

AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO TEACHING SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST
CENTURY

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, “An Inclusive Approach to Teaching Shakespeare in the Twenty-First Century,” I use the lens of critical pedagogy and critical race theory to examine the ways teachers teach Shakespeare in American high schools. With data gathered from the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) convention as well as field research and classroom observation of a high school English teacher in Texas, I build a picture of how Shakespeare is taught in American high schools.

Data from the NCTE conference indicate that there is a vigorous environment of professional development at the national level aimed at providing cutting-edge teaching methods to teachers of high school Shakespeare. Yet, the paradox is that the exclusivity of the conference means that the teachers and students who may need these new teaching methods the most are the ones most left out of the equation whereas teachers and students from already good schools increase their socio-economic capital accumulation in the area of Shakespeare pedagogy. I argue that this is another evidence of the imbalance in educational opportunities between students from mostly poor and minority rural and inner-city schools.

I also argue that the experience of students in the high school classroom has not changed as much as is needed because most teachers go into the high school classroom without having had any training in the teaching of Shakespeare. This general lack of training in the teaching of Shakespeare means that most teachers are unable to offer students updated inclusive Shakespeare Pedagogy and often resort to repeating the teaching methods they remember from their high school days. I argue that this belies the supposed importance of Shakespeare as espoused by the

Common Core. With teachers left to their own devices coupled with meager resources, the teaching of Shakespeare in American high schools is not inclusive.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother and father. It is dedicated to my mother because she has been the bedrock of my drive to educate myself. I also dedicate this to my father who passed away in January this year and was not able to see me graduate as a Ph.D. Without my father's vision to send me to school despite his own lack of formal education, this journey would not have even begun much less concluding today.

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Contributors

This work was supervised by a dissertation committee consisting of Professor Nandra Perry (Chairperson) of the Department of English, Professors Margaret Ezell, and Ira Dworkin of the English Department, and Professor David Donkor of the Department of Performance Studies. The data analyzed in chapters two and three were gathered by the student independently. All other work conducted for the dissertation was completed by the student independently.

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Exordium

My admiration of Shakespeare, as a profound delineator of human nature and a sublime poet, is but little short of idolatry – John Quincy Adams, *New England Magazine* 1835.

I would say Shakespeare continues to be a touchstone. Like most teenagers in high school, when we were assigned, I don't know, *The Tempest* or something, I thought, 'My God, this is boring.' And I took this wonderful Shakespeare class in college where I just started to read the tragedies and dig into them. And that, I think, is foundational for me in understanding how certain patterns repeat themselves and play themselves out between human beings. – Barack Obama, *New York Times* 2017.

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing for the Folger Shakespeare Library's "Teaching Shakespeare: A Folger Education Blog" in 2016, Ayanna Thompson, Professor of English at The George Washington University comments on peoples' surprise when she tells them that she, a Black woman, teaches and writes about Shakespeare and race. According to Thompson,

in the current climate, these topics—Shakespeare and race—are usually viewed as mutually exclusive: you are either interested in Shakespeare OR race... And yet, Shakespeare provides us with incredibly rich plays that are filled with incredibly complex characters who frequently make references to racial differences. (Thompson)

This surprise, whether expressed by laypeople on the streets or scholars in the university, dominates the teaching of Shakespeare to children in the United States. As a Black Muslim immigrant, I get similar reactions when I mention that I study Shakespeare. The comments usually go like this: "Why Shakespeare?"; "As an American, even I find Shakespeare hard"; or "That is impressive." Because in the global cultural imagination Shakespeare is seen as *the* English cultural icon, seeing him in the hands of non-white actors elicits the kind of surprise Ayanna Thompson recounts.

This dissertation, "An Inclusive Approach to Teaching Shakespeare in the Twenty-First Century," looks at current approaches to teaching Shakespeare in the United States, as well as

new and emerging teaching methodologies that see the exploration of racial and other forms of difference in Shakespeare's rich and complex body of dramatic texts. Like Former President Obama said to the *New York Times* in 2017 at the end of his historic presidency, Shakespeare continues to be a touchstone. Understanding Shakespeare's works might help us, as it helped President Obama, see how certain patterns repeat themselves between human beings. To do that, in this introduction, I first attempt a historical overview of Shakespeare's place in American education and then offer a short argument on the need for inclusive pedagogy.

1.1 Shakespeare's Place in American Humanist Education

In the year 2020, Shakespeare remains the most important author in world education by far (Sullivan and Sharpe ix). All over the world, Shakespeare is the centerpiece of humanist education, whether he is taught in English (as is increasingly the case with the global dominance of the English language) or in translation. For example, in my home country of Ghana, and in many other former British colonies, Shakespeare is a permanent fixture of high school education. As part of Ghana's high school graduation examinations organized by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), Ghana has guidelines and book requirements set out for schools much in the same way that the American Common Core Standards work, but with a more rigid formula with Shakespeare very integral to the curriculum.¹

In North America, Shakespeare has been an important fixture of humanist education since the late nineteenth century. In the nineteenth century, Shakespeare was used as a means of

¹ WAEC, founded in 1951, dominates secondary education in Anglophone West Africa. WAEC organizes completion examinations for junior and senior high schools. The examination juggernaut was the brainchild of Dr. George Baker Jeffrey, Director of the University of London's Institute of Education in 1949 (Dillard 418). This very important institution, the brainchild of a consortium of London educators, still has an enormous impact on the way children in a large part of West Africa are educated.

teaching elocution and lofty morals to American students (Frey 544). With a theme-focused and didactic placement of Shakespeare in nineteenth- and early-twentieth century American education, Shakespeare was seen as necessary for the moral development of American students. Nineteenth century Shakespearean educators (such as Henry Norman Hudson, who printed school editions of Shakespeare in the 1850s) aimed to mold schoolchildren into gentlemen and gentleladies (Frey 544-46). However, this moralizing emphasis did not last. In his overview of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Shakespearean teaching methods in American secondary schools, Charles Van Cleve details the evolution of Shakespeare pedagogy from the “philological-analytical” method to what I call the “simile-hunting and metaphor-counting” method. This change happened because teachers believed the moralizing of Shakespeare pedagogy harmed his legacy as a writer with aesthetic value (338-43).

This shift is significant because the turn of the twentieth century saw the standardization of American education. Throughout this early period of standardization, which also saw an increase in high-school enrollments, Shakespeare was a constant fixture.² These same standards also included authors such as John Milton, Walter Scott (Sir), and John Webster. However, of these authors, Shakespeare has been the only one with staying power (Albanese 160-62). As Richard Dutton argues, “Shakespeare is [still] a bedrock figure in high school literature on both sides of the Atlantic, an iconic figure of English-language culture” in the twenty-first century (197).

In the United States, the stated goal of humanist education has been to make good citizens of a democratic society. Current guidelines for pre-tertiary education from elementary through high school follows the precedent set by Harvard in 1874. In the introduction to the

² These standards were ushered in by entry requirements of colleges such as Harvard in 1874 (Van Cleve 334).

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (referred to as the Common Core Standards), the Council of State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA) points out that these standards are meant to meet the charge to define college and career readiness, the Standards also lay out a vision of what it means to be a literate person in the twenty-first century. Indeed, the skills and understanding students are expected to demonstrate have wide applicability outside the classroom or workplace (Common Core 3).

The standards, therefore, set out to prepare American students leaving high school for college or the job market to be well-rounded adults capable of “cogent reasoning and use of evidence that is essential to both private deliberation and responsible citizenship in a democratic republic” (Common Core 3). The standards, as espoused by Henry Norman Hudson in the 1850s, haven’t changed much in the formally espoused goals set by important stakeholders in American education infrastructure today, as showcased by the words of the CCSSO and NGA above.

In the Common Core Standards, Shakespeare is the only author who is mentioned specifically by name in the general body of a document, and unlike other authors (whose texts are only mentioned as examples), the CCSSO and NGA mandate that teachers include Shakespeare in their instruction. This mandate is given even though the Common Core goes out of its way to remove as many indications as possible about which side of the “canon wars” it sided with. The Common Core Standards is reflexive and aware of how much it centers Shakespeare in its scheme. In the section titled “What is Not Covered by the Standards,” it argues that

The Standards define what all students are expected to know and be able to do, not how teachers should teach. For instance, the use of play with young children is not specified by the Standards, but it is welcome as a valuable activity in its own right and as a way to help students meet the expectations in this document. Furthermore, while the Standards

make references to some forms of content, including mythology, foundational U.S. documents, and Shakespeare, they do not—indeed, cannot—enumerate all or even most of the content that students should learn. The Standards must, therefore, be complemented by a well-developed, content-rich curriculum consistent with the expectations laid out in this document (Common Core 6).

The outline makes Shakespeare equivalent to and in the same standing as mythology and foundational U.S. documents. This simply means that Shakespeare is a permanent fixture of the curriculum, the only variation being which Shakespearean text a teacher chooses to use (just as a teacher makes the personal decision on which “foundational U.S. document” to select). In the sections detailing guidelines for U.S. teachers, the CCSSO and NGA give a few more examples of how to impart knowledge and prepare American high school students to be for college and other careers. It asks teachers of grades 6-12 to select works that “offer profound insights into the human condition and serve as models for students’ own thinking and writing” and offers “the timeless dramas of Shakespeare,” along with other seminal U.S. documents, as examples of works teachers should select from (Common Core 35).

At the end of the Common Core Standards, the CCSSO and NGA gives a few examples of texts that they believe offer profound insight into the human condition and crucially “serve as models for students’ own thinking and writing” (35). As indicated at the beginning of this introduction, the stated purpose of Anglo-American humanist education is to create citizens who will be “good” members of society. These exemplar texts include a variety of literary fiction, including Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, and Lorraine Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun*. The suggested literary non-fiction includes George Washington’s “Farewell Address,” Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” Theodore Roosevelt’s 1901 State of the Union” address, and Abraham Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address” (58). All these selections suggest that the CCSSO and the NGA aim to get students to read “great classic and contemporary works of literature

representative of a variety of periods, cultures, and worldviews, [so that] students can vicariously inhabit worlds and have experiences much different than their own” (7). All these examples given by the Common Core Standards are recommendations to help teachers decide for themselves which texts they will select in order to achieve the goals set forth by the standards. This leaves ample room for teachers to choose what they want to teach. However, teachers cannot escape Shakespeare. As a result, this makes Shakespeare pedagogy central to the standards’ introduction of students to texts that will “serve as models for students’ own thinking and writing”—the most important focus in education (35).

1.2 Origins of Inclusive Pedagogy

Students and teachers, especially in white-centric classrooms (and by white-centric I mean classrooms where white bodies and sensibilities take center-stage in classroom dynamics), find it easy to discuss Shakespearean texts like *Hamlet*, *Romeo & Juliet*, and *Macbeth* because of what I call “the veil of anonymity” that these plays’ seemingly anonymous but universal themes appear to convey. In the discussion of “inaction” in *Hamlet* for instance, Student A, who might be timid and indecisive in his real life, is not outed by the text. As far as the audience (the teacher and the rest of student A’s classmates) are concerned, inaction is not written on the forehead of Student A. So even if Student A has major antipathy about discussing something that defines his person, he is plain and anonymous in the classroom’s discussion of inaction. The same concept can be applied to discussing the inevitability of fate in *Romeo & Juliet* because the icy hands of fate do not identify the fortunate and the unfortunate by first glance.

But race as a concept is naked and defining. Students are unable to hide behind anonymity. Their race is written on their faces and bodies, and as a result, the pitfalls are a lot

more dangerous for students and teachers. Even though inaction is just as innate to human relationships and merits discussion in much the same way that race does, race presents a more challenging problem than does inaction because teachers and students' anonymity is taken away. To this end, discussing race seems to students as though they are discussing themselves. The intellectualization of Student A's inaction in *Hamlet* cannot easily be transferred to whiteness or blackness. Because of the polarization of American society along color lines, it becomes harder to intellectualize blackness and whiteness in the classroom. So, in the American classroom, you find students and teachers alike unwilling or unable to distinguish between textual blackness and Black people.

However, should students and teachers find it easy to distinguish between textual blackness and Black people? At least to me, they cannot and should not. They cannot because of how social relationships are constructed. This too is the case with Shakespeare, who may have met some Black people in England³ but who, given the evidence of textual sources from which he borrowed a lot of material for *Othello*, *The Tempest*, and *Titus Andronicus*,⁴ likely constructed blackness from the figment of his imagination, imbuing Aaron, Othello, and Caliban with characteristics and qualities he imagined Black people to have. Like Shakespeare, much of white society's conception of blackness or Black people is textual and not based on familiarity with actual Black people. Textual blackness then mediates the real-world relationships between Black and white people. In many instances, these two planes of blackness (the textual and the corporeal) become inseparable. Many English speakers, from Shakespeare's fifteenth century to

³ Emily Bartels's seminal essay "Too Many Blackamoors: Deportation, Discrimination, and Elizabeth I" discusses the presence of Black people in Britain during the Elizabethan/Early Modern period. Shakespeare would have had the opportunity to meet Black people if he was adventurous enough to move in the circles they moved in.

⁴ Ayanna Thompson elaborates on the various sources from which Shakespeare borrowed *Othello*'s storyline and characters in her introduction to the Arden Shakespeare *Othello* Revised Edition, 13-25

today, have had their first and sometimes most dominant interaction with blackness through texts. Contemporaneously, such texts include the news media and modern social media platforms. But these mediums are so powerful and influential that it becomes difficult to separate them.

Yet, in the Shakespeare classroom, teachers often attempt such a separation for pedagogical purposes in order to protect students with the veil of anonymity. However, the Western humanist tradition's conception of literature resists this separation. In 2019, I taught my students the T. S. Elliot and I. A. Richards New Critical School of literary criticism, and the school's emphasis on a text's capacity to communicate timeless truths and meanings of universal significance was the center of my students' interest. Because New Criticism is still so dominant in high school pedagogy, what the text communicates can often be taken as a universal truth that cannot be contained on the page (Tyson 130).

Shakespeare and his status in the Western canon make this even more complicated. For instance, Shakespeare is supposed to be the most adept communicator of the human condition according to the "Shakespeare Stans"⁵ of the Western tradition, so what happens when students think they have identified an undercurrent of racial prejudice in his plays? That would certainly account for the animosity felt by many Black students when studying the bard's othered characters—particularly Othello, Caliban, and Aaron. These students are engaged in the internal resistance that is constitutive of the Black experience in the West. This resistance or tension is

⁵ The term stan is slang in popular culture. It refers to the obsessive fanatical worship of an artist. It is an allusion to the American rapper Eminem's song of the same name where an obsessive fan commits murder-suicide after he doesn't get a response from the artist after writing him fan mail. Harold Bloom best exemplifies the Shakespeare stans in recent years. His defense of the Western canon in his massively influential book *The Western Canon* gives much accolades to Shakespeare. He followed it with the standalone defense of Shakespeare in *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*.

best encapsulated in W. E. B. Du Bois' concept of "double consciousness," which he elaborated in *The Souls of Black Folk*. Black students are defined by the Western intellectual tradition because they are the products of it, and yet, because of their subaltern position within it, Black students are also often resistant to it. Practicing resistance is a necessary part of Black subjectivity even if in their act of resistance, they are reifying the intellectual structure that produced both their subjectivity *and* canonical texts like *Othello* or *The Tempest*. When Black life, as it is constructed in the West, is devoted to resisting white constructions, it allows for discourses that privilege the white gaze. These discourses may then reinforce the concept of blackness created by the white gaze.

Perhaps one means of bypassing the white gaze is by building discourse communities outside the ambit of the Western intellectual tradition. I have, as indicated above, often read about how Black students react strongly to the violence of Iago and Roderigo's racial taunts in *Othello*. These reactions interest me because I do not have the same reaction to these texts. Despite being a product of the Western colonization of Africa, my subjectivity differs slightly from that of African Americans who are descended from chattel slavery. As a child in junior high school reading *Othello*, I was rather drawn to the magisterial portrayal of a Black man in a white society by the most acclaimed of white authors. Unlike my ancestors, who were foot soldiers for the British army in various world wars, the generalship of Othello over the Venetian armada stood out to me more than the jealous vituperations of two pitiful white men.

White students are equally held captive by the Western intellectual tradition articulated above. For them, to acknowledge the racist tendencies of Shakespeare's *Othello* is to agree that they are complicit in his racism. Despite the New Critics' exhortation to ignore the author and look at the "timeless" text, Shakespeare assumes a larger than life persona in the Western mind.

Othello, just like *Hamlet*, cannot be considered without considering Shakespeare. English cultural superiority has been bolstered by the country's association with Shakespeare.

