress, and with the general control of the classroom. Since the portions of the teaching did not generally take entire class periods, the teachers, primarily the student teacher, planned and executed lessons during the remaining portions of class.

Data Collection

Since the researcher was interested in the social context surrounding high school students' participation in dramatic oral reading fluency activities, varied methods of data collection were employed. The methods of data collection were qualitative in nature as describing the social context does not lend itself to quantitative ways of knowing. From field notes to interviewing to audio and video taping portions of the class, the researcher collected a wide angle view of the Poetry Out Loud Project. The class where the research occurred was a physically large space and one that was conducive to the variety of activities during the project.

The field work was scheduled to begin on March 5th and continue until April 12th (actually lasted from March 5th until April 28th) with the researcher actively collecting data during the entirety of the 90 minute periods. This schedule accounted for 18 hours of contact time in the classroom for the researcher with additional time allotted as needed. The methods allowed for triangulation of data during the analysis stage.

Field Notes

To address the social context portion of each research question, the researcher selected field notes, considered "the observer's records of what has been observed" (Krathwohl, 2002, p. 266). A thick description, these notes portray individuals as they exist in the environment as well as record what happens. Since the researcher took on a lead role in instruction, the time following the lesson was utilized to quickly jot down major ideas while continuing to observe the class. As Ely (1991) recalls, "forgetting begins as soon as the experience ends" (p. 79). Specifically, the notes were entered on a laptop computer because the researcher felt more comfortable with that medium. The electronic files of the field notes and all other information pertaining to the study were password protected while on the computer and as research concludes, the documents were stored in multiple locked cabinets on DVD-R discs.

Student Interviews

To address the social contexts of the classroom, (research questions one and two) the students' perceptions were critical. When considering using interviews for data collection it was important to consider the roles of the interviewer and respondents. Each of the six students was interviewed twice. The first interview served entirely as an introductory interview. The second interview was partially structured, which is important according to Krathwohl (2002) as he portrays in a continuum ranging from unstructured to totally structured. The researcher elected to use the partially structured interview for the study. Krathwohl (2002) describes this style of interviewing: "Area is chosen and questions are formulated but order is up to interviewer. Interviewer may add questions or modify them as deemed appropriate. Questions (see Appendix E) are open-ended, and responses are recorded nearly verbatim, possibly taped" (p. 287). The researcher selected this style of interviewing because it fits the nature of working with high school students. Being sensitive and aware of their responses and overall psyche, the researcher asked questions in a different order for different students. Also, this format allowed the

researcher to dig deeper and ask follow up questions without being chained to a strict structure. As Krathwohl's description alluded to, the researcher audiotaped the interviews for further analysis.

Teacher Interviews

Since the teachers spent the exact amount of time in class with the students as the researcher during the study, their opinions and perceptions of the social context of the classroom were of supreme importance. Not only were their ideas of what transpired important but also specifically addressing research question three concerning the manipulation of the social context was something the researcher asked. Especially interesting was the juxtaposition of the student teacher's perceptions with those of the seasoned classroom teacher. The teachers were responsible for selecting this class and the interview provided critical information about the students involved to include their interactions, social dynamics, and academic progress throughout the year, not just the study. For the purpose of the teacher interviews, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview. Described by Krathwohl (2002) as "questions and order or presentation are determined… Questions have open-ends; interviewer records the essence of each response" (p. 287). Again, the researcher audio-taped the interviews in order to provide the best possible information from these valuable perspectives. Additionally, the researcher chose a more structured interview format to more readily compare both teacher's perspectives and perceptions of the social context in the classroom (see Appendix F).

Videotaping Performances

As teachers frequently experience, it is nearly impossible to evaluate a presentation as it is occurring. Too many factors are at play. Classroom management issues and the gamut of interruptions often cause experienced, effective teachers to lose focus on the presentation. In order to preserve the POLP Project performances, the researcher elected to record the events using a video camera. This provided another data set which addressed the second research question concerning the social context that inhibits dramatic oral reading performances. From the video, several conclusions could be drawn by viewing and reviewing the tape. The camera was placed towards the back of the room in order to see the audience as well as the performer. Since the camera was a distance away from the oral reading performance, the voices, both performer and audience, were recorded using a remote microphone placed in the middle of the room. The

audio of the performances was examined for any statements that lower the expectations of the performance or apologies following it by the performers. The recordings of the performances were carefully examined for physical movements, gestures, and signs students felt uncomfortable reading in front of others.

Data Analysis

Being that all data sets were qualitative in nature, the researcher elected to utilize a qualitative computer software program for data analysis. The industry standard has long been the NUD*IST software package though the varied data sets including video and audio files created a need for multimedia data analysis. The researcher selected hyperRESEARCH (HR) to code and analyze the data due, in part, to its multimedia friendly applications. In preparation for the study, the researcher obtained trial versions of the latest NUD*IST software package and compared it to HR. Finding the latter to be user friendly considering the varied data sets, it became an obvious choice. Prior to beginning the study, the researcher used the online tutorials and created a sample project. As with any software, the more experience possible in using it, the better. Furthermore, the researcher chose to use the program to help the study be repeatable and to provide more reliability.

While HR provided a method of coding, reducing, and sorting data for the analysis, it did not provide any answers or interpretations. Because the study is informed by prior work with similar circumstances, the researcher proposed at the onset of the study that self-efficacy could be one contributing factor in the perceived progress of students.

Transcribing and Organizing the Data

In qualitative methods of research it is necessary to create a structured method of organization. The researcher transcribed the audiotapes following the study. The videotapes were transcribed following the study and entered into HR for the video content. Following the transcription, the audio and video tapes were stored in a locked file cabinet for safekeeping. The field notes were not entered into the HR program but were printed and consulted to bolster analysis. No attempt at coding or finding themes were made until the research was completed.

Coding and Analyzing the Data

At this point in the analysis, the HR program became instrumental in separating the information out into understandable chunks. Once the data sets were organized through the computer software, the researcher read, watched, and listened to them in their entirety. This step in coding was essential to gaining an idea of what was captured though first impressions did not carry weight as the coding process continued. As the process continued, the researcher considered the social cognitive theory of self-efficacy to inform coding and analysis while maintaining a perspective free of bias.

The theory of self-efficacy, credited to Bandura (1986, 1997) rests on the idea that in order to reach success in adverse situations, one must believe success is possible. This is not to say the belief of success guarantees success but disbelief promises failure. In the case of the study, students repeated dramatic oral readings and received feedback about their progress. Self-efficacy as it exists, is influenced directly by personal, social, and contextual variables (Bandura, 1997). As Schunk and Meece (2006) explain:

> Development takes place in many different social contexts. During adolescence there are important changes in your people's family, school, and peer environments. Influences associated with social contexts may have profound effects on adolescents' beliefs about their capabilities of succeeding in and out of school (p. 74).

In the case of the study, self-efficacy clearly had a potential to explain students gaining confidence in their ability to dramatically read poetry aloud. Through school and peer relationships, it was hoped students would gain confidence in their abilities through the study. These possibilities revert back to the purpose of including self-efficacy theory in the study which was to inform the analysis, especially the coding of data.

Summary

Participatory action research was the approach chosen for the study utilizing qualitative methods exclusively. The researcher, as participant observer, entered the classroom as a teacher working with other teachers. The study was designed to utilize materials from the Poetry Out Loud Contest and apply them to the classroom situation of repeated reading. In working with the dramatic oral reading fluency of high school students, an environment rich in social context, the

researcher sought to understand the research questions posed in this study. By actively teaching while carefully collecting and organizing data sets, the researcher maintained a deep level of engagement with the research project. After the data was gathered and organized, the researcher began to code it using qualitative data analysis software. The social cognitive theory of self-efficacy had the potential to inform the coding process as it led to analysis before it was presented in narrative form.

CHAPTER 4 - Results

During the course of the study, adolescent literacy was named the hottest topic of 2007 by the International Reading Association in their publication *Reading Today*. In their survey of twenty five literacy leaders, selected for their broad perspective on literacy, Cassidy & Cassidy, reported adolescent literacy was the hottest topic. "Adolescent literacy is 'extremely hot'; all of our respondents agreed that this topic is receiving a great deal of attention. Furthermore, all of the respondents agreed that it should be receiving this attention" (p. 11). This was the first time since the survey's inception in 1996 all twenty five respondents agreed what was hot and what should be hot. The extension of the No Child Left Behind act to older students and the money allocated for the Striving Readers program are two potential reasons for the rise in attention to this topic. Considering the political and societal forces at work during the study helps demonstrate more work in these areas needs to be completed.

This study was conducted during the second semester of the school year between March 5 and April 28, 2007. It addresses the use of oral reading activities, often reserved for speech and theater classes, in a general population high school classroom. By adopting, in part, methodologies endorsed by the National Endowment for the Arts' Poetry Out Loud National Recitation Contest and those used in oral reading fluency acquisition of elementary school students, the study focused on the social context of the classroom and how that context acts to promote or inhibit the use of such activities with high school students. Fourteen ninth-graders participated in classroom activities and performances geared to develop dramatic oral reading abilities.

Participants

In order to begin to understand the contextual factors at play in this classroom, it was essential to first examine the individual participants. By characterizing the class, teachers, and individual students, the findings of the research assumed new meanings as they relate to the people involved.

Class

Chapter three contains general information about the class including socioeconomic levels, race, gender, and employment patterns. Students were encouraged by their teachers to

express themselves, and the overall feeling in the classroom was one where the students' voices were valued far above those of the teachers. To say this classroom was student-centered would be a gross understatement; the teachers facilitated rather than preached, questioned rather than told, and ultimately valued the experience and relationships between individuals above and beyond the content of ninth-grade language arts.

Teachers

Mrs. Gruene (pseudonym)

A retired drill sergeant from the armed services, prior to the study Mrs. Gruene completed all of the requirements for the degree Bachelor's of Science in English Education and her successful student teaching experience completed that degree. An African-American female, Mrs. Gruene served as a role model for the diverse class of students and by the end of the study had been hired by Buffalo Mound High School (BMHS) as a full-time teacher for the next school year.

Mr. Robbins (pseudonym)

Writer, graduate student, and ninth-grade academy teacher, Mr. Robbins was in his ninth year of teaching, all at BMHS, during the study. Students flocked to his room long after they had him as a teacher, and he was trusted to give advice, tell the truth, and brighten the day of many students. He had a classroom manner so different from traditional stereotypes of teachers, students found him refreshing while colleagues found him threatening. Having grown up around a large Hispanic and Asian immigrant population, Mr. Robbins, a Caucasian male, is at home around the broad diversity represented at BMHS.

Student Interviewees

Jeannette (pseudonym)

Described by her teachers as an underachieving honors student, Jeannette's GPA was a 2.8 while she is best characterized by her unusual clothing combinations eccentric and oft changing hair style. An Asian American female, she was hesitant to participate in dramatic oral reading during the study though proved one of the most accurate readers. English was her second language and her reading level was post-secondary. Her father served in the military and she

attended the district less than four years and moved following the study. Mr. Robbins described her with the four phrases: "Brilliant student; quiet and reserved; rough past; bored with school."

Juan (pseudonym)

Reading poetry aloud all but caused Juan to flunk sixth-grade English so his apprehension levels were high at the beginning of the project. Despite a relatively high reading level—eleventh-grade—he was not a strong student (2.967 GPA) though he possessed a tenacious work ethic according to Mr. Robbins. A Hispanic-American male, Juan participated in JROTC, attended the district for less than two years, and one or both of his parents served in the military. Mr. Robbins described him with four phrases: "Hard worker; rough past; beyond anger management problems; feels good about himself now."

Malary (pseudonym)

Students described Malary, a Caucasian female, as one of the most intelligent and friendly members of class. She maintained a 3.867 GPA while taking an honors level curriculum. She read at the tenth-grade level. A JROTC participant, Malary proved to be the most dramatic reader and the person all three teachers thought of as the person who bought into the POLP the most. She had attended the district for three years, and her family was dependent on the military. Mr. Robbins described Malary with three phrases: "Affectionate and flirtatious; balances social life with school; somewhat rebellious."

Mark (pseudonym)

Having just recently moved to the area from a large Southern metropolitan area, Mark was the newest member of the class. He transferred in with a sixth-grade reading level and a 3.2 GPA. A Hispanic-American and an avid baseball player, he was easily the most parsimonious in his responses during interviews and was a quiet member of the class. Though new, he developed several friends in the class. His family is dependent on the military. Mr. Robbins described Mark with two phrases: "Quiet and reserved; finding his niche."

Michael (pseudonym)

Everyone else in the class, for some reason or another, followed Michael's lead. He was the most outgoing and sometimes the most outrageous. I often had a difficult time not laughing because many of the things he said and did were truly funny. An African-American, he was an

all-star track athlete and only read Maya Angelou poems for the POLP. He attended the district for four years, maintained a 1.8 GPA and read at the sixth-grade level. Mr. Robbins described Michael with four phrases: "Extrovert, extremely confident, athletically gifted, struggling reader."

Rebecca (pseudonym)

A seemingly quiet and shy member of the class at the outset of the project, Rebecca volunteered to read first at nearly every opportunity. A Caucasian, she reported that she hated reading but did not mind reading aloud. She attended the district for seven years but had just transferred into the class at semester. She maintained a 3.6 GPA with a sixth-grade reading level. Her family was not dependent on the military. Mr. Robbins described Rebecca with three phrases: "Puts all energy in school; low self-esteem; compensates with good grades."

Timeline Narrative of Events

A day-by-day account of what actually happened was included here to describe a context for this action research and to establish my place and role in the daily events of teaching in a ninth-grade language arts classroom. My role as a teacher was one in collaboration with a classroom teacher, Mr. Robbins, and a student teacher, Mrs. Gruene throughout the Poetry Out Loud Project (POLP). While the teaching aspect of this study was never done completely alone, the planning and execution of the research was. In an effort to provide perspective, I will, from this section forward discuss the daily events of the study as a teacher in this classroom with the notation that throughout the project, I also intensely observed the classroom and took field notes when I was not the lead teacher.

The classroom itself proved imperative to some of the descriptions. It was a large room, larger than most other classrooms I have seen and probably twice the size of the room in which I taught for five years. While this size was useful, especially for large classes, the fourteen students seem dwarfed by the room. There were instructional areas with chalkboards on the North and South walls while the student desks are arranged facing each other with the backs to the East and West walls. A work area for the teachers existed in the southwest corner of the room while a small bank of windows graced the northeast corner. My observation table where I placed my laptop computer and notes was near the windows and the focus of the classroom instruction was on the chalkboard area opposite of me on the South wall. The room was full of books and

the walls were covered with posters about authors. Additionally, the schedule was unusual in that the students met for one hour, went to lunch, and then returned for thirty minutes. These contextual factors provided further understanding of the day-by-day account of my experience in the classroom.

Day One: Mr. Robbins was the lead teacher today and my role was to observe. He was continuing a poetry unit the student teacher, Mrs. Gruene, was teaching that included students bringing in their favorite song lyrics and explaining them to their peers. It was Monday morning, and Mr. Robbins was caught off guard by the student teacher's absence and in the minutes prior to class was preparing to introduce the lyrics of several song lyrics and discuss them as poetry. Between preparing songs, making copies, and finishing a graduate school response paper due in just a few minutes, Mr. Robbins was multi-tasking. I immediately volunteered to help, forgetting for a moment I knew very little about where to make copies or, much less, the way around the school. As any veteran teacher can do, Mr. Robbins finished all of the tasks and was prepared for the students as they filed into the classroom. Immediately catching my attention was Michael (pseudonym), a flamboyant African-American student who floated and danced into the room. I learned his name immediately as I had in the past when students were so full of enthusiasm and energy on the first day of class. He exchanged friendly glances with me and began cracking jokes with Mr. Robbins. They had a well established rapport. Several students discussed a concert they had attended over the weekend and compared plans for Spring Break, just two weeks away. As the lesson began, students settled into their seats for a quiz left by the student teacher. This was met with some resistance but ultimately completed and Mr. Robbins moved the students into groups to discuss the songs he had chosen. Immediately, April complained, "I cannot work with Juan." Porscha asked "What, they don't like each other?" Sasha responded "Girl, they hate each other, are you blind?" Mr. Robbins intervened immediately and the original concerns were alleviated; Juan and April remained in the same group. During the lesson, I walked around and introduced myself to several students and asked them what songs they were planning to bring to share. Several students remembered me from some in-service work I had performed at a local middle school classroom the year before. Next, Mr. Robbins played the songs and asked the students questions about them. Concurrently, Michael provided impromptu dancing to each song while it played. It was easy to tell on this first day of observations this class was exciting to be around and would be challenging to teach.

Day Two: The status quo returned as the student teacher provided the lead instruction. The students immediately seemed more calm and focused. While Mr. Robbins was not teaching, he remained in the room off to the side observing and typing. My main impetus of the day was to learn the names of the students as I would take over a portion of the lead teaching during the next class period. Many students were easy to remember while others were already proving impossible to forget. An observation I made immediately was that the students were in different seats and all of the African-American students were sitting together on one side of the room. The other side was mixed with other races. Michael even commented, "these seats are like segregation, except for April." In the first few minutes of class six different people asked Stacy if she was alright. Several students commented that she was frowning for the first time of the semester and others rushed in to comfort her. This caring nature was a new side of the class to me. As Mrs. Gruene continued teaching, two students, in particular Michael and April, were exhibiting distracting behaviors such as moving around constantly and talking to neighbors. It was easy to see this class was generally distractible. After lunch, the students returned to present their song lyrics. As part of this presentation, Mrs. Gruene had asked the students to read their song lyrics to the class, play the song, and share their opinions about the songs' meanings. Malary volunteered to share her song, and she commanded the class' attention throughout her presentation. Since a portion of the POLP relied on students' attention and respect during performances, I was pleased to see this. Next, Matt walked to the front of the room and refused to read his lyrics. Both Mr. Robbins and Mrs. Gruene offered encouragement, but he refused imploring, "Can't we just take off the points and let me play the song?" Before returning to his seat he exclaimed, "I will just do it later, whatever!" Certainly one of the questions going into this project was whether or not high school students would read aloud in front of their peers in a performance setting. Here, Matt provided reason to believe the question was valid.

Day Three: I knew today was going to be challenging, and when Michael walked into the room, visibly shaken by something that had happened in the previous class, my premonition was proven accurate. It was easy for me to tell in just two days that Michael was a student who would be difficult to teach, especially for novice teachers. A student teacher in his previous class had caused him major worry, and the class rushed to his side to comfort him and to hear what had happened. Mrs. Gruene and Mr. Robbins each tried to settle him down so we could start; how Michael felt affected the rest of the class and whispers of mutiny and revenge spiraled out of

control for a few minutes. It was clear that finding a peaceful resolution to Michael's problem was far more important than starting the POLP. Once the teachers were satisfied the issue had been resolved enough to begin class, I circled the students in desks in attempt to hold their attention longer as I introduced the project. I began by dramatically reading two poems— "America" by Claude McKay and "Fire and Ice" by Robert Frost. We discussed the poets and the poems before I asked the students what they liked and didn't like about how I read them aloud. Several ideas were generated and I witnessed both that the students had a good idea of what reading aloud should and could sound like and that they were not totally comfortable with the idea of doing that themselves. The rest of the presentation went better than I had hoped; students listened attentively for the most part, and I thought bringing them closer together was successful. Next, I directed the students to www.poetryoutloud.org and had them select their first two poems. This process was riddled with computer problems as we had checked out a mobile computer lab. While I gave the students some direction in selecting poems by having them stay within certain letters of the alphabet, the database proved overwhelming for several individuals. Once everybody had selected two poems, the POLP was concluded for that day. After lunch, both Michael and Louise presented their song lyrics and poetry. Michael seemed better but Louise, an African-American female, spoke only to the African-American side of the class. This was interesting and I noted it. At the very end of the hour a student from another class came in to fetch the mobile computer lab for his teacher. Looking around, he commented to Michael, "This class is ghetto." Approaching the student in a forward, threatening manner, Michael replied, "This ain't a ghetto class, this is a fine class." This happened fairly close to my observation station where I had been adding to my field notes, and I was able to catch the dialogue and a real feeling of defensiveness from Michael. Other students noticed too and waited for the visitor's response, one precluded by the bell ringing.

Day Four: Today marked the first day of the Cooperative Repeated Reading (CRR) strategy and also marked the first day of Mr. Robbins trip overseas. Mrs. Gruene was in charge and without a substitute teacher in the classroom for the first hour of class. This was the first time she had been left alone in the classroom, and while she was more than ready for that challenge, reigning in the students proved difficult. I began today's session of the POLP by performing "O Captain, My Captain" by Walt Whitman before beginning to explain how CRR was going to work. I tried to settle the students and focus them in as many ways as I knew, but it

was difficult. I decided, rather than continuing to try to explain, to have the students learn on the fly. I allowed them to choose a partner to work with feeling that with this type of activity, students would not feel comfortable reading aloud for anyone else in the classroom. Despite some difficulty getting everyone to stay focused, this proved more successful than talking to them. After the first ten minutes, I asked the students to switch partners which did not work out too well. Rather than finding a new partner, the class converged into two groups and continued socializing more than reading aloud. One of the students, Wendy, who had proclaimed "She didn't do reading, doctors ordered," during the first day I spent in the classroom asked when they were going to get to read in front of the entire class. Something had made an impression on her. Next, the substitute made an appearance following lunch saying he had fallen asleep and missed the first part of class. As the students returned to the classroom, he exclaimed "Whoa, whoa, hold up. Stop talking. Stop talking!" and addressed Michael's group "What is it about 'stop talking' that you don't understand?" This certainly quieted the students down and focused them on their peers as Mrs. Gruene continued with the music presentations. April was the first to present her song, and the class was quieter and more attentive than I had seen them thus far. The substitute teacher stopped the class after April's presentation and asked the class "Why are we doing this? Why are we listening to this song? Why are we listening to this crap? I know I am from a different generation, but I think this is crap. Why do you listen to it? Because it touches your heart? Is that true?" I was shocked to say the least and feared this kind of personal challenge might push some of the students over the edge. Rather than telling off the substitute, which I was tempted to do myself, the students banded around April and explained the song, why they were doing the assignment, and what value was particular to the song she had presented. It was interesting and encouraging to see this response.

Day Five: The POLP was planned to take a shorter portion of the class. Mrs. Gruene began the hour with a quiz. This served to calm the class and focus them on school related work that was going to affect their grade for the class. Mrs. Gruene was well aware this was the last day of school before Spring Break, and I complimented her on the way she arranged the schedule for the class and started the hour. Next, I began the POLP with a quick refresher on CRR and how that was supposed to look. I reminded the students they needed to work away from the others when they were reading and to station the groups around the large room. Following the POLP, I completed two introductory interviews with student interviewees.

Day Six: The Monday after Spring Break and the students seemed excited to be back and were agreeable. This also marked Mr. Robbins' first day back. Mrs. Gruene again settled down the class effectively by having them write about their Spring break experiences. Next, I took over to have the class select new poems. After choosing the first round of poems and working with them through two CRR sessions, it was time again to have the students choose another poem. This was an awkward and somewhat frustrating process before, but the students knew their way around the poetry website at this point and remained focused. Some students did ask if they could go to other sites to look for poems, but I remained adamant that they stick to the POL site. Despite a little grumbling, all of the students were able to find two poems; these poems were important because they would be used for the first performance. Students generally took more time trying to find a poem and asked all three of the teachers for input. It remained clear the students needed more background in poetry to be able to select poems. Most of the students had one or two or three they knew about and they searched for poems by those authors. Following the poetry selection, the students were encouraged to read their Spring Break stories; I completed two more introductory interviews with student interviewees.