This is not mere speculation and reaching. The most virulent, violent manifestation of white supremacy on a mass scale in the past hundred years came in the form of Nazi Germany, who took Shakespeare as one of their national poets. To many Nazis, Germany was the inheritor of and heir to Shakespeare. To that effect, Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, with its denigrating characterization of Shylock the thrifty Jew, became a popular play for the Nazis and was performed with government support. But outside of *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare himself was championed by the Nazi regime to the extent that in 1937 "a special Shakespeare festival was put on for the Hitler youth in the presence of Rudolf Hess," Hitler's second in command from 1933 to 1941 (Strobl 19). Even German dramatists during the Third Reich, when bemoaning foreign influence on the German stage, excepted Shakespeare even as they named other English authors because Shakespeare was integral to their white (Aryan) supremacy (Heinrich 232).

This dissertation is motivated by the challenge posed by discussing Shakespeare in the multiracial classroom. My first inkling of the necessity of this study came during my second year in graduate school when I read "*Othello: What is the Position of Race in a Multicultural English Classroom?*" by the Bangladeshi-British teacher Husna Choudhury. In the article, Choudhury details her attempt to teach *Othello* while also juggling multiple identities in a London classroom. Choudhury's experience became burnt into my psyche because, despite our differences, we shared a very similar positionality. My own anxieties about teaching in a predominantly white university in Texas as a Black African immigrant mirrored her experiences in her London classroom despite the difference in our contexts. Whereas Choudhury was dealing

with a socially diverse, majority-Black group of students, my classes at Texas A&M were predominantly white (Choudhury 191). My positionality in this space has been a source of anxiety since I started graduate school, especially given the long-term cultural impact of the September 11th terrorist attacks and the attendant “war on terror.” Things became even more anxious for me when, just a year after I got to Texas, the president of the United States proposed a “total and complete ban on Muslims entering the United States” (Taylor). Being a young Black male, as well as a Muslim immigrant teaching in a Texas classroom, my anxiety reached its peak then.

So, after looking at various topics for my dissertation, I finally settled on Shakespeare pedagogy in multicultural environments. Studying how Shakespeare is taught to students who are also subjects/citizens of the Anglo-American geopolitical space appears a need most urgent when looked at from the standpoint of citizenship or subjecthood. What kinds of subjects are being produced by contemporary educational standards? Considering the explicitly humanist goal of the Common Core—and particularly its reasons for the necessity of Shakespearean education—“An Inclusive Approach to Teaching Shakespeare in the Twenty-First Century” finds its purpose. I use data from the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) convention and classroom observation, with the theoretical grounding in critical pedagogy and critical race theory to examine the ways teachers teach Shakespeare in American high schools.

Exordium

The convoluted wording of legalisms grew up around the necessity to hide from ourselves the violence we intend toward each other. Between depriving a man of one hour from his life and depriving him of his life there exists only a difference of degree. You have done violence to him, consumed his energy. Elaborate euphemisms may conceal your intent to kill, but behind any use of power over another the ultimate assumption remains: “I feed on your energy.”—Paul Muad’Dib, *Dune Messiah*.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK & LITERATURE REVIEW

This dissertation takes part of its inspiration from the works of educators and philosophers interested in expanding the ambit of pedagogical practices to improve the lot of marginalized communities. I will therefore discuss the works of Paolo Freire and Henry Giroux, two of the most prominent scholars in the field of critical pedagogy, in order to set up the philosophical tradition from which this dissertation takes its inspiration. Before looking at Freire and Giroux, I will discuss the relevance of Frantz Fanon to critical pedagogy and as a precursor to Freire. I will then explore the works of critical race theorists such as Derrick A. Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Cheryl Harris to show how race functions in the classroom.

Next, I will turn to how Shakespeare has functioned traditionally in the classroom. Because of Shakespeare’s centrality in the Western Canon, I will discuss how Shakespeare has been introduced to students by teachers. I will then look at contemporary approaches to teaching Shakespeare with special attention to performance-related strategies.

I will discuss Ayanna Thompson’s work here as well. As one of the few high-profile Black Shakespeareans, her work on Shakespeare pedagogy is very important for any conversation on inclusive pedagogy. Thompson and Turchi’s *Teaching Shakespeare with*

Purpose: A Student-Centered Approach was instrumental to my project design and will provide the foundation for my research.

2.1 Critical Pedagogy

In the academy, we are in the business of education. Teaching! Pedagogy! But what is pedagogy? What does it mean to be an educator, a teacher, a pedagogue? This question has been the central focus of philosophers and educators whose body of work has come to be referred to as “critical pedagogy.”

To discuss critical pedagogy, we must first look at the geopolitics of colonialism and their effect on global education. Critical pedagogy can be traced to decolonization movements, as well as to educators in the global south who were teaching at the end of the Second World War and during the Cold War between the United States and the USSR. In this era of decolonization, perhaps no writer-philosopher stands as high as Frantz Fanon. As Henry Louis Gates has argued, Fanon has been read as “both a totem and text” because eminent critics like Edward Said have elevated him to the status of a “global theorist” (Gates 457-59). Both of Fanon’s seminal works— *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*—deal extensively with subject formation. It is this aspect of Fanon’s work that I want to use as a jumping-off point in order to discuss critical pedagogy as espoused by Paulo Freire and those who have followed him.

In *the Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon argues that to undo colonization, one must understand that “decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is clearly an agenda for total disorder.” According to Fanon, the initial colonial encounter “was colored by violence and...cohabitation—or rather the exploitation of the colonized by the colonizer—

continued at the point of the bayonet and under cannon fire” (2). Understanding the colonial situation this way is necessary in order to understand the “red-hot cannonballs and bloody knives” that decolonization requires (3). The disorganization, dismantling, and disordering of the society that true decolonization entails must, therefore, be a necessary component of the decolonization agenda.

In Fanon’s argument for the necessity for violent opposition to the colonial situation, we see a framework for opposing institutions that uphold the violent colonial situation. For this project, this important Fanon sentence deserves a full reproduction here:

In capitalist societies, education, whether secular or religious, the teaching of moral reflexes handed down from father to son, the exemplary integrity of workers decorated after fifty years of loyal and faithful service, the fostering of love for harmony and wisdom, those aesthetic forms of respect for the status quo, instill in the exploited a mood of submission and inhibition which considerably eases the task of the agents of law and order. (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* 3-4)

Clearly, Fanon recognized the powerful influence of education on the psyche of the colonized and its use in the continued maintenance of the colonial situation. Given that later theorists such as Giroux move the critique of neoliberalism to the forefront of critical pedagogy, Fanon’s focus on education as a capitalist reproduction of servile populations is prescient here.

I discuss Fanon’s subversive pedagogy as a tool against colonial oppression because Fanon has generally not been discussed in the field of education and critical pedagogy. Even though Fanon was very explicit throughout *The Wretched of the Earth* that everything “rests on educating the masses, elevating their minds, and on what is all too quickly assumed to be political education” (138), he has been primarily remembered as an ideologue of political revolution rather than a critical pedagogue. The entirety of Fanon’s project in *The Wretched of the Earth* can be seen as a theory of education, showing how the colonial system educates the colonized on how to feel inferior by viewing themselves through the eyes of the colonizer. To

situate Fanon in this pedagogical tradition is to reclaim his place in the educational philosophy of marginalized people all over the world. While Fanon's place in critical pedagogy has been gaining more recognition in the past decade, it still needs further discussion. William W. Sokoloff does well to dedicate a whole chapter to Fanon's subversive pedagogy in his recent work.⁶ The connection between Fanon and critical pedagogy, which is more often associated with Freire and Giroux, needs to be strengthened.

Freire's pedagogy, which others have developed and expanded on, is first and foremost a philosophical method. At the heart of Freire's pedagogical method is what he refers to as *conscientização*. *Conscientização* is the Portuguese term for critical consciousness or critical thinking. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire argues that liberation cannot be achieved by paternalistic educational models, which he calls the "banking concept of education." Rather, it can only be achieved through a process in which the oppressed comes into an awareness of their own socio-historical position and by so doing are able to engage in what he calls "emergence" (109). Accordingly, when the oppressed reach a level of awareness where they can critically perceive their situation, *conscientização* then prepares them "for the struggle against the obstacles of their humanization" (Freire 119).

In the preface to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire argues that people fear critical consciousness (*conscientização*) because they believe that it will lead to destructive fanaticism, but Freire argues that "*conscientização* does not lead people to 'destructive fanaticism.' On the contrary, by making it possible for people to enter the historical process as responsible subjects, *conscientização* enrolls them in the search for self-affirmation and thus avoids fanaticism" (36).

⁶ See Sokoloff's chapter "Frantz Fanon's Subversive Pedagogy" in *Political Science Pedagogy: A Critical, Radical, and Utopian Perspective*, Palgrave, 2020. eBook.

This I believe is a perfect response to the fears of mid-twentieth century educators like Lionel Trilling who were wary of exposing students to literature that would lay bare the contradictions inherent in their world or cultivate what Trilling refers to as “hostility to civilization” (225). It becomes clear that a Freireian critical pedagogy does what Trilling claims contemporary literature does: it asks questions that appear scandalous and forbidden in polite society (228). And *conscientização* threatens the status quo, which Trilling seems eager to protect in his claim about modern literature’s hostility to civilization.

Freire makes use of many of Fanon’s ideas about the dehumanization that is entrenched in the practice of colonial domination and class hierarchy. Building on Fanon’s distillation of the inherent violence in existing structures, Freire believes that true *conscientização* will elicit a psychological emergence and then a real, material struggle against the systems used by the ruling class to keep down the oppressed. As a method developed from the philosophy of liberation then, critical pedagogy seeks to engage practices that unleash not just the thinking capacities of students but their ability to act to change existing structures of inequality, structures that inhibit their humanization.

For Freire, critical pedagogy—or what he also refers to as pedagogy of the oppressed—is animated by authentic, humanist (not humanitarian) generosity. It is a pedagogy of humankind. Pedagogy that begins with the egoistic interests of the oppressors (an egoism cloaked in the false generosity of paternalism) and makes the oppressed the objects of humanitarianism maintains and embodies oppression. It is an instrument of dehumanization. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, the pedagogy of the oppressed cannot be developed or practiced by the ruling class. It would be a contradiction in terms for the oppressors to not only defend but implement a liberating education (54).

The revealing component of the excerpt above from Freire is the notion of authentic, humanist generosity as opposed to the false generosity of paternalism. To be a critical pedagogue, one needs to be serious in his or her approach to knowledge (re)production. This is where the now popularized idea of classroom dialogics or the discussion-based classroom comes from. This is probably one of the most important contributions of critical pedagogy to contemporary teaching praxis. Yet, the dialogic model of education is fraught with its own problems. In a conversation with Macedo Donaldo, Freire expounds on what he calls the “false dialogics” of the contemporary classroom. Freire’s comments on false dialogics are in response to Donaldo’s claim that a certain kind of false, paternalistic dialogics pervades the contemporary American classroom.

Donaldo’s comments come from his experience at the University of Massachusetts where his white colleagues expressed concern about his extensive teaching and discussion of anti-racist pedagogies. One of them, a white female teacher, recommended that Macedo’s “class spend at least three weeks getting to know each other so as to be friends before engaging sensitive issues like racism” (380). Her position was that to denounce racist structures, non-white people needed to first befriend whites. In response to Donaldo’s anecdote, Freire argues that the kind of dialogue the white woman was demanding is “walk up the street” type of dialogue and not dialogue “in search for the delimitation of a knowable object” (380). As discussed above, in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire talks about false generosity (44-45), which applies to the kind of friendship this white teacher was requesting. There truly cannot be friendship between the oppressor and the oppressed unless from the outset there is an understanding of the oppression taking place—who is oppressing and who is oppressed. In Freireian critical pedagogy then, a dialogics that serves as psychological-emotional expiation in the classroom is not true dialogue.

Foremost in Freire's idea of critical dialogics is information; anti-oppressive knowledge is paramount—not the feelings of oppressing class students in the classroom.

The privileging of knowledge brings up another crucial component of critical pedagogy, which Freire drives home in his dialogue with Macedo: teachers must not see themselves as facilitators. Freire's point here is that even when

white educators [need to] divest from an authoritarian educational practice, they should avoid falling prey to a laissez-faire practice under the pretext of facilitating...In the end, the facilitator is renouncing his or her duty to teach—which is a dialectical duty. In truth, the teacher turned facilitator rejects the fantastic work of placing an object as a mediator between him and his students (378).

To illustrate Freire's point, it might be crucial to think about the reality of oppressive social frameworks that walk-up-the-street types of dialogue enforce in daily conversations and how these unfortunately get imported into the classroom. An example is in order. Let us say that there is a teacher in a Waco, Texas, classroom made up of mainly white students and a few Black and Hispanic students. Let us also say the teacher's class is discussing the history of lynching and Jim Crow laws. Does "the teacher as facilitator" emphasize the historically accurate fact that Black and Hispanic-Americans were the primary target of mainly white lynch mobs in Texas even if it might inflame the sensibilities of his/her primarily white students? Or does she/he allow the discussion to center around students' recollection of their lived experiences and knowledge about lynching? What will be these students' memories about lynching? Alexander Binnenkade defines memory as

embodied; as situated in time and space; as connective, multidirectional, fluid and unstable; as text, material, and practice; and as a powerful site of identity formation that necessarily interrelates hegemony, conflict, and forgetting" (29).

Similarly, Ahlrichs et al view memory as "as constructed, contested, and intimately implicated in the power relations that shape any society or community" (90). What these two definitions above

agree on is the role of memory in structuring social power relations.⁷ In the hypothetical Texas classroom above, how then does a teacher engage the memory of lynching in Texas in a way that is appropriate to critical pedagogy?

If, for instance, the teacher in the Waco classroom finds that their students come from what Binnenkade calls “discursive nodes”⁸ that have undergone substantial concealment of potentially embarrassing individual and collective communal memories of lynching, then the teacher-as-facilitator will likely not educate or instruct critically. I say that because such a teacher will not meet a classroom that is knowledgeable enough—because of the substantial concealment they have been through—to engage in a meaningful discussion about lynching and collective American memory. Therefore, according to the rigors demanded by Freire, critical pedagogy will demand more of the teacher than to just act as a facilitator. It will require the teacher to pick from the trove of knowledge on liberatory education gathered through the multiple and extensive discursive nodes that the teacher has experienced over the years. A walk-up-the-street dialogics will only reify the practiced communal and familial concealment.

In a 1988 work on critical pedagogy, Henry Giroux argues that schools must be seen as “democratic public spaces...where students learn the knowledge and skills necessary to live in an authentic democracy.” This conception of the schools, Giroux argues, is opposed to that which sees schools as an “extensions of the workplace or as a front-line institution in the battle of

⁷ It is worth looking at some more theories of memory’s relationship to society to attempt an answer to the question above. In his instructive article in *Memory Distortion: How Minds, Brains, and Societies Reconstruct the Past*, Michael Kammen makes the crucial point about memory deception among Americans who go to astonishing lengths to “conceal potentially embarrassing episodes and memories from their children and grandchildren” (333). Michael Schudson also argues that “an individual’s capacity to make use of the past piggybacks on the social and cultural practices of memory” (347). If put in conversation, Schudson and Kammen’s argument presents a serious challenge to the critical pedagogue in the hypothetical classroom presented earlier in the Waco classroom.

⁸ Biennenke’s “Doing Memory: Teaching as a Discursive Node” offers a thorough explanation of the concept of discursive nodes and how they can operate in the classroom, as well as a particular delineation of the mechanics of teaching as an interplay of nodes of memory practice with multiple and interrelated stakeholders (31-36).

international markets and foreign competition” (xxxii). From this perspective, Giroux’s subsequent critical output falls under two main categories: the first is an oppositional critique of factory-line pedagogical models that prepare students to function as cogs in transnational capitalist conglomerates; the second is a theory of teaching as an exercise aiming for social justice.

Giroux argues that for there to be liberatory pedagogy, critical pedagogues must start with “those manifestations of suffering that constitute past and immediate conditions of oppression” (xxxiv) and that “the central questions for building a critical pedagogy are the questions of how we help students, particularly from oppressed classes, recognize that the dominant school culture is not neutral and does not generally serve their needs” (7). This cultural and historical view of pedagogy is reflective of Giroux’s experience as a high school history teacher and his role in the development of cultural studies (Giroux, *On Critical Pedagogy* 3). Giroux’s call for engaging past and present oppression is in line with the concerns of the hypothetical Waco classroom discussed above. As Giroux and other critical pedagogues argue, the main work of critical pedagogy is to destabilize and complicate calcified and rigid traditional modes of knowledge dissemination, which stabilize social interaction in unequal and unjust patterns of domination. Many theorists in the field of critical pedagogy, including Giroux, have rightly turned their attention to the role of markets in contemporary classroom dynamics. Giroux argues that

neoliberal public pedagogy strips education of its public values, critical content, and civic responsibilities as part of its broader goal of creating new subjects wedded to the logic of privatization, efficiency, flexibility, the accumulation of capital, and the destruction of the social state (*On Critical Pedagogy* 10).