Day Seven: Mrs. Gruene was being observed today by her University Supervisor so I encouraged her to take the first portion of the period for her lesson. While watching I could not help but notice that she had included oral reading into the lesson. In beginning a novel, Mrs. Gruene asked for volunteers to read. Immediately Stacy raised her hand and began reading. She seemed very competent and comfortable with this role in the class. Later, as the students moved into groups to do more oral reading, I walked around and listened to the readers noticing Matt was struggling a bit and was reading in a very monotone voice while Jeannette was reading with a strong sense of dramatics. Next, I gathered the students in a circle at the front of the room and asked them to listen to me read "This is Nebraska" by Ted Kooser. I asked them to think of critiques of my oral reading and then purposefully read the poem poorly. I was overwhelmed with their response and scribbled them down while discussing what good oral reading was supposed to look like. The students seemed motivated by the opportunity to point out weaknesses in one of their teachers. They noticed several elements of dramatic oral reading: poor annunciation, no eye contact, slouching posture, monotone, mumbling, no enthusiasm, no voice inflection. Following this activity, I introduced the CRR feedback form designed to give students more structure to help critique their peers. The students moved into CRR groups and began

working with another new partner. While I recommended new partners each time we completed a CRR cycle, the students seemed to gravitate back to some of the original groups. The CRR feedback form did add an element to the practice reading that made Wendy uncomfortable, and she began to refuse to participate. Rather than allowing that to happen, I chose to intervene and volunteered to be her partner. This seemed to help ease her apprehension, and Mrs. Gruene circulated around the room helping keep the other students focused. This was by far the best experience I had working with CRR and between that and the positive beginning we had with the bad example of oral reading, I certainly felt like this was working.

Day Eight: This was a unique Friday as two of the track athletes—Michael and Porscha— were absent. The class was calm and subdued compared to previous days. I focused them at the beginning by explaining our next meeting would be our first performance. At the beginning of the POLP session I had the students continue working with a partner to make any final improvements for the performance. Students again seemed comfortable and agreeable with this activity. After the first cycle, I circled the students and asked for any volunteers to read a poem to the rest of the class and get some feedback. Though this was not on the original plans, I thought it would be helpful in building confidence for the performance as several students had mentioned an uneasy feeling about reading to the whole class. Three students volunteered and the feedback was accurate and constructive. Rebecca, one of the weakest oral readers, volunteered to read first. We finished the class by briefly discussing the upcoming performance. Still, students expressed some apprehension for this event.

Day Nine: I brought in a microphone stand and a microphone for the performance which we used both video and audio to record. These simple props proved distracting at first as the students wanted to come up to the front of the classroom and pretend to sing into the microphone. Their inner rock star was emerging. After giving the students five minutes to warm up, the performance began. Michael wanted to set the tone and go first by reading "Phenomenal Woman" by Maya Angelou. Next was Sasha followed by Stacy and Malary. I wondered if that would have any effect on the rest of the class, as those four were the strongest oral readers going into the project. I noticed and recorded apprehension in many forms including looking away, body language, and volunteering others to go. Sasha stepped up as a leader in the class and began prodding her peers to get up and read. The pauses between several readers were long and painful, but the last three students volunteered without hesitation. Overall, the performance went very

well, and I had the students provide some reflective feedback at the end to help solidify their shortcomings and move forward.

Day Ten: The students selected two new poems in the computer lab; changing to the lab setting proved much more effective. Several students spent the entire thirty minutes searching for just the right poem to share with the class in our final performance. I let the students browse the entire www.poetryoutloud.org today rather than directing them to specific letters of the alphabet. The lack of parameters seemed effective for the students despite there being 481 poems at their fingertips. Two students, Sasha and Michael, wanted to choose poems off the website and I deviated from my original plans and allowed them, under the guidance of Mr. Robbins, to search websites outside of the site. Malary and Stacy spent the entire time in the computer lab picking their final poems and were late to lunch. With the lunch line and time being sacred, I thought this was something worth noting.

Day Eleven: I decided to bring in audio clips of dramatic oral interpretations of poems. I felt like this adjustment was necessary for two reasons. One, I felt the students were starting to lose interest because the POLP was repetitive, so I brought in the clips as a motivator. Two, I didn't feel students were progressing at a fast enough pace and wanted to push them.. The clips included a recording from the Poetry Out Loud website of two students reciting at the 2006 national contest and a clip from Taylor Mali reciting "What Teachers Make." The students responded positively to the clips and we reviewed using more enthusiasm, conviction, and inflection in their voices for better dramatic oral readings. Next, we moved into CRR groups to try to work on improving the dramatic oral readings of the poems. As I circulated around the room I noticed socially, students seem to feel comfortable around everyone in the class but certainly wanted to work with just a select few. This was especially apparent between Jeff and Malary, Jeannette and Rebecca, Sasha and Porscha, and April and Matt. Rebecca was the first one to volunteer to read aloud in front of the class again though her comfort level around the other students did not seem to be as high. It seemed as though she was using this as a way to fit in with her more boisterous, outgoing peers. If so, it might be misguided, as she struggled a bit more with reading aloud than others. The students did seem a little bored with the CRR by the end of POLP session.

Day Twelve: Since bringing in audio clips seemed to motivate and focus the students on the previous day, I decided to bring in two video clips. I found two clips of the POL contest from

www.youtube.com and managed to convert them to files to show to the students. While the contestants were reciting poetry and the class was reading it, several students seemed to take hints from the videos and several commented they wanted to participate in the contest part of the POL next year. Mr. Robbins announced BMHS would host a contest in the upcoming years. Once the videos were complete, I asked the students to complete a feedback form for two people whom they had not previously critiqued. Several students were off task immediately and things somewhat fell apart from there. Even though I reminded them our final performance would be the next class period, they remained less than focused. I concluded that while the CRR was helpful, it was too repetitive to do on a daily basis. I discussed this with Mr. Robbins and Mrs. Gruene during the lunch break and they agreed that the students were just a little bit off that day.

Day Thirteen: The final performance had arrived, and while I felt some relief to be near finished with the data collection process, I was excited to hear the progress students had made or, in some cases, had not made. Another slight change to the format was that on the final day, all three teachers had to read too. Strangely enough, the students seemed motivated by this and were curious as to what Mrs. Gruene had selected to read. Her place in the classroom was clearly established by this point in the semester; students responded to her as they had earlier to Mr. Robbins. While the students were making final preparations for the performance, an air of enthusiasm floated around the room. A friendly argument broke out between Michael, Matt, and Rebecca for the right to read first. Porscha, whom had been absent for the first performance, curiously tapped on the microphone and watched the sound waves bounce on the computer that was setup to record the audio of the final performance. Rebecca won the argument and started out the final performance by reading two poems including "Annabel Lee" by Edgar Allan Poe. Malary followed with a great rendition of "Fever 103" by Sylvia Plath before Sasha read two short poems in a way that made it clear that they were personal. From the strong beginning, I started to notice that Louise was laughing out loud both during and after people read. This changed the feeling in the room, and there was a two minute pause at one point while waiting for someone to read. Juan, though visibly shaking, finally broke the silence with a convicted reading of "Mother to Son" by Langston Hughes that absolutely was his best. Louise kept laughing. I wanted to yell at her; I wanted the teachers sitting right next to her to stop the behavior but it didn't stop. Nonetheless, Malary provided the climax to the final performance by taking the microphone off the stand and stepping towards the audience while reading "Insomnia" by Dante

Gabrielle Rossetti. This was clearly a moment, her moment, and one that I never would have thought possible at the beginning of the POLP. The students went to lunch and while the three teachers were eating and waiting for them to come back, Mr. Robbins brought the camera and was going to show some of his colleagues when he said, "I don't think it recorded." Deep breaths I kept telling myself; I was sure it was fine. It wasn't. The camera had failed to record the final performance except for the first two minutes. In a rush of trying to determine what to do, we decided to try it again and repeat the performance. Michael and Porscha had left during lunch to go to a track meet and Malary had pushed a boy though a glass window and wouldn't be returning for a couple of days. To say the least, the dynamics of the class changed drastically and the performance had an artificial, rushed feeling as we tried to capture what had been lost— impossible.

Over the next week I spent several hours completing the final interviews with the six students and the two teachers. This process was simultaneously rewarding, concerning, and tedious. Students shared ideas that had never occurred to any of the teachers involved and the teachers each shared insight into how to improve such a project. Upon leaving the classroom, we had a final day where I brought pizza and drinks for the students. While this was never promised or alluded to in anyway as a part of my teaching, I felt it was something I wanted to do to give back to the students that had been so interesting, challenging, and ultimately fun with which to work. Now, I knew I had nearly ten hours worth of interviews to transcribe as well as audio and video performances to review as part of the data analysis process.

Data Processing and Preparation

The interviews were finished and the locking gray plastic tub I had purchased to hold the various papers from the study was heavy to lift. While it seemed like in just a few days I would be writing away at the dissertation and closing in on deadlines, I was mistaken. Data had to be processed before I could draw any conclusions let alone begin writing.

I began by transcribing the audio taped interviews using a standard transcription machine. I had originally decided to complete this process myself rather than pay someone. Many researchers had advised me I would learn a great deal as I listened to the tapes. I stuck with the original plans and transcribed the tapes. Especially useful in this process was a set of Shure E3C noise canceling ear phones. This allowed me to hear parts of the tape that I would not have

otherwise been able to decipher. In the middle of the second tape, an interview with Mark, disaster struck. Somehow in rewinding the cassette tape, I managed to break it and the spools spun freely inside. All was not lost as a resident expert in tape repair examined it and was able to fix the cassette with scotch tape. The interviews were enjoyable to hear again and aspects of speech such as sarcasm, sighs, and verbal ticks created a sense of reality. By the end, the cassette tape was not all that was broken; my will to transcribe tapes waned and just about any distraction from pressing the foot pedal forward and continuing to type was welcomed. When I was finished, I had sore fingers and 86 single-spaced pages of interview transcripts between the two teachers and six students.

In continued preparation to enter the interview transcripts into HyperResearch (HR), I first had to assign pseudonyms and remove the names from the transcripts. I used some of my favorite students' names from the past years of which students in the present study reminded me. Once that process was completed, I then had to open each document and save it as a .txt file. This was necessary to prepare the documents for the HR program as it required the universal .txt file extension. At this time, I also renamed each file to reflect the pseudonym of the interviewee and further protect the identity of the human subjects involved.

The next step in data processing was to deal with the audio recordings. Using the free recording software Audacity, with which the two performances were recorded, I opened the tracks and listened through the recording noting high and low volume portions. By viewing the digital audio track in wave format (see Appendix H) I was able to detect sections that needed the volume amplified or reduced. Similar to the skills a music producer would use to master the recording of a band, though simplified to one microphone input, referred to as one track, I processed the original recording into something that had equal sound values and allowed me to hear the quiet portions of students talking between performances and to quiet some extraneous noises such as a weed eater and a loud vehicle driving past the school. Once I was satisfied, I used Audacity to convert the audio from an Audacity project file to an Mp3 file which was compatible with HR (See Appendix I). I then repeated the process for the second performance. This program is simple to use though having considerable experience with it was an invaluable personal resource.

Next in the data processing was the video, an area where I lacked confidence. In discussing how best to create a compatible file format with Mr. Robbins, I discovered Nero, a

software program designed to create DVD's and computer friendly files. While this program cost considerably, they did offer a 30 day free trial version I utilized. This was amazingly simple software. I opened the video in Nero and selected the option to create an MP4 video file from the .DVD file commanded the program to begin. It worked flawlessly, a relief as I was quite apprehensive of this process. The video too was ready to be accessed by the HR program.

As I began to use HR, I started by rereading each interview transcript in its entirely and reviewing the digital audio and video recordings of the performances. Once I had completed that process, I decided I needed to take a break from the data and let it settle a bit. During a five day dissertation research hiatus I attended an international convention. On the plane ride back to the United States, I listed as many initial categories as I thought back through each interview and performance recording.

Back in the office, I began using HR to open each transcript and do some initial coding to see if any of the products of the plane ride were actually represented in the data (See Appendix J). Several of the categories I listed were present in the data, and several developed during the process of initial coding. Coding based on thought analysis I began with a preliminary central phenomenon and searched the interview transcripts for representation of the fifteen original categories. The next step in the process was to code the audio and video. This proved time consuming. I opened each source using HR watching for the categories to be demonstrated by the students' actions or reactions. Once I viewed a clip that represented a category (See Appendix K), I had to start and stop it before and after the clip before assigning the code. Once the code was assigned, I could review the clip continuously by activating the loop playback function.

After the codes were assigned to the video, audio, and text of sources of the study, I used HR to examine different categories simultaneously. For example, if I wanted to look at everything that was coded as Confidence, I could select just that code and bring up all of the instances from all of the different sources. Then, I could look through them one by one to begin to determine similarities and differences. This helped tremendously in developing and understanding patterns amongst the data (See Appendix L). While the data processing and preparation was time consuming and tedious, it did help tremendously as far developing my ideas about how this information fit together and made sense.

Open Coding

As I transcribed the interviews and watched the videotapes, fifteen different codes emerged. Descriptions of each with examples from the data sources provide an understanding of each different category and how they related to the POLP. The names for each category were taken from the transcripts of the actual interviews with the teachers and students. For example, at one point Mr. Robbins referred to the class, "They act like they are family, I mean they are a little dysfunctional, but they act like family…" and from that statement I derived the themes of family and dysfunctional family. Additionally, each category is divided into connotative and denotative type of comments.

Choice

The students' selection of the poems to read was a factor in the understanding of the POLP. This was anticipated to be problematic at the onset of the study because the POL website offered four hundred and eighty one different poems. In the teacher and student interviews, when students discussed the POL website and the selection of which poems, they were coded with this category. In the interview following the project with Mrs. Gruene, she offered her connotative perception of why one student may have withdrawn, in part, from the project.

> *T: Did you notice anybody withdraw from the project?*
>
> *Mrs. Gruene: I think even Michael was a little bit withdrawn from the poetry. When he read the first poem he had really, really liked that first set of poems he picked. You could see him, even if it was just one line, he kept repeating them over and over and over. But the other poems he didn't take much thought, he just picked two poems that happened to be by the same author and they didn't really have anything to express.*

Clearly, choice was a factor for Michael as Mrs. Gruene viewed it, "I think his heart wasn't in it when he picked the last two poems."

Mr. Robbins also pointed to choice as being an important factor in his interview and the category was named based on his denotative comment.

> *T: What was your overall impression of the POLP?*
>
> *Mr. Robbins: They had choice, they could pick what they wanted, and if a student wanted something by a certain poet and couldn't find it on the website necessarily, we gave them a little bit of choice there and they felt some ownership.*

While the flexibility to allow students to choose poems away from the website was not intended originally, two students did venture away for the third selection process. Another student, Rebecca, mentioned that choice was a factor for her for reading in her introductory interview. This would be classified as a denotative comment because she is speaking specifically about choice.

>*T: Is there anytime that you do like to read?*
>
>*Rebecca: Ummm, in seminar because I can bring my own books.*

In asking her about her reading history, she said that she didn't like reading in class or at any other time than when she could choose the books.

Class Pride

Statements of class pride were represented by a student protecting or complimenting her classmates or in some way defending or complimenting the class, teachers, or curriculum. The first example was Michael talking about his classmates being able to perform successfully. This is a connotative comment.

>*T: Can you think of something that was the most memorable part for you?*
>
>*Michael: I was real happy when they got up there and could perform in front of the class just like everybody else could.*

Another type of comment found in the interview transcripts was the compliment towards the class as a whole. Mark, being a recent transfer student, noticed something special about this particular class. This is a denotative comment.

>*T: What did you notice about this class when you arrived?*
>
>*Mark: Kind of up there, kind of special because they really get along and work with each other and are interesting in a lot of ways.*

In a short amount of time around this group, Mark noticed that this group is different from others he has seen and said so in this example.

Confidence

The category of confidence occurred when a student demonstrated faith and trust in his own ability. Selections from the videotape and audio of the performances as well as student and teacher interview transcripts were analyzed for statements and exhibitions of confidence. All eight interviewees made comments or exhibited certain criteria in the digital data. The first

example is from a student interview transcript where Michael and I were discussing the final performance, specifically, how confidence was exhibited by other students.

> *T: You guys argued on Monday about…*
>
> *Michael: Who would go first, I know, that is the first time that is ever happened.*
>
> *T: First time?*
>
> *Michael: Yeah, because I always go first. That is why I said, why do you want to go first? I always go first.*
>
> *T: I guess the POLP has given you competition?*
>
> *Michael: I know. People are trying to take my first place spot.*

In relating his experiences with an argument about the last performance, Michael connotatively acknowledges that his peers are acting differently than before, exhibiting the confidence to perform first, before him.

Next, Jeannette spoke directly about her own confidence as it related to how she felt reading in front of the class at the beginning of the project compared to how she felt at the end.

> *T: Do you feel differently at all about reading in front of others?*
>
> *Jeannette: Conservatively I guess I do but I mean, it is still like, I don't want to just go up there and do it because that is me. I think I have gotten better at speaking as I go up there for the most part.*

This statement by Jeannette would classify as a denotative example because she was speaking directly about how she felt about participating in dramatic oral reading.

Mr. Robbins offered his impression of the project in the next example. His comment provides the teacher's perspective about the benefits of the POLP. It was another concrete example.

> *T: What was your overall impression of the POLP*
>
> *Mr. Robbins: You have the ones that already like to get up in front of the group but you have the really quiet people getting up there and I thought that was pretty cool so anything that makes our introverts become a little bit more extroverted is a good thing.*

Anti-Climate

Any comments about behavior or actual behaviors potentially disruptive or destructive to the flow of the class were coded in this manner.

The first example was from Jeannette. She was talking about Michael and the way he treated people in class at times. This was a direct, concrete example of the classroom climate being disturbed.

> *Jeanette: If he said some of the things he says about other people to me, I would like go to bed and cry cause it is like really mean. Like the way he treats Stacy is horrible. I don't even know how she could put up with that.*

Mr. Robbins provided another example of the anti-climate, also speaking of Michael. This comment was an example of the teacher's perspective, which, in this case corroborates what Jeannette said.

> *T: Like he was intentionally trying to screw that up.*
>
> *Mr. Robbins: I think that he kind of was which was bizarre. I don't know what made him want to do that that day.*

Empowerment

This category was limited to student actions and self perceptions and teacher's perceptions since the concept of empowerment would denote an authority giving power to someone underneath them. In this case, the students are empowered by Mr. Robbins and Mrs. Gruene but also by the POLP. Not all students felt this way nor exhibited actions that made me believe they were empowered.

The audio clip of Malary taking the microphone and reading "Insomnia" during the final performance was one example of Empowerment because she felt like she could, in essence, take over the class. While the experience of being in the classroom provided me with convincing evidence of this, the audio recording of this event made it clear that she was confident enough to do something nobody else had done.

A comment from Malary about her overall experience with the POLP supports the idea that she garnered something more out of the project than most students. This was an example of her self-perception.

> *Malary: I would say that the most part of it was how I changed reading poetry and how I found out how I can express more ways of reading poetry. Because just the lines and everything, you know, but I didn't know you could put emotion and moves into it and stuff like that.*

Climate

All of the students and both teachers described the class like a cohesive group during the interview process. These statements reflected a positive classroom environment and one that is safe while also encouraging socially jeopardizing activities such as dramatic oral reading. I asked the students if their class seemed different than their other classes. Here are two examples of answers to that.

> *Juan: I guess now we can really tell each other almost anything that we need to, like if we were having trouble or anything. And I guess we all just fell really comfortable in that class because Mr. Robbins brought us all together.*
>
> *Michael: We do a lot of personal type activities, trying to see 'who are you?'*

Mr. Robbins provided classroom climate for this room during the beginning of the year as well as some possible reasons that this idea was a consensus amongst participants in answer to a follow up question.

> *T: What specifically do you mean when you say a 'certain group of kids?'*
>
> *Mr. Robbins: And they are all different scales academically and socio-economically and you hit just about every single race in that class too which, not that you don't see that in the other classes but just the way they come together kind of as a family group, which sometimes can be annoying because they are too comfortable but other times it is cool just to see a large group of different types of kids getting along.*

Feedback

The idea of feedback was critical to the status of the project though teacher and student alike hardly mentioned it. It was, in fact, coded only nine times. Discussion of feedback was not something asked about in the interviews unless the interviewee mentioned it. In the first example Mr. Robbins reflected on why Malary was so successful and mentioned it.

> *Mr. Robbins: [Malary] took on all of the comments that were made, like the comments you had the students make towards each other when you had them in the circle. She actually was listening to what everyone else was saying about any sort of criticism and she tried to put all of that into her presentation.*

The second example is a more direct question though it followed Mark mentioning feedback as something memorable about the project.

Mark: I remember when Juan rated me on the second poem.

T: How did it feel when people would give you feedback on your reading as far as like using those forms or just talking to you? Did you like that?

Mark: It was ok because then I can work on something that I needed to.

T: Can you remember a couple of things that people said?

Mark: Like my posture. They thought I was posing when I was reading.

T: Is that something that you changed?

Mark: Not really.

Motivational Teachers

Comments that fit into the category of motivational teachers were either from students commenting on Mr. Robbins, Mrs. Gruene, or the researcher or from the teachers about the motivation levels of students. This criteria qualified these comments, at least at the introductory level, in this category.

Michael: I think it is [Mr. Robbins]. It seems like Mrs. Gruene and the para's we've had in that class are the same way. I think they relate to us more. I don't know if it is because they are a younger age or what but they are more comfortable to be around.

While the students comment about the teachers described something that sets those teachers apart from others he had experienced, the next comment is Mrs. Gruene demonstrating concern for the motivation levels of the students.

Mrs. Gruene: For some reason I think that the motivation went down. I know the motivation was there at the beginning and some people couldn't wait to see you; I guess it kept them from doing whatever was regular in the class so they were excited you came but then for some of them, the motivation and enthusiasm was gone a little bit.

The opportunity to reflect on the project and ultimately create something much better from this experience was the focus of the teacher interviews. Mrs. Gruene demonstrated that she not only felt comfortable expressing her ideas but also being critical of the project.

Nervousness

The category of nervousness referred to comments from both teachers and students and student behaviors exhibited on the video and audio recording. This category was exemplified by a one minute video clip from the first performance. Sasha, a particularly strong oral reader

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finished her poems and returned to her seat. From that time, (00:03:29 to 00:04:28), the class as a whole hesitated to participate. April was tapping her feet at a rapid pace while Mrs. Gruene called names to attempt to motivate someone to read. Finally, the awkward time following Sasha's performance came to an end when Stacy, an avid oral reader, volunteered.

Jeannette offers another example of nervousness by describing what it was like to read in front of the class.

> T: How is it being in front of the class like that?
>
> Jeannette: Sometimes when you are speaking you are trying to get all of the words out and then you forget to breathe and then you realized you have to breathe and you will try to get to the very last line and breathe in but then there is like a gap and so it is really hard to remember where you should pause and you can't get a word right so you keep stuttering and then it is like, "Oh God, no, why now?"

Mr. Robbins offered his perspective about why a particular student was participating more than she had previously in the class.

> T: Can you think of anything more specific about Rebecca that made her volunteer first at every opportunity?
>
> Mr. Robbins: The other students have to get up too and a lot of people were nervous to do that stuff so this project put them all on the same plane

Performance as Motivator

This category emerged completely from the transcripts of the interviews and was not something that was intended or anticipated at the onset of the study. This category referred to comments that were made by students that described the aspects of performance—such as being videotaped—as being motivational. Additionally, teachers made comments about students in describing the factors motivating them towards success.