The neoliberalization of education is, therefore, a core concern of contemporary critical pedagogy. Hence, Slater and Griggs argue that national educational policies such as the Common

Core (discussed in the Introduction) are “predicated on neoliberal human capital principles” including high test scores and global competitiveness (446). The market liberalization of education and what it means for the agency of citizens (students and teachers alike) is, therefore, a core feature of current critique of educational practice among practitioners. Because critical pedagogy aims at solidarity, Giroux argues that

With its theater of cruelty and mode of public pedagogy, neoliberalism as a form of economic Darwinism attempts to undermine all forms of solidarity capable of challenging market-driven values and social relations, promoting the virtues of an unbridled individualism almost pathological in its disdain for community, social responsibility, public values, and the public good. (11)

From Freire to Giroux, it can be argued that critical pedagogy aims (at least in its theoretical framing) to remove from education practice those things that limit the practice of freedom and the expansion of the dividends of a democratic society to the hitherto marginalized.

Critical pedagogy has nonetheless come under scrutiny from both people who share the goals of inclusive pedagogy as well as those who, to say the least, are skeptical of such goals. These critics have helped the field improve and expand on their theoretical strengths over the years and have even spawned other subfields which are now full-blown separate fields of educational theorizing. One of the most influential critiques of critical pedagogy came in 1988 from Elizabeth Ellsworth, who at the time was teaching at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In her classroom, Ellsworth attempted to confront hegemonic practices and campus racism at UW-Madison using the available tools from critical pedagogical theorists. Her critique of critical pedagogy stems from the utter failure of its tools to achieve their stated goals in her class. She argued that the

key assumptions, goals, and pedagogical practices fundamental to the literature on critical pedagogy—namely, “empowerment,” “student voice,” “dialogue,” and even the term “critical”—are repressive myths that perpetuate relations of domination (Ellsworth 298).

Ellsworth's first major critique is that critical pedagogy is abstract and obfuscating. She argues that she found the language of critical pedagogy "more appropriate (yet hardly more helpful) for philosophical debates about the highly problematic concepts of freedom, justice, democracy, and 'universal' values than for thinking through and planning classroom practices to support the political agenda of C&I 607 [class]" (300). She consciously made attempts to remove the abstractions she encountered in her syllabus design. Instead of naming the course something like "Media and Critical Pedagogy," she ended up naming it Media and Anti-Racist Pedagogies" because she did not want to hide the overtly political dimensions of her course. By doing so, she felt she had at least tried to surmount some of critical pedagogy's abstraction.

The second major critique that Ellsworth makes is on "the rationalist assumptions underlying critical pedagogy" (303). She first argues that "as a discursive practice, rationalism's regulated and systematic use of elements of language constitutes rational competence 'as a series of exclusions—of women, people of color, of nature as historical agent, of the true value of art.'" She suggests that it might be predatory to put groups who have historically been constructed as irrational others in the classroom to argue using the tools of the oppressor (304-5).

The third major critique she offers is of critical pedagogy's concept of 'emancipatory authority' and 'student empowerment.' This is probably the most significant aspect of Ellsworth's essay, as it deals with multiple issues that later theorists have attempted to account for. Ellsworth argues that the emancipatory pedagogy that critical pedagogues talk about implies that a teacher knows the object of study better than a student, but she makes the point that she "did not understand racism better than [her] students did, especially those students of color coming into class after six months (or more) of campus activism and whole lives of experience and struggle against racism—nor could [she] ever hope to" (308). As someone interested in

representation in the teacher population, this point that Ellsworth makes is most critical for me in any conversation on critical pedagogy. Her rejection of emancipatory authority speaks to the inherent challenge that white practitioners of critical pedagogy face in ridding themselves of learned oppressive tendencies (310). To that effect, critical pedagogy's claim that there can be an empowered student cannot be realized in an inherently paternalistic classroom and educational environment.

Ellsworth ends her treatise by proposing ways to surmount the inadequacies of critical pedagogy. She identifies (through dialogue with her students in the classroom) the unfair burden placed on students of color in explaining endlessly to white students and professors the "consequences of white middle-class privilege" (316). This harks back to Du Bois' argument that subjecting Black children to the often-hostile environment in white schools taught primarily by white teachers can lead to "complete ruin of character, gift, and ability and ingrained hatred of schools and men" (331).

Ellsworth offers two important solutions which I believe show the limited nature of her own vision for progress. First, she calls for white teachers and students to share the burden of educating themselves about their privilege, and second, she suggests that a safer and more trusting classroom space can be achieved by "social interactions outside of class—potlucks, field trips, participation in rallies and other gatherings" (316-17). Having identified the impossibility of shedding the power inherent in the role of the teacher, her inability to see non-white teachers occupying her role speaks to the limitations of her proposed solutions. Rather than offer a realistic way out of the inherent power imbalance in the classroom, Ellsworth's second solution once again undermines the potential of a truly transformative and liberatory pedagogy by suggesting a kind of walk-up-the-street friendly engagement. To suggest potlucks and field trips

as serious avenues for encouraging critical pedagogy seems trivial if not outright ludicrous. Jackman and Crane's 1986 essay on the dynamics of group contact, published three years before Ellsworth's essay, had already debunked the idea that simply having potlucks would improve race relations much less foster the kinds of critical conversations needed in the classroom, an environment already noted for its selective sieving of America's citizens. Jackman and Crane find no evidence supporting the contact theory that intergroup "contacts with duration and intimacy (such as friendships) are more motivationally compelling" or more helpful in intergroup relations (479). Dixon, et al. (2005); Wagner, et al. (2008); Pettigrew and Tropp (2011), and many others in intergroup contact studies have complicated the notion that just getting people from diverse backgrounds to become friends eliminates prejudice.⁹ The major issue here is Ellsworth's inability to or oversight in including or envisioning (in her solutions) teachers who may have to come from the hitherto oppressed groups she aimed to help. She therefore engages in the same paternalistic tendencies she bemoans in the field of critical pedagogy. This is the same paternalism because she still centers herself in the liberatory pedagogy that critical pedagogues espouse.

The shortcomings of Ellsworth's critique aside, she and other critics of the field of critical pedagogy helped improve the theoretical output as well as the classroom engagement of critical pedagogues. The dialogue between Freire and Macedo came as a result of some of these

⁹ Intergroup contact theory is a really fascinating field to go into given the continued globalization, cosmopolitanism and increased travel in the 21st century. With its roots back in the middle of the 20th century's fraught post World War II and holocaust racial politics, through to the civil rights movement to the popularity of cultural studies, optimism on the potential of desegregation and improved civil rights led many people to overstate the benefits of intergroup contacts which Dixon et al delve into in their 2005 article "Beyond the optimal contact strategy: A Reality Check for the Contact Hypothesis". Thomas F. Pettigrew is, however, the most influential contemporary scholar in the field as well as race relations in general. His 2011 work *When Groups Meet: The Dynamics of Intergroup Contact* has been described as "the touchstone for research on intergroup contact in many kinds" (Taylor 5). Many young researchers (including Tropp, Stathi etc.) have since continued expanding on Pettigrew's work making it a vibrant research area today.

critiques. Indeed, Freire tells Macedo (in response to his critics) that he has a lot more work on liberatory pedagogy than just *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and has actually expanded on his philosophy in order to address some of his critics' concerns in his 1994 follow-up *Pedagogy of Hope* (386). In *Pedagogy of Hope*, Freire responds particularly to those who accuse him of jargon and lack of clarity. He argues by way of detailing a conversation with a fifty-year-old Black man in Washington D.C. that people who accuse him of obscurity should not be believed because ““it is a question of the thinking that is expressed in [Freire’s] writing. Their problem is that they don't think dialectically”” (74). Freire also responds to some accusations that his pedagogical models excluded or didn't talk about black or colonized subjects enough by espousing his concept of unity in diversity in order to deal with the ruling class (who are the true minority). According to Freire), those calling themselves minorities (this identity is imposed by the ruling class) need to see through that divide and conquer tactic and unite with other members of the oppressed class be they a blue-eyed Irish or Black woman (152-54). Freire also talks extensively about the evils of racism, colonialism, and apartheid by discussing his travels in Africa from Tanzania to South Africa (144-49).

Despite the expansion of the field of critical pedagogy, some of this criticism has spawned new fields and subfields that developed in parallel and in response to the academy's embrace of interdisciplinary research. One such new field is Critical Race Theory (CRT), which developed out of criticism of Critical Legal Studies (CLS) in the early 1980s. As Cheryl I. Harris postulates,

The challenge for scholars of color in the academy, like the challenge to the poet in the unjust society, is to render the invisible visible and tangible, to move what is in the background to the foreground; to tell a different story that is neither known or familiar and indeed may be disturbing, annoying, and frightening. Because the past is with us in the present, because subordination existed and exists, the work of the scholar of color

involves the task of exposing the jurisprudence that oppresses in order to work towards articulating a jurisprudence that resists subordination and empowers (Harris 333).

Critical Race Theorists, who are mostly scholars of color, looked to foreground issues of race and racism that critical legal studies scholars—who were primarily white—failed to account for in their legal analysis (*Critical Race Theory* xxii). This is similar to the critique that African-American feminists (womanists) such as Audre Lorde (1984) leveled at mainstream white feminist scholarship and practice, arguing that “it is the refusal to recognize [the] differences” between white and Black women that accounts for the actual separation between the two (Lorde 115). Critical Race Theory in education is, therefore, a Black and minority addendum (some will argue that it is its own field) to the field of critical pedagogy.

2.2 Critical Race Theory in Education

When Critical Legal Studies critiqued the European and American legal systems, attempting to demystify their traditional normative and positivist underpinnings (de Almeida 2232-34; Salojärvi 428), legal minds in the African-American tradition saw that “while CLS had developed some very significant insights about how the legal process worked, the movement did not adequately address the struggles of people of color, particularly blacks” (Brown and Jackson 13). Thus, as Cornel West argues, CRT sought to examine the “law’s role in the construction and maintenance of social domination and subordination” (xi). When Professor Derrick A. Bell argued that “revolutionizing a culture begins with the radical assessment of it,” he was showcasing the central tenet of Critical Race Theory (893), which is that “racism is normal in American society” (Ladson-Billings 1998, 7). This means that any attempt to address social ills that takes a color-blind approach to race (i.e., ignoring it), is bound to fail because race is always

present in American life. The second basic tenet of CRT is the concept of interest convergence, or, as Derrick Bell argues,

white people will seek racial justice only to the extent that there is something in it for them. In other words, interest convergence is about alignment, not altruism. One cannot expect those who control society to make altruistic or benevolent moves toward racial justice when the existing injustice sustains their control. Instead, civil rights activists must look for ways to align the interests of the dominant group with those of racially oppressed and marginalized groups. (Ladson-Billings 2013, 38)

Bell's concept of interest convergence speaks directly to Freire's idea of "unity in diversity" because it is a direct counter to the divide and conquer tactics of the ruling class.

Other foundational concepts in CRT include the social construction of race, differential racialization, intersectionality, anti-essentialism, and the voice of color— sometimes embodied in the legal narrative in legal scholarship (Delgado and Stefancic 9-11). Voice in CRT scholarship focuses on storytelling and counternarratives by people of color that allow them "to articulate their experiences in ways that are unique" to their communities in order to help address racial inequality in the United States (Kumasi 211). Chapters Two and Three of this dissertation make use of the self-reflexive narrative (or voice of color) in order to make sense of undertaking this project as a Black man in overwhelmingly white professional spaces (NCTE Conference and central Texas high school systems). I will explore in-depth that aspect of CRT in both chapters.

In the critical pedagogy tradition, scholars of color such as bell hooks have attempted to link critical education to ending racism. In *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*, bell hooks argues that "working to end racism in education is the only meaningful and lasting change that will benefit Black students and all students. Perhaps we will see a day when progressive, non-racist schools, truly educate everyone" (80). Just like scholars in the critical pedagogy tradition, CRT scholars extended the traditional CRT critique of legal scholarship to critique of educational scholarship and practices. Drawing on CRT's excavation of how race affects legal

outcomes, critical race theorists of education have sought to uncover how race creates oppressive educational experiences for students of color (and their families) in seemingly “race-neutral” contexts like pedagogy, policy, and curriculum. In this way, CRT scholars in education seek to show the inextricable relationship between education and racial inequality (Dixon and Lynn 3).

From very early on, educational scholars have played a key role in the development of CRT (Zamudio et al 8). Gloria Ladson-Billings and William F. Tate, two pioneers in the CRT and education movement, have argued that the “current multicultural paradigm is mired in liberal ideology that offers no radical change in the current order” (62). Just like legal scholars of the CRT tradition, educational scholars such as Ladson-Billings are skeptical of the liberal positivist outlook on the Supreme Court’s legal desegregation in *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. It should be noted that some of the earliest and most important writings in the CRT movement began as a critique of the law’s role in education. Bell’s essay “Serving Two Masters: Integration Ideals and Client Interests in School Desegregation Litigation,” which many theorists identify as central to the development of CRT, palpably deals with the law’s role in race differences in education.

As Professor Bell argues, the rights that the NAACP and other civil rights organizations were fighting for through school desegregation in the United States “literally did not exist prior to 1954.” As a result, the state essentially created those rights. He goes on to argue that the NAACP’s fixation on Black children gaining access to white children’s schools “fails to encompass the complexity of achieving equal educational opportunity for children to whom it so long has been denied” (Bell 477-78). This critique went on to become integral to CRT in education critique. Another foundational CRT scholar, Neil Gotanda, in his 1991 *Stanford Law Review* essay “A Critique of ‘Our Constitution is Color-Blind’” criticizes the law’s color-blind

approach to present conditions that have been historically caused by race-based privilege such as “housing, education, employment, and income” because they undergird “continuing oppression of institutional racism” (45). It should therefore come as no surprise that CRT has found fertile ground in pedagogical theories of education that center minority student experiences.

CRT offers two broad critiques of education that center race as a crucial matter and analytical tool in understanding school inequity (Ladson-Billings and Tate 48). The first is centered on how race and its inextricable affiliation with property affects (1) school funding, and (2) who gets to determine who can and will be excluded. The second major critique that CRT scholars offer is how race determines the curriculum in the United States. When looking at CRT’s articulation of the relationship between race and property, Cheryl I. Harris’ essay “Whiteness as Property” is the most widely cited and canonical within CRT scholarship both in legal studies and education research.

Using the narrative structure common in the CRT tradition, Cheryl I. Harris recounts her grandmother’s history of passing for white and then uses that story as a basis for exploring how whiteness has always been invested with property rights. Passing so that she could provide sustenance for her family, Harris’ grandmother knew without a doubt and in painful ways the fact of the property value in whiteness. To this effect, Harris argues that her

Grandmother's story illustrates the valorization of whiteness as treasured property in a society structured on racial caste. In ways so embedded that it is rarely apparent, the set of assumptions, privileges, and benefits that accompany the status of being white have become a valuable asset that whites sought to protect and that those who *passed* sought to attain—by fraud if necessary. (1713)

Harris argues that the American law’s “construction of whiteness defined and affirmed critical aspects of identity (who is white); of privilege (what benefits accrue to that status); and, of property (what legal entitlements arise from that status),” and that the *Brown v. Board of*

Education decision “remained unwilling to embrace any form of substantive equality, unwilling to acknowledge any right to equality of resources” even as it *de jure* extricated the property value in whiteness (1725, 1751). The court’s refusal to address *de facto* white privilege (accrued by way of historical and contemporary socioeconomic exclusion of “others”) ensured that whiteness still included within its social formulation and operation the property value it had before the Court’s decision. This is reflected in how schools continue to be funded post-*Brown*, where, according to the Education Trust, “districts serving the most students of color receive about eighteen hundred dollars or thirteen percent less per student than districts serving the fewest students of color” (Morgan and Ary 10).

CRT approaches to education have two primary centers of analysis: the exclusion of minority literature from the curriculum and the exclusion of minority bodies from the classroom. Milton Reynolds’ “affective-underskilling” framework is useful in understanding the exclusion of minority literature in education. Reynolds uses the term “affective-underskilling” to describe the predictable patterns of social anxiety, agitation, evasion, and consternation that emerge in conversations regarding race among people who have been socialized to be colorblind. These patterns seem to be most evident among, though not entirely exclusive to, people who identify or might be identified as white (360).

Even though Reynolds focuses more on the behavior of teachers in the classroom (which I discuss in Chapter Three), I use affective-underskilling to discuss how critical race theorists of education show how school curricula still generally exclude non-white literature and cultural artifacts. Ladson-Billings argues that academic success for students across the United States requires being prepared for the world through culturally relevant pedagogy which helps students can attain cultural competency. She defines cultural competency as “the ability to help students

appreciate and celebrate their cultures of origin while gaining knowledge of and fluency in at least one other culture” (75). By not engaging students with adequate historical events and literary output by non-white Americans, students are affectively-underskilled.

Critical race theorists of education also critique the exclusion of Black educators in the classroom. Early Black theorists of education, such as Dubois and Booker T. Washington found it very important to have Black educators teaching Black children. CRT scholars today reiterate Du Bois’s argument about the negative impact that integration had on the psyche of Black children. Even before the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision was handed down, Black teachers were wary of the potential impact that desegregation would have on their job security. The steep decline in the number of Black educators that followed in the wake of desegregation is aptly captured by Hudson and Holms when they state that

In 1954, the year of the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, approximately 82,000 African American teachers were responsible for the education of the nation's two million African American public-school students (Hawkins, 1994). A decade later, over 38,000 Black teachers and administrators had lost their positions in 17 southern and border states (388).

This decline also accompanied declining high school student performance numbers, especially among Black boys. The payoff that many Black people in the United States anticipated from desegregation and which they felt justified the decrease in the number of teachers does not appear to have borne fruit. To fully understand the scale at which African American teachers lost their jobs, it is important to note that by the mid-twentieth century, up to half of the Black professional class were teachers (Landry 52). Teachers “served a primary leadership role” in the Black community prior to the Supreme Court’s decision in *Brown* (Tillman 282). The sacrifice of these teachers for integration, therefore, was a significant one. The overwhelming ratio of white men and (mainly) women teaching an increasingly diverse student body has therefore come under scrutiny by critical race theorists of education. Leonardo and Boas offer a great

historical overview of the role of White women in education and their role in reinforcing White domination, and how the increasing and unchanging dominance they play in the classroom needs to be challenged¹⁰.

CRT's critique of American education is directly relevant to Shakespeare's role in contemporary education. CRT's critique of educational inequity figured largely during the so-called "canon wars" of the 1990s, during which Shakespeare's place in American education was contested. Along with literature of many other "dead white male" canonical authors, Shakespeare's was scrutinized for carrying water for racism and racial domination. As Gates argues in *Loose Canons*, even though non-white literature is gaining a place in predominantly white institutions (PWIs) at the college level, Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, and Mark Twain still dominate the high school curriculum (90). Though Gates made this assessment almost three decades ago, it is still, unfortunately, the case today in 2020 at least when it comes to Shakespeare, who is a mandated author by the Common Core.

2.3 Critical Shakespeare Pedagogy

The idea that "English Studies" is in a state of crisis is shared by many scholars today (Pechter 1). Because Shakespeare resides at the core of most English studies, Shakespeare studies too is said to be in a state of crisis, with scholars like Bloom arguing that the Western Canon has been destroyed by those who aim to expand it (*The Western Canon* 7). Discourse on

¹⁰ Zeus Leonardo and Erica Boas in "Other Kids' Teachers: What Children of Color Learn from White Women and What This Says about Race, Whiteness, and Gender" is perhaps one of the most important articles in the *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education*. Their historical analysis of the role that white women, because of their race and gender, has played in reifying and reproducing white power structures and minority failure is extremely salient when theorizing inclusion/exclusion and diversity in the field of education. It greatly situates the debate over inclusion in the CRT tradition of historicizing any analysis of law and equality in terms of historically built social systems that go beyond our latest colorblind legal frameworks.

the teaching and learning of Shakespeare is intimately tied to the critique of educational practice by CRT scholars. The major issues at the center of concern about a decline in Shakespeare studies hinge on two major observations. The first is that Shakespeare has declined in popularity among students and teachers because he has been replaced by other authors (contemporary and minority, purportedly), and the second is that like English studies more generally, Shakespeare studies has moved from the study and exploration of form to the study and exploration of function. In essence, Shakespeare scholarship has moved from literary criticism to cultural criticism.¹¹ These two arguments above are steeped in the discourse on critical pedagogy and critical race theory. Two studies, published 50 years apart, give a great overview of the trajectory of Shakespeare education in the United States. Using this work, I will show how the discourse on Shakespeare pedagogy has helped frame the discourse on critical pedagogy and critical race theory in Shakespeare studies today.

Van Cleve's 1938 essay "The Teaching of Shakespeare in American Secondary Schools" looks at how Shakespeare studies in American public schools started. According to Van Cleve, American high schools first moved to teach Shakespeare because they sought to equip their students with better compositional abilities for Harvard because the university's 1874 entrance exams listed three of Shakespeare's plays as required readings (334-35). Conceived this way, Shakespeare studies in secondary schools have been intimately tied to exam-focused sieving mechanisms for American colleges. This practice of sorting students into higher education is part of the apparatus of exclusion that many minority groups in America have suffered from.

¹¹ Foremost among these scholars who argue that Shakespeare's declining popularity is as a result of both cultural criticism and replacement by other authors is Harold Bloom who derogatorily calls those doing so "school of resentment. In Part I of *The Western Canon*, "An Elegy for the Canon," Bloom's bombastic lament of Shakespeare's decline is at its finest here.

Shakespeare's continued primacy in education can be seen from the fact that he is maintained as a "standard author" by educational institutions like the Common Core whereas other authors such as Oliver Goldsmith or Sir Walter Scott are not.

Earlier teachers of Shakespeare in the United States, such as those interviewed for Van Cleve's study, decry the predominance of the philological methods of teaching Shakespeare inherited from classics education, as well as textbooks presenting "Shakespeare as a philosopher of life" (338). Both concerns by teachers in the 1930s, the dominance of philology in Shakespeare studies and the elevation of Shakespeare as a philosopher of life that concerned teachers in the 1930s are still seen as causing the downfall of Shakespeare studies. I have derogatorily labeled the philological methods of Shakespeare studies inherited from the classics as "simile hunting and metaphor counting" because such methods focus (among other things) on "poetic metre [and] rhyme" (Fulk 95). The framing of Shakespeare as a philosopher of life has a rather complicated position today. The Bloom school of "bardolatry" wants Shakespeare ensconced as a philosopher of life without question whereas the critical pedagogue wants him or his works critiqued as an embodiment of the fraught nature of human relationships, particularly as they relate to social difference. Presenting or teaching Shakespeare as a philosopher of life, as Bloom wants, is tied to the racialized sieving disguised as educational meritocracy mentioned above.

The elitist ideological undertones of Shakespeare studies' entry into American education and the implications thereof have also been critiqued by scholars of Shakespeare. Charles Frey identifies Shakespeare's entry into American life (and, subsequently, American education) as parallel to that of the English bourgeois who would later migrate to the continent in the late-eighteenth century (544). As a result, Shakespeare can be seen as coming to American life

through elite culture, which is kind of opposite to his entry into British life as a playwright accessible to the masses. This echoes some of the comments made by teachers in Van Cleve's essay, as some believed that Shakespeare studies "are best suited for pupils of high mental ability" and in their schools, "enrolment [in extended Shakespeare courses were] generally confined to the superior pupils" (348). The "bard for all people" who became increasingly popularized in the 1950s after World War II, according to Frey, is inherently tied to an ideological project that saw him as a "writer of lofty moral tags, many of which were quoted approvingly by American presidents" and who was then "eulogized and universalized and mythologized in this era as 'Shakespeare for Everyman'" (544, 549). As an exercise aimed at inclusion, critical race theory is in stark contrast to the elitist ideological project that provides the foundation for Shakespeare studies.

The other interesting ideological strand in Shakespeare education that Frey identifies is the attempt to present Shakespeare as a "gentle Will, [] ennobling, not-of-an-age, universal, uncriticizable genius" through overly edited and "authoritative" editions and essays. Frey argues that (what many contemporary scholars criticize as not Shakespearean enough) comic book adaptations and translations are no less Shakespeare than these "scholarly editions" because they embody the "explosive violence and ungentleness of the plays" (355). The prescience of Frey's commentary on what might become an alternative to this ideological "bardolatry" is worth mentioning. He argues that teachers who encourage students to see beyond or question this ideological posture, "the over-universalized and ennobled Bard endorsed by their texts [,] face formidable problems" (556). These problems, as the canon wars indicate, were a repudiation of critical approaches to the received ideology inherent in Shakespeare pedagogy.

Both Frey and Van Cleve touch on performance-based pedagogies, indicating that from the turn of the twentieth century, when Shakespeare was being codified into the American education system, teachers and educators already believed in instituting performance-based pedagogies. According to Frey, “American editors of the separate play editions stressed the dramatizing approach” since 1919 (344). Despite this scholarship, dramatization has not permeated the American classroom as deeply as such scholars and teachers have desired. Contemporary scholars still identify dramatization as the solution to students’ declining interest in Shakespeare. According to deGravelles, “trends in Shakespearean pedagogy have moved toward performance-based teaching approaches,” which can be traced to an “an explosion of literature on performance-based approaches beginning in the 1980s” (145, 162). Even though performance-based pedagogy is almost universally lauded, teachers need not sacrifice other important issues, such as the explicit exploration of race and identity, when it comes to Shakespeare studies in favor of just performance alone.

Exploration of identity in Shakespeare studies is not new. Shakespeare’s universality hinges on what many scholars believe is his uncanny exploration of the human condition. The Common Core (discussed in the introduction) identifies Shakespeare’s “timeless dramas” as examples of texts that “offer profound insights into the human condition and serve as models for students’ own thinking and writing” (35). By identifying Shakespeare with timelessness regarding the exploration of the human condition, the Common Core again institutionalized the ideological positions of the likes of Bloom who argue that “what Shakespeare invents are ways of representing human changes, alterations not only caused by flaws and by decay but effected by the will as well, and by the will’s temporal vulnerabilities” (*Shakespeare: The Invention* 2). Bloom even goes as far as to declare that “[i]f any author has become a mortal god, it must be

Shakespeare. Who can dispute his good eminence, to which merit alone raised him?”

(*Shakespeare: The Invention* 3). These claims, dripping with— and in service to— the kind of ideological posturing that it declaims in attributing Shakespeare’s status to merit, invites readers to consider just what kind of human Bloom’s god invents. And, furthermore, what are the limits of his invention?

When Bloom declares in the *Western Canon* that “Shakespeare’s greatest originality is in representation of character,” the question I have for Bloom as a critical pedagogue is this, why not study his character portrayals (47)? If, as Bloom asserts, Iago is raised by merit “to a bad eminence that seems unsurpassable” and has “a negative grace beyond cognition and perceptiveness,” can a responsible teacher discuss this character without looking at his most potent tool in destroying the lives of the play’s tragic hero and heroine—Othello’s race (438-39)? Bloom’s scholarship indicates that one can. Throughout *The Invention of the Human* and the *Western Canon*, he does not discuss Iago’s deployment of race in his villainy against Othello. But many critical pedagogy scholars believe that Bloom and other humanist scholars’ elision of race in their study of Shakespeare is a longstanding humanist tradition given humanism scholarship’s tendency to ignore race (Cameron 2020). And so, Bloom and others in this tradition not only ignore race in *Othello* but do the same for other Shakespeare plays that deal with race. However, James Andreas argues that Bloom is selective in his ignoring of race in Shakespeare, as he rightly identifies anti-Semitism in *The Merchant of Venice* (183-84). Andreas’s reading clearly shows the limits of traditional Shakespeare scholarship in the humanist tradition, and therefore invites many scholars—particularly Black scholars, women and other minorities—to offer a more critical reading of Shakespeare as a foundation for teaching the bard.

In “Rewriting Race Through Literature: Teaching Shakespeare’s African Plays,” Andreas argues that given *Othello*’s popularity through the nineteenth century, it is extremely well suited for the classroom and can be used alongside his other African plays to show how race and racism function in society (225). Defining racism as “feelings generated by the preconception of who the ‘other’ is,” Andreas argues that no Shakespeare character is as preconceived as Othello, whose physical entrance on the stage is preceded by Iago’s clever poisoning of his character and reputation by roping in the audience in “projecting and reflecting its xenophobia onto Othello” by branding him a thief, savagely animalistic, and visually marked as the “other” by his skin color (226-28). Given Iago’s reputation as a master weaver of language and his use of this mastery to tragic ends, Iago’s linguistic cues and strategies can show students how racism can function with language as its driving tool. In *Othello*, Iago’s racism is almost entirely generated by his use of language. And in a language classroom, this appears the best approach to Shakespearean pedagogy.

Resistance to teaching Shakespeare and race has sometimes taken the form of resistance to the interpretations scholars who teach Shakespeare and race make of Shakespearean texts. But the need to critically teach Shakespeare by highlighting the corrosive deployment of racist language by his characters need not rest entirely on these interpretive lenses alone. It can also rest on how Shakespeare and his plays have historically been received by readers globally. This perspective comes from understanding responses to texts, as the social reader-response theorists argue, as “products of the interpretive community” to which a given reader belongs (Tyson 176). Seen from this perspective, the need to highlight the racial components in Shakespeare’s African plays is not entirely dependent on a teacher’s interpretation of the plays but the interpretive communities in which the plays have circulated.

For instance, how does Bloom's elision of race in *Othello* relate to white South African hate mail sent to actors John Kani (a Black man) and Joanna Suzzman (a white woman) for touching in a 1987 staging of the play (Thompson 2016, 97-98)? As Thompson further documents, French audiences fainted at the death of Desdemona in 1792 and in 1822, the Black actor playing Othello in Baltimore was shot by a soldier who said that "[i]t will never be said that in [his] presence a damned nigger killed a white woman." These events are unrelated to the scholarly debate over what Shakespeare means (42). The audience in all cases though, particularly the soldier in the last instance, clearly acted his part in the inherently racist interpretive community of 1822 Baltimore, Maryland.

As Frank W. Brevik argues, any attempt to teach Shakespeare's African plays without highlighting the fraught racial politics in those plays is engaging in fantastical pedagogy. Teaching *the Tempest* from what he referred to as an "American Adamic context," Brevik's own students, particularly his essay's co-author, showed him that in our post World War II classroom, "it is virtually impossible to not touch on the anti-Semitic voices so explicit" in *Merchant*. Equally, it is impossible to discuss *The Tempest* without discussing race in twenty-first century United States given that America's history of slavery acts as a co-text for students when they approach the play (39-40). In teaching Shakespeare, it is therefore necessary—even if one's scholarly interpretation sees race as unimportant in Shakespeare's African plays—to engage students in the topic of race and othering.

Beyond the audience's reaction to Shakespeare's African plays, centering the racial component of the bard's works is important for how educational schemes have engaged his work, particularly where colonial education is concerned. Contemporary education is rooted in English colonial education all over the Anglophone world. Taking India for instance, Jyotsna G.

Singh argues that English colonial educators were very explicit in their utilization of Shakespearean and other English texts as tools in the civilization of the colonial other (106). One such educator, Charles Trevelyan, argued that by being introduced to “the best and wisest of the Englishmen through the higher medium of their works” Indian colonial subjects would “become more English than Hindu” (106). The cultural capital with which Shakespeare is imbued in English education carries with it the implicit assumption of the inferiority of the other, who may be able to escape his/her inferiority by imitating the mores of the English.

Given the similarity of contemporary Anglo-American education to colonial education, it is important to ensure that marginalized students in English education globally are not imbibing similar racial paradigms through contemporary Shakespearean education. As Ania Loomba argues, teaching that highlights Shakespeare’s complication of the “histories of contact can help qualify the notion of an endless history of Western hegemony” (175) because “Shakespeare has already been, and continues to be, taught, performed, and written about in highly racialized ways, and for highly racialized purposes. We must necessarily either challenge these histories or rehearse them. There is no middle ground” (160). From Loomba’s perspective then, any critical engagement with Shakespeare must necessarily include looking at the bard as he engaged—or has been engaged through—the racial question.

To many Shakespeare pedagogues, the way to ensure Shakespeare’s continued relevance and to address students’ declining interest in Shakespeare is to engage him in a way that is relevant to the lives of these students. As Brevik’s students showed him, their daily lives outside the classroom are saturated with discourses on race and otherness. To ensure that these students find the humanities classroom interesting and relevant to their lives, teachers must not run away from engaging them in discourse about the racial elements in these texts. If Shakespeare indeed

has an uncanny ability to portray the human condition in its various manifestations, then it stands to reason that the race—one of the defining aspects of the human condition— would abound in his works, even in those that are not primarily concerned with race and otherness. This deserves pedagogical attention that teachers would do well to pay.

Even though discussion of Shakespeare and race in the college classroom (especially regarding his African plays) has been normalized, the same cannot be said of the high school classroom. As I mentioned in the introduction, only 32-43% of American adults have some form of post-secondary education, and only 33% have bachelor's degrees (Ryan and Bauman 2). This means that to achieve the stated purpose of humanist education, pedagogical focus needs to be at the pre-tertiary level.

Unlike Shakespeare pedagogy within the academy, where teachers are often also researchers, high-school teachers of Shakespeare are (generally) exclusively teachers. This reality has a profound effect on teaching practices. Cutting-edge critical pedagogical practices developed by scholars working in higher education take time to get to high school Shakespeare pedagogy. This is the case partly because high school teachers do not have the same material resources that college professors have. They therefore depend on the resources their school districts readily have on offer.