Several students mentioned that they appreciated the physical attributes of the performance including the video camera, the microphone, the microphone stand, and the recording software.

> T: What was your overall impression of the POLP? Be specific.
>
> Rebecca: I like poetry. I liked a lot of the poems that I read and I liked getting up and reading in front of the class, especially when you were filming us.

66

From a teacher's perspective, Mrs. Gruene's comment about the realization some students experienced when performing was the opposite of Rebecca's motivation. The following excerpt is part of answer to the broad question.

T: What was your overall impression of the POLP?

Mrs. Gruene: Then some of them, I would hear them, when they got up there for the real performance, they said, "Man, I should have took that serious."

Poems Representing Identity

This category developed on account of all participants commenting to the effect that they understood each other better by hearing which poems their peers selected. Mrs. Gruene's comment provides a good example.

Mrs. Gruene: Some of them, because of the class, they are a little bit ethnic oriented so they wanted—the African-American kids—to stick with African-American poets but it was kind of good to just pull them away and just to find more than just Maya Angelou, more than just Langston Hughes

The next example was a connotative example offered by Jeannette as to why she chose certain poetry to perform.

T: Why did you choose the poems that you chose?

Jeannette: The titles would mostly catch my eye. I don't really like happy poems. Sometimes I do. I looked for the most depressing or kind of evil titles so that was usually what caught my eye.

Resistance

The category of resistance encompasses comments and actions that go against the goals of the POLP. These varied from students commenting about other students and teachers commenting about students to video and audio recordings of resistance.

One of the goals of the POLP was to get all of the students to participate in the performances of the dramatic oral reading of poetry. During the last performance, there was a noted problem with Michael making other students laugh. Jeannette accounts her reaction to that form of resistance.

T: Did you think they were laughing at the performers?

Jeannette: Well, it seems like it. They like whispered and stuff. It is not very nice.

In part of the questioning, I asked all eight participants if they noticed anyone withdraw from the POLP. The students provided a firsthand sense of how their peers were doing. Juan pointed out that he noticed two other student interviewees were acting withdrawn.

Juan: Maybe Jeannette and Rebecca? I don't they liked it that much because they stared down and said it really fast.

Segregation

This category developed through a sense from both teachers that many of the social problems observed during the project were due to the students, when given the opportunity to choose where they sat or with whom they worked, separated by race.

I: How could a teacher change/alter the social context of the classroom to help foster performance activities such as this?

Mrs. Gruene: We did rearrange the seating. I think I have done it three or four times. It seems like even though that group gets along for the most part, they still isolate or segregate themselves into groups. There are a whole bunch of little groups in that classroom and so they tend to move towards the group that they feel most comfortable with.

Interestingly enough, only one student's comments was coded as segregation.

T: Do you see any differences between your cooperating teacher, Mr. Robbins and his student teacher, Mrs. Gruene?

Rebecca: Mr. Robbins really hasn't been teaching us that much lately. They are kind of the same but she is a little more serious and she kind of teaches us to know about doing the right thing and stuff. We talked about fighting and how the class was segregated kind of and Michael actually did that. It isn't like that we meant to but the [three African-American girls] drifted towards Michael. He has a lot of friends in the class.

Self Policing

This category developed from the interview transcripts as well. Several of the students reported feeling pressure to perform their poetry before they wanted to. Additionally, self policing also referred to members of the class that kept others in check.

Michael explicitly discussed how he persuaded other students to perform.

T: Do you think you pressure other people into doing things?

Michael: Yes. Like if some won't go, like hurry up and get up there and do their poem, I was like, I would say for example, "Sasha, ain't you gonna go up there, didn't you just say you were gonna go?" I would do something like that and they didn't even say they wanted to go.

From the perspective of the teachers, Mr. Robbins offered his opinion about the success of the POLP.

Mr. Robbins: But we got a 100 percent involvement so..I think they felt like it was necessary to be able to get to that point. If any one of them wouldn't have participated, the whole group would have made them participate. They would have goaded them into it somehow.

Transferable Skills

Most teachers certainly hope activities they use in class will relate and help their students in other classes. Another surprising category, students and teachers alike brought up several examples of how working on dramatic oral reading in the POLP transferred to success in other classes. By the final interview I conducted, I asked Mrs. Gruene her opinion on this.

T: Do you think anything they learned in this project could translate to other classes?
Mrs. Gruene: Oh, definitely. I have heard some of them say that their next speech after doing that, they were more confident going up there doing a speech for speech class. Some of them say they are not afraid now as to before where they were to answer questions. If I can read in front of the class, I can go out there and I can answer any question. Even if I don't get it right, I am not going to be as afraid to be vocal about my answer. Asking questions is the same way.

Results

From this initial coding process, it became necessary to focus the results to those that would be helpful to understanding the research questions present. The three action verbs out of the research questions—influence, manipulate, inhibit—provided the categories for which I have chosen to present the data. Three coding categories—poems representing identity, transferable skills, empowerment—were eliminated from this section because they were outcomes of the POLP rather than parts of the process.

Influence

How does the social context of the high school classroom influence high school students' participation in dramatic oral reading? Five separate categories contributed to the understanding of the influences at work in the POLP. 37 % (182/493) of the codes assigned were derived from these five categories which create the larger group of influence. First, I witnessed a sense of Class Pride (7%, 14/181) amongst the students in my time in the classroom. When Michael verbally accosted the student as detailed in the timeline section, he was standing up for the other people in the class and for the teachers. Certainly, this is not something that happens in every classroom. Furthermore, students reported being proud of each other for their success and motivated to succeed by others triumphs in the POLP. Finally, student comments reflected a sense of pride and protection of their teachers an example of how they felt during the project. These three different ideas together create an influence on the outcome of the POLP. Second, students reported, and I observed behaviors associated with Nervousness (17%, 31/181). In asking ninth-graders to stand up in front of a classroom and read poetry, the teachers knew the conditions were right for students to be nervous. A wavering voice, a tick, or direct statement about how reading in front of others made the students feel were included in this category. Ultimately, this factor influences students' participation in the POLP. Third, I was surprised by students and the idea that Performance as Motivator (14%, 31/181) was one such example. Bringing in props and recording equipment somehow made the POLP performances seem special and different to the students. Students commented that they liked the camera in the room; the POLP performances were different than other class experiences they had up to the point of the study. Fourth, students influenced each other with the concept of Self-policing (12%, 22/181). By pushing others to perform or participate, they had a major impact on the ultimate goal of the study which was to have 100 percent participation. Jeannette, for example, reported that she didn't appreciate the self-policing and waited until the very end to participate in each performance. Finally, the category of confidence (49%, 89/181) played a role in influencing the outcome of the class.

Teacher Interviews

The teachers' perspectives on which social factors influenced the students towards participation and ultimately, specifically which social factors, was an essential part of

understanding the data collected. The interviews, often much more like conversations, were dotted with my own ideas while I ultimately valued all three perspectives from the teachers because they were unique in many instances. I did not make an effort to equally represent the teachers here because as different people we brought different foci to the different sections.

An example of Class Pride occurred during a conversational interview I did with Mr. Robbins. In discussing the class as something different, I shared the following thought.

> *T: This is something that they said, 'We don't necessarily like each other outside of this class but in here we do; we stand up for each other; we absolutely are not going to allow others to push us around.' It is like when the substitute came in and tried to talk crap on their music. They said 'Hey, you are messing with the whole family here, don't do that.'*

This example demonstrates how Class Pride is part of the social context and how it influences the outcomes of events in the classroom. Despite the fact that the students reported not getting along on many occasions outside of class, something entirely different occurred in the classroom doors. While the incident with the substitute was obscure and unfortunate, seeing the class handle that situation was something I remembered much past the day it happened. A student would likely feel more comfortable reading in front of other students who had stood up for her in a situation such as this.

One of the interesting situations that arose during the study happened during the final performance when Louise was caused to laugh during the first few performances. In an attempt to recover the performance, we decided to tape the performance again. In discussing that second performance, Mr. Robbins, reflected about the differences between the two performances.

> *Mr. Robbins: Because I think they felt more comfortable and there weren't hecklers or anyone so that completely defused Louise and they realized that Louise was sincere with what she said. Everyone started volunteering more freely. There also wasn't the intimidation that Malary was there and going to outshine them either which might have been part of it too. When they got up there, they weren't concerned about someone being that much better than them. It is hard to follow someone like that. I was somewhat apprehensive about doing any sort of performance myself because I was thinking, if this comes off too good or whatever, what if they don't want to go or are scared to go. They might be thinking, "What if I can't keep up with that?"*

Asserting that the second performance was more successful for those three reasons, Mr. Robbins' comment explored the possibilities of why the students seemed less nervous. Without the laughter and resistance, the second performance moved much more quickly on account of less Nervousness.

Performance as Motivator was an interesting category to develop in the context of the POLP. What students focused on as a part of their motivation to participate in the POLP was an important factor in the study in preparation of repeating it in new places and in different ways. While that being said, this category was one that I anticipated the opposite to be found true.

Discussing the overall impression of the POLP with Mrs. Gruene was critically important because of the fact that she was student teaching and at times seemed unconvinced by the POLP. Her interview transcripts reflect that our conversation was less complimentary and more constructive than that of Mr. Robbins'. Nonetheless, she too pointed out that the performance was something the students enjoyed.

Mrs. Gruene: I think maybe with that class they enjoyed the performance.

In making this comment, she asserted the idea that this class of students was different from the others which she taught. Saying that the students enjoyed the experience is important but not critical to the success or failure of the project.

Opposite the aesthetic (Rosenblatt, 1978) lies the efferent which addresses why the students seemed to be motivated by the performances. While focusing entirely on either does not provide the information necessary from which to understand the data, considering each to be an important aspect of motivation to read, to participate was vital to this study. Approaching the context of the POLP differently based on his experience teaching at this high school for a number of years, Mr. Robbins, while his opinion was not considered more heavily, provided a perspective on the POLP more closely related to the efferent.

> *Mr. Robbins: There were a few of them that when we were doing the readings and they*
> *had to read for practice, I think some of them didn't buy into that at first until they*
> *realized the performance thing was real, that they were going to be taped and that people*
> *would be watching and it is going to be an important thing so I think a few of them didn't*
> *understand the value of that (practice time) at first.*

From this perspective, it was actually the performance that provided validity to the project's less aesthetic, day-by-day activities such as cooperative repeated reading. Students knew that we

were doing this project for a reason and that there would be performances but in the haze of being ninth-graders hadn't realized exactly what it all meant. Just as surely, my descriptions and directions may have been failed communications, in that, the students either couldn't understand them or were not listening.

As part of the interview process, I asked Mr. Robbins if he would consider doing the POLP next year in his classroom. In saying that he would, he offered another comment that would signify that Performance as Motivator is something to continue to consider. He planned to combine the aesthetic and efferent aspects of the project in his own for the following year.

> *Mr. Robbins: Yeah because you are not just doing it in dead air. Plus you have props, you have the microphone and the camera. Even if I didn't have it set up to record, just having the microphone up there, it really makes a difference in how they did because they were conscious of how things were coming out of their mouths while they were up there.*

Having the props, as mentioned by several students, was something important because it was *cool*, but from Mr. Robbins' perspective, they also made a difference in how well students performed, an idea leaning more to the efferent side of Rosenblatt's continuum.

Often the most significant influence on adolescents is their peers. While the perils of peer pressure are oft accounted by the popular news media and educational researchers alike, the concept that students push others towards positive participation in classroom activities remains unnoticed. The impact of the social context towards involvement was exemplified by a comment categorized as Self-policing.

> *Mr. Robbins: But we got a 100 percent involvement so..I think they felt like it was necessary to be able to get to that point. If any one of them wouldn't have participated, the whole group would have made them participate. They would have goaded them into it somehow.*

Goading students into participating is not always a positive situation. The flight or fight reflexes could appear from a student feeling cornered by their peers. Self-policing is not always a positive aspect of a classroom environment though it constantly influences students.

In some instances there will be a certain student that bears more influence on others. Situations like this occur for a variety of reasons. It could be a romantic interest by one party, an issue of social status or a feeling of inferiority for some reason or another. In another example of

Self-policing, Mr. Robbins discussed why Michael might have acted out and disrupted the final performance.

> *Mr. Robbins: The other thing that changed things a lot too was Stacy not being there. She is usually the checks and balance person if Michael is getting too far; she puts him in check and if she is going too far, he puts her in check. Michael's behavior was due the fact she wasn't there to do that, she is usually the student in the class that takes care of that.*

As a part of the social context of this particular classroom, Stacy and Michael had an understanding. Stacy had been absent for several consecutive days prior to the final performance and was clearly still sick, though present. If Mr. Robbins' perspective was accurate, Stacy at full speed would have easily stopped Michael's derailment efforts. Without her, Michael was left unchecked.

April was a student, though not an interviewed member of the class, who provided an interesting example of Confidence. Certainly not a shy student in anyway, she was often out of her seat, talking to other students, and occasionally disrupting class. In my field notes, she was not the first person whose name I learned but she was second. Next, Mr. Robbins offered another specific observation of a benefit of the POLP by comparing April to Rebecca.

> *Mr. Robbins: [April] talks a lot more in class and volunteers more often but when it comes academic type things and I would classify this as more academic, she usually isn't one. So something struck a chord with her there too. I don't know if it was just having a microphone. I don't know if it was just poetry, for any of them I am not sure what it is because none of the students have expressed that poetry is there favorite thing.*

Displaying Confidence in class can certainly appear in many different forms. For April, she was not considered by her teachers as a particularly studious individual. She came to school to socialize. The example of demonstrating confidence in the context of the POLP as something "more academic" was not something anticipated. By becoming confident working with material such as classic poetry, it is hoped students will feel more comfortable as they encounter more difficult texts throughout their schooling.

A student who mentioned in the interviews that he struggled with Confidence during the project was Juan. Many of his actions observed during the performances, both in person and on the video recording, supported this idea. As part of the teacher interview, Mr. Robbins brought

up and we talked about Juan's success and the idea that he turned the corner as far as confidence goes.

> *T: And at the end there, at the last day, the last performance, he was one of the top two or three readers. You could tell that he wanted to do that well. That was something that was important to him. The way he read "Mother to Son," I thought was as good as what anybody else did.*

Nearly failing an entire semester of class because of his inability, as a sixth grader, to read poetry aloud Juan was transformed into an outstanding performer as a ninth-grader. Having Confidence in his ability resulted in the scenario from the comment above.

All five categories—Class Pride, Nervousness, Performance as Motivator, Self-policing, Confidence—combined to provide support in answering the ultimate question of whether the social context influences students participation in dramatic oral readings. These examples demonstrated several different perspectives of how the original research question might be addressed.

Student Interviews

Another valuable perspective on finding support for an answer to the question of whether or not the social context influenced students' participation was that of the students themselves. Students see the classroom as they experience it and while the teachers provided an analytical viewpoint and certainly an abundance of ideas, each student provided a wealth of experiences and insights to what is actually happening in the classroom. The purpose of this section was not to offer an opinion on what the students had to say, but rather present it in an understandable format, as it relates to understanding the categories of Class Pride, Nervousness, Performance as Motivator, Self-policing, and Confidence.

The example of Michael, in part, purposefully ruining the final performance has been belabored but his core feelings about the class, despite his actions, are central to the first example. Part of the following excerpt was coded as Class Pride.

> *T: What is your overall impression of the Poetry Out Loud Project we just completed?*
> *Michael: My overall impression of it is that it was good that we did it and our class was chosen to do it. Not because we are the most outgoing class because I think we can relate more to some of the stuff that has been said and different types of poetry. I think we can understand that better than some other classes because we might have lived it or can*

relate to it more. My overall view is that I liked it. It is something different to do in your classes and it isn't always books and work, work, work.

While the purposefully broad questions solicited more than just one thought, part of it related to class pride. In the answer, he said that his class related to different types of poetry "Not because we are the most outgoing class," but they are actually "Better than some other classes because we might have lived it or can relate to it more." Besides Class Pride, Michael takes on a leadership role in speaking for the class. Few would argue that for good or bad, Michael was the leader of the class.

Class Pride was a category that influenced participation. Juan describes his teacher and class in a proud manner.

> *Juan: No, I don't think so because I guess we wouldn't have the same teacher as Mr. Robbins and we wouldn't have the same people in the class and I guess we wouldn't be that close together we were this year. It is going to be different next year…because I guess we had something special there.*

In trying to understand the social risk involved in reading aloud as it related to and ultimately affected students' participation in the POLP, I asked them about what it was like to stand in front of the class and read poetry. Except for Michael, all of the students reported some sort of Nervousness.

> *Juan: It is really hard to explain. It is like for me, I start to lose my breath and I have trouble breathing and everything but then I usually get past the first sentence or whatever, I can usually keep going because I can catch my breath and realize it is not too bad.*

In a continued effort to understand what students think of each other, I asked them if they noticed any changes or behaviors that they found different than normal, especially during the performances.

> *Malary: It wasn't nerve-racking. The camera being there didn't really phase me.*
> *T: Did you see that in anybody else?*
> *Malary: Maybe just a little bit, like the way they didn't look up at the audience whenever the camera was on. I knew some people did when we just read in group but when the camera was on they sorta just looked down a lot but I guess it was just because the whole entire class was listening to them, not just the camera.*

This comment was categorized Nervousness rather Performance as Motivator because according to Malary, the performance did not motivate the students of whom she spoke.

Performance as Motivator was a factor as several students reported when asked about the most memorable aspect of the POLP. These common answers to the same question provided the original impetus to look for more examples of this and to ultimately ask the teachers about the concept.

> *T: What was the most memorable part of the POLP?*
>
> *Mark: Probably reciting the poems at the end with the videotape.*
>
> *Malary: I don't know. I thought the camera was a good thing.*
>
> *Rebecca: I just liked reading in front of the class. Just getting Michael in front of the classroom and getting to have the microphone up there and stuff.*

Whether it was the microphone as Rebecca suggests or the camera as Mark and Malary put forward, this was a factor for these students. The physical attributes of the performance were motivating but that left the question whether the students were influenced more by the experience or just by props.

Students providing motivation for each other emerged as an example of **self policing**. While the term policing could indicate a punitive response to a behavior, these students are pushed towards participation by their peers.

> *T: Can you think of anybody in the classroom that motivates you to do better in school than maybe what you are capable of?*
>
> *Juan: I guess almost everybody in the class does. Basically, we all get along together really good. We encourage each other and just like keep helping each other out.*

Juan's response alluded to the familial feeling present in the classroom. He sensed that other students pushed him towards more success in school because they cared about him and about his success. He saw motivation as something extrinsic. Consequently, Malary viewed the idea of motivation in the classroom as something intrinsic.

> *T: Are there any other students that you think pressure you to do well.*
>
> *Malary: I wouldn't say really pressuring but motivating. Like motivating as in Jeff. Since we are both in honors and everything we both do projects that are extracurricular that the other kids don't do. So I guess when he finishes it and I don't, I kind of feel like 'oh*

crap,' I need to finish my project or I might get a bad grade so I would say it is more
motivating than pressuring. Same with the teachers I think.

Malary acknowledged being a self-motivated student. In the continuation of this line of questioning, she did note that her father's high expectations served as the ultimate motivating factor for her. Finally, Self-policing took a different turn as it was viewed through the students' eyes. Rather than a focus on the punitive, students here focused more on the positive, motivational aspects of their interactions with their peers.

How did Confidence influence the students' participation? Comments that were coded as exemplifying or discussing Confidence were varied. From the flamboyant and exuberant to the shy and reserved, Confidence was an expected result of this project. Nonetheless, students reported it in several different manners. For example, I asked Michael about what it was like to read poetry in front of his peers.

> *Michael: Me being the person that I am, it really don't matter. I think you just have to have that confidence and not worry about other people.*
> *T: What do you mean, kind of person?*
> *Michael: Being the kind of person that I am is because I know people and feel comfortable around them. If I feel comfortable around you I have no problem reading aloud or anything. I think it is being the person I am and because of the class, you know?*

A lack of Confidence in his abilities was never noted by Michael. He exuded it. Consequently, Juan developed more Confidence throughout the study.

> *Juan: I learned that poetry isn't as bad as I think it is and that speaking out loud isn't all what it is cracked up to be. It is not that hard. All you gotta do is make sure you got yourself a good introduction and basically you can get through the rest of the speech. That is at least what it is for me.*

Clearly, Juan possessed an innate fear of speaking in front of other students. He lacked belief in his abilities.

The student interview data set provided an interesting look at the students' perspectives of what ultimately influenced their experience in the POLP.

Performance Recordings

Explaining audio and video clips cannot do justice to actually watching them but viewing the clips cannot compare to actually being in the classroom either. It cannot compare to feeling

the tension between students or seeing beads of sweat form on the backs of necks in fear of reading a poem in front of the class. It cannot compare to experiencing a two-minute pause between the readings of poems as students are attempting to volunteer others so they can avoid going. It is true that the video of the first performance is a step in understanding the social context, in particular, which influences are at play. It is clear that the audio represents the best possible second chance to understand, to feel, to recapture the moment. When it was relevant and possible, I have transcribed conversations, mumblings, and other understandable portions of the media clips. Other times, the concept is the focus of the clip as it relates to the category. In considering how to describe the clips for this study, I have employed a method of Describe, Analyze, and Reflect, put forth by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

The three methods of describing the video require, at this point, more detailed descriptions. To describe a video clip, NBPTS suggests, "A retelling of what happened in a classroom situation. This kind of writing is meant to 'set the scene.'" To provide analysis of the video clip, NBPTS recommends, "Analysis deals with reasons, motives, and interpretation and is grounded in the concrete evidence…" To demonstrate reflection on a video, NBPTS advocates, "A thought process that occurs after a teaching situation. This is the thinking that allows you to make decisions about how you would approach similar situations in the future. You could decide to do something the same way, differently, or not at all." These three basic definitions from NBPTS helped demonstrate the importance of each video clip.

*(Audio, Performance Two, 00:25:12.970,00:25:31.978) Describe…*During the second performance, Mr. Robbins performed Taylor Mali's "Totally, Like, Whatever, You Know." When he moved towards the front of the room, a unique silence overcame the class as they focused on their teacher. Students were smiling and intensely interested in what their teacher was reading. *Analyze…*The concept of Class Pride was evident during the performance as students smiled and listened. Following the performance, the students expressed their pleasure with the reading by congratulating Mr. Robbins. *Reflect…*All three teachers chose a poem and performed it in front of the class. We were initially apprehensive in doing this fearing that it might set the expectations too high and cause students to feel uncomfortable, but it turned out to be a positive moment, especially when Mr. Robbins read a poem.

*(Video, Performance One 00:07:23.732,00:07:57.276) Describe…*Sasha finished reading her poem and was returning to her seat. Simultaneously, a student clapped rather than the preferred method of snapping.

T: We are going to get it, I know.

Stacy: On the last person (sarcasm).

Students fidgeted in their seats. Stacy applied makeup and the students quietly chattered around the room.

Wendy: Come on Juan.

Sasha: Oh Wendy, you suggested people, you know what that means, you know what that means.

Michael: Someone just go. This is ridiculous. You are wasting my camera time.

Matt: How about Jeff? He is so nice.

Finally, Wendy gave into Sasha's pressure and left her seat for the front of the classroom. *Analyze…*The beginning of the clip demonstrated an awkward sense in the classroom because most of the students snapped their fingers while one or two clapped. Another interesting quality of this clip is Sasha. She had just finished reading and was trying to convince her peers to go. This video clip demonstrates Nervousness as several different students volunteered others to go. *Reflect…*The period of 35 seconds between performances seemed like an hour. It started as the students confused whether to clap or snap for the previous reader and continued through the somewhat hostile time between readers.