Many who attempt critical pedagogy, to the extent that the data shows have been unsuccessful. Sarah Kass, a high school teacher in Boston, Massachusetts provides a good case study in failed critical pedagogy at the high school level. In an article she published in the *Journal of Education* in 1994, Kass engaged students in a discussion of the multiple racist insults to which Iago subjects Othello but steered the conversation away from the racial angle when a student resisted with identifying Brabantio's angst over Desdemona's marriage to Othello as

racial prejudice (90). When the student says that it would be racist for Brabantio to have a problem with a Black man marrying his daughter but argues that Brabantio was only being protective because he didn't want her getting pregnant, it is clear that the student's interpretation is imbued with layers of prejudice received from an interpretive community outside the classroom. Kass' inability to pry open that loaded interpretation leaves the class unsatisfactory and aside from that incident, she completely ignores the racial element for the rest of her class, as far as she discourses in her article. In more ways than not, she did more harm than good by attempting a critical engagement here because her backtracking at the accusation by the student may reify other students' belief that such a discourse in and of itself amounts to racism.

However, there has been robust innovation in scholarship on high school Shakespeare pedagogy scholarship over the past two decades, much of which has centered on performance-based pedagogies to the detriment of critical approaches (Thompson 2010, 337). Thompson and Turchi argue that

according to the theories for performance-based pedagogy, the student's body plays a central role in his or her kinesthetic processes and syntheses. Nonetheless, the current theories, methodologies, and practices of performance-based pedagogy sacrifice discussions of students' race, gender, ability, and sexuality in order to espouse a universalist rhetoric. While the rhetoric about the value of diversity is readily espoused, the practical implications for the ways to embody diversity in Shakespearean performance is avoided. (724)

Thompson and Turchi's argument is perhaps best exemplified in Margaret A. Dulaney's "Using a Prop Box to Create Emotional Memory and Creative Play for Teaching Shakespeare's *Othello*," which makes universalist claims of her student-embodiment-inspired classroom when teaching *Othello* but fails to mention race. Her approach, to get students to identify with the text and the characters, was able to elicit student tears as a result of possibly having been through a recent break-up (41). This shows that it was effective in achieving its goals, but to my mind it also exemplifies the phenomenon that Thompson and Turchi identify above. In the elision of

race, many high school teachers purposely exclude one of the central issues of the play even when they are engaged in performance-based pedagogies. As Thompson shows in her analysis of student performance uploads to YouTube, there is no way that performance approaches to Shakespeare can be devoid of the racial aspects embedded within his plays even when student performances do not engage the race question (Thompson 2010, 354).

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, one of the best recent pedagogical tools to come out of high school Shakespeare pedagogy is Ayanna Thompson and Laura Turchi's *Teaching Shakespeare with Purpose: A Student-Centered Approach*. Published by the Arden Shakespeare series, *Teaching Shakespeare with Purpose* seeks to combine the engaging aspects of performance-based approaches to teaching Shakespeare with the "explicit exploration of identity" in the classroom (2-4). The authors identify similar challenges with high school Shakespeare pedagogy where "Shakespeare study is defined by factoid recall, character identification, and plot summaries," similar to what I refer to as "simile-counting and metaphor-hunting" (6). As the subtitle suggests, Thompson and Turchi seek to "show teachers how to approach Shakespeare's works as vehicles for collaborative exploration" and how to "teach Shakespeare's plays to diverse advanced learners as living, breathing and evolving texts" (18).

Teaching Shakespeare with Purpose devotes two chapters to innovative ways to engage Shakespeare through classroom performance techniques and historicization. Thompson and Turchi argue that teachers engaged in performance-based pedagogies should be intentional in their casting choices (as opposed to colorblind) because many twenty-first century American students have bought into the fantasy of colorblindness (73-76). They argue that the discomfort that might come out of the explicit discussion of difference and identity in casting decisions should not discourage teachers from engaging in such pedagogy because there are no neutral

bodies in the classroom (83-83). The authors also point out that Shylock's characterization has changed over time and across performances, making it impossible to offer a conclusive analysis of how he was envisioned by Shakespeare. Acknowledging the sociology of these performance histories will then allow teachers to show students how history is unstable and dynamic and how that impacts their lives (109-10).

After reading *Teaching Shakespeare with Purpose* in 2017, I noticed little overlap between the research and methodologies offered and actual conversation with high school teachers of Shakespeare. I must acknowledge that while the book attempts to give teachers in high school the tools to teach Shakespeare effectively, it is also addressed to college teachers. It is therefore unsurprising that the book did deeply engage high school Shakespeare teachers. Only two paragraphs are dedicated to discussing a 9th-grade classroom observation done regarding *Romeo and Juliet*, and the NCTE, the foremost high school teachers' organization in the US, is mentioned only in passing (69, 71-72). After reaching out and meeting one of the co-authors, Laura Turchi at the University of Houston, and expressing interest in researching Shakespeare pedagogy in high schools, we agreed that one of the shortcomings of *Teaching Shakespeare with Purpose* was the lack of engagement with high school teachers. Turchi also recommended attending the NCTE to gauge the state of play when it comes to cutting edge teaching practices. That is the genesis of this project in earnest.

In the following chapters, I look at the NCTE, a central Texas classroom observation, as well as other recent innovative approaches to teaching Shakespeare in high school from the perspective of current teachers and institutions.

Exordium

I want to argue that it's important for us to make peace with discomfort. That there's something perverse about expecting always to be comfortable. Life is messy. Sometimes discomfort opens us up to growth and to knowledge and to meaning." —Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, NCTE 2018.

"Bad teaching wastes a great deal of effort and spoils many lives which might have been full of energy and happiness. — Gilbert Hiphet, *The Art of Teaching*

3. AT THE CUTTING-EDGE: SHAKESPEARE AT NCTE

As I outlined in the previous chapter, Turchi recommended gathering data on cutting-edge teaching practices at the NCTE as part of my dissertation project. The NCTE offered two great opportunities to gather data. First, there was an overwhelming number of sessions at the conference where I could gather data, including open session workshops offering professional development to teachers. Second, there was an equally large national pool of teachers from which I could recruit participants for my study. This chapter begins with a short overview of how Shakespeare featured in the conference overall and is followed by a discussion of the data captured from the conference.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval process for gathering data at NCTE was smooth and quick. I was able to get a quick turnaround from the Texas A&M IRB because unlike my research in local high schools (discussed in the next chapter), this data gathering did not involve minors. I only needed to submit a verbal script for the recruitment of teachers at the NCTE (Appendix A), an information sheet about the parameters of my data gathering (Appendix B), and an interview guide for teachers (Appendix C). This was the easiest part of this project. All the above documents were repurposed from my main IRB application for the high school observation and so were not time-consuming. The interview guide for teachers was basically the

same one I used for the main application with minor changes here and there. I memorized the recruitment script shown in Appendix A, and I introduced my project to teachers with that information. I handed out the information sheet and took the contact information of those who expressed interest in order to contact them later for further interviews.

The codes for analyzing the NCTE data are divided into two categories. The first set of codes is designed specifically for the eleven open sessions I attended. This group of codes describes the presence of race consciousness and the discussion of marginal identities in the Shakespeare sessions. To that end I asked three questions

1. Does the workshop offer examples from any of Shakespeare's African plays?
2. Does the workshop engage the topic of otherness, identity, and/or race?
3. Does the workshop offer teachers strategies to help them engage students in inclusive pedagogy?

The second group of codes describes the teacher interviews and are like those I use in the next chapter for my classroom observations. These codes center around teacher preparedness.

Therefore, I looked for education and certification, mastery of Shakespearean texts of choice, access to institutional support, and other professional development competencies of teachers.

NCTE's 2018 convention's theme "Raising Student Voice: Speaking Out for Equity and Justice" was appealing to me, as it dovetailed with my own project. Turchi, who was in attendance and an advisor to my project, recommended the conference partly because of its theme. Therefore, I anticipated that conference sessions on Shakespeare would likely feature issues of inclusive pedagogy. Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie opened the general session with a focus on diversifying curriculum and teaching practice so as to ensure that

students see themselves, as well as others, in the texts we teach. She argued that this would help boost students' confidence in themselves.

I attended eleven out of seven hundred sessions at the NCTE conference, focusing primarily on sessions that served secondary school teachers. I intended to attend a wide range of sessions to get a proper grasp of the professional development opportunities available to high school teachers with various interests, though I did give special attention to sessions that emphasized inclusive education, such as one by Michael Seward on decolonizing the English classroom.

The first day of the NCTE conference featured four hour-long workshops. I picked the session titled "Decolonizing the English Classroom: What Can You Do?" because it was one of two sessions that day (the other being "The Social Justice English Classroom") that dealt directly with my own project interests. The session aimed to provide attendees with a theoretical framework for understanding the inherently colonial nature of the educational system, as well as concrete practices that they might use in their own classrooms for resisting such colonization and, by extension, decreasing the damage done to students *by* that educational system (NCTE 2018 43).

The session was facilitated by Kevin DePaw, Kylowna Moton, Michael Seward, and Vivian Yenika-Agbaw. Drawing on bell hooks' argument that "education is always a vocation rooted in hopefulness," Seward postulated that we, the attendees, saw ourselves as helpful teachers interested in finding newer and better ways to help our students learn well (hooks xiv). This is the major takeaway I got from the NCTE conference: that all or most participants in attendance came to the conference in order to better themselves so as to be better equipped to teach their students. Most of the teachers I interacted with at the conference, as well as those I

later interviewed, saw the NCTE as a professional development opportunity through which they could update their teaching skills by learning from fellow teachers and experts from respected institutions such as the Folger Shakespeare Library.

Of the eleven NCTE sessions I attended, five were Shakespeare themed/focused, and six were general sessions. Of all the sessions I attended NCTE, “Decolonizing the English Classroom: What Can You Do?” offered the most impressive set of material for teachers, as it provided a comprehensive overview of theory, history, pedagogy, curriculum, classroom activities, and assessment, as well a wealth of further readings and course templates from both the existing paradigm and from the decolonizing perspective.

3.1 Overview of Shakespeare at the NCTE

I identified ten conference sessions that had Shakespeare components in their program descriptions. Of the ten, Turchi had encouraged me to look out for the Folger Shakespeare Library sessions given that they are the highlight of any Shakespeare pedagogy professional development event at NCTE conferences. The Folger had three sessions at the conference, two of them led or facilitated by Peggy O’Brien, the director of education at the library. I was able to attend all three of the Folger sessions. Aside from these Folger sessions, I was only able to attend two other Shakespeare sessions because of schedule conflicts with the Folger sessions.

The first Folger session, titled “What to Do—and What Not to Do—in Week One of a Successful Shakespeare Unit” offered strategies to get students interested and to hold their attention in that daunting first week of a Shakespeare unit. The second Folger Session, titled “Teaching Literature for Social Change Starts with Us” focused on teacher “strategies for using literature as a way into difficult—and essential—classroom conversations about race, ethnicity,

identity, and community” (NCTE 2018 85). The third Folger Session focused on taking teachers through the “Folger Method,” which the Folger Shakespeare Library says is an engine for educational equity.

The other two sessions on Shakespeare that I attended included the WNET sponsored ““Friends, Americans, Countrymen?” *Julius Caesar* and the American Experience” and an exhibit by Sally Trenor and Greg Watkins of the website myShakespeare.com on how to use their website in the classroom. The *Julius Caesar* session explored ways to use WNET/PBS’ “Shakespeare Uncovered” video series with Brian Cox on *Julius Caesar* to explore how the play continues to resonate with contemporary American audiences. In fact, Cox’s exploration of rhetoric in *Julius Caesar* is a great tool for teaching students about the power of rhetoric—a lesson especially useful in the Trump era.

I chose these two sessions (in addition to the Folger sessions) because I thought it might be worthwhile to review other free, open-access resources that offer teachers all over the country new ways of teaching Shakespeare. Because the Folger is the most powerful (and expensive) of these public institutions, not every teacher has access to their more comprehensive subscription-based services. I felt that reviewing other resources teachers may have access to was a good way to understand the scope of Shakespeare teaching resources across the United States.

One of the Shakespeare sessions I missed was a session on Shakespeare and digital literacy. Another one was a Folger-DC Public Schools (DCPS) partnership to show how DCPS employs the Folger Method to highlight student voice. The remaining three sessions I missed include a session on how to read colonization critically in Shakespeare, another on pairing August Wilson and Shakespeare in the classroom, and the last on how to teach grammar with Shakespeare. Of these missed sessions, the August Wilson pairing and the one on reading

colonization in Shakespeare stung the most, as I believed they could have had a lot to offer my project. As a result, and as is evident in the next chapter, the range of my data is limited.

3.2 Standout Sessions

The two sessions that stood out to me at the conference were the first two Folger sessions, especially the second session on teaching literature for social change. In the first session, presenters (English teachers) from high schools in New York, Georgia, and Washington D.C., all of them Folger alumni, offered participants exemplary excerpts from various Shakespearean texts (*Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, and *Hamlet* respectively). They emphasized reading out loud, letting students stand and move around, as well as utilizing visual imagery to teach students how words function in the Shakespearean text. They showed how such imagery could be used for anything from highlighting tone to showing how casting decisions might affect how the audience finds meaning in a text.

The excerpts from *Othello* where participants were encouraged to read out loud some of Iago and Roderigo's lurid shenanigans in Act One elicited some insightful observations about how teachers can get students interested in the play even if the play's racial discourse is not their primary focus. Participants were divided into two groups in the conference room and given an excerpt from *Othello* which ran from 1.1.84 to 1.1.118. The session showed how Iago and Roderigo's attempts to incite Brabantio to wrath over Othello's relationship with Desdemona could be an entry point for students depending on how the teacher approached it. As first-week activities, teachers could use these excerpts to help students with intonation, word emphasis, and voice before going on, later in the semester, to perhaps read the play in its entirety.

Starting the Shakespeare unit with the sexually suggestive passages in *Othello* that the facilitators gave us might be the best entry point for students. In fact, the facilitator noticed giggles from teachers when we read aloud Iago's "Even now, now, very now, an old black ram/Is tugging your white ewe. Arise, arise" (1.1.87-88). If adults giggled at this, imagine what can happen when you let high school students read this out loud in class! As someone who is interested in sensitive topics such as race and sexuality, sometimes I can go in hard during the teaching session. Getting students to find fun moments in the plays at the beginning of the semester before getting into heavier topics seems like a great strategy for a play like *Othello*.

The second Folger session offered teachers ways to introduce students to Shakespeare and teach social change smoothly. Peggy O'Brien asked teachers to frame Shakespeare's vaunted position in the American intellectual tradition as that of an immigrant. The idea that Shakespeare is an adopted feature of the American social imagination—and yet still so integral to America—seems to square perfectly with America's conception of itself as a nation of immigrants. If even Shakespeare is an immigrant, O'Brien seemed to imply, then immigrants might not be so bad. What is fascinating about this point is that during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, Tom Cotton, a U.S. senator from Arkansas, argued that America should not allow Chinese students to study quantum computing and artificial intelligence but that "[i]f Chinese students want to come here and study Shakespeare and the Federalist Papers, that's what they need to learn from America" (Re 2020). Obviously, Shakespeare has been naturalized and nationalized in the American imagination to the extent that political leaders see his cultural capital as a worthwhile export to foreign students. Shakespeare, therefore, can be an effective vehicle for teaching thorny subjects involving social change as Ayanna Thompson argues, particularly if framed, as O'Brien suggests, by casting Shakespeare as an immigrant.

The second major point in O'Brien's introduction to the session was that teachers ought not to frame Shakespeare as a unique solitary genius but rather as one whose work follows in a long artistic tradition that involves poets, playwrights, and essayists of all creeds and colors. In fact, O'Brien jokingly says Shakespeare "stole" all but one of his plotlines from other authors. In so doing, she echoed the scholarly consensus that "Shakespeare borrowed shamelessly, from contemporaries, fellow actors, Anglo-Saxon literature, and Roman historians and playwrights" (Madison 760). This is exactly what some of my students argued when I taught Shakespeare in the summer of 2018. Following Thompson and Turchi's suggestion in "Shakespeare and the Common Core: An Opportunity to Reboot," instead of teaching several plays, I decided to teach just one Shakespeare play—*Othello*—for the entire semester (34). I decided to focus the course on all the texts Shakespeare borrowed from and some of *Othello*'s afterlives. In one of our class discussions, a student argued that Shakespeare was basically a thief (just as O'Brien said to the teachers at this session). But of course, that should not be the point of such a lesson. Rather, I focused on Shakespeare's indebtedness to other authors, including Leo Africanus, to show that knowledge production is global insofar as it is interconnected (Gillespie 15). This helps to dispel notions of cultural superiority that contribute to racial strife in the United States and beyond. Students' sense of affinity with the bard is improved when they do not see him enthroned as some unreachable magus but rather as someone who borrowed from others.

O'Brien also emphasized the importance of a teacher's role as the "opening act"— and in many instances the *only* act— in their students' relationship with Shakespeare. As a result, middle and high school Shakespeare teachers are more important than college professors. Research has already indicated the gap between what incoming freshmen know of Shakespeare and what their professors expect them to know when they transition from high school to college

(Brady 336). Professional development projects like the Folger's help close that gap, and O'Brien was very clear in that this is what the Folger intends.

The two other presenters in the session stressed two crucial points. Using an excerpt from *The Merchant of Venice*, Amber Phillips stressed the need for teachers to embrace the discomfort that comes with discussing race, gender, and sex in Shakespeare's texts because embracing the honest mess that is life (and Shakespeare) is the only way to affirm the identity of all our students. Using Shylock's famous revenge speech in Act 3, Scene 1, Phillips recommended that teachers teach their students about voice and identity. Both Phillips and Mark Miazga, who focused on the Folger Method, stressed how teachers can use excerpts like these as prompts to get students to discuss instances of injustice that they had seen or experience in their own lives. Teachers could then have them reflect on whether they could or could not respond like Shylock.

Donna Denize used George Moses Horton's poem "Troubled with the Itch and Rubbing Sulphur" to show how teachers can pair texts from minority authors with Shakespeare to teach important lessons on tolerance and racialization. Much like the deceptive pleasure of scratching an itch in Horton's poem, Othello sees Iago's deception as a balm. Trouble "soon returns again" to Othello because just as a scratch does not resolve the itch but rather inflames it, so too does racism make worse that which it attempts to resolve (Horton 66). As mentioned earlier, the value of this session was in its multifaceted nature.

Overall, the Shakespeare sessions at NCTE 2018 highlighted the significance of professional development in the evolution of Shakespeare pedagogy. The Folger's appeared to be less of a top-down experts' approach. The top-down type of professional development—professional development that functions like training, where an expert comes in and teaches non-experts something they're assumed not to know—has been panned by critics as often ineffective

because these experts in many cases “know little about the specific contexts in which teachers who attend their workshops teach (Wilson and Berne 174). Unlike this approach, the sessions at NCTE—particularly the Folger sessions—were more participatory and inclusive, as the facilitators (other than O’Brien) were drawn from various schools across the United States. Their sessions functioned like a modern classroom where participants and leaders both contributed to knowledge-building. The Folger/NCTE sessions afford teachers from a wide array of places across the United States the opportunities to participate in professional development programs to improve their teaching. This approach varies from the increasingly preferred professional development model—where usually local university researchers partner with local schools (Brady 335). The Folger method, even with its shortcomings, offers the opportunity for teachers who might not teach in areas near universities that they can partner with.

3.3 Teacher Interviews

As indicated earlier, the main reason for my attending NCTE was to talk to teachers from a variety of schools and geographical locations across the United States. Therefore, I used the conference as a means of recruiting potential interview subjects in order to gather data on Shakespeare pedagogy.

3.3.1 Teacher Composition and Location

In total, I approached over forty teachers at NCTE, as well as four English Language Arts (ELA) administrators at the Conference on English Leadership convention. I was able to get contact information from twenty-five teachers. Only two administrators gave me their contact information after reading through my recruitment material. Of the teachers, twenty responded to

my follow-up emails, and then I was able to interview fifteen of these respondents. I did not end up successfully interviewing any administrator. Table 1 below is the breakdown of the demographics and locations of the teachers I interviewed:

#	State	School	Years Teaching	Race	Gender	Shakespeare Play Taught
1	Massachusetts	Public	+10 (17)	White	Male	<i>Othello</i>
2	DC	Public	-5 (3)	Black	Female	<i>Romeo & Juliet</i>
3	Colorado	Public	+5 (8)	White	Male	<i>Macbeth</i>
4	Pennsylvania	Public	+5 (9)	White	Female	<i>Romeo & Juliet</i>
5	Ohio	Public	+5 (7)	White	Female	Sonnets
6	Michigan	Private	+10 (13)	White	Female	<i>Macbeth</i>
7	Oregon	Charter	+10 (14)	White	Female	<i>Romeo & Juliet</i>
8	Connecticut	Public	+5 (7)	White	Female	<i>Romeo & Juliet</i>
9	Texas	Private	+10 (11)	White	Female	<i>Romeo & Juliet</i>
10	Georgia	Public	-5 (2)	Black	Male	<i>Othello</i>
11	Massachusetts	Public	+5 (8)	White	Female	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
12	Georgia	Public	+5 (6)	Black	Female	None
13	Texas	Public	-5 (3)	White	Female	<i>Romeo & Juliet</i>
14	Michigan	Public	+10 (12)	White	Female	<i>Macbeth</i>
15	New York	Public	+5 (9)	White	Female	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>

Table 1: Teacher interviewee demographics

Six teachers taught in urban high schools while the remaining nine taught in suburban schools. The highest-rated school was from Massachusetts, and it was ranked among the top

twenty in the state and top three hundred nationally. The lowest-ranked school came from Georgia, and it was ranked in the top fifty in the state and top thousand nationally. Clearly, the teachers I interviewed at NCTE generally came from good schools. Five teachers had been teaching for more than ten years, eight for more than five years, and three for less than five years. The oldest teacher had been in the field for seventeen years, and the youngest had been teaching for two years. Three of the teachers were African American. Twelve were white. There were no Asian or Hispanic teachers. There were three male teachers and twelve female teachers. *Romeo & Juliet* was the most popular play being taught (six teachers), followed by *Macbeth* (three teachers), *Othello* (two), *The Merchant of Venice* (one), and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (one). One teacher was teaching Shakespeare's sonnets, and one teacher was not teaching any Shakespeare at all. Two private schools, one charter school, and twelve public schools were represented in the interview subject pool. All but one taught high school. The middle school teacher came from one of the private schools.

3.3.2 *Shakespeare and Race in American High Schools*

Fourteen of the fifteen teachers I interviewed responded in the negative when asked if they had any Shakespeare-specific pedagogical training during their teaching certification or before they started teaching Shakespeare in their schools. This fact, which I talk about in detail in chapter three, is peculiar given Shakespeare's pre-eminence in American humanist education. One of my interviewees from Massachusetts argued that this lack of Shakespeare pedagogical training "makes first-year teaching very challenging because his training appeared not applicable to the classroom he met." He took two Shakespeare courses in college, as well as a course in Elizabethan theater. The one teacher who mentioned receiving Shakespeare-specific pedagogy

before starting teaching was the African American female teacher from Washington D.C.

According to her, the DC Public School system (DCPS) has a close relationship with the Folger and often partners with the Folger to train its teachers. Her Folger training included strategies to get students engaged through requiring students to move about in the classroom and getting them outside their own comfort zones. Unfortunately, as a ninth-grade teacher, she did not have an opportunity to teach any of Shakespeare's African plays, as she only taught *Romeo & Juliet*.

As indicated above, the most popular plays taught were (in descending order) *Romeo & Juliet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Merchant of Venice*. Of the plays taught, I wanted to find out whether these teachers discussed race or othering with their students. I was interested in this question especially regarding *Romeo & Juliet*. My hypothesis was that these teachers did not think of Shakespeare as related to race, essentially proving what Thompson had postulated in her teaching article for the Folger (Thompson 2016). The responses were close to my hypothesis. Only two out of the six teachers taught Shakespeare with any consideration of race or otherness.

The two teachers who mentioned talking about race in *Romeo & Juliet* used Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* to talk about gang violence because they taught in urban high schools. Both teachers indicated that James N. Loehlin's "These Violent Delights Have Violent Ends': Baz Luhrmann's Millennial Shakespeare" and Elise Walker's "Pop Goes the Shakespeare: Baz Luhrmann's William Shakespeare's *Romeo + Juliet*" helped them see Luhrmann's adaptation as a bridge to discussing race in the play. As Walker argues Luhrmann's depiction of Verona as a place

beset by urban violence, a media that assaults the senses with a barrage of information, oppressive consumerism, depersonalization, the suffocation of innocence, faithlessness and violence: patterns of oppression which may be seen in our modern world. (Walker 136)

evokes the urban environments in which some of these teachers teach. The fatalism of the lovers in Luhrmann's depiction, as Loehlin argues, reflects some of the challenges many children in America's urban communities face (128). One thing I found fascinating with these two teachers was that they used Luhrmann's film not necessarily to start a progressive conversation about race but to elicit interest from the students. Because these teachers used the film to talk about gang violence and as a way to get students interested in the play, it can seem as though they were reifying societal (mis)conceptions about life in and children from certain communities. However, at the other end, these teachers reported that they got more students interested in the play when they used it to discuss gang violence.

The four teachers who taught *Macbeth* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* did not discuss race in their classes. Like those teachers of *Romeo & Juliet* who did not include race in their classes, teachers of *Macbeth* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* reported discussing other "universal" themes such as ambition, masculinity, love, and betrayal. As I would later observe in central Texas, the Massachusetts teacher who taught *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was unaware that the play could be used to discuss race and othering.

The three teachers who offered the most data on Shakespeare and race were those who taught *Othello* (two) and *The Merchant of Venice* (one). Mr. M, from Massachusetts had the most experience teaching and was able to offer the most data on his experience with *Othello*. Mr. M, who had been teaching for seventeen years, recently changed schools (within the same state) and did not get to choose which play to teach. Twelve other teachers also had this experience on not being able to choose a play. Either school districts or the school ELA administrators selected the plays, and teachers reported not having the option to change plays. Mr. M, who was happy with the choice in *Othello*, indicated that his ELA department head was a specialist in race and

gender in literature and, as a result, ensured that the program included a wide variety of texts that dealt with othering. Beyond Shakespeare, Mr. M mentioned that their department's book selection skewed heavily towards books that covered class and gender struggle, the voice of the voiceless, and generally how groups treat each other. This points to the influence of progressive administrators on text selection, as well as thematic areas teachers cover in their Shakespeare classes.

For Mr. M himself, his discussion of race and othering in his Shakespeare classes focused on getting students to understand issues of stereotyping, as well as metaphors for and the symbolism of othering. To do that, Mr. M recommends slowing down and having students unpack certain important scenes, such as when Iago uses racial insults to encourage Brabantio's rage against Othello. Mr. M usually does exercises where he asks his students to look for references in certain scenes that highlight light/dark symbols so that he can use that to help them see how stereotyping develops and functions in society. Some of Mr. M's exercises and handouts, which he graciously shared with me through email, involved using iconic Hollywood movie scenes (like the standoff between Doc Holiday and Johnny Ringo in the 1993 classic *Tombstone*) to get students to see how bias is created when people have preconceived notions of people they have not even met. Mr. M also gives his students an extensive list of terms and definitions related to bias, bigotry, and race.

As Mr. M's school is in a primarily white suburb, over eighty percent of the students are white, with under ten percent being Black and Hispanic. This posed a challenge for Mr. M when it came to his very progressive engagement with race in the classroom. Some of these challenges included white students' complaints that he was creating an unsafe environment in the classroom, white students bringing larger socio-political issues into the classroom, everyone assuming as an

English teacher in the northeast that he was liberal, and Mr. M's efforts to shield students from each other during discussion of thorny issues. The other more frustrating challenge Mr. M shared was that students' class discussions demonstrated student understanding of these issues in *Othello*, as well as progress in how they viewed social issues like race, bias, and bigotry. However, there was significant retrenchment in their written responses on the same issues. Mr. M thought that the phenomenon of online anonymity (where students feel less accountable) crept into student writing, which he didn't think was good.

As an older white man with almost two decades of teaching, Mr. M also talked about why he perhaps got away with the things he was able to get away with. Building a reputation and having seniority helped him navigate some of the minefields associated with engaging these topics especially when students accused him of creating an unsafe classroom environment. Mr. M's students' claim that in discussing race he was creating an unsafe classroom evidenced Reynold's concept of affective underskilling (discussed in Chapter One). Mr. M's students are used to being in white-centric environments where "comfort is often confused with safety. It is the pursuit of comfort rather than comprehension or confrontation that begets affective underskilling" (362). However, because Mr. M has cultural capital and seniority as a shield, he has so far been able to weather the storms created by discomfiting white students.

The other two teachers who provided data on Shakespeare and race were the white woman from New York (Ms. N) who taught *The Merchant of Venice* and the Black man from Georgia (Mr. G) who taught *Othello*. Ms. N, who taught eleventh grade in a New York state suburban school, was assigned the text by her school ELA administrators. In contrast, Mr. G chose *Othello* himself for a very urban school. Ms. N found students receptive to the conversation on antisemitism and generally found that discussion of the text went smoothly and

without many challenges. Her major challenge was attempting to get students to make textual analysis without involving the holocaust.¹²

Mr. G, on the other hand, found students struggling to resonate with *Othello*. In fact, it was not until he paired the play with Tim Blake Nelson's film adaptation *O* (2001) during his second year of teaching that students started getting more interested in the story. Nelson's depiction of Othello (Odin) as a Black basketball player in love with a white girl appeared to some students too stereotypical. But students in Mr. G's classes became intimately involved in the play's plot when they pushed back against the film's portrayal of Odin as inarticulate and violent. Scholars such as Vanessa Corredera agree with Mr. G's students that Nelson's overwhelming portrayal of Odin can be polarizing to African American audiences (Corredera 2017). Mr. G's class showed more interest in the film adaptation than the text, which they read before watching the movie. And despite not showing interest in the play text at the beginning, Mr. G found that they wrote insightful papers at the end of the semester. Paper topics included racial othering or interracial domestic unions in *Othello*, as well as the play's similarity to African American sports culture. In his class, Mr. G found that students easily substituted the Venetian General for the American athlete.

Of the teachers who did not teach Shakespeare and race/othering, two main barriers to engaging the topic emerged. The first was that most (nine) of them were teaching in departments and school districts where the Shakespearean plays that they believed dealt with race were not assigned by the administration. The second reason given by two of the teachers— the woman with three years teaching experience in Texas and the woman with seven years teaching

¹² As I have mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, I do not think it is possible or even desirable to expect that kind of separation. There is no way to separate the Nazi project from the future reception of Shakespeare's Venetian drama featuring the "thrifty" Jew Shylock.

experience in Connecticut— was that their schools were in conservative counties, and they could lose their jobs if they taught race and othering in their Shakespeare classrooms. So even though they had nominal choices in texts, they selected the “safer” choice in *Romeo & Juliet*. These two teachers were both in their second years of teaching in their respective school districts; they had both taught in other schools prior.

The other standout interview I had was with the Black female teacher from Georgia (Ms. O), who said she consciously chose not to teach Shakespeare. In fact, I wanted to interview her even though she had informed me at NCTE that she found no value in Shakespeare and so was not going to waste her time teaching it. She had been teaching English for six years and was confident in herself. Ms. O had a repertoire of texts that she felt were more useful for her inner-city school. According to her, Shakespeare was just another dead white man who was taking up space that could be occupied by African American women. She was currently having her students read a selection of poetry from the Harlem Renaissance, as well as Jacqueline Woodson’s *Brown Girl Dreaming*, Ta-Nehisi Coates’ *Between the World and Me*, Octavia Butler’s *Kindred*, August Wilson’s *Fences*, and the recent popular novel *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas.

Ms. O’s main reasoning for teaching her predominantly Black inner-city students poems, plays, and novels by African American men and women was that she wanted them to see that Black people did and could do more than play basketball or football or music. Even though, as a Shakespeare lover, I very much itched to win her over, she had a firm idea of what she aimed to achieve with her teaching, and I could not muster an argument on the spot in the interview that could persuade her that teaching her students *Othello* was better for them than *Fences*. She focused quite a bit of her responses on *Fences* because it directly countered my arguments about

the need for her students to learn about Shakespearean drama. To her, the struggles of African Americans are better represented by August Wilson in the characters Troy, Rose, and Cory, and she claimed that Wilson deserves to be called the American Shakespeare. This is quite a statement given that Wilson himself credits Shakespeare as one of his theatrical ancestors (Menson-Furr 66).

Other than Ms. O, I wanted to find out from the rest of the teachers how their experiences at NCTE might impact the rest of their teaching of Shakespeare in the future. Mr. M was already teaching *Othello* and intended to continue teaching it, indicating that he would lean on some of the resources that the Folger provides for free. Mr. G said something similar, and Ms. N was going to continue teaching *The Merchant of Venice*. Of the remaining eleven, all said they will talk to their ELA administrators about the possibility of teaching Shakespeare's African plays, but most were skeptical about that happening. Five who were part of the Folger sessions said they would use the Folger Method, while the remaining six did not have an adequate answer to improving their teaching of othering in Shakespeare.

Exordium

All of us who dig in the archives are nontraditional detectives. We all believe in informed serendipity in the archives. But as I review my four full file cabinets and my boxes upon boxes of documents, images, short stories, maps, engravings, letters, and photographs, I realize that hanging out has been a very good form of historical methodology. —Jean Pfaelzar

4. *MIDSUMMER IN CENTRAL TEXAS*

This chapter details my observational research done at a high school in Texas. As I will get into later, my IRB stipulations on working with minors, as well as permissions granted by my research subjects, do not allow me to identify the name, exact location, or other identifying information of either the teacher or students who took part in this research. So, while I identify the general area in which the school is located (central Texas), I will not be naming the specific school or school district that this research was conducted.