*(Audio, Performance Two, 00:30:15.913,00:30:31.765) Describe…*During the second performance, Jeannette approached the microphone. She had been waiting till the end to perform her poetry and several students and at least one teacher had called her name attempting to get her to perform. She hesitated and made several strange comments.

Jeannette: Yes, its fantastic (sarcasm)

Class: Someone whistles.

It really is. Ok, Um. Everybody be quiet. I am reading. [papers shuffling]. That is what I thought.

*Analyze…*Jeannette demonstrated nervousness in the fact that the awkward comments she made were out of character for her. Which student was whistling could not be discerned; I don't recall thinking that the whistling was towards her but it is clearly audible in the recording and may

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have contributed to her comments. Regardless, it was obvious that she was uncomfortable. *Reflect…*This was a case where several students and at least one teacher had attempted to persuade her to go before she was ready. During her interview, she commented that the scene with Michael causing Louise to laugh had made her, someone not completely confident though capable, very nervous.

*(Video, Performance One, 00:19:14.071,00:20:04.288) Describe…*The first performance ended and after briefly waiting for someone else to volunteer to read a second time and then asking for volunteers and waiting again for eight seconds, I redirected the students towards reflective improvement.

T: Does anyone want a chance to read one more? (pregnant pause) Take a second and
on your actual poem, write down a couple of things you think you could have done better.
Following this, Juan and April move around the room searching for pens and pencils. Michael, Louise, and Jeff start talking with each other and to neighbors. *Analyze…*Asking the students to complete a reflective activity following a major performance such as this was often something I did as a classroom teacher in attempt to use the Performance as Motivator for the future. *Reflect…*I should have waited longer for anyone wanting to perform a second poem. By providing examples of "things [they] could have done better," I would have prompted better results.

*(Audio, Performance Two, 00:22:41.180,00:23:45.260) Describe…*This audio clip reflected the longest silence between readers, Matt and Michael, during the second performance, 63 seconds. Immediately following Matt's rendition of, "O Captain, My Captain," Louise broke out laughing. The silence is broken as Michael approaches the microphone. Before reading his poem, a conversation occurred with Louise.

Michael: (laughing) have you went yet?
Louise: No
Class: Yeah, you should read.
Louise: Stop making me laugh and just go.
Michael: Hey, ya'll.

*Analyze…*The laughter following Matt's performance was disturbing to witness in person and the awkward silence on the audio tape is difficult to review. Nonetheless, the conversation between Louise and Michael remains important as an example of Self-policing. They each attempted to

get the other to read. Louise's comment, "stop making me laugh," demonstrated that she realized her behavior was not acceptable. *Reflect…*The situation with the laughter was something quite disconcerting. I felt that the safe environment established in the classroom eroded in just a few minutes. Though Louise vocally asked Michael to stop causing her to laugh, the laughter continued throughout the rest of the final performance.

*(Video, Performance One, 00:08:55.794,00:09:13.198) Describe…*Jeff left his seat three seconds before Wendy, the previous reader even sat down. He stood erect in front of the microphone. The other students in the classroom mumbled for a second before he began in a firm voice.

Jeff: I am reading "I Know, I Remember, but How Can I Help You?" by Hayden Carruth.

Analyze… Jeff, rather than waiting to be prodded or even for the previous reader to reach her seat walked to the stage confidently and announced what he was reading. His posture and voice coupled with the fact that he did not wait to step forward and begin demonstrated his Confidence. *Reflect…*Jeff was an honors student and someone that felt comfortable reading in front of others. He read immediately following Wendy; her performance was dotted with miscues, which could be a reason he didn't hesitate when he approached the stage.

*(Audio, Performance Two, 00:36:12.992,00:37:46.845) Describe…*Four people had read a second poem and the lunch bell was about to ring. Malary asked if she had time to read her second poem, and I said that she did. She walked up to the front of the room.

Malary: Can I carry this around?

T: Yeah.

Malary: It seems more dramatic; I like it. I am going to read a poem…

Taking the microphone off the stand and walking around the front of the room, she read "Insomnia," using voice inflections, hand gestures, and appropriate pauses. The class was silent. They watched intensely as their classmate truly performed a piece of poetry. *Analyze…*This qualified as a bold move that exuded Confidence in her abilities. *Reflect…*This was the moment when it all made sense. Students were in awe. Teachers were impressed and Malary had taken an interest in the project and translated that into a fine product.

Inhibit

How does the social context of the high school classroom inhibit students' participation in dramatic oral reading? Three separate categories contributed to the understanding of the potential factors. During the open coding process, 20% (101/493) of the codes assigned were delineated from these three categories. Through axial coding, these three categories were combined into the larger category of inhibit. First, the interview transcripts and recordings documented the Resistance (56%, 57/101) I experienced at times during my experience at BMHS. Second, the concept of Anti-climate (32%, 32/101) was observed throughout the coding process. This varied from students getting others off track to insults and unconstructive criticisms. Third, the students in this particular classroom seemed to separate by race at times. Segregation, (12%, 12/101) though a small percentage, was something at least one teacher believed was the cause of some of the problems experienced during the final performance.

Teacher Interviews

The teachers offered an important perspective concerning the social factors that combined to attempt to inhibit the dramatic oral reading in the classroom. Since the teachers experienced these factors on occasion as a natural part of teaching—some students dislike English—as a natural part of the daily experience of being a classroom teacher, their perspective on what causes students to rebel against certain activities was particularly important. Again, including my own opinions, while not typical, is again part of the discussion of what social factors influenced students' participation.

As part of the teacher interview process, I wanted to find out what the teachers thought of the project and ultimately how they would improve upon it and use it, or not, in the future. In discussing ideas surrounding the POLP, it was clear that there were several issues that arose that one or two of the teachers had not noticed. Several other ideas were noticed by all three teachers as indicated by the comments in the discussion/interview. One of the questions that I asked both teachers concerned the key problems that arose during the project.

> *Mrs. Gruene: I think a lot of it was that that class gets distracted. They had a lot of drama before you came in the class so it took awhile to get them focused and I don't think they really saw—I know you told them what you wanted to happen and why they were doing it—the purpose until the performance. With that group, to keep them focused is constant challenge.*

Specifically, the comment that the class "had a lot of drama," placed this comment firmly in the context of the Anti-climate category. While the word *drama* is a pop culture term for problems with peers, the students certainly did not get along perfectly before I entered the site, according to Mrs. Gruene, or when I was there. Being distracted by a number of different factors could have provided an environment with potential for these issues to transpire. Additionally, in a discussion with Mr. Robbins about some of the problems that arose, we discussed the issue of the teaching schedule. Since I taught only a portion of the class on most days, Mrs. Gruene and I often switched it around and taught at different points in the hour, depending on what we did that day. The lunch break in the middle of the class was a particularly challenging issue.

> T: There were a couple of days they came back from lunch and just did a really, really nice job and there were a couple days that something happened at lunch and nothing academic happened afterwards.

The allusion to something happening at lunch was what caused this to be categorized as Anti-climate. For example, one day, Michael was reprimanded at lunch and perceived the teacher as a "racist," and someone that singled him out. This caused a major commotion upon returning from lunch and no matter what I did, truly nothing academic happened. Anti-climate also existed in students being too close to one another. The example of the final performance was one such case when students' familiarity and friendliness may have disrupted and in part, destroyed the sanctity of the oral readings.

> Mr. Robbins: Another part of that for some reason Michael was off the chain and being goofy that day. He got Louise to where she had the giggles to where she couldn't stop. Because Louise was doing that Sasha looked at Louise and then she couldn't stop. So Sasha moved behind Michael and it calmed it way down at that point. You could see there was a chain reaction that never stopped from that which was different from the regular environment and once it started it was something that was hard to get them to stop.

Mr. Robbins' perspective on the final performance as one of the key problems that arose provided understanding to the idea that this class did demonstrate some anti-classroom climate behaviors. This specific social situation caused other students to feel inadequate and uncomfortable as the laughing often erupted at the end of someone reading. This final performance was supposed to be a capstone on the project, to provide students a memorable

experience and an opportunity to share their choice of poetry. As it was, some of the intentions and goals of the final performance were not reached due to the social situations that arose in class.

Another important category that contributed to understanding the social context and how it served to inhibit the project itself was Resistance. That took several forms during the course of the project as students said and did things that went against the POLP objectives. Mark provided the first example of Resistance during his introductory interview. He said almost nothing but was also very negative about participating in the project and did not see a point to it. In discussing with Mrs. Gruene whom had stood out, she mentioned Mark had. That was surprising to me.

> *T: He was someone in particular that sat in the introductory interview and said for all sakes and purposes that he hated this and thought it sucked and couldn't figure out why we were doing it; he was really negative. I think I saw that shift a little bit; I don't know if it shifted completely.*

As I tried to view this through Mrs. Gruene's eyes, I understood her perspective too because he was new to the class and had not participated in activities prior to my arrival. His participation alone was new and would have stood out from that point of view. Too, she didn't hear all of the negativity during the interview, which gave me a different perspective. Regardless, Mark was the student in the class that I thought resisted the project the most. Additionally, Mrs. Gruene accredited the final performance to a resistance on the part of Michael. Here, she offered a possible reason for his behavior.

> *Mrs. Gruene: They were too short and he needs to like warm up and he picked the two shortest poems and even though it was a black author I don't think he really liked them. He couldn't get himself into it so he was. The second performance, because of the poems he chose, I don't think he took too much time picking those as he did the first ones.*

Mr. Robbins and I allowed Michael to choose poems that were not on the list because we wanted him to be able to read what he wanted and choose an author in whom he was interested. As Mrs. Gruene suggested that was likely a mistake. He picked the first two short poems by Maya Angelou. As she alluded to, it resulted in Resistance at the final performance. Another possibility for the cause of Michael's misbehavior and ultimate Resistance, according to Mrs. Gruene, was a defense mechanism based on his peer's improvement and increased confidence.

Mrs. Gruene: Going back to that previous question with Michael, he seems so confident but he knew what he had for that last time wasn't as good as a lot of his peers; it wasn't. There were five or six people in that class that were better than he was whereas the first time that wasn't the case. Maybe that was a defense mechanism when he was making Louise laugh and take attention away?

I agreed the possibility that this was the underlying cause of Michael's resistance was very likely. After all, he was the star of the show the entire school year from what Mr. Robbins said. He was dethroned by the POLP and rather than accepting that, he chose, unfortunately, to ruin others' experiences. Finally, most teachers would ask how a student, one student, could do such damage to the environment of the class and ultimately work toward inhibiting the participation of his peers.

T: With Michael, he has a status in the class of being somebody they look up to. He has the power at any given time to completely change the nature of the class. If you could go back and remove him from that last day's performance, it wouldn't have been very interesting but it would have gone without a hitch and we would have seen better performances from some of those kids.

My final example from my interview with Mrs. Gruene offered the perspective I had immediately following the research. The insight from the students and from Mrs. Gruene and Mr. Robbins about Michael and that final day changed that original perception greatly.

"It is looking like an apartheid in here, get back to your original seats!" was a specific statement I recorded Mr. Robbins making during the course of my observation. For whatever reason, students did separate into different races when they were allowed to do so. That being the case, both Mr. Robbins and Mrs. Gruene saw the issue as something that caused problems during the course of the project. As one of the central focal points of the research, I was interested in what types of social situations would influence and possibly inhibit the students' willingness to participate. While race was something that came to mind, it was not something that I intended to be a focus. Next, Mrs. Gruene projected segregation as a possible cause for the problems that occurred.

T: What were some of the social situations that arose during the POLP?

Mrs. Gruene: I think they were too over friendly. I think there was a lot of that. That class, even though they are the best of friends they tend to segregate and when they

segregate, it becomes about this person, it is more of a race thing. I tried to talk to them about everything. It is not so much a competition, it is more of a, "Well I am not doing what I am supposed to do so I am going to ridicule you or I am going to find some way to bring you down or make you feel uncomfortable." I think that last performance, that is exactly what Michael did. He knew he didn't prepare to read as well so he decided he was going to bring everyone else down when they read or at least give them the impression that they are not doing well by having someone else laugh. I don't know what was said to Louise, but if someone is up there and they see you laughing, laughing, laughing, of course they are a teenager, they are going to be self-conscious. It is just like a teacher, it is the same thing. Even if I was up there and someone started laughing, I would question, "Did I do something wrong?" "Is my hair sticking up or is there something coming out of my nose?"

While giving the students the choice of whom they worked with on most days of the project was something written into the original plans for the POLP, it may have caused some problems that worked to inhibit the best possible performance. In discussing the social situations with Mr. Robbins, I led with a reference to the segregation because I didn't see it as a problem at the time. In light of what the two classroom teachers said though, I was wrong.

I: What do you see as some of the social situation and dynamics in this class? I thought that the African-American kids stuck together and tended to cling together and certainly throughout the project that was something that was pretty consistent. They wanted to work together, they didn't want to work with other people and while they—I didn't see any idea that there were problems there—were just more comfortable, maybe, working with one another because they were friends not because of any racial issue.

Mr. Robbins: I have a couple of opinions about that. That is something that I am a little more stringent about is the seating chart. I make sure they separate so they have to work with others because they are comfortable working with other people in the class. If you forget and get a little lax on that and let them start grouping together than that is easier and it is a comfort zone they are used to. Then they will just work primarily with each other. I think that was part of what you saw. It was the seating arrangement and just enforcing that and making sure they set where they were supposed to because all of those kids work really well with other people. One of the good examples of that is Sasha

because even though she feels comfortable in that group, I think she prefers to be with somebody else because she can show she likes poetry a little bit more. It is not just based on cultural norms there because when she would get with someone else, she would be a lot more focused and she would get them more focused but when she was with that core group of African-American students that was sitting right in that one area, then it became more about jokes and little things and not as serious and not as focused. Even filtering into that last day performance where you saw Michael getting them off track because if you take Louise and Sasha, they are usually pretty serious about activities like that and Thelma, for example, would never laugh towards anyone's performance and she tried to make that clear, but Michael was making her kind of laugh and she was a lot more serious because she is not as confident with presenting things. Mostly, I think it was seating arrangement thing; you have to enforce that. That is one of the things that we talked about at the first of the year. I don't allow that kind of grouping because it is everywhere else in school situation, you are able to group yourselves like that and I think we need to get as far away from that as possible and I talk about that frequently first semester. Getting out of your comfort zone, meeting other people, being nice to each other, talking to other people, being friends with your friends in the hallway where you are always going to see them but in the classroom getting to know those people that you have to, that you just get stuck with.

Mr. Robbins agreed with Mrs. Gruene's assertion that the students separating by race had been, at least in part, a cause for Michael's uncharacteristic behavior. In planning the project, I wanted the students to ultimately feel comfortable reading dramatically in front of peers of their choice before moving them to new groups. During the project, I started that way but stopped enforcing that the students work with new people.

Student Interviews

In discussing the POLP with the students, I wanted to find out what parts of it made them uncomfortable and what parts they did not like. Throughout the interview process, I did not question or challenge the students' opinions and asked open-ended questions that would often lead to unfamiliar places. While not mentioned by name by the students, the category of Anti-climate occurred several times throughout the transcripts. Much of the discussion centered on Michael's disruption of the final performance. Risking sounding repetitive, I included more

about that phenomenon as it related to social factors that could potentially inhibit participation in performance based activities.

While the students ultimately seemed to work together in a friendly, conducive classroom environment, there were occasions when the opposite was found to be true. In interviewing Mark, I often had to ask seven or eight follow up questions to get any sort of an answer out of him. He was standoffish in the interview and his answers were parsimonious and often detail free. He offered his precise perspective on the laughing that occurred during the final performance.

> *T: How did that make you feel when Louise was laughing through the whole*
> *performance?*
> *Mark: Like she wasn't very mature.*

Mark expressed that he was frustrated by the experience of the final performance because he had picked a poem he wanted to share with others. During the introductory interviews, I thought he was the least interested in the project but by the end he wanted to participate even though some classmates made it difficult.

Jeannette was likely the most intelligent person in the class, and it might not be a coincidence that she was most critical of the project and especially, of Michael. She was very upset with the manner in which the final performance occurred and said she didn't want to read because of the laughter and commotion caused by Michael. In the midst of her complaints I asked a question that sparked a noteworthy answer.

> *T: Do you see him being a negative influence in the class overall? Do you see some*
> *positive things too?*
> *Jeannette: Yeah, he does do good things; he makes the class more lively, but I don't think*
> *the class, other than [Michael's] friends, would really miss him if he were gone. He says*
> *a lot of rude things and just comes out with stuff...*

These words signify that Jeannette was pretty frustrated with Michael. She does not feel any loyalty towards him and while she does at least acknowledge that others appreciate what he added to the class, she was quick to qualify that statement. If Jeannette's statement was true and the class really wouldn't miss Michael, a solid example of Anti-climate would be the result. Following this part of the interview, I urged her that if in the future she felt so strongly about a student, she should report that to the teachers. She said she would never do that. One possible

explanation for Jeannette's displeasure with another member of the class is revealed in this next excerpt.

> *Jeannette: I had to switch over from another hour to accommodate all of my classes.*
>
> *T: So you weren't here at the beginning of the school year?*
>
> *Jeannette: Yeah, me and another person came in late. Mark moved here from somewhere else. I guess that kind of relates to each other.*

Not being around at the beginning of the school year as Mr. Robbins was creating the classroom climate for the school year could have played an essential role in her general distaste and discomfort around Michael. As an admittedly shy person, the opportunity to connect with the other students would have been limited. Nonetheless, she continued voicing her displeasure with the way Michael treated other students in the class.

> *Jeannette: Like the way he treats Stacy is horrible. I don't even know how she could put up with that.*
>
> *T: They kind of bicker back and forth quite a bit?*
>
> *Jeannette: Yeah but he says some mean things to her and she usually doesn't say anything back to him. He will say things about her appearance. Especially since girls are like all self-conscious. It is just kind of, if you don't have to do it, don't do it.*
>
> *Jeannette: He will talk about her freckles and stuff and always make fun of her head. Anything he can make fun of he does.*

Mr. Robbins viewed the relationship between Stacy and Michael as a give and take one where each tempered the other when it was necessary. Jeannette's perspective was much different. The focus she placed on Michael could be due to the fact that she was interviewed immediately following the final performance. Many of the references she made were about events that happened even before the POLP began. Regardless, she was upset by her experience with Michael as a classmate.

Student Resistance took several forms during the course of the project. Ultimately, everyone did participate and perform oral readings of poetry, but it was not without certain forms of Resistance. Mark proved to be one of the most difficult students to engage with the oral readings. During the introductory interview, he expressed through his body language and voice he really did not like what we were doing.

> *T: What is your opinion of the Poetry Out Loud Project at this point?*

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Mark: I don't know I just I really don't know.

T: Do you see a point in doing it?

Mark: Not really.

T: Do you think any of the students in the class would benefit from doing it?

Mark: No.

His answers were accentuated by shoulder shrugs, an expressionless voice, and by him staring at the table and at the tops of his shoes. He clearly did not appreciate having to do this. By the final interview, his resistance surfaced in different forms though it was still prevalent.

T: First of all, what was your overall impression of the POLP we just completed?

Mark: It was pretty easy.

T: What did you like about it?

Mark: Spending half the class doing poetry.

Mark failed to appreciate the goals of the POLP though he was much less standoffish during the second interview. I remember during the first interview feeling insulted and that it was a personal thing between us. By the end of the project, we had become better acquainted and though he stopped short of seeing the point in the project, he expressed less Resistance. Additionally, Jeannette was another student that seemed resistant to the idea of performing. She hesitated until almost the very end of each performance to participate. I was particularly interested in why Jeannette, a "brilliant" student according to Mr. Robbins, was so apprehensive.

T: How do you feel about being asked to read in front of others?

Jeannette: I usually don't like doing it at first, but I can get into it once I am actually doing it. I don't have a problem with it but if I actually have a choice about when I have to go up, I am going to stall as long as I can.

T: You did. You waited until almost the very end to go. Can you think of precisely why you didn't want to go?

Jeannette: Lack of confidence just because going up there you always feel like there are people watching you. When there are people actually whispering or, they're, when I was watching them, certain people would be completely looking at them and then they would whisper something and laugh. You know, if you aren't up there and you see that happen, you are like "Oh Great." That is part of the reason why I hesitated.

Jeannette provided another perspective about why she wanted to resist participation in the project. Certain factors of the environment were disrupted by Michael and without that comfort-zone, she did not want to take one step in front of the class. Here is a student as talented and bright as anyone in the classroom but her confidence was waning before that final performance. Certain factors of Resistance as described Jeannette worked to inhibit her participation and that of others.

While Segregation was coded nine times by teachers, it was only mentioned twice by students and both times Rebecca discussed it. The fact that students did not discuss it was something that stood out to me as being important. Whether they weren't comfortable discussing it or whether they truly did not recognize it as something important in the context of that specific school and classroom is difficult to discern; however, in Rebecca's case, she recalled that one of the teachers had mentioned the fact students seemed to be separating by race and offered a possible explanation in her comparison of Mr. Robbins and Mrs. Gruene.

> *T: What do you see as the differences between your two teachers, Mr. Robbins and Mrs. Gruene?*
>
> *Rebecca: …We talked about fighting and how the class was segregated kind of and Michael actually did that. It isn't like that we meant to but everyone (here referring to the three African-American girls) drifted towards Michael. He has a lot of friends in the class.*

Suggesting here that the division of races was really only amongst the one race, African-Americans, likely due to friendship bonds outside of class, Rebecca related enjoying both teachers and appreciated that Mrs. Gruene talked more "about doing the right thing and stuff." The case for Segregation truly inhibiting the performances or other dramatic reading activities is weak from the perspective of the students.

Performance Recordings

Several instances from the project help document and demonstrate students' attempts to inhibit participation. The actions took many forms. Whether they were instances of comments between the performances or the actual performances, students, on occasion, worked against the goals of the project and each other.

> *(Audio, Performance Two, 00:23:45.337,00:24:11.890) Describe…*This clip featured Michael performing "Chrysanthemums" by Maya Angelou. This was an extremely short poem

(14 seconds) and the recording was dotted with laughter before and during the reading of it. He made two miscues in the reading, stopping before the words range and poetry.

Michael: Oh, my, my(laughter)

Class: (laughter)

Michael: Poem is called Chrysanthemums. It's by Maya Angelou.

*Analyze…*The fact that this student, someone that always wanted attention, read such a short poem was an example of anti-climate. He broke character before starting the reading and caused the class to laugh. *Reflect…*Michael was a gifted reader and someone that stood out immediately as wanting to be in front of the classroom at every possible opportunity. The fact that he chose a 14 second poem to read made me think that he no longer bought in to the project and was not taking it seriously.

*(Audio, Performance Two, 00:32:45.235,00:33:42.692) Describe…*This is the break before Louise reads her poem. She is the last person to read her poem and several student comments during the break shed light on the anti-climate in the room at this point.

T: Louise.

Mrs. Gruene: Louise, you are the last one.

Porscha: Go Louisa!

Louise: Shut-up Porscha!

April: Louise, say something.

Wendy: We are going to laugh at you.

Louise: Alright, let me make one thing clear before I go. I was not laughing at anybody up here because of that statement you just made.

The students are restless in the fifty seconds it takes between April, the previous reader to sit down and for Louise to actually start reading. *Analyze…*Louise waited till the very end to present her poem and from the comments between the readings, the environment seemed hostile. The "Go Louisa!" statement from Porscha was said with sarcasm and the reply from Louise was too. Wendy made an angry sounding comment about Louise's laughter throughout the presentations. Here, Louise took the blame for something that Michael caused, but retorted that she was not laughing at anybody, likely realizing how it must have seemed to her peers. *Reflect…*The class didn't throw pens and paper at Louise but voiced their displeasure in their comments, one of

which, Wendy's, seemed particularly barbed. The Anti-climate the students created worked against the class at times during the final performance.

(Audio, Performance Two, 00:34:53.117,00:35:17.835) Discuss…This audio clip contained Michael's final performance. It was short and riddled with miscues and laughing. He made eight mistakes in three lines of poetry. While he did read a second poem, it was read poorly.

> Michael: This is my second poem by Maya Angelou again. Umm, it is called "Passing Time." Your skin like dawn, mine is like musk [laughter]/ One paints [paints-miscue] the beg [laugh] inning, [laughter] of a [laughter] certain end [laughter], the other, [laughter] the end of a [cert miscue] sure beginning. Sorry ya'all, I messed it up.
>
> Porscha: Is that it?

Analyze…Michael did read a second poem which I had stated at the beginning of the second performance as being one of the goals for that day. This example of Anti-climate falls on the shoulders of the class leader, Michael. Whether it was a poor choice of poems to read or a general lack of seriousness, he did not perform to his capability. Reflect…I guess ultimately, this was a disappointing moment in the research sequence. Mr. Robbins and Mrs. Gruene suggested several possibilities about what might have happened to trigger this response but ultimately, Michael, because of his status in the class, tainted the final performance.

(Video, Performance One, 00:10:26.606,00:10:54.771) Describe…This clip of a time between performances illustrated several students goading Matt into performing next. Succumbing to the peer pressure, Matt threw up his arms on his way to the front of the room.

> Matt: Whatever, I'll go. I hate you people!

Analyze…Matt was a student that fled the front of the room when asked to read song lyrics aloud while I observed their music presentations and read the same poem, unnoticed by the teachers until after the project, for each performance. He may have memorized that poem, "Oh Captain, My Captain," so he could survive the dramatic oral readings by not reading. Reflect…I didn't perceive Matt's somewhat harsh words as being a sign of how he felt toward the class, but he may have been frustrated because several students were calling his name and trying to get him to read. This form of resistance was preferred to the flight approach Matt took prior to the beginning of the project.

*(Video, Performance Two, 00:00:06.398,00:00:11.398) Describe…*This five second clip is meant only as a representation of the seating arrangement. The four African-American students are sitting on the right side of the screen with the noted addition of April, a Caucasian female, and are flanked by me and Mrs. Gruene. Moving from right to left there is a separation and the other students are mixed together. Within that mix of students are two Asian American students, two Hispanic American students and four Caucasian students. *Analyze…*The division of race is representative of the cliques present in the classroom when students were allowed to choose their groups. The students were sitting by their friends. Rebecca and Jeannette, virtually inseparable during class, sat directly next to each other. Jeff, Malary, and Richard, friends from eighth grade were the same way. *Reflect…*The concept of Segregation is difficult to demonstrate in a movie or audio clip unless specific interactions between students would have been captured. They were not, but when I gave the students the choice of where they wanted to sit for the first performance, a snapshot of the room provided a typical configuration of the class as it relates to racial Segregation.

Manipulate

How can teachers manipulate the social context of a classroom in order to promote students' participation in dramatic oral reading? Four separate categories combined to create the axial coding category and the support for the understanding of manipulate. During the open coding process, 23% (111/493) of the codes assigned were from the categories of Climate, Choice, Motivational Teachers, and Feedback. These four categories fall into the manipulate section of the axial coding because they are all factors that, in the context of a classroom, could be altered by a teacher or researcher. First, the interview transcripts and recordings document the category of Climate (41%, 46/111). While something that was established early in the school year in this particular classroom, different management and teaching styles could produce drastically different results, hence, Climate was a factor that could be manipulated. Second, the concept of Choice (18%, 20/111) occurred frequently in the transcripts and performance recordings and again, was a factor that could easily be removed by the teachers in the context of the project. Rather than having students freely and openly select which poems to read, a teacher or researcher could choose the poems or significantly limit which poems students could read. Third, the presence of Motivational Teachers (32%, 36/111) in a classroom could be changed or

altered to create different results. While sorting teachers to determine if they are motivational could be a lengthy process, teachers that did not possess the self-perception being a motivational teacher would likely net different results. Finally, the element of Feedback (8%, 9/111) could be increased or decreased in order to meet different goals or alter the results. These four categories contributed to the understanding of the aforementioned original research question of how to manipulate the social context to promote participation in dramatic oral reading activities. This section was organized into the three different central data sets—teacher interviews, student interviews, and performance recordings.

Teacher Interviews

The teachers' perspectives on the POLP were invaluable. Through the interview process both Mrs. Gruene and Mr. Robbins offered incredible insights and suggestions on ways in which I could change the POLP to improve it for the future. I began each interview by encouraging each to offer their unique perspectives about the POLP and to not be concerned with what I thought. I implored each of them to share what they thought was valuable, what could be changed, and ultimately if they would engage future students in similar activities.

The concept of a positive, friendly classroom Climate was easy to see the very first day I attended this class. Students truly enjoyed class, each others' company, and the teachers enjoyed teaching. While this feeling in the classroom was difficult to quantify or describe, Mr. Robbins description of how he developed the climate during the first few weeks of school and then maintained it since then is particularly relevant.

> *T: Could you go back and kind of walk me through process of developing this close knit classroom climate.*
>
> *Mr. Robbins: I think maybe the fact that from the very beginning I would make sure that no matter what we were reading or doing we would always write and speak about those topics and give the kids a chance to have a voice and maybe give them an opportunity that sometimes they are not given and even if they are saying something that maybe I don't necessarily agree I still allow them to do that. We talk about those things and if I find something, maybe one of their opinions or a stereotype that they should rethink I tell them why I think they should rethink it and kind of maybe there is a father figure thing going on there. I guess it is maybe just a comfort level of letting them be who they are without being to overly critical of those personalities and I probably was heavy at the*

first of the year of jumping on people if they are not nice to each other. I do talk about family and the way you treat people in general is going to have a big effect on the way they treat you and we go through a lot of that. It is real subtle talk; I don't go straight out and say you can do this, you can't do this, but anytime there is a teachable moment at the first of the year I am heavy on those types of things. I think maybe that class took to it more than others because a lot of those personalities in there are smashed really early in other classes. They never get a chance to shine. In here, they feel comfortable because they are able to voice their opinions. If someone in the class early on may have said something and someone else didn't agree with, I smash that really early. So now if they tease or joke or that type of thing, they know there is a limit. In general I have always tried to setup that type of atmosphere where it should be comfortable for them to say to write to speak about whatever they need to. We apply that to whatever we are doing or reading, even if that is <u>Romeo and Juliet</u> or <u>The Odyssey</u> and the classic stuff, we still get back to their issues and they have the opportunity to just say what they think about them in general.

Mr. Robbins' description of the beginning of the school year helped explain much of his teaching philosophy. He focused on the individual student and respected their opinions, unique abilities, and differences. He was clearly a learner-centered teacher based on what he stated in the interview and through my observations while in the classroom. A self-described "father figure" in the way he approached teaching, I witnessed him provide lunch money for students, purchase items from the internet, and provide space in his classroom for athletic bags and personal effects. He was attune to students needs and wants as people and at the same time fostered a learning environment where students were excited about English. Additionally, by relating classic works such as *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Odyssey* back to his students' lives, he worked towards developing a sense of self within the literature and literacy activities. I observed students that were engaged in school activities not to get a grade or necessarily learn something but because they felt a sense of loyalty towards Mr. Robbins and developed, through the course of my observations, a similar level of loyalty towards Mrs. Gruene. Consequently, the POLP would have been drastically different if a different teaching style and approach would have been present.

The subject of choice as it related to the poetry students picked to read during the project provided one example of when the two teachers didn't agree with each other. As I mentioned, whether or not the teachers would complete such a project as this again without me around provided a fascinating set of answers, some of which focus on the idea of Choice. Students were originally limited to certain letters of the alphabet in their choices of poetry. Each teacher provided a different approach to this problem.

> T: Would you do a project similar to this in your class next year and what would you change about it?
>
> Mrs. Gruene: I would do a project like this and have the students read and pick out poetry. I think I would still use the website to have them pick out poems. I would break it down and stick with one or two poems and have them work with those two poems so much that they really become comfortable with them.

By limiting students' choices to one or two students to read as a whole class, the project would ultimately take a more teacher centered approach. There is no question that students were overwhelmed with the amount and type of poetry available as part of the Poetry Out Loud National Recitation Contest. How does a teacher offer choices while dealing with such a large amount of material? In my next question, this time to Mr. Robbins, I alluded to having the students work with several types of poetry prior to beginning the project.

> T: I am wondering about what needs to happen before they begin picking out poetry in order to make that more successful and in order to make them aware of what kinds of poems they even like.
>
> Mr. Robbins: "This is your group of poems, you need to look through here and find what works for you." That works for those kids but for the two or three that asked, "could we look for other stuff," I think they needed a choice so I don't know if you make it a whole class thing where everyone has all this latitude because some kids need that structure of "this is what you're gonna do and these are your parameters and that is it." It depends, I think the option should be there but I don't think I would present it to everybody as "this is the option."

Mr. Robbins would offer the students choices but observed that most students needed limits within which to search for poetry. Basically coming into the classroom for only two days before beginning the project was a limitation. Before beginning this project again, the teachers agreed

that a poetry unit of some sort where students became familiarized with several different poets and forms of poetry would have significantly helped students choose poetry more effectively. Each approach to teaching the POLP in regards to Choice would yield different results, hence, placing that category clearly in the manipulate section.

Few teachers would feel comfortable discussing being a Motivational Teacher in the context of an interview yet the students in this classroom found both teachers motivational for completely different reasons. Either through comments they made about students, actions they took and discussed, or perspectives they shared, both Mrs. Gruene and Mr. Robbins fit into the category of motivational teachers, not necessarily because they try to be that but because students viewed them each in that light. This first example demonstrated Mrs. Gruene's belief in a student's abilities and projected the disposition that she viewed her role as someone that needed to encourage and empower Rebecca.

> *T: [Rebecca] stumbled a lot too. It was almost like that proverbial kid in the class that volunteers to read aloud even though everyone knows they can't.*
>
> *Mrs. Gruene: For Rebecca, I kind of expected her to do her part because in class; even when we read some difficult pieces, she would always volunteer to read. She is not a fluent reader though but at the same time, you don't discourage her from reading because if she is volunteering to read when no one else is, then the reading orally is going to help her mentally. She does stumble over the words but I don't see her motivation going down.*

Mrs. Gruene wanted Rebecca to continue trying and fighting to become a more proficient oral reader because she recognized a willingness in the student to participate that would ultimately "help her mentally." The idea there was that Rebecca could gain confidence for other aspects of school and life by gaining it as part of the POLP. Next, from the perspective of the student teacher this time around, Mrs. Gruene offered her thoughts about Mr. Robbins' oral performance on the final day.

> *Mrs. Gruene: I looked at Mr. Robbins' and I thought man, he has never done that before. He took a poem that he has only heard once or twice and he practiced it and I could see where that expert teacher, he had the visual, he had everything down pat and I thought, man, that is where I want to be. There is a difference, even though you read a lot and you know certain aspects to look for, between that and doing it. I am still looking to get there.*

Mr. Robbins, as her cooperating teacher, was characterized as a Motivational Teacher. By setting an example and performing poetry in such a fine manner, Mrs. Gruene expressed wanting to reach a point as a teacher where she could do what he was doing. She recognized his talent and ability during his performance of poetry. Furthermore, a teacher's philosophy was offered as a characterization of a Motivational Teacher. Through Mr. Robbins words, I was provided evidence in support of the idea so many students had mentioned. He motivated students.

> *Mr. Robbins: I think you have to do as many things outside of the regular format as possible because the kids get so used to sitting down in their seats, having to follow rules, writing things with paper and pencil all the time but if you give them a chance to do something that some of them feel more comfortable with.*

Mr. Robbins expressed his approach to teaching in just a few lines and with that, shed light onto why his students were motivated to attend his class and participate in the activities he endorsed. It was different. It was not English class like they had experienced before and because of that, students felt motivated by his approach. By removing teachers that were identified as motivational from such a study, the results would change.

Both teachers agreed the concept of Feedback was central to understanding of some students during the POLP. Long considered one of the pillars of education, the Feedback a student received as part of a class was critical to them realizing mistakes and moving forward. The feedback as it appeared in the POLP was largely peer to peer in nature. Mr. Robbins offered his insight into the issue of dramatic oral reading and changes he had seen as a part of the project.

> *Mr. Robbins: Because a lot of these kids when they read journal entries or just anything that they read they, if it is in their own words, they paraphrase and ad lib and will not read straight from the paper but now they are getting closer now that they will read what they have written because they know what it is going to sound like when it comes out because they had to focus on that and have someone critique what they were doing so I think that part is really valuable and has a lot to do with their academic success rate in any course because confidence keeps a lot of students from doing well in courses that they are not comfortable with even something like a math class so maybe now, a couple things really, they are even more vocal and this class is already vocal and a little more confident in what they are doing.*

Mr. Robbins felt the peer to peer Feedback was effective in building confidence. While agreeing with this to a point, Mrs. Gruene also saw a place for more teacher feedback.

> *Mrs. Gruene: Maybe if they had to read it to us with one of the readings and then go back and read it to their partners with us critiquing and pointing out all the good things that they could highlight on.*
>
> *T: Kind of using the teachers more?*
>
> *Mrs. Gruene: Yes and then by the time they go there, "well the teacher says I did this real good, do you see me losing that or did I go the opposite way or did I do something totally different?"*

This concept of using the teachers more for the Feedback portions of the POLP was an idea that had not occurred to me during the design of the study. While there were certainly several opportunities, circulating around the room or listening to individual students read, for the teachers to provide Feedback and we all did, it was not written into the formal plans. Discussion of Feedback was a small portion of the interview transcripts of the teachers though, the two comments above illustrate an important potential alteration for future projects.

Student Interviews

The students' perspective on the elements of the project, teachers, and class that could be potentially manipulated to form different results takes several different forms, though is limited by in large due to the fact they were the subjects of the project. Their opinions about each other as they related to classroom climate or their thoughts about the class in general combine to create an understanding of the class and some of its' unique features.

> *T: What is being in Mr. Robbins' third hour, what does that mean to you?*
>
> *Juan: At the beginning of the year, we really didn't have that much in common or anything. Michael would get up and dance around or bring people down or something but then Mr. Robbins talked to him and then Michael started being nice to everybody else. Then, everybody else started seeing the positives from each other. And we all just realized all of our weakness and would help each other out and if we were having trouble with an assignment, we'd help each other out and like if I couldn't get an answer they'd give me the answer and I would give them another answer. We would trade and things like that.*

Juan related a sense of classroom climate he experienced as a part of this class. For 9th grade students to "realize weaknesses and see the positives from each other," a special situation must be in place. In discussing which students he did and did not feel completely comfortable around, Juan related not feeling comfortable around Michael but recently things had improved. The opposite question also resulted in a unique answer.

> *T: Who in the classroom do you feel most comfortable around?*
>
> *Juan: I think Mark, Wendy, Malary, and Jeff. Those are the people I feel most comfortable with.*

I wondered if there were other circumstances that caused these students to develop these bonds.

> *T: Is there any reason? Did you guys go to middle school together? Do you live close by? Are you friends from other classes?*
>
> *Juan: The only person I knew outside of Mr. Robbins' class was Malary. I have known her since eighth grade and we were on the track team together and I guess we kind of got to know each other then Mark I just met before you came and Wendy I guess she tried at the beginning of the year, I didn't talk that much and I guess she kind of encouraged me to open up a little bit. I think Mr. Robbins makes it friendly and comfortable.*

Based on my first impressions of Juan when April declared aloud she could not work with him, I wondered if socially, he fit into the class very well. I never sensed any further disagreements between Juan and April; it is likely Mr. Robbins took care of that immediately. Another example of Climate occurred during the interview with Malary. In our discussion of why she felt comfortable reading aloud and what factors led to her enjoyment and engagement of the project.

> *Malary: I think Mr. Robbins makes it friendly and comfortable.*
>
> *T: What has happened in there that makes this class so friendly and comfortable? How does he do that?*
>
> *Malary: He is like us though. He sort of just has his stuff together at the beginning of class. He knows what he is talking about and he relates stuff to us a lot and we get along with him. I think that is one big thing that brought us together because we all got to know each other. That class is always the class I look forward to in my schedule. I always knew that I wasn't always under pressure and I could just chill out and stuff.*

The idea that these students got to know each other so well stood out throughout the data sets. Malary was an exemplary student and she participated at a very high level in the POLP. These

students learned about each other as people and students at the beginning of the school year and since then have built on the classroom Climate.

The concept of Choice as it related to students selecting poetry was a topic I tried to ask questions about. I felt that this might have been a limiting factor for some students as there were either too many or not the right poems from which to choose. In attempting to clarify this process for future projects, I didn't get much information from the students. Only (6/20) of the responses coded Choice were from the student interviews and only two students—Rebecca and Malary—commented about it.

> *Malary: Yeah, I think if there were more websites than just the Poetry Out Loud it would*
> *be a little better but I think it is a good website.*

This report of feeling limited by the Poetry Out Loud website was not uncommon amongst students during the project but most accepted it as what we were doing and moved on. Rebecca agreed with Malary.

> *Rebecca: Just different poems. More places to find the poems.*

Both Mrs. Gruene and Mr. Robbins advocated limiting the students' choices of poetry, except in special cases, so they could focus more. Having nearly 500 poems from which to choose could have been counterproductive but the issue here had little to do with the number of poems and much more to do with the style and type of poems present. Students that enjoyed poetry wanted to read poems that they knew and the website did not offer that, in most cases. This is not to say that this aspect of the project should change. Exposing the students to poems considered classic or canonical was an aspect of the project that I would not change.

Whether teachers serve to motivate students to completing their work or inspire them in other ways to reach above and beyond their capabilities, few students would argue that these two Teachers were Motivational. In part, the style, or approach to teaching, each took was one predominantly learner-centered. This focus on the individual student was one factor of why the students reported enjoying this class more than others and referring to it as their "best class." Mark, having missed out on much of the community building and from having Mr. Robbins as a lead teacher, offered that the teachers made sure he completed his work.

> *T: Do you feel any pressures in this class as far as do you think the teachers want you to*
> *succeed?*
> *Mark: Yeah.*

T: How do you know that?

Mark: Because they are pushing us to do our work all the time.

Oftentimes, having the expectation of success leads to actual success. Mark felt that the teachers ultimately wanted him to do well. Furthermore, students often compared teachers to each other. While this is often an unfair, inaccurate practice, the students experienced a variety of teachers throughout the day. As described in the day-to-day events of class, a substitute disrupted the classroom environment in one of my first days of the POLP.

Malary: I think the teachers make a really big difference because like the class would be a whole lot different. We had a substitute once but it changed everybody because we couldn't talk to each other.

The apocalyptic day when the substitute called their music "crap" and repeatedly challenged the students was a decided departure from status quo. Motivational Teachers are teachers that respect students' interests and relate to their students. Michael related this during his introductory interview.

Michael: You can relate to them more because it seems like they have experienced the same things that we have experienced. Because they are not older like some of our other teachers, we can relate to them more and they can relate to us.

While Michael pointed towards age as a being a factor, his comments had more to with the fact that both Mrs. Gruene and Mr. Robbins accepted him as person and respect him. Finally, Rebecca offered her perspective about the teachers and why she liked the class.

Rebecca: They are serious about what they are doing but they make it funner.

Teachers that students relate to and enjoy being around are not necessarily good teachers and not considered motivational. In this case, the students realized, as demonstrated through their comments, these teachers had their best academic interests in mind and treated them as equals, as people. The category of Motivational Teachers is well represented with Mrs. Gruene and Mr. Robbins.

Feedback was not a popular conversation piece during the student interviews. Only Mark and Rebecca commented on the concept. I expected that this would have been something that the students would have discussed more. After all, the idea of students critiquing each other's oral reading performances was a central part of the study and of what transpired on a daily basis. Feedback took several forms from an informal comment to a more formal, written evaluation. In

moving the students toward formal feedback, I had the class stand in a circle and asked for volunteers to read. Rebecca was the first volunteer and I led a brief Feedback session with class asking them for input on how she could improve. They participated nicely and offered several constructive suggestions.

> Rebecca: I know that I didn't look up. I tried to but it kind of looks weird. I could have just glanced up or looked up fast but people didn't catch it. Kind of like you know how we have to give input when Michael did it?
>
> T: Yeah?
>
> Rebecca: Nobody wanted to do it because Michael didn't want them to.
>
> T: Right, they kind of knew how he would react.

This sequence in Rebecca's interview was included to demonstrate one of the possible reasons feedback was not discussed much by the students. Michael read immediately following her and while the class participated in critiquing her oral reading, they would not say a word about Michael's. He read well but no one was going to take a chance that their comment might offend their leader. I offered a couple of suggestions and moved on, sensing the awkwardness in the room. A teacher could easily increase, decrease, or change the feedback structure for the POLP and produce different results. In combining with Motivational Teachers, Choice, and Climate, the category of Feedback is another contributing idea to ways which the POLP could be manipulated.

Performance Recordings

(Audio, Performance Two, 00:31:45.865,00:32:05.750) Describe…April gets up to reading "Passing" by Toi Derricotte. The reaction in class is natural and normal. She was the first student to read her second poem.

> April: My poem is called "Passing" and this is my second poem.
>
> > A professor invites me to his "Black Lit" class; they're
> > reading Larson's Passing. One of the black
> > students says, "Sometimes light-skinned blacks
> > think they can fool other blacks,
> > but I can always tell," looking
> > right through me.
> > After I tell them I am black,

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I ask the class, "Was I passing

when I was just sitting here,

before I told you?" A white woman

shakes her head desperately, as if

I had deliberately deceived her.

She keeps examining my face,

then turning away

as if she hopes I'll disappear. Why presume

"passing" is based on what I leave out

and not what she fills in?

In one scene in the book, in a restaurant,

she's "passing,"

though no one checked her at the door—

"Hey, you black?"

My father, who looked white,

told me this story: every year

when he'd go to get his driver's license,

the man at the window filling

out the form would ask,

"White or black?" pencil poised, without looking up.

My father wouldn't pass, but he might

use silence to trap a devil.

When he didn't speak, the man

would look up at my father's face.

"What did he write?"

my father quizzed me.

*Analyze…*I selected this sequence of events to represent Climate because not all classrooms would be conducive to a Caucasian reading such a poem. April read this poem in such a manner that all of the students appreciated it. *Reflect…*Choosing this poem and "A Negro Speaks of Rivers," to read for the final performance was a bold move on April's part. She felt confident

enough in her abilities and surroundings, in particular the Climate, that she would take a risk such as this.

(Video, Performance Two, 00:18:25.423,00:19:11.784) Describe…Sasha read a poem that she selected from a site other than the Poetry Out Loud. The poem, "Secret Friends," was one of two she selected under the guidance of Mr. Robbins. The recording featured a truck with loud exhaust pipes driving by. Analyze…This poem was special for Sasha, in part, because she got to choose it from somewhere other than the designated website. She read it with passion and expression. Her engagement with this poem was a direct result of the choice she made to read it. Reflect…For some students choosing poetry outside of the website can be effective. In this case it worked. Sasha took something and made it her own, made it special.