I have divided this chapter into three subsections with a summary. These sections include Proposed Research Design, Modified Research Design, and Data Analysis. This project design is centered on methods of ethnographic research principles including participant observation and case studies as explained by Sharan B. Merriam in *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education* (27-31). This case study was not intended to be evaluative but more descriptive and interpretive. However, some aspects of it do border on being evaluative, as I offer description, as well as some explanation and judgment. Judgments are not intended to be prejudicial to research subjects, especially the teacher involved (39). As Merriam and Tisdell indicate, this type of judgment is more appreciative than evaluative because the aim is to identify “what is positive or appreciated and effective [in order] to facilitate innovation” (4). Before we dive into these sections, I will provide a brief synopsis of why I decided on field research—a

rather unusual choice for literature-focused students in Shakespeare studies. As mentioned in chapter one, I was drawn to fieldwork because I saw a gap in the research on Shakespeare pedagogy from literature-based Shakespeare scholars. Even though formalism has fallen out of fashion with contemporary English scholars, high school English pedagogy is still heavily structured along the lines set by the New Critics (Tyson 129). When I read through the existing literature on Shakespeare pedagogy, I found the engagement with the high school teaching lacking.¹³ Popular texts on Shakespeare pedagogy such as G. B. Shand's edited collection *Teaching Shakespeare: Passing it On* or Rex Gibson's multi-editioned *Teaching Shakespeare* do not critically study how Shakespeare is taught in high schools. As a result, I chose to do an observational high school study in order to close the "gap between educational research and practice" (Broekkamp and van Hout-Wolters 204). I believe this study will help further research into high school pedagogy, particularly as it relates to teaching Shakespeare. As indicated in Chapter One, Shakespeare pedagogy is not just of concern to critical pedagogy but also to critical, race-conscious pedagogy, particularly in the United States. That, alongside my positionality as a Black Muslim immigrant to the United States, informed my decision to pursue this project (Manohar et al 1603).

After coming to a decision on the research topic and selecting my dissertation chair in the person of Dr. Nandra Perry, we decided that we needed to at least get some outside opinion on the project given that we were housed in an English department and not an education department. With Dr. Perry's help, I was able to meet Laura Turchi to discuss my research plans. Part of the project design, the questionnaire for teachers, and the whole concept of gathering data at the

¹³ (See, for example, Thompson and Turchi, who dedicated barely two paragraphs of analysis to high school observation. 71-72).

NCTE (the basis for chapter two) came from this meeting. As Jean Pfaelzar says in the exordium above, “hanging out” can turn out to be a great research methodology.

I raised with Turchi one of my observations about *Teaching Shakespeare with Purpose: A Student-Centered Approach* regarding the lack of extensive high school observational components. Turchi informed me that it is rather difficult to undertake these kinds of research projects for a myriad of reasons ranging from the expense involved to accessibility and privacy concerns. As is the case with many novices, I was going to have to learn the hard way, as the last two and half years have shown me.

4.1 Proposed Research Design

4.1.1 Rookie Mistake: An Attitude

Coming into this project with the mentality of “I am coming to do what others have failed to do,” as is often the case with young researchers, I had initially planned an overly ambitious research project aimed at covering at least three schools in at least three different school districts (Swauger 65). As Appendix D shows, my email script for the recruitment of teachers included letting them know that I was planning on observing and interviewing multiple teachers in multiple schools for the project. In many ways, my initial approach and experience with this project mirror that of Mellissa Swauger, who derisively

wondered why fellow feminist scholars will suggest [she] shy away from a project that gives voice to girls. [She] ignored their advice and moved forward with the project, although [she] soon learned what they meant when [she] began learning more about the fixed and protective nature of IRB policies and procedures. (65)

When I read Thompson and Turchi’s *Teaching Shakespeare with Purpose*, I thought their work did not have enough high school classroom experience. Even after my meeting with Turchi, I

still harbored the belief that I would do more than they did. That is why my research scope was a lot wider than any I have come across in the literature.

After receiving guidance for securing IRB approval for research with vulnerable populations, I began my research.

4.1.2 *Recruitment Process*

I developed a two-pronged recruitment approach, reaching out to both teachers and to principals/administrators. Of the seventeen public high schools I identified in the catchment area, I sent emails to English teachers in ten of the schools that were close enough to allow for daily commute. I also attempted to balance schools that served both significant minority student populations and predominately white schools in order to vary the sample population. I then sent out emails to teachers requesting permission to observe their classes.¹⁴

From December 2017 to early 2018, as emails to various teachers and school administrators took months to come back in the negative and others did not even respond, I was ready to give up. Pranee Liampond and others argue that official documentation may be a good way to open doors for researchers (132). Because Texas A&M is one of the most powerful institutions Texas, I felt as though its institutional authority would help open doors for me. As you can see from Appendix E and virtually all my correspondence, I began to present my affiliation with the university more directly. Nonetheless, in my experience, personally reaching out to teachers in my own capacity as a Ph.D. student at Texas A&M did not work in spite of my institutional cover. This aspect of the recruitment process, according to many researchers, is a

¹⁴ *Appendix B* is a reproduction of the teacher recruitment script I sent to the various teachers in the ten schools identified.

critical issue because “one has to consider whether the inquiry can proceed if access is denied. In that regard, developing a study with maximum flexibility and multiple data sources is highly advisable” (Aydarova 35). I was ready to give up and shift my research design away from fieldwork and classroom observation. The conversations with my supervisor at this period informed part of the reflexive nature of this dissertation whereby I attempt a “thoughtful, self-aware analysis of the intersubjective dynamics between researcher [me] and [my] researched [subjects]” (Call-Cummings and Ross 3). My supervisor recommended I make use of my frustrations and challenges with access to schools into productive parts of my dissertation. I took that advice wholeheartedly, and it is reflected in the process-oriented and biographical nature of this chapter. As Geoffrey Walford argues in *Doing Qualitative Educational Research*, reflexive accounts of research that show “some of the idiosyncrasies of [the] person and circumstance[s]... at the heart of the research process” has become an important and valuable aspect of educational research (2). A significant portion of this chapter therefore involves very reflexive information on the data collection and analysis process that I went through.

I began exchanging communication with Turchi on possible alternative data sets even as my supervisor decided to help me with my recruitment. One of the important issues that researchers in education ask prospective scholars to contemplate is how gatekeeping can be used to improve or hinder access (Cohen et al. 231). Cohen et al. further suggest that “access to powerful people may take place not only through formal channels but through intermediaries who introduce researchers to them” (238). I realized that my access to these schools would most likely come by leveraging my relationship with my supervisor. My struggle to get replies (even negative ones) made me acutely aware of my positionality as a researcher during the past three years, and this awareness was at its zenith during this period in 2018. I realized that I had

become a Black researcher. I had to reconceptualize my own perception of who I was and my effect on the research (Roberts 337). My inability to land a single positive response despite having drafted the recruitment emails with help from two senior researchers made me believe that something else other than just the message in my mailers were at play here. I therefore decided to leverage my relationship with my supervisor for the remainder of the recruitment process.

Mind you, I am a Black African immigrant in central Texas. I am also Muslim. Not just any Muslim but my name is the most iconic of Muslim names. Mohammed, everyone knows, is the name of the Prophet of Islam. And Umar is the name of his companion and second Khalifa. Given the local culture (which is very conservative and heavily populated by Evangelical Christians), there is good reason to think that my name alone may have contributed to many teachers' hesitance to respond to my emails in the affirmative. In contrast, my supervisor is not just a white woman but a southern woman who is deeply embedded within the community as an ordained priest and local university professor. She agreed to help make calls to school administrators on my behalf. Because of her intervention, I was able to secure meetings with two school administrators. As you can see from Appendix F, once she got a positive response from a school, I then followed up with an email to cement the budding relationship and to keep the doors open. I was able to travel to meet the superintendent of one of the school districts and attempted attending a public-school board meeting to embed myself in the community by familiarizing myself with the teachers and parents (as shown in Appendix G). My supervisor, according to Cohen et al., therefore acted as an intermediary between me and the institutions I needed access to (243).

The number of students targeted for the research design was also flexible as per the guidelines for researchers laid out by Strunk and Locke (35). I initially proposed to observe as many as four teachers and upwards of a hundred students, as shown in Appendix H. I was aware that I might not be able to get as many research subjects as I had projected, but I was confident that I would be able to get at least two teachers and two schools. The range of two to four teachers and seventy to a hundred-and-fifty students were projected, with the numbers varying based on the accessibility of research subjects.

My initial research design also included getting rich data from students with multiple instruments designed to get as much information from the students about their experience with Shakespeare as possible. I initially planned to audio record the classroom discussions, interview students and teachers, and acquire and examine student responses to assignments. As Appendices I and J indicate, both students and teachers were to be informed that they would be recorded during class, and students who chose to would participate in open-ended interviews as well. This was to help ensure that rich data sets were acquired during the data gathering process.

4.2 Modified Research Design

4.2.1 The IRB Process and Gatekeeping

My finalized research instruments and data sets came about through two major institutional challenges: the Texas A&M IRB process, and the various school districts' institutional process for research and observation. As mentioned above, I finalized my decision to pursue this project in 2017, and I started gathering the documentation required for the IRB process at the end of that fall. By February 2018, having completed the mandatory CITI Program training for human social research (reference ID 3882, ID 52733, ID 60977, ID 113753, and ID

142536), I sent out the recruitment emails to prospective teachers and principals. I did this because A&M's IRB required that I complete the training alongside getting various permissions from institutions before they would approve any research with human subjects.

As mentioned above, the response to my personal recruitment efforts was abysmal, and as a result, I could not fully submit my IRB in the spring of 2018. After my supervisor intervened and helped make calls to prospective institutions' administrators, two schools finally gave us face-to-face meetings. I was accompanied by my supervisor to the first meeting. I was able to go to the second meeting on my own, which was also secured because of my supervisor's intervention, on my own.¹⁵

Of the two schools that finally gave me permission to conduct research, the first one (referred to as School X) had me go through the school district's research officer, from whom I got guidance on their research approval process (as shown by my recruitment email script to the officer in Appendix K). I completed the district's research form (nine pages total), as well as their criminal background check, and I was approved to undertake research in the school (as shown in Appendix L). I then had to use the district's approval to contact administrators of the school, which I did (as shown in Appendix M). Luckily for me, I was able to successfully meet the assistant principal, as well as the coordinator of the school's English Language Arts department, and secure their support for my research. At this point in time (fall 2018), my IRB submission had stalled without approval because the officer in charge demanded not just the school's approval but individual teachers' approval. My correspondence with the second school

¹⁵ Appendix F shows some of the processes I had to go through at the request of the school district, including a criminal background check. I should mention that I ended up working with only that school district.

(referred to as school Y) dried up as the continued request for documents appeared to have worn them out and fostered disinterest in my research.

In addition to requiring more documentation, the IRB also required that all students and their parents give active consent for me to record classes, view student assignments, and interview students. After consultation with my supervisor, we decided to scrap the audio recording, review of student assignments, and student interviews. Appendix N shows a recruitment email for prospective teachers post-IRB denial of active student participation. School X's district sent me a passive consent letter, as indicated in Appendix O, to be submitted to the IRB to indicate their preference for passive consent as opposed to active consent, which is what the A&M IRB was asking for. Passive consent differs from active consent in that you need the latter to have access to students on a more personal level for potentially invasive activities, such as interviews and viewing of assignments. I finally submitted the forms, along with a student opt-in form (Appendix P), passive parent consent form (Appendix Q), updated teacher interview instrument (Appendix R), and a classroom observation guide (Appendix S) as was demanded by the IRB.

By the time the IRB approved the project, the dates I had planned for my dissertation were totally obliterated. In my final scheduled Ph.D. semester in the spring of 2019, the IRB gave me their blessing on the fifteenth of February. Without the support of an additional year from my department, I would not have been able to complete this project. As Ronald F. White argues, "the IRB process consumes an inordinate amount of time, energy, and resources in attempting to prevent a growing list of imagined harms, minor harms, or highly unlikely harms" (547). Even though I rushed to the school to schedule an observation, they had no Shakespeare

classes scheduled that included any of Shakespeare’s prominent African plays that semester. So, I had to wait for a class in the fall of 2019.

4.2.2 *Casualties of Gatekeeping*

Two major negative results of my battle for access were a lack of data (and therefore limited applicability) and wasted time and money. *Table 2* below shows the extent of data loss because of the cumbersome IRB process, as well as bottlenecks in institutional access.

	Proposed Design Instruments	Final Design Instruments
Plays	At least two of Shakespeare’s African Plays: <i>Othello, Titus Andronicus, The Tempest, The Merchant of Venice, and A Midsummer Night’s Dream</i>	A <i>Midsummer Night’s Dream</i>
Quantity of Participants	3 to 4 teachers 70 to 150 students	1 teacher 46 students
Data Instruments	An audio recording of class Notes taken of class Interview with students Interview with teachers Review of student assignments Teacher Notes	Notes taken of class Interview with teacher Teacher notes

Table 2: Breakdown of data loss from proposed to actual research design

My inability to access more schools, teachers, and students impacted the range of my data, which I had felt was a weakness of Thompson and Turchi’s work. Institutional gatekeeping by university IRBs and local schools make it difficult to access and conduct field-based educational research. The only other recent dissertation that engages Shakespeare pedagogy at the high school level is by Angela Hunt, and she had access to students because she was a teacher at the high school where she conducted the research (14). This limited the mistrust and overprotectiveness from imagined harms that Ronald F. White talks about. As Turchi warned me

in our meeting two and half years prior, doing this type of research requires an inordinate amount of patience and availability of time and resources, and my experience confirms this.

4.3 Data Analysis

Given that I ended up with one school and one teacher, I decided to maximize the data I could collect from the school. I still had to juggle this data collection with my assignment as a Graduate Assistant Lecturer at Texas A&M. My ability to collect data was therefore hampered by this aspect of being a student researcher. The data that is presented in this section was gathered in November 2019.

4.3.1 Codes for Analysis

My original planned data set would have been quantitatively tabulated to highlight the variety of teaching methods in these different schools. This was to ensure a good range and, by extension, the applicability of research outcomes. However, as outlined above, various institutional obstacles led to a limited study and limited data. I use both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to “provide a better understanding of the research problems and questions than either approach on its own” can provide (Cohen et al. 32). These mixed methods are particularly useful because of my limited data range the codes developed for this study, therefore, have both quantitative and qualitative components.

As shown in Appendix R, one of the central codes for this project was identifying how prepared teachers were to teach Shakespeare. Education research has centered on effective teaching methods for years, hence my inclusion of teacher preparedness as one of the codes for the qualitative data analysis (Aydin 76; Breitsprecher 8; Holt-Reynolds 30). In this code, I

looked at the teacher's education and certification, mastery of the Shakespearean text of choice, access to institutional support at the local and national levels, and familiarity with professional teaching organizations such as the NCTE.

The second set of codes centered around student learning outcomes. I wanted to see how students viewed Shakespeare before the class, how well students were responding to Shakespearean texts during the lesson periods, as well as how much they learned at the end of the class sessions. As a result, codes developed for this part of the analysis include students' prior knowledge of Shakespeare, students' responses to Shakespeare texts, and teacher's success at achieving learning goals at the end of the session.

While observing the class sessions, it occurred to me that perhaps the most important element of code that I did not factor into my initial project design was the learning environment. I remembered on the way to meet Turchi that I had an insightful conversation with my supervisor about the challenges many high school teachers face when teaching high school English, especially in under-served school districts. At the time, I still thought I was going to have varied data sources. Because I was only able to gather data from an urban school, the teaching and learning environment became quite important to my data, particularly after I observed the classroom dynamics there on my first day. As a result, I added a third code related to disciplinary and classroom disruption issues, as well as attendance.

4.3.2 *Research Site*

I gathered this data in a central Texas high school. Per my IRB limitations, I will not be able to disclose the exact location or give identifying information about the school. However, there are a few details I can give that should give some context for the data. The school is in a

small city, as indicated in the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) locale code, and it serves predominantly minority students. Data from state and private sources put the minority enrollment around seventy percent, with over sixty percent classified as economically disadvantaged and qualified for free and reduced lunch. The school's reading proficiency is around fifty percent, about ten percentage points below the state average. Almost seventy percent of the student body is classified as at risk of dropping out. The school scored around twenty percent out of one hundred on the U.S. News college readiness index. The school falls squarely under the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center's designation as a low income and high minority school (3).