(Audio, Performance Two, 00:15:30.342,00:16:34.292) Describe…Mrs. Gruene read a poem as part of the final performance. She chose "Making Peace" by Denise Levertov and mentioned that it was one of her personal favorites. Analyze…Seeing their teacher on the same level, the students responded with enthusiasm to Mrs. Gruene's reading. She proved to be a Motivational Teacher in this case in leading by example. Reflect…In our interview following the project, Mrs. Gruene mentioned that she enjoyed reading it, but reflected she didn't read it as well as Mr. Robbins and wanted to work to be as good as him. Mr. Robbins was a Motivational Teacher motivating another Motivational Teacher, Mrs. Gruene. While, the feedback portion of the POLP occurred off camera, the recording devices captured audio and video examples of Motivational Teachers, Climate, and Choice that contribute to understanding the question of how the social context could be manipulated to increase participation in the dramatic oral readings.

Data Analysis

Working from the fourteen open coding categories into the axial coding of inhibit, manipulate, and influence, the data suggested three new themes, or representations of knowledge as they contributed to the grounded theory. Three sequential central themes existed: family, performance conditions, and literate identity, each with an antithesis. I began this section by briefly introducing each theme and explaining how it related to the grounded theory. From that point, the outcome categories of Poems Representing Identity, Empowerment, and Transferable Skills were reintroduced as data to support the grounded theory, which, was explained in detail at the end of the section.

Family vs. Dysfunctional Family

As I spent an increased amount of time in the classroom, I sensed that the students in there were somehow bonded in ways with which I was unfamiliar. The feeling in the classroom was one of warmth and acceptance and as I blended into that classroom, I too felt a sense of belonging. The architect and simultaneously the patriarch of this family is Mr. Robbins. He created this group and it was his approach to teaching that Mrs. Gruene and I adopted while teaching in his students' classroom. As with any family unit, this classroom was not without issues and concerns. The chief issue was Michael. He possessed an uncanny ability to impress his teachers in one second and cause undue, premature loss of hair in the next. He was the catalyst for both good and bad behavior, and the students followed his lead. Despite this being an issue at two key moments and a significant part of the discussion of Chapter Four, Michael added far more to the class as a whole than he disrupted on that final performance day.

Through the three axial coding categories of influence, manipulate, and inhibit, it is possible to see a picture of this theme. Ultimately, the powers of family must be greater than the powers of dysfunctional family in order for this theory to move forward. Five open coding categories combine here to create the theme of Family (Class Pride, Climate, Motivational Teachers) vs. Dysfunctional Family (Anti-climate, Segregation). They work together to influence or inhibit students' participation in dramatic oral reading activities.

Positive Performance Conditions vs. Adverse Performance Conditions

The positive performance conditions must be greater than the adverse performance conditions in order for a student to reach a literate identity. Students ultimately must feel safe in the environment and possess confidence in order to successfully participate in dramatic oral reading activities. These conditions relate back and rely on the previous theme of family. This is not to say that students can't get nervous and be apprehensive as part of being asked to perform in front of their peers. Certainly, many of the qualities that inspire positive participation are also considered adverse performance conditions. For example, when a student gets nervous about a performance, it likely means that she cares about it and wants to make it the best possible. Mr. Robbins offered an example of confidence.

> Mr. Robbins: *That is probably the biggest thing is confidence even though over and over we have covered that the final having to get up in front of somebody and they feel like*

they can do that. Most of those kids, no matter how boisterous or flamboyant or whatever else they are normally, when you give them an assignment when they have to stand up and speak and read off a piece of paper especially, they shrink into themselves and you can't get much out of them.

Relating back to the original open coding categories, the theme of Positive Performance Conditions (Class Pride, Climate, Motivational Teachers, Confidence, Performance as Motivator, Self-policing) versus Adverse Performance Conditions (Anti-climate, Segregation, Resistance, Nervousness) works together with the theme of Family versus Dysfunctional Family in order to create the second step of the grounded theory.

Literate Identity vs. Anti-Literate Identity

If the family is larger than the dysfunctional family and if the positive performance conditions are greater than the adverse performance conditions then students will develop a literate identity as part of the project. At this point, to reach the final result in the grounded theory, the original open coding categories of Poems Representing Identity, Transferable Skills, and Empowerment are reintroduced and combined into a new section called Outcomes. These categories, as the results of the POLP, contributed to the emerging literate identities of the participants. This is not to say that everyone developed a literate identity during the POLP, but it is a set of conditions that are conducive for that to occur.

Outcomes

Students and teachers reported seeing results, or outcomes, of the POLP. While these reports were unsubstantiated by quantitative data, they remain an essential part of the study because they contributed directly to the grounded theory. Three different categories were considered to be direct results of the project. The three categories comprised 18% of the total codes (493) assigned in the study. Transferable Skills (29/90) were those skills that students reported or teachers reported seeing that developed as a result of the POLP. Empowerment (11/90) was only coded a handful of times during the data analysis but was not the smallest category that remained in the discussion (Segregation 9/493). Poems Representing Identity (60/90) was a particularly strong category, the second largest amongst all of the categories. Together these three categories represented reports of what the students gained from the experience of the POLP.

Teacher Interviews

As we were discussing students that seemed to respond to the POLP at a different level, Mr. Robbins and I talked about the example of Rebecca. This is an example of Empowerment because this student responded in a way that was out of character; she went above and beyond what she had previously displayed.

> *T: Rebecca would be one and she kept volunteering, did you notice that last day?*
>
> *Mr. Robbins: And she doesn't volunteer for anything during the regular class. You can get information out of her if you call on her but she doesn't volunteer, have her hand up and do anything where she is volunteering very much. She really connected with that.*

I alluded to the fact that Rebecca passionately argued with Michael and Matt about who would go first. That discussion between the three of them was surprising on several levels but none larger than in Rebecca's case. She was an introvert and not a strong oral reader yet she was motivated to participate to the point that she was willing to stand up to Matt and Michael, arguably the two strongest personalities in the classroom.

Michael's disruptions during the final performance was something concerning; I remember wondering why Mrs. Gruene or Mr. Robbins weren't stopping him from causing Louise to laugh. In our discussion of that, Mr. Robbins makes a statement I coded as Empowerment because he is clearly giving the power of the classroom to the students.

> *T: If a teacher singles a kid out in a situation like that and reprimands him or her, sometimes it will completely change the performance and the kids will be intimidated.*
>
> *Mr. Robbins: That is true too because that is their performance and they were in control of that and that was their time with you so I didn't want to interject any point with that. So it was interesting and annoying at the same time.*

This is clearly an unorthodox approach to teaching and while I remembered wanting the teachers to stop the disruptions at the time, his perspective was a valid one too. Clearly, this teacher valued the students' experiences. Another experience that related was that of April.

> *Mr. Robbins: She talks a lot more in class and volunteers more often but when it comes to academic type things, and I would classify this as more academic, she usually isn't one. So something struck a chord with her there too. I don't know if it was just having a microphone. I don't know if it was just poetry, for any of them I am not sure what it is because none of them students have expressed that that is there favorite thing.*

Mr. Robbins expressed that April performed in a way that was out of character in a positive manner during the POLP. Her choices of poetry coupled with the fact she volunteered to read frequently made Mr. Robbins believe that she was engaged at a high level with the project.

An example of Poems Representing Identity was coded in my conversation with Mrs. Gruene.

> *Mrs. Gruene: That way those that wanted to just do the ethnic poets, they could have a little more variety because the website. Some of them were going outside the website to find particular poems by particular authors. Other than that, I still think it was good because I had some of the other girls, like April and Malary that actually took the ethnic poems and then incorporated them into themselves*

The student teacher referred to the instances when April and Malary chose African-American poems to read and did so in an exemplary manner, taking on a persona of sorts. In addition, Mr. Robbins added his perspective of what motivated some students to select poems.

> *Mr. Robbins: Some of them wanted to find something that said something about themselves too…*

Students choose poems for many reasons but because Mr. Robbins' comment here alluded to the idea of self expression through the selection of poetry. He acknowledged that not everyone was so selective and didn't take the poems seriously.

> *I will just take this one and I will have two of those and I will be done with it and others were looking at content and being very selective.*

> The teacher interviews transcripts did not yield any results for Transferable Skills.

Student Interviews

Several students reported gaining skills that transferred to other classes. This concept of Transferable Skills is one that teachers of most subjects, except for Algebra of course, hope happens at some point. Juan was one of the most animate in his descriptions of how the POLP helped his speech grade.

> *Juan: Because then you have all the attention on you and usually I end up forgetting what I was going to say because I guess I have really bad memory or something and when I get under pressure I usually forget a lot of stuff. Then, there is also Life Skills. We have to do speeches in that class and recently I had to do a speech on a future job you want to do and I chose master chef and the speech went very well, and I felt very confident and that*

was the first time I ever felt confident in my entire life in speaking. I guess it was because of this poetry out loud thing because I just felt like I was getting in front of these people again just doing another poem but it was just a speech.

For Juan to express that he was more confident speaking than he had ever been before was a significant statement. He felt strongly about how positive of an experience POLP had been for him despite harboring deep seeded animosity toward a previous English teacher that had nearly failed him for poor oral reading skills. Additionally, Jeannette, one of the most resistant students to the POLP in the entire class, reported gaining some confidence that helped her during a speech.

Jeanette: Yeah, I think I speak a little better. I guess though since I had to do another speech in life skills that had to 5 to 10 minutes. Actually, I did really good, surprisingly, since I stalled to the very end and rushed through all of my work. I only practiced the very beginning where I recited a poem from Alice in Wonderland*. Pretty cool. That was the only part I actually practiced and then the rest, when I had to give the information, I didn't practice at all so I was really surprised when I felt like I did pretty good.*

There were several points during the interview with Jeannette I wasn't sure she could say something positive about the experience. Here she offered a compelling example that demonstrated the category of Transferable Skills. Also, Rebecca reported Transferable Skills as an outcome of the POLP.

Rebecca: Yeah. I think that is part of the reason I did so good on my career speech in life skills because I had more confidence. It was the best speech grade I got so far. Yeah because like last time I did bad and I didn't get to the time so I got a 66 on that speech. This time I got an 82.

Rebecca's speech score increased an admirable amount. It is impossible to tell whether the POLP had any effect on that score, but the students reported increased confidence and related it to success in other classes. They believed that the POLP had positive effects on their other classes.

Another category was Empowerment. Several students reported positive changes in their abilities or attitudes that equated them feeling different about the experience. For example, Juan was the student that might have needed this project the most and his comments reflect a noteworthy positive attitude about the project and his abilities.

Juan: Probably the final presentation we had to give because I guess it was like our final
time to actually get up there and actually get to read the poem out loud to each other. I
guess we all really wanted to make it something special I guess. Like me, I wanted to
have hand movements and everything but I didn't have enough time to memorize the
poems so I couldn't really because I had to keep looking down at the poems and figure
out what to say and everything. Then I guess, also I was really nervous and I didn't want
to do anything that would embarrass me too much.

This student admits to being nervous and potentially embarrassed by the act of dramatic oral reading yet it is something with which he wants to be successful. Another example of Empowerment was reflected in Malary's comment.

Malary: That was a part of it but I would say that the most part of it was how I changed
reading poetry and how I found out how I can express more ways of reading poetry.
Because just the lines and everything, you know, but I didn't know you could put emotion
and moves into it and stuff like that. That was most memorable.

The change Malary mentioned was clear to the participants. All six students and both teachers mentioned the change they witnessed in Malary and responded that she was one of the people that stood out in class.

Poems Representing Identity was a category that developed as a surprise outcome of the POLP. Juan's example typified the category.

Juan: At first, I chose poems because they were short and I didn't want to speak that
much. Then, I chose my second one because, it was called like Father, Son, and Holy
Ghost, about Christianity and everything and I guess that is my religion so I thought I
would go ahead and do that one. Plus it was a medium sized poem so I didn't think it
would be that bad. It related to me. The second time we chose poems I chose, those two I
chose two that were really short because the time before they didn't go so well because I
basically just got up there and read it real fast and so I just chose two really short poems
so I could get it over with so I wouldn't be too embarrassed up there. The third time I
realized that this was going to be my last time to do Poetry Out Loud and so you said we
could choose any poem we wanted off the website and I guess I really got into it and tried
to pick out two poems that I really, really, liked. The mother one ("Mother to Son"), that
reminds me of my mom and how she, it actually reminds me of dad and how he had to

live and how he grew up and everything and then how he encourages me to keep going
and not like fall down or stumble or anything and then my other poem I just really liked
that one because it was talking a little bit about Christianity in there and also it was
talking about how he's not too much of coward and that if the universe is going to fall
apart and he was the only one left that all existence would rest on him and I guess I
really liked it.

From Juan's personal example to Rebecca's reflections about her classmates, the examples of
Poems Representing Identity developed a sense that the students understood the poetry being
read and what it meant to each other.

Rebecca: Some people kind of opened up more because they chose poems that related to
them. Some of them chose poems that had a meaning to a lot of people in the class. I
thought Michael had a poem about a woman and it was kind of about her having a lot of
confidence and he has a lot of confidence. He's different than other people and the
woman was different than other people and stuff.

Malary's perspective on why she chose poetry added to this category.

Malary: I would look for personality in things. And maybe personality I could relate to...
the color of the poem too, the mood.

Mark related understanding Malary better because of not only what she read but how she read it.

T: Do you feel like you understand anybody in the class better?

Mark: A few people, yeah. When you see somebody up on stage doing something, you see
how their personality is because you let it out. Like Michael, Malary. She was all happy
and ready to get up there and then put everything into it.

T: She kind of took it over and was really excited.

Mark: It was like she wrote it.

Mark's parsimonious comments throughout the interviews caused me to wonder if he understood
the purposes of the POLP. His final comment of the final interview says it all. Malary didn't
write the poem but she wrote the text on how to perform poetry that day. She did write it.

Performance Recordings

*(Video, Performance Two, 00:14:56.582,00:16:05.045) Describe…*This clip is from the
second filming of the second performance. The class was short on people as the three students,
Porshca, Michael, and Malary did not return from lunch.

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T: Does anyone want to volunteer to read a second poem?

T: Juan, good!

(He puts his gum down)

T: Are you sure you don't want to have Matt hold it for you?

Wendy: Do you plan on chewing that later?

Juan: This one is called "Mother to Son" by Langston Hughes…

Analyze…Even though this was the second filming of the second performance, Juan was the first to volunteer to read a second poem. His oral reading was of a high quality, but the fact that he volunteered was most noteworthy. This example of Empowerment was reflected in several comments from students and teachers about this student; the video represented the concept well. *Reflect*…The conversation about the gum was a reflection of some of the advice about performing I shared with the class at the beginning of the first performance. The fact Juan remembered to spit out his gum was reaffirming that he had bought into POLP.

(Video, Performance One, 00:16:31.972,00:17:32.913) Describe…This video clip from the first performance exhibited April reading "The Slave Auction" by Francis E. Harper. When she announced the title, the African-American students look at each other, look back at Mr. Robbins, and then up at April. Following the reading, Sasha, Louise, and Michael demonstrated that they appreciated the poem and April reading it with applause and looks of appreciation. *Analyze*…At first it seemed as though April had upset the African-American students with her choice of poems. She read it well and in the end, they appreciated her reading of it. This example of Poems Representing Identity was appropriate for April because the persona she projected in the class was a concerned voice for the African-American condition. All of the poems she chose to read in front of the class were either written by or about African-Americans. *Reflect*…I remembered the tension in the room when she announced the title of that poem and began reading it. As she read it though the tension lifted and the class as a whole appreciated it.

The outcomes section of this theme combines with two previous themes in order to create students with a literate identity. The theme of Literate Identity (Class Pride, Climate, Motivational Teachers, Confidence, Performance as Motivator, Self-policing, Poems Representing Identity, Transferable Skills, Empowerment) versus Anti-Literate Identity (Anti-climate, Segregation, Resistance, Nervousness) relied on the two previous themes moving across the grounded theory laterally.

Grounded Theory

Throughout the open coding and axial coding and considering all of the data collected and presented throughout this chapter, I arrived at a theory to explain the phenomenon that all of the students participated in the dramatic oral reading activities. Kublin et. al (1998) relate that "Vygotsky described learning as being embedded within social events and occurring as a child interacts with people, objects, and events in the environment" (p. 287). It was this classroom environment that played the key role in the participation, hence, the learning that occurred during this study, not, as I originally had proposed, was it Bandura's Theory of Self-Efficacy. While students and teachers reported and exhibited confidence throughout the study, few reported confidence as a major factor in their willingness to participate. Rather, students discussed the family atmosphere present in the classroom. In describing the theory, I have separated the theory into six different stages in order to explain it in a numerically sequential manner.

1. Stage One: Central Phenomenon
2. Stage Two: Open Coding
3. Stage Three: Axial Coding
4. Stage Four: Theme One: Family versus Dysfunctional Family
5. Stage Five: Theme Two: Positive Performance Condition versus Adverse Performance Condition
6. Stage Six: Theme Three: Literate Identity versus Anti-Literate Identity

Figure 1.1 Grounded Theory

Figure 1.1
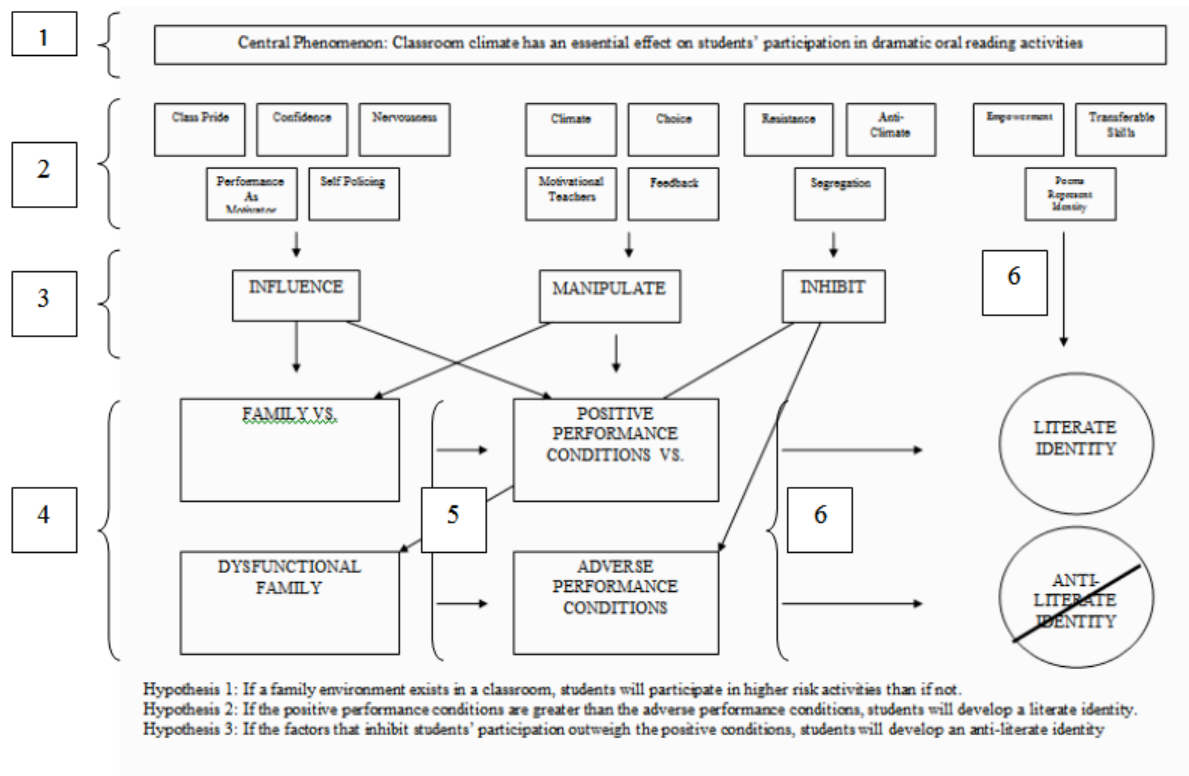
Stage One – Central Phenomenon

The central phenomenon as stated in the grounded theory is "classroom climate has an essential effect on students' participation in dramatic oral reading activities." Considering that the several students in the classroom reported minimal gains in confidence, and focused instead on whether or not they felt comfortable in the classroom during the interviews, I proposed this as the vital reason for the students' participation.

Stage Two – Open Coding

The Open Coding process produced fifteen different categories that are represented in Figure 1.1. These categories were described and exemplified at length in Chapter Four of the research study. These fifteen concepts created the first line across Figure 1.1 with fifteen small boxes.

Stage Three – Axial Coding

The Axial Coding process required putting the data in a different format in order to begin to understand the potential impact on the research study. On Figure 1.1, the open coding

categories are grouped by the axial coding categories of Influence, Manipulate, and Inhibit. At this point, the open coding categories considered outcomes of the POLP rather than part of the process were separated off to the far right side of the diagram.

Stage Four – Theme One

The theme of Family versus Dysfunctional Family created Stage Four of the Grounded Theory when categories were taken from each of the axial coding categories to create the new understanding of knowledge. This was the first conditional stage of the theory in that everything beyond this point hinged either on Family or Dysfunctional Family. Essentially, in order for the positive theme of Family to move across to the right, it had to be greater than the Dysfunctional Family portion of the theme. For example, the Motivational Teachers had to outweigh the Anti-Climate that Michael attempted to establish during the final performance.

Stage Five – Theme Two

Each axial coding category again contributed to the second theme, Positive Performance Conditions versus Adverse Performance Conditions. In addition, the first theme of Family versus Dysfunctional Family contributed to Stage Five of the Grounded Theory by moving to the right. Again, the Positive Performance Factors, which were created in part by the Family, must be greater than the Adverse Performance Factors, which were created in part by the Dysfunctional Family. Whichever conditions exist with the greatest value moved to Stage Six.

Stage Six – Theme Three

Again, each axial coding category contributed to the third theme of Literate Identity versus Anti-Literate Identity. Additionally, the first two themes moved over and contributed to this, the results of the study which, combined with the three categories of outcomes—Empowerment, Poems Represent Identity, and Transferable Skills—create the final representation of data. Based on the prior conditions, students either reached a Literate Identity or an Anti-Literate Identity during their experience with the POLP.

Summary

Chapter Four provided the contextual information necessary to understand the study. From the students to the teachers to the physical description of the classroom, a sense of what it was like to both teach and learn at this school in this classroom provides the study with a basis to

understand what happened and why. By using the students and teachers own words throughout the descriptions of the open coding and axial coding categories, I have attempted to create an understanding of the individuals as their perceptions, comments, and actions contributed to the three central themes of the study: Family versus Dysfunctional Family, Positive Performance Conditions versus Adverse Performance Conditions, and Literate Identity versus Anti-Literate Identity. These three themes represented the understanding of how the factors present in the classroom directly affected not only the students' participation but also the development of their literate identities as they traversed through the Poetry Out Loud Project.

CHAPTER 5 - Discussion

This chapter is designed to provide insight and discussion into the findings and conclusions of the study of students' participation in dramatic oral reading activities in the social context of a ninth-grade classroom. By examining the phenomenon demonstrated through the grounded theory, I will interpret the implications of these findings for classroom teachers and propose further considerations of the study. A discussion of recommendations and suggestions for further research will conclude the study.

Summary of the Study

Dramatic oral reading instruction is as old as education in America. Once the focus of schools preparing students for a world scarce of printed materials, it has been transformed to a fringe activity, one that in the modern American high school takes the shape of forensics, debate, speech, and theater. It is no longer the center of instruction or focus but rather an outlet for a small portion of the student population. The art of performance, especially in high school English classes, is seldom part of the curriculum. As this study focused on the social aspects of asking students to read dramatically in their English class, some of the concerns and problems associated with such activities and consequently some of the reasons these art forms are disappearing surfaced. Standing up in front of a classroom of their peers and reading poetry took some nerve and responses to the situation varied widely.

The purpose of this participatory action research study was to examine the social context surrounding students' participation in dramatic oral reading activities. I engaged in this research to discover if students would participate and engage in these types of activities, in this case, oral readings of poetry, in the context of a classroom. By examining the social context of the classroom from a qualitative perspective, the students' opinions of the experience were valued above the skills that they gained. Since there is little to no research—action, qualitative, or quantitative—published about similar activities being used with high school students, this research served to help the researcher understand what factors must be considered before attempting similar studies in the context of a regular classroom.

This study was conducted at a high school in the Plains States during the second semester of the 2006-2007 school year. Students selected poetry from the www.poetryoutloud.org and

practiced reading it using Rasinski's Cooperative Repeated Reading strategy where students read a text to a partner several times and both garner feedback on their oral reading and provide it for their partner. The students selected poems three different times and presented at least one poem each in two separate performances. As the research drew to a close, the researcher made a gradual exit from the classroom and research site by returning to portions of class for nearly two weeks. The final student interviews conducted during this time also provided closure for the students most closely involved in the process.

During the performances, the researcher recorded audio and video and following the study conducted interviews with the six students and the two classroom teachers. Once the interviews were finished, the researcher transcribed the tapes. Through the transcription process, coding categories began emerging and being considered. Once transcribed, the researcher read through the student interviews in their entirety and recorded several potential categories. Next, the process was completed with the teacher interviews and potential categories were added. Before reviewing the audio and video recording, the researcher engaged in several processes in order to establish compatibility with the Hyper Research Qualitative Software Analysis Program. By taking the audio recordings and amplifying them to equal levels using audio recording software Audacity, the discussions and chatter in the classroom became audible. Using the Nero Software Package, the researcher then converted the video from a DVD format to a computer and HyperResearch friendly MP4 format. Once all the files were in place and the names were changed on the transcripts, the documents and files were loaded into the HyperResearch program and the initial open coding process began. 15 codes were established in this first stage of data analysis which eventually resulted in three axial coding categories—inhibit, influence, manipulate. Three themes emerged during the final data analysis and based on Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1987) a grounded theory was established to explain the phenomenon of the classroom environment fostering the level of participation witnessed during the POLP.

This study was completed in a single high school in a single classroom with fourteen students, one classroom teacher, and one student teacher. With the results presented in the words of the participants and in descriptions of the actual interactions and performances as captured in the video as much as possible throughout Chapter Four, it is appropriate to examine several key findings.

Findings

Data revealed fifteen categories expressed during the interviews or witnessed during the audio and video recordings: (1) Choice; (2) Classroom Climate; (3) Class Pride; (4) Confidence; (5) Anti-Climate; (6) Empowerment; (7) Feedback; (8) Motivational Teachers; (9) Nervousness; (10) Performance as Motivator; (11) Poems Representing Identity; (12) Resistance; (13) Segregation; (14) Self Policing; and (15) Transferable Skills. These categories, in part, combined to create the axial coding categories of Influence, Inhibit, and Manipulate in an attempt to understand how each factor played on the study itself. From that point, they were separated into the emerging themes of Family versus Dysfunctional Family, Positive Performance Conditions versus Adverse Performance Conditions, and Literate Identity versus Anti-Literate Identity.

1. How does the social context of the high school classroom influence high school students' participation in dramatic oral reading?

Over and over the students and teachers referenced the concept of Family throughout the project. While not perfect, this group of 14 students and two teachers functioned like a unit. When someone was upset, as in the examples of Michael and Stacy, their family was there to support them. When Malary took over that final performance, her peers were there to congratulate her. Mr. Robbins described this group as a family and the students substantiated that claim by expressing their class pride and care for others. Even Michael mentioned how glad he was to see his classmates get up there and participate; he didn't expect them to.

A family oriented peer culture was witnessed within the context of this classroom that fostered students' participation in dramatic oral reading activities. This culture proved imperative in creating the ultimate results of the study. It was in place upon my arrival to the classroom. These students had undergone a transformation engineered by their teacher from eighth graders to a functioning high school class where individuals and their opinions were valued above curriculum, school policy, and structure. Working with diversity amongst economics, gender, and race with broad interests this teacher and consequently his student teacher, developed what could only be called a symbiotic community within the context of this classroom. When one student was in need of sympathy, attention, or a snack other members of the group responded. As the students embarked on this decidedly different activity, it was not all that unfamiliar because Mr. Robbins had the students presenting in front of the class on several occasions prior to my

arrival. Learning and skills acquired in this classroom are directly linked to the environment and according to Langer (2001) "environment is a fundamental part of what gets learned, how it is interpreted, and how it is used" (p. 839). If Langer is correct in believing that the environment plays such a critical role in learning, her opinions would support the findings in this study and the grounded theory that, in fact, the environment, referred to as family in this study, was the critical component that afforded the students success and an opportunity to reach a literate identity.

This "certain group of kids," as Mr. Robbins referred to them as had created something special in the four walls of this classroom. Their sense of community and family was something unmistakable as outsiders entered the classroom. POLP was another outlet for their creativity, confidence, and exuberance. Students gained confidence and gained an understanding of each other not often afforded in high school English classrooms because they trusted each other and because they truly did function together.

While the Family fostered the initial culture from which the POLP could take place, several positive performance conditions had to occur in order to move the students along in the theory presented. First, confidence was an imperative aspect of the students' development. Without confidence in their ability, above all else, to make it through the performance, students would have been more hesitant to participate let alone engage. Another key performance condition proved to be the motivational teachers. The students' respect and admiration for Mr. Robbins and Mrs. Gruene was clearly noted throughout Chapter Four. A final performance condition that helped move students towards a literate identity was the performance itself. Again, a bit of an idiosyncrasy, this class of students was motivated by the camera, the microphone, and the opportunity to share their poetry with their peers.

Students assumed new roles in the classroom as part of the POLP. They became identified, in part, by the poems which they read and in part, by the way which they read the poems. Students that participated by choosing representative poems and reading in a different, better, and more dramatic manner moved across the grounded theory diagram towards a literate identity. Drawing on the family environment and positive performance conditions, students that truly reached this area experienced this as a part of the system in place in this particular classroom. In fact, according Alvermann et al. (1999), any literacy event "can be thought of as critical social practice" (p. 22). This critical social practice occurred as a natural part of the

POLP as students selected poems, engaged in oral reading, participated in performances both as performers and as audience members, and arrived at an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses as they relate to reading poetry aloud. Freebody et al. (1998) furthers that idea by saying even "a bristling array of silences—things we could have said instead, aspects of a topic we could have highlighted but chose not to" (p. 1). Even the silences during the literacy events contribute, through social means, to the literate identities established or not established by the participants.

2. How does the social context of the classroom act to inhibit student participation in dramatic reading?

Several factors developed in the data that contributed to the anti-theme of dysfunctional family. First, new adults in the classroom would naturally disrupt the flow and potentially work against the goals of any project, especially one requiring a certain degree of comfort and risk-taking. As I mentioned in Chapter Four, Mrs. Gruene was not like a student teacher and really assumed many of the qualities that Mr. Robbins possessed as far as her perspective on working with the children. Nonetheless, the fact that Mr. Robbins was no longer the lead teacher during the project worked to disrupt the flow of class and be one example of how the dysfunctional family antithesis could have eclipsed the theme of family. Second, several students moved into this particular class at semester or even more recently. A new student can make or break a class environment. Rebecca and Jeannette were both additions to this class at semester and students I interviewed. Several of their comments during the interview process demonstrated that they were not completely comfortable with environment. Another student I interviewed, Mark, was an even more recent addition to the class. He was clearly not a student who completely bought into the POLP, and his being in the class and potentially working against the goals of the class or project was noteworthy. Between the three additions to class and the student teacher, a sense of classroom community or environment would be hard to nurture. Third, the researcher served as another potential disruptive factor in considering the classroom environment. While I tried to maintain rules and expectations similar to that of Mr. Robbins and Mrs. Gruene, it was difficult considering all three of us think of teaching differently and utilize three considerably different teaching styles. While it wasn't as big of a factor as I once considered, just having three adult teachers in the classroom might be intimidating to students. This may have been one key advantage of completing research in a Professional Development School; students were used to

having multiple adults in the classroom. Fourth, Michael was a strong individual personality, as strong as I had experienced as a student or as a teacher. This was a possible factor in causing a feeling of dysfunction amongst the family because he was held to different expectations than other students. Michael often referred to having problems with teachers throughout his schooling. It was easy to see why. Clearly, he was an exceptional student and a constant challenge for a teacher trying to manage a classroom. One of the many attributes he possessed was leadership. He could easily sway the class one way or another, humor them with dancing or a joke, and ultimately create excitement amongst his peers. It was a conscious decision for Mr. Robbins and Mrs. Gruene to give Michael the kind of power he held in this class. Both could have easily stopped anything he did, but that would likely cause many more problems than it would solve. While a single one of these instances could have been enough to derail the efforts of the POLP, or any other classroom project for that matter, the combination could have proved destructive.

Several conditions during the actual performances were present that acted to inhibit students' participation in the POLP as a continuation and product of the anti-theme of dysfunctional family. First, students that lacked confidence often experienced a great deal of nervousness when given the opportunity to read in front of the class. This lack of confidence could have resulted in several adverse performance conditions. Students might have openly defied the project, fled the room, or simply refused to participate. Second, resistance was observed throughout the project but most obviously during the performances. While this resistance took many forms, it often made the time between performances seem like hours. Third, the possibility of self-policing having negative affects on students is something that occurred to me. While they worked towards getting their classmates to participate, they may have caused some undue and unproductive stress. The example Jeannette would seem to speak to this. The adverse conditions that the dysfunctional family created provide an understanding of what negative factors were present in the classroom.

The dysfunctional family produced adverse performance conditions which resulted in the potential for students developing an anti-literate identity or going wholly against the goals of the project with mocking participation. First, students that would reach this final anti-literate category could be characterized by several indicators. If a student refused to participate in the class activities or in the performances this would signify to other students and to the teachers an

anti-literate identity. Beyond the general lack of participation, students that would potentially fall into this category might defy authority, dissuade others students from participating, distract others, or chastise students adopting a literate identity. While students in the present study showed signs of an anti-literate identity, no one reached it completely so more about this category is sure to be learned from future experiences.

3. In what ways can the social context be manipulated to encourage student participation in dramatic readings?

The axial coding category of Manipulate, developed, in part to address the elusive answer to this question, categories of motivational teachers, climate, choice, and feedback that contributed to an understanding of which categories in the present study could be manipulated or altered in future studies. That being said, actually manipulating the social context would be much more difficult. While finding a classroom without a motivational teacher might not be that difficult, doing so would be a questionable practice. The sense of climate alluded to in this study is student centered, friendly, empowering, and unorthodox. A different teacher could set a climate in a classroom that could be completely effective, be the opposite of Mr. Robbins, but not facilitate the performance risks the students in the present study so willingly took. These factors can all be manipulated to affect the outcome of research studies related to this.

What could a teacher do to manipulate the social context might better be answered some ideas about for what to watch. The students in the POLP tended to segregate by race at certain points during the project. Students grouping into cliques, whether by race, socioeconomics, or even gender tended to work against the goals of the project. One way to manipulate the social context is to constantly require the students to change with whom they are working. By pushing students away from their comfort zones and into groups, over the course of a project or school year, into groups with all of the rest of the class, the potential for a cohesive group to develop would be at a higher level. In addition, the poetry itself, in a situation where students are developing a literate identity by performing poems they select, could have been a limiting factor. To manipulate the poems available for selection and possibly work outside of the POL website would be another way to affect the social context of the classroom. Having students write their own poetry could be another addition to this idea.

Whatever potential manipulations to the social context exist, none would necessarily work with the next class of students. While finding a similar class to this through the descriptions

would be possible, finding an equal situation would be nearly impossible. Ultimately it is up to the researcher and teachers involved to understand and analyze their own social context as it relates to students willingness to participate and engage in dramatic oral reading activities.

Conclusions

When students feel safe in the classroom environment, they are willing to take risks. While the risks taken in this study were inherent parts of most classroom environments, they were social concerns of the students. This class worked together in a manner that at the very least was abnormal. Their level of cooperation, friendliness, and sympathy was something most family units do not experience. When students feel safe and take risks they have an opportunity to engage in authentic learning not possible in classroom situations where the student voice is not valued. These teachers and this group of students and maybe even the hour of the day all worked together to create an environment where a project such as the present study would flourish.

The guitarist who plays a song over and over at his house in front of the mirror has no concept of what it is like to play the same song on a stage, in front of 100 potential critics. In much the same way, learning anything and doing it in front of peers is a different proposition altogether. Performance based learning is something that provides students with an authentic opportunity to demonstrate skills and knowledge. Besides the type of performance detailed in the study, engaging students in group presentations of materials is important. Furthermore, whole class discussions, like Socratic seminars, provide another performance based learning experience where students must demonstrate their knowledge, critical thinking ability, and reflective resources with an audience.

Poetry Out Loud is a viable undertaking in a high school English classroom. In just the second year of existence, POL was something that as a professional currently situated outside of a classroom made me anxious to lead a class of secondary students again. Poetry was not something that I particularly enjoyed teaching and this project renewed an interest in poetry as an art form and as a school subject. Major national support in the form of the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation legitimizes this program and promises longevity. With current popular culture bringing poetry slams and poetry readings back into the consciousness of society, a program like this only makes perfect sense from a broader societal perspective. As teachers continue to discover the great resources available here just to use to teach English, they

will certainly find something not only worthwhile but essential in developing the literacies of their students.

The very students involved in this study and their reactions to the project were of essential interest. One of the questions that stood out to the researcher as the research cycle started was whether or not high functioning and low functioning students would participate. Malary is a high functioning students. She not only participated but took her last performance beyond the imagination of the teachers and her peers. Juan provides the exact opposite example because he clearly felt uncomfortable reading in front if his peers. Several commented to that fact and he stated in his interview that he was very nervous but ultimately proud to participate. The case of Michael is an anomaly. He read at the sixth grade level and maintained a low GPA yet he reported never having difficult with confidence, especially regarding performances, before in his life. He epitomized the idea of confidence, but what happened during the final reading, as Mrs. Gruene mentioned in her interview, could be that he realized his shortcomings compared to the other students like Juan and Malary. Being used to being the number one performer at track meets and in his various classes, the idea of playing second fiddle to several of his peers, in fact demonstrating a particular weakness in reading, didn't sit well and he, therefore, disrupted the performance. These three students fail to answer the questions of whether high functioning and low functioning students, within the context of a classroom, benefit from work with oral reading fluency. For Juan and Malary, they engaged and participated at the highest possible level, but for Michael, he eventually disengaged before destructing the sacred performance environment.

Several students established literate identities during the project. For this to occur, as I mentioned above, the conditions had to be conducive to taking risks. Another key element related to this conclusion is choice. Students had to have the opportunity to select a literary work that somehow represented self, ideals, or persona. Juan represented self when he chose Langston Hughes "Mother to Son." That meant something more to him because it represented his mother and father. When April chose "Passing," by Toi Derricotte, she represented choosing ideals. With a decidedly European American background, she chose several African-American poems to read, creating a sense that she understood part of the condition her African-American classmates experienced. Finally, Michael created, in choosing six Maya Angelou poems to read as part of the project, a representation of persona, an extension of his own character to different worlds.

A final conclusion is represented by the surprising category performance as a motivator. Again, these students seemed particularly engrossed by the aspects of performance, both the physical changes to the classroom and the emotional challenges to their peers. At one point, Michael mentioned "somebody better get up there" because they "were taking my camera time." The students interviewed mentioned that getting to perform in class was something they enjoyed. Furthermore, 100 percent of the class participated in the performances. While several students still felt uncomfortable, nervous, and apprehensive about standing in front of 13 of their peers, three teachers, a camera, and a recording microphone, they did it. I felt that most of the students enjoyed the opportunity and beyond all of the potential intimidating factors, most of the participation represented engagement.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study are that of one classroom. The teacher, school, and students are unique and by design produced unique results. Nonetheless, teachers in contexts similar to this may, in light of these findings, use the strategies and ideas present in this study to help their own students perform poetry out loud and develop oral reading skills. By nature, action research findings are not generalizable, but according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the findings can be transferable.

> If there is to be transferability, the burden of proof lies less with the original investigator than with the person seeking to make an application elsewhere. The original inquirer cannot know the sites to which transferability might be sought, but the appliers can and do. The best advice to give to anyone seeking to make a transfer is to accumulate empirical evidence about contextual similarity; the responsibility of the original investigator ends in providing sufficient descriptive data to make such similarity judgments possible. (p. 298)

From the contextual information provided in both Chapters Three and Four, the researcher offers forth several recommendations for practitioners.

Activities that require taking a risk, such as a speech or in this case a dramatic oral reading, require a sense of community or family to support them to their fullest extent. The classroom of the study was not without issues or concerns and all three teachers noted that there were times when the sense of classroom climate was endangered by students' activities. Teachers

must remain vigilant in regards to students separating or grouping and disrupting the safe environment.

The Poetry Out Loud program is excellent and is working towards having more students, teachers, classrooms, and schools involved across the country. While the study did not follow through to the contest portion of Poetry Out Loud or the memorization and recitation stage of their curriculum, it was clear to see that students engaged in classic, canonical texts for the purpose of presenting them. As Mr. Robbins stated about April in his follow up interview, "When it comes academic type things…she usually isn't one…so something struck a chord with her there too." The student of which he speaks engaged with particularly difficult poems and took great care in selecting works that represented her ideals. The opportunity to engage with texts such as the ones available on the website is a fine opportunity for any student. Ultimately, using either a portion of the free materials available from Poetry Out Loud to enrich an English class or to help supplement a textbook would be beneficial to the stakeholders involved. Moreover, adopting the program in its entirety in respective schools is something to consider seriously.

The study furthers the idea that high school students still lack oral reading fluency skills. While the connections between oral reading fluency, silent reading fluency, and reading comprehension remain undefined, the idea that fluency, a concept considered the final step in reading acquisition, is completely in place by the end of fourth grade was not reflected by the students in this classroom. In fact, several students struggled reading the poems with reasonable amounts of prosody or automaticity. Based on this experience and others similar to it comes the recommendation of including more dramatic oral reading embedded in the curriculum at the high school level. This could take the form of the study or it could take a multitude of other forms and probably should. For example, encouraging students to write, perform, and record a podcast or vodcast would be fluency focused activities. Creating a news broadcast or reading a play as Reader's Theater would be possibilities. Having students perform excerpts from their favorite young adult novels would work too. Which activities used are completely at the teacher's discretion, but the fact that they are used remains my firm recommendation.

One of the additions to the study that both teachers suggested and I agreed with would be to continue to videotape performance scenarios such as the ones present in the study and show those, either individually or as a large group, to the students. By using a think aloud protocol

with the students to review the videotapes, students would see their own faults, discuss those with the teacher, and have a greater potential for improvement. Whether this was completed in a game film scenario with the teacher coaching the players through their individual plays or in a one on one setting, this could potentially be a humiliating and counterintuitive experience for students. It may also be difficult to make this happen in a classroom setting unless it was completed as a whole class. If that was the case, I would want to give students the option to have their tape reviewed. In that scenario, this could be an invaluable tool for improving any type of performance from oral reading to Socratic seminars to group presentations.

Further Considerations

Though several limitations of this study were discussed in Chapter One, it is again appropriate, with the experience of actually conducting the study, to expand upon them. The Poetry Out Loud selection of poems was somewhat, at least at first, overwhelming for these students. Four hundred and eighty one poems by well over three hundred authors provided variety and covered the breadth of available poetry. Ninth-grade students are not particularly knowledgeable about the multitudes of poets represented on the site. The teachers in this study decided more of an introductory unit would be beneficial yet would likely not solve the problem completely. In addition to students feeling overwhelmed, the teachers reported feeling less than competent with the poetry available.

The limitations of participatory action research as Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that it is not readily generalizeable. The act of generalizing, rather, depends on the parties wishing to repeat such a process to interpret the contexts and descriptions as something similar to their own. This research is not designed to be transferred to other settings without carefully considering the contextual factors described within.

Geographical limitations should be considered as part of this study. The student population from which the class in the study was drawn is not representative of the Plains States or most situations across the country. Being situated so close to a major military installment, the community and thus the school contains, arguably, the most geographically diverse population in the state. In a different Plains State community with little geographical diversity, this study could have different results.

The number of students, even in the context of research on a single classroom, is somewhat limiting. 14 students is a small number by most school's standards for a typical 9th grade English class. That small number of students may have had a positive impact on the classroom environment but could be considered a limitation of the study since someone looking to repeat this and get the same results might have a difficult time finding a ninth-grade class with such low numbers. Moreover, as a researcher trying to establish this family environment, doing so with a larger group may prove treacherous.

While I considered Mrs. Gruene a particular interesting strength of this study, the fact that she was in charge of most of the instruction and most of the classroom management during my time in the classroom is a limitation. While Mr. Robbins was in the room nearly the entire time and remained a significant focus of the students, he was not the main catalyst for learning. That responsibility was left in the, might I say very capable, hands of a self described novice teacher. Studying this classroom without a student teacher would be different than with one.

Recommendations for Further Research

In examining the data that were collected and analyzed, the researcher is prepared to make research suggestions and recommendations. Since this study examined the qualitative aspects of dramatic oral reading, it would be natural to complete a similar study over an entire semester or school year, possibly in multiple locations, and collect quantitative data on the participants. Completing the study with a larger sample size and multiple classrooms would create transferability and generalizeable results. Specifically, a miscue analysis both before and after the students participate in the project could demonstrate significant difference in scores. Performing a fluency test on students in addition to the miscue analysis and continuing to collect qualitative data that resulted in significant change over the course of time could further the support for using dramatic oral reading activities either in or out of the context of an English classroom. Finally, performing such a study at grade levels 10, 11, and 12 would provide more complex social contexts within which to work.

A qualitative ethnographic study of dramatic oral reading over the course an entire school year could reveal many more layers of meaning surrounding the social context of how students react to such activities. A researcher would want to purposefully select a classroom where those types of activities were valued. With such an in depth study where the researcher may actually

attend an entire year of a class, significant contributions to the knowledge base of fluency related instruction at the high school level would be possible.

Case study research kept creeping into my mind throughout the present study. Each student interviewed, for entirely different reasons, provided a glimpse of what might be possible to learn if an in-depth case study approach was employed. For example, Juan was a student that nearly failed an entire semester of English because of failing oral reading activities yet he, arguably, found the most success and reward in completing the project. What happened in his case that truly engaged him in the activities that occurred as part of the POLP? Including a personal reading history and current attitudes of reading disposition would potentially help understand why students engaged in the project or not. Much of what could be learned from Juan couldn't be learned from an in depth study of Michael or Malary. Millions of other potential cases exist in secondary schools across the country.

A biography of a teacher like Mr. Robbins could contribute significantly to the current literature on effective teaching styles. The way he connected with students was phenomenal. He had their confidence, trust, and loyalty on levels potentially unprecedented levels. If I had to choose one word to describe his teaching style, it is unorthodox. Oftentimes, educational biographies are completed on teachers, professors, or educational leaders following a lengthy career. Taking a significant snapshot of this teacher ten years into his career could help educators understand what factors are at play in the motivation, teaching style, and perspectives.

As I listened to the audio recordings and watched the videos, I noticed there was a lot idle chatter between performances. Whether that was a result of nervousness or these students community orientation, this intercalary time provided some interesting comments and revealed some of the social situations present in the classroom. Using the current study's audio and video recordings and only focusing on the intercalary time, I could complete more research on what is actually said, the time between performances, and the social context as it is represented during that time. This could work as a qualitative phenomenology study.

Though it did not present itself as a key theory that perpetuated the confidence levels of students in this study, the idea that Bandura's Theory of Self-Efficacy could be extremely important to understanding students' beliefs as they relate to dramatic oral reading fluency is another potential research undertaking. Working from an unpublished dissertation by Theresa Duncko this study combines her focus on Self-Efficacy including her "Children's Self-Efficacy

Scale," she used with middle school students and the Poetry Out Loud Project. By doing survey work with the students and working with larger populations in different states, it is hoped that the transferability of this research will be broad and far-reaching.

Conducting a mixed method quantitative and qualitative longitudinal study over the course of five years would provide results that could make major contributions to the research on adolescent literacy. A researcher could establish a literacy foundations lab where oral reading fluency was one of five areas addressed. Since the National Reading Panel (2000) claimed that fluency, along with phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, and phonics, were the five key areas that need addressed when someone is learning to read, a study that worked with high school striving readers in those areas could provide invaluable insight into what it means to learn to read at an older age. While the five areas addressed by the NRP focus on reading acquisition of elementary school students, those students that slip through to fourth or fifth grade without reaching the fluent point of reading no longer receive direct instruction. This concept would require an approach outside of the curriculum.

In the Fluency Project that led to the work in the present study, pre-service teachers were utilized as tutors throughout the process. Studying the effects on attitudes of pre-service teachers towards adolescent literacy involving these tutors during their pre-service years and their approaches to teaching during their first two years would be another possible angle. This could take a straight qualitative approach and could easily include survey research as a data source. Essentially, determining whether or not having students complete service learning activities was effective would be one of the central goals of the research.

Conducting research within the professional development school (PDS) is an oft overlooked aspect of maintaining the relationships established. Any of the recommendations for research could take a PDS angle by occurring within the context of a school university partnership school. As an ever increasing number of universities are forming these partnerships with public and private institutions, the breadth of research fails to represent the amount of work transpiring there. Potentially studying the effects on teacher quality and student learning compared to non PDS equivalents would provide another glimpse at the benefits (or not) of PDS partnerships. Furthermore, the introduction of different types of material to challenge and interest students working on dramatic oral reading is another strand that could run through each of the suggestions. By no means do I recommend research only using poetry as the primary material.

Summary

Data revealed fourteen original categories that, through axial coding, contributed to the grounded theory presented here. Through the video and audio recordings, student interviews, teacher interviews, and through my own observations and field notes, these students and teachers combined to create a family environment in the research classroom. They were not without problems and not without dysfunction but looking back at the entire picture this study creates, it is clear to me that the good outweighed the bad, that the literate identity was developed much more than the anti-literate identity, and that these students benefited in social ways from experiencing the POLP. To me, the noise this class produced on a daily basis signified learning, engagement, and an overall beautiful sound. Maybe it was Juan stepping up and finding success in establishing a literate identity. Malary's final performance was incredible. Sasha read two poems she chose like she had written them. It could have been the caring, parenting nature of Mr. Robbins or the stories that Mrs. Gruene told. The chemistry was right in this situation for an environment that promoted students' participation in dramatic oral reading activities. To borrow Michael's words, "this [was] a fine class."

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Appendix A – Cooperative Repeated Reading Response Form

Cooperative Repeated Reading Response Form

Reader: _____ Rater: _____ Date: _____

How did your partner read? Rate her or him in each of the following areas for the first and last reading.

DECODING (was able to read the words correctly)

	Outstanding		Good		Fair
First Reading:	1	2	3	4	5
Final Reading:	1	2	3	4	5

PACING (was able to read at a good pace and adjusts pace where appropriate)

	Outstanding		Good		Fair
First Reading:	1	2	3	4	5
Final Reading:	1	2	3	4	5

EXPRESSION (was able to read with good expression and in phrases—not word by word)

	Outstanding		Good		Fair
First Reading:	1	2	3	4	5
Final Reading:	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix B – Poems Available from Poetry Out Loud

A

A Black Man Talks of Reaping By Arna Bontemps

A Blessing By James Wright

A Boat beneath a Sunny Sky By Lewis Carroll

A Country Boy in Winter By Sarah Orne Jewett

A Country Incident By May Sarton

A Fixed Idea By Amy Lowell

A Hundred Bolts of Satin By Kay Ryan

A Locked House By W. D. Snodgrass

A Psalm of Life By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

A Red, Red Rose By Robert Burns

A Satirical Elegy on the Death of a Late Famous General By Jonathan Swift

A Shropshire Lad II: Loveliest of trees, the cherry now By A. E. Housman

A Song for Soweto By June Jordan

a song in the front yard By Gwendolyn Brooks

A Supermarket in California By Allen Ginsberg

A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning By John Donne

Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight By Vachel Lindsay

Actaeon By A.E. Stallings

Adding It Up By Philip Booth

Advice to a Prophet By Richard Wilbur

After the Gentle Poet Kobayashi Issa By Robert Hass

Agoraphobia By Linda Pastan

Alabanza: In Praise of Local 100 By Martín Espada

All This and More By Mary Karr

Blind Curse By Simon Joseph Ortiz

Booker T. and W.E.B. By Dudley Randall

Boy and Egg By Naomi Shihab Nye

Break of Day in the Trenches By Isaac Rosenberg

Break, Break, Break By Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Broken Promises By David Kirby

Buckroe, After the Season, 1942 By Virginia Hamilton Adair

Buick By Karl Jay Shapiro

Buried at Springs By James Schuyler

C

Calmly We Walk through This April's Day By Delmore Schwartz

Carmel Point By Robinson Jeffers

Casey at the Bat By Ernest Lawrence Thayer

Catch a Little Rhyme By Eve Merriam

Celebration for June 24 By Thomas McGrath

Channel Firing By Thomas Hardy

Chicago By Carl Sandburg

Childhood's Retreat By Robert Duncan

Chorus Sacerdotum By Baron Brooke Fulke Greville

Coda By Basil Bunting

Cold Blooded Creatures By Elinor Wylie

Concord Hymn By Ralph Waldo Emerson

Conversation By Ai

Courtesy By David Ferry

Crossing the Bar By Alfred, Lord Tennyson

D

Danse Russe By William Carlos Williams

J

K

Ma Rainey By Sterling A. Brown

Meditation at Lagunitas By Robert Hass

Medusa By Louise Bogan

Mending Wall By Robert Frost

Mingus at the Showplace By William Matthews

Miniver Cheevy By Edwin Arlington Robinson

Mirror By James Merrill

Mortal Sorrows By Rodney Jones

Mother to Son By Langston Hughes

Movement Song By Audre Lorde

Mr. Edwards and the Spider By Robert Lowell

Mrs. Adam By Kathleen Norris

Mrs. Kessler By Edgar Lee Masters

Mrs. Krikorian By Sharon Olds

Musical Moment By Virginia Hamilton Adair

My Father in the Night Commanding No By Louis Simpson

My Grandmother's Love Letters By Hart Crane

My Last Duchess By Robert Browning

My Papa's Waltz By Theodore Roethke

My Sad Captains By Thom Gunn

N

Next Day By Randall Jarrell

Nineteen-Fourteen: The Soldier By Rupert Brooke

No Coward Soul Is Mine By Emily Jane Brontë

Not Guilty By David Rivard

Not Here By Jane Kenyon

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments (55) By William Shakespeare

Not Waving but Drowning By Stevie Smith

November Cotton Flower By Jean Toomer

Nude Descending a Staircase By X. J. Kennedy

Nurture By Maxine W. Kumin

O

O Captain! My Captain! By Walt Whitman

O Carib Isle! By Hart Crane

Ode on Solitude By Alexander Pope

Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat Drowned in a Tub of Goldfishes By Thomas Gray

Oh, Hope! thou soother sweet of human woes By Charlotte Smith

Old Ironsides By Oliver Wendell Holmes

Old Men Playing Basketball By B. H. Fairchild

On Hurricane Jackson By Alan Dugan

On Inhabiting an Orange By Josephine Miles

On Monsieur's Departure By Queen Elizabeth I

On Pickiness By Rodney Jones

On Quitting By Edgar Albert Guest

On the Existence of the Soul By Pattiann Rogers

On the Lawn at the Villa By Louis Simpson

On Virtue By Phillis Wheatley

One Art By Elizabeth Bishop

One Perfect Rose By Dorothy Parker

Onions By William Matthews

Ovation By Carol Muske-Dukes

Over the Roofs By Sara Teasdale

Ox Cart Man By Donald Hall

Ozymandias By Percy Bysshe Shelley

P

T

The Alphabet By Karl Jay Shapiro

The Animals By Josephine Jacobsen

The Arrow and the Song By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The Bad Old Days By Kenneth Rexroth

The Bearer By Hayden Carruth

The Birth of John Henry By Melvin B. Tolson

The Bloody Sire By Robinson Jeffers

The Campus on the Hill By W. D. Snodgrass

The Charge of the Light Brigade By Alfred, Lord Tennyson

The Chimney Sweeper: When my mother died I was very young By William Blake

The Cross of Snow By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The Daring One By Edwin Markham

The Darkling Thrush By Thomas Hardy

The Delight Song of Tsoai-talee By N. Scott Momaday

The Emperor of Ice-Cream By Wallace Stevens

The Evening of the Mind By Donald Justice

The Fire Fetched Down By George Bradley

The Flea By John Donne

The Fury of Aerial Bombardment By Richard Eberhart

The Gift By Li-Young Lee

The Glove and the Lions By Leigh Hunt

The Goddess Who Created This Passing World By Alice Notley

The Good-Morrow By John Donne

The Great Blue Heron By Carolyn Kizer

The Greatest Grandeur By Pattiann Rogers

The Groundhog By Richard Eberhart

The Healing Improvisation of Hair By Jay Wright

The Heaven of Animals By James L. Dickey

The Hermit Crab By Mary Oliver

The Illiterate By William Meredith

The Kiss By W. S. Di Piero

Y

Appendix C - POLP Schedule

DATE	LESSON	DATA COLLECTED
March 5, 2007	Researcher will observe the class without participating	Field Notes
March 7, 2007	Researcher will observe the class without participating	Field Notes
March 9, 2007	Introduction to Poetry Out Loud	Field Notes
March 13, 2007	Cooperative repeated reading	Field Notes
March 15, 2007	Cooperative repeated reading/mini performance	Field Notes, Student Interviews (audiotape)
March 26, 2007	Two new poems/ cooperative repeated reading	Field Notes
March 28, 2007	Cooperative repeated reading	Field Notes
March 30, 2007	Practice performance	Field Notes, Videotape
April 3, 2007	Two new poems/ cooperative repeated reading	Field Notes
April 5, 2007	Cooperative repeated reading	Field Notes
April 10, 2007	Final Performance	Field Notes, Videotape
April 12, 2007	Individual Interviews	Field Notes, Student Interviews, (audiotape) Teacher Interviews (audiotape)
April 16, 2007	Make-up Day	

Appendix D - Parent Letter Home

January 29, 2007

Dear Parents and Students:

I am presently a doctoral student in the Curriculum & Instruction program at Kansas State University. I hold a current Kansas teaching license and have five years experience teaching high school students and two years teaching college students.

I am writing to seek your consent in a research study that will investigate the social context of a high school classroom participating in dramatic oral reading of poetry. By social context, I mean the pressures to succeed or struggle based on prior friendships, relationships, and other connections. Since the students will be asked to perform poetry reading out loud, similar to that seen in a poetry slam, they will exhibit observable behaviors that promote and/or demote the activity. The students will be engaged in activities to develop skill in oral reading and will be asked to perform poems in front of their peers. Additionally, there will be six students asked to participate in an interview to gain more insight into the social context. The classroom teacher and student teacher will be in the room throughout the process and will teach lessons in addition to this each day of the research. This is only a portion of the class activities.

The student performances will be videotaped and the interviews will be audio recorded. Actual student names or images will not be used in the final research report or any subsequent publications. Participation is voluntary and the student may withdraw from the study at any time without an effect on the class grade.

If you have any questions, I can be reached at (785)249-5893 (home) or at czg6644@ksu.edu. You may also contact Dr. Todd Goodson, my advisor, at (785)532-5898 (KSU) or at tgoodson@ksu.edu if you have questions or concerns about the study. Questions regarding the rights of human subjects should be addressed to Rick Scheidt, Chair of the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, or Jerry Jaax, Associate Vice Provost for Research Compliance and University Veterinarian at (785)532-3224.

A parent/guardian and student informed consent form is attached to this letter. After reading carefully, please sign and return one copy of the consent form to Mr. Robbins as soon as possible. I have included an extra signed and dated copy of the consent form to keep for your records. I am excited to begin working with your student on activities that are designed to be both educational and motivational.

Sincerely,

Chris Goering

Parent or Guardian/Student Informed Consent Form

PROJECT TITLE: Dramatic Oral Reading Fluency in the Social Context of a High School Classroom

APPROVAL DATE OF PROJECT: EXPIRATION DATE OF PROJECT:

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr. Todd Goodson, KSU professor, (785)532-5898 or tgoodson@ksu.edu

CO-INVESTIGATOR(S): Chris Goering, Doctoral Candidate, (785)249-5893 or czg6644@ksu.edu

**IRB CHAIR CONTACT/PHONE INFORMATION*:*
- Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.
- Jerry Jaax, Associate Vice Provost for Research Compliance and University Veterinarian, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH: To provide an understanding of the social context of a high school English classroom and to understand how students respond to dramatic oral readings of poetry as classroom activities.

PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED: (Mr. Goering will lead portions of the class as a guest teacher. He will direct the students in dramatic oral reading of poetry which will include small group work and large group performances. Performances will be videotaped and six students will be interviewed following the unit of study. The researcher will audiotape the interviews.

LENGTH OF STUDY: 12 class periods from March to April 2007.

RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED: No risks anticipated

BENEFITS ANTICIPATED: As students are encouraged to participate and improve their dramatic oral reading of poetry, they will naturally gain confidence in presentation skills and reading ability.

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY: Actual student names will not be used in the final research report or subsequent publications.

TERMS OF PARTICIPATION: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is completely voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

We verify that our signatures below indicate that we have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that our signatures acknowledges that we have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

PARTICIPANT'S NAME:_____
PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE:_____**DATE:**_____
PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE: _____**DATE:**_____
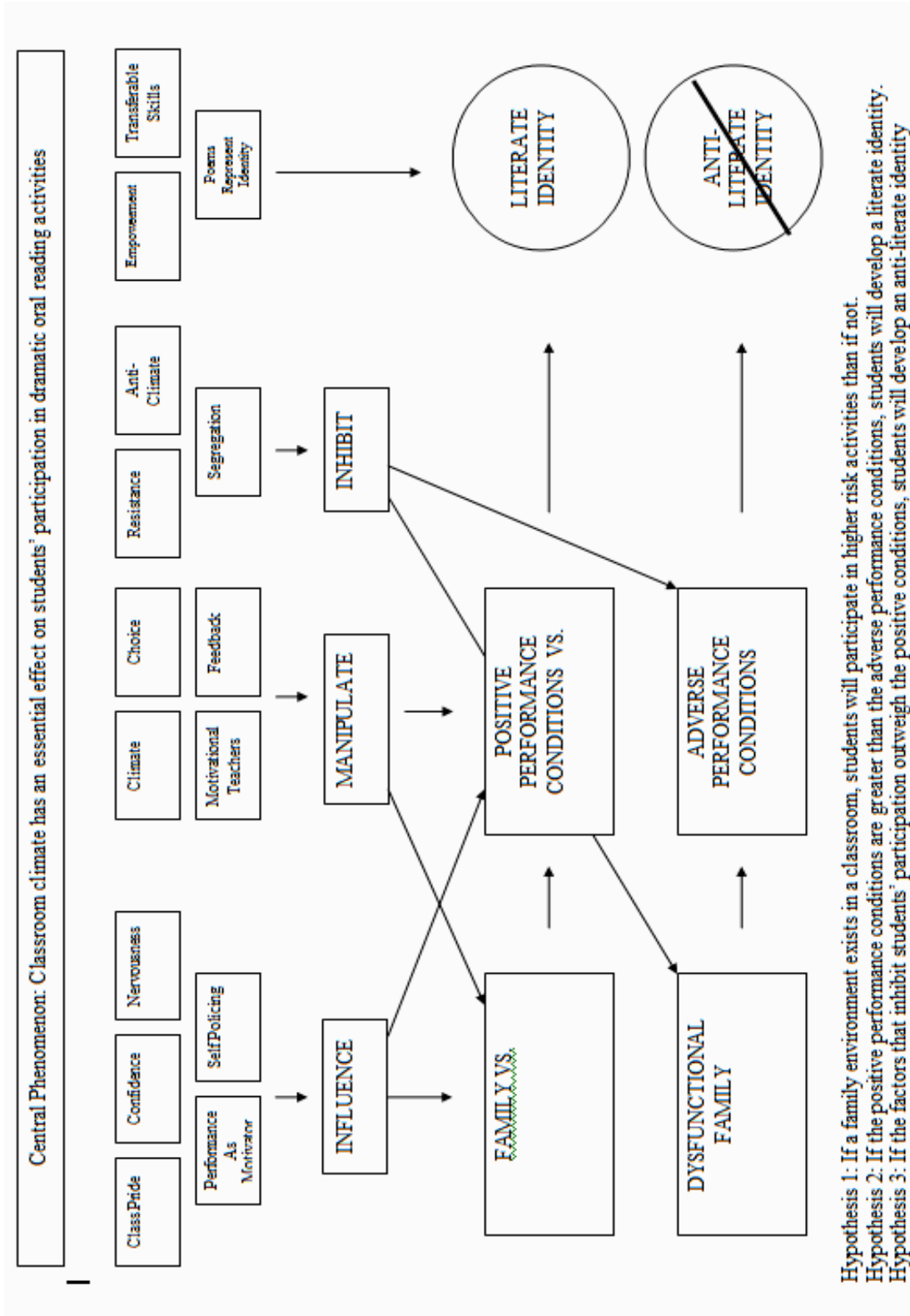**WITNESS:** _____**DATE:** _____

Appendix E - Student Interview Questions

1. We are going to talk about these past twelve days of class and about the Poetry Out Loud Project. Please answer honestly and openly. Your answers will not offend me in anyway nor could the affect your grade and are completely confidential. The answers will be reported as they are will help future students potentially involved in this project.

2. What is the most memorable part of the POLP for you? Why?

3. How do you feel about being asked to read in front of other students? Why?

4. Was the performance nerve-racking for you? Why or why not?

5. Did you ever feel pressure to do well from anyone else in the classroom? Who and why?

6. Did you ever feel pressure to not try your best from anyone in the room? Why and why?

7. If you were asked to read aloud in class tomorrow, would you feel more confidence than you did prior to beginning the POLP? Why or why not?
8. Overall, what would you change about the experience with POLP? Can you think of anything that could be improved to help keep you more interested?

Appendix F - Teacher Interview Questions

1. Thanks for agreeing to the interview. The following questions are designed to help inform the study, especially focusing on the social context of the classroom and how it might have affected student participation. These answers will not be shared with others.

2. What was your overall impression of the POLP? Explain in detail.

3. What, in your opinion, is the educational value of this project or one's similar to it?

4. What social situations came up during the course of the POLP?

5. How could a teacher improve the social context of a classroom to help foster activities such as this?

6. If I was out of the picture, would you consider doing this project again, and if so, how would you change it?

Appendix G – Grounded Theory

Central Phenomenon: Classroom climate has an essential effect on students' participation in dramatic oral reading activities

Class Pride · Confidence · Nervousness · Climate · Choice · Resistance · Anti-Climate · Empowerment · Transferable Skills

Performance As Motivator · Self-Policing · Motivational Teachers · Feedback · Segregation · Poems Represent Identity

INFLUENCE · MANIPULATE · INHIBIT

FAMILY VS. · DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY

POSITIVE PERFORMANCE CONDITIONS VS. · ADVERSE PERFORMANCE CONDITIONS

LITERATE IDENTITY · ANTI-LITERATE IDENTITY

Hypothesis 1: If a family environment exists in a classroom, students will participate in higher risk activities than if not.
Hypothesis 2: If the positive performance conditions are greater than the adverse performance conditions, students will develop a literate identity.
Hypothesis 3: If the factors that inhibit students' participation outweigh the positive conditions, students will develop an anti-literate identity

Appendix H-Audacity Screen Shot Pre-Processed

Appendix I - Audacity Screen Shot-Post Processed

Appendix J – Hyper Research Screen Shot

Appendix K – Hyper Research Screen Shot Example – Video
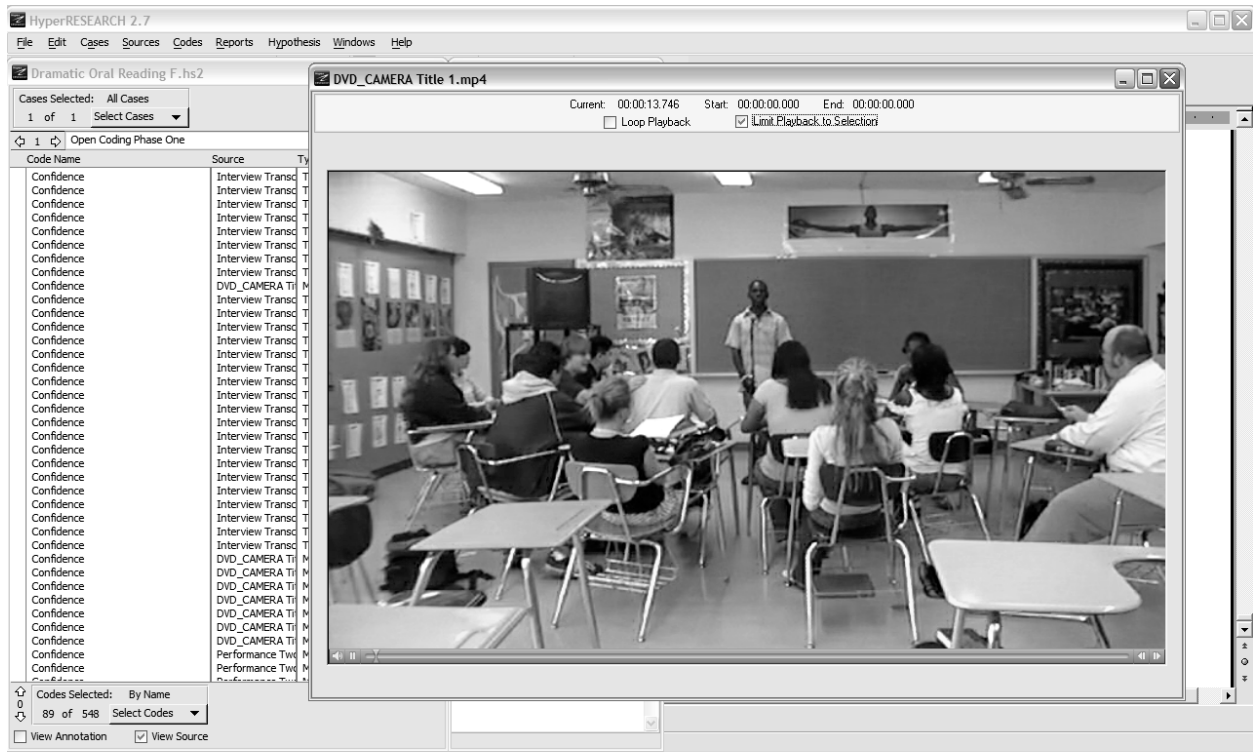
Appendix L – HR Multiple Source Analysis Screen Shot