Because I did not live in the city in which the school is located, I commuted to the campus in November 2019 during the teacher's Shakespeare sessions. As an international student without a car, my options were limited by way of transportation. The unreliability and lack of public transportation, coupled with having to juggle my own graduate teaching, equally hampered my travel opportunities. However, with financial support from my supervisor, I was able to commute to the school using a rideshare service. These constraints limited my observation time. Out of eight regular class periods on the teacher (Mr. X)'s daily schedule, I could only attend two of them on a regular basis from beginning to the end. As shown in Appendix T, I chose to attend the first and second periods from 8:20-9:10 am and 9:15-10:03 am. In the middle of the observation period, I switched from observing the first and second periods to observing the fourth and fifth periods. I used those two classes as a control group to see how many characteristics the regularly observed classes shared with the rest of Mr. X's students. Table 3 below is the observation schedule I followed, as well as some dynamics of student attendance:

Day	Periods	Content Covered	Attendance
1	1st & 2nd	Shakespeare's life, Greek Mythology, the Globe theater	43 (25 + 18)
2	1st & 2nd	Teacher Sick day	25 + x
3	1st & 2nd	Act 1 Scene 1	39 (24 + 15)
4	1st & 2nd	Act 1 Scene 2 to Act 2 Scene 1	42 (24 + 18)
5	1st & 2nd	Act 2 Scene 1 to Scene 2	41 (24 + 17)
Day	Periods	Content Covered	Attendance
6	4th & 5th	Act 3 Scene 1 to Scene 2	47 (25 + 22)
7	1st & 2nd	Act 3 Scene 2 to Act 4 Scene 1	44 (24 + 20)
8	1st & 2nd	Act 4 Scene 1 to Act 4 Scene 2	45 (26 + 19)
9	1st & 2nd	Act 5 Scene 1	48 (29 + 19)
10	1st & 2nd	Movie Planning	42 (22 + 20)
11	1st & 2nd	Casey Mott's Dream: Movie Day 1	45 (25 + 20)
12	1st & 2nd	Casey Mott's Dream: Movie Day 2	44 (23 + 21)
13	1st & 2nd	Casey Mott's Dream: Movie Day 3	44 (25 + 19)
14	1st & 2nd	Dreamy Test: Test Day	43 (25 + 18)

Table 3: Observation schedule and student attendance

At the school, I underwent daily security check-ins for visitors. Each day I was given a visitor tag which I used to go into the school and then the classroom for the observations. I built a good rapport with the administrative assistants, as we bonded over the fact that one of them had a sibling who was an evangelical missionary in my home country, Ghana. Even though I may not have started this process as part of the insider group to whom gatekeepers provide access (as Walford argues), our common reference point opened the door for communion (38). As many researchers have found out, one's ability to build rapport with administrative staff can go a long

way toward ensuring successful research. As a result, while access to the school had been difficult to obtain, once there the environment was welcoming.

4.3.3 *Student Participants*

In the classes I observed, the students had uneven attendance. All reported data is from my own daily counting of student attendance. As Table 4 below shows, the average attendance for the two classes was between 43 and 44. The highest attendance was on the ninth day of observation, with 48 students present on the final day of the class reading of the play. On average, the two classes totaled 10.6 White students (24%), 6.6 Black students (15%), and 26.4 four Hispanic (61%) students. The demographic of each class matched that of the school in general, with slightly fewer Black students and more Hispanic ones than the school's averages show. The students observed were seniors in their final semester of high school.

Day	White	Black	Hispanic	Total
1st	11	9	23	43
3rd	8	5	26	39
4th	11	7	24	42
5th	9	6	26	41
6th	17	10	20	47
7th	10	6	28	44
8th	11	6	28	45
9th	8	7	33	48
10th	10	5	27	42
11th	11	7	27	45
12th	11	6	27	44
13th	12	6	26	44
14th	9	6	28	43
Average Attendance	10.6	6.6	26.4	43.6

Table 4: Student attendance

Of the two classes I primarily observed, the first period had the highest attendance. The class recorded a twenty-four-point five student attendance record over the course of the observation period, as shown in Table 5. Hispanic students made up sixty-one percent of the class, just like the two-class average and the school average shown above. Black students made up fourteen percent, and white students rounded out with twenty-four percent of the class.

Day	White	Black	Hispanic	Total
1st	7	3	13	23
3rd	4	4	16	24
4th	4	4	16	24
5th	5	4	15	24
6th	12	4	9	25
7th	5	3	16	24
8th	6	3	17	26
9th	5	4	20	29
10th	6	3	13	22
11th	5	4	16	25
12th	6	3	14	23
13th	6	3	16	25
14th	6	4	15	25
Average Attendance	5.9	3.5	15.1	24.5

Table 5: First period attendance

The second period had lower attendance, with an average of 18.9 students over the observation period. I recorded more absentee students on average than the first period, with only 15 students in attendance on observation day three. The main fluctuation in attendance came from African American and white students, as shown in Table 6. The average attendance broken

down by demographics also mirrored the school average, with Hispanic students leading at 60%, white students at 24%, and Black students at 15%.

Day	White	Black	Hispanic	Total
1st	4	4	10	18
3rd	4	1	10	15
4th	4	3	11	18
5th	4	2	11	17
6th	5	6	11	22
7th	5	3	12	20
8th	5	3	11	19
9th	3	3	13	19
10th	4	2	14	20
11th	6	3	11	20
12th	5	3	13	21
13th	6	3	10	19
14th	3	2	13	18
Average Attendance	4.5	2.9	11.5	18.9

Table 6: Second period attendance

4.3.4 *Teacher Participant*

The school administration gave me Mr. X’s contact information so that I might reach out to him for the project. When I did, he was gracious enough to outline his teaching schedule for

me, including the weeks he would be teaching *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I requested a meeting with him, to be attended by me and my supervisor, if he was comfortable with the arrangement. Luckily for me, he agreed to meet with me and my supervisor on the school premises during his conference time. He was a young man in his thirties and very supportive of my project. Our brief conversation with him put me at ease regarding my observation because he was so relaxed about the whole affair. Mr. X is a White teacher in the second year of his career as a high school English teacher. He left a much higher paying job as an IT consultant to teach English. My conversations with him during the observation period and during my interview revealed that he majored in English in college. He took a Shakespeare course in college but has no formal training in teaching Shakespeare. He also mentioned that he might teach high school English for another year or two before moving on to another job. This is consistent with the data on teacher retention, which shows that anywhere between “20% to 50% of teachers [leave] the profession within the first five years” (Hughes 245). In large urban schools, the rate at which novice teachers leave the profession can reach upwards of 70% (Papay et al 437). Papay et al. go on to show that white teachers who leave tend to have the lowest return rate (444). I must add that three months after the conclusion of my observations, Mr. X reached out to inform me that he was feeling more confident and considering teaching for more than just another year.

In our introductory conversation, Mr. X told me about the specific edition of *Midsummer Night's Dream* he would be using: the *Glencoe Literature Library's* 2000 publication by *McGraw-Hill* (which you can see in Figure 1 below). When asked why he chose that particular text, Mr. X said that this was the edition that the school had enough copies of for all of his students to receive one each (I talk more about the choice of text later.) My initial impression was that the text was out of date, as all the related readings in the book are from the mid-1990s

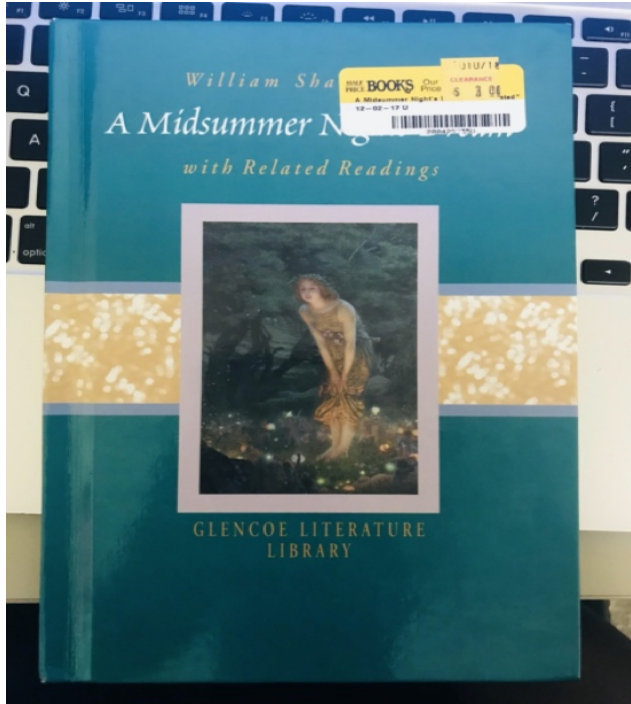


Figure 1: Glencoe Literature Library textbook: A Midsummer Night's Dream

4.3.5 *Teacher Preparedness*

As mentioned above, Mr. X was an English major in college but went into IT consulting after graduation. He came back to teaching because he felt (in his own words) “it was the right thing to do.” Throughout my time with him, Mr. X displayed a passion for teaching that you would normally expect from someone who left a lucrative career for a high school teaching position.

Mr. X underwent the online teacher certification program with Texas Teachers of Tomorrow. According to Mr. X, this was a very underwhelming experience, which he felt wasted quite a bit of his time. When I asked him to think of any good things to say about his experience with Texas Teachers of Tomorrow, he struggled to find any except that the online,

self-directed format was convenient. When taking the course, Mr. X found multiple errors in the course modules. Given that the course was designed in 2012 and, according to him, hadn't been updated, there were multiple dead links. The exact words he used to describe their technology module was that it “felt like... a scam.” He also found that it had little to no oversight, as students were left to their own devices. This left him thinking that it was not a good certification preparation program as compared to in-person ones like the one offered by Texas A&M’s Teaching, Learning, and Culture program. As an English major confident in testing, he found that he simply could test out of a lot of the modules without needing to go through them. Additionally, the four thousand dollars required to get the certification is not tax-deductible. Mr. X felt this was rather bad if the state wanted to attract teachers. That one must pay to get the certification and cannot write it off on one’s taxes felt to Mr. X as though the state was punishing would-be teachers. This was especially the case given that Texas Teachers of Tomorrow (and most other online certification programs) will usually take the money out of a teacher’s first-year salary.

I asked Mr. X about whether there was any specific Shakespeare content in his certification, and he could recollect a few questions that mentioned Shakespeare. However, he indicated that one need not pass the Shakespeare section of the course in order to receive certification. He said that the certification program was rather general, with questions centered on general pedagogy and student management. Mr. X was not impressed with the questions, noting that many were rather silly. One example he gave was “Johnny is struggling, should you encourage or punish him?” Mr. X argued that these kinds of questions were too basic because they were designed to cover multiple grade levels.

At least insofar as Mr. X's experience with the Texas Teachers of Tomorrow certification, teachers who are put in the classroom to teach Shakespeare are not prepared in such a way as to indicate that Shakespeare is an indispensable part of humanist education. Outside this online certification, Mr. X was encouraged by a senior English teacher at the school to avoid showing only movies. From what I deduced, Mr. X was placed in the classroom and left to his own devices given what he later told me about what informed his choice of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as the Shakespeare text to teach.

According to Mr. X, a friend of his had done her master's thesis on magic, and he liked the idea, so he decided to make it a running theme in his class. So, his choice of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was logical given the supernatural nature of the play. His other reason for choosing *A Midsummer Night's Dream* had to do with the fact that, according to him, the play was what he considered to be at his students' level.

Mr. X told me that when he polled his students at the beginning of the semester, less than one third had read *A Midsummer Night's Dream* before. According to Mr. X, ideally, the students should have read the play during their freshman year, but they hadn't. The scope and sequence of the district's curriculum, which Mr. X graciously shared with me, was indeed very good and advanced. For their Renaissance Tragedy and Comedy curriculum for instance, the school district recommended *Macbeth* and *Much Ado About Nothing* which Mr. X was expected to use to guide students to "understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of drama and provide evidence to support their understanding," as well as "evaluate how the structure and elements of drama change in the works of British dramatists across literary periods." Mr. X argued that it was way too advanced for his students given that they came to him having not read as much as one would expect from the lower grades. As evidenced by his survey

of students on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the beginning of the semester, it appeared that his students had done little to no self-directed reading outside the classroom. He therefore aimed to just get them through at least reading/listening/watching the play by the end of the allotted time for Shakespeare.

As an English major in college with a passion for fantasy literature, he seemed generally well prepared for the class. Any lack of preparedness that Mr. X experienced is likely to be reproduced in most English teachers all over the country, especially those in the early stages of their teaching careers. Without any formal training in Shakespeare scholarship or Shakespeare pedagogy, most teachers either reproduce what they think they remember from their high school and college English classes or assemble a hodge-podge teaching approach for their students. And Mr. X informed me that he was not aware of NCTE, which was also the case for many of the teachers in Chapter Two, who indicated that most of their colleagues were unaware of or had not participated in professional organizations such as the NCTE or the Folger.

4.3.6 *Learning Environment and Favorability for Learning Shakespeare*

As indicated above, School X (in which I conducted this observational study) serves a majority low-income population with more than 75% students of color and 60% classified as qualifying for free and reduced lunch. Like many urban schools, School X was undersupplied. As mentioned earlier, Mr. X chose to use an edition from the 1990s because this was the edition of which the school had enough copies to give to all his students. Given that he ultimately had the class read alongside the audiobook, the textbook edition may seem unimportant. However, I believe adequate supplementary material available in the textbook could have served as great additional material for him to frame his classes. The Glencoe edition's related readings are both

short and dry. There are no instructions or suggestions for the teacher on how to use the textbook at all. As Bauml et al. have found, urban schoolteachers list the lack of supplies as one of their main challenges (15). This was indeed a challenge for Mr. X. With a more recent textbook, he might have been able to glean some ideas that could help in his teaching of Shakespeare to his students. I gave him my copy of the Arden Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the end of our interview to help in this regard because it at least mentions some of the play's ability to "reflect the web of human relations with its entanglements of class, race, gender and power politics" (Chaudhuri 37).

In teaching *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Mr. X appears to have gone back to the basics with his students, who were in their final semester of high school, as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is usually taught in freshman classes. When I asked Mr. X if he allows the students to take the textbook home so that they can complete the readings at home, he responded that he does not even allow them to take their notebooks home because many of these students don't read away from school. If they were to take the textbook home, many might not return them. That informed his decision for having them read along in class to the audio version of the play. That students are not able to read at home hinders teachers in urban schools like Mr. X, who must coax students into reading texts in the classroom.

The lack of students' at-home reading is clearly tied to the fact that the school serves a predominantly working-class community. Rosana Hidalgo's 2013 work on developing the social capital of low-income parents to help them help their children improve their reading and comprehension skills found that even though parents might be interested in helping their children learn, they lack the skills to do so. As a result, many parents are not actually helping their students read at home (74). With a more intellectual home environment (encouraged by the

availability of books) that fosters home reading, perhaps the time Mr. X and the whole class spent (seven class sessions) mostly reading the text might have been spent doing some of the things the district's scope and sequence demanded, such as evaluating how Shakespeare undermines the basic structure of the dramatic experience by combining actors and audience's roles with his play-within-a-play format.

On my very first day of this observation period, I was shocked to find that in both class periods, most students (the majority) were on their headphones throughout the class period. Many were listening to music, while some were watching videos on their smartphones. Later, Mr. X informed me that he had a relaxed attitude about cellphones despite getting advice from a senior teacher to enforce a strict cellphone policy.

In the second period, one student's music was loud enough to warrant Mr. X asking him to turn it down. This seemed to show that Mr. X was comfortable with students listening to music as long as it did not disturb the class or the rhythm of Mr. X's delivery. As we covered in chapter one earlier, many Black education theorists (such as Du Bois) believed that Black children were not getting educated well at schools predominantly taught by White teachers because these schools/teachers were hostile to Black kids (331). I raised this issue of him appearing not to care if the students learn or not during our interview, and Mr. X assured me that he planned to do better next time.

Resolving the smartphone issue in Mr. X's class was more complicated than just banning students from having them. According to Mr. X, school policy is that individual teachers cannot confiscate students' phones. If a teacher says there will be no phone use in class and a student breaks the rule, Mr. X must call the school resource officer to come and get the device. According to Mr. X, the school district's reasoning is that they cannot be liable if phones go

missing when teachers confiscate them. Rather, it is easier to have the school resource officers do the confiscation. However, the challenge with always buzzing the school resource officers is that the school authorities will likely interpret that as losing control of the class, and hence it will reflect negatively on the teacher in their evaluations.

On all the days that I observed the class, all students at one point or another used their smartphones. It did not matter whether the student was engaged and insightful or was generally uninterested. On the sixth day of my observation, one of the most engaging and bright students (a white Hispanic young woman) ended up becoming glued to her phone halfway through the class period. It is also important to note that on my second day of observation, a substitute teacher taught in place of Mr. X, and she had the same relaxed smartphone policy. In fact, during her time in the class, students were openly ignoring her and playing music loud enough for me to hear three rows away.

In particular, two days stood out to me in the way I see the unrestricted use of the smartphone in the classroom as extremely deleterious to learning. On my eleventh day of observation, the day we started watching the movie adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, out of the twenty-five students in attendance, about fifteen were fully engaged with the movie. However, midway through the class period, only eight students were actually watching the movie. The rest of the class, including the white Hispanic student mentioned earlier, were on their phones. Their phone activities ranged from watching their own movies, playing mobile games, texting, surfing social media, and watching comic bits. On day fourteen, the last day of my observation, students took a test on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I had expected that their phones would be taken from them that day, but Mr. X only informed them that they could not use their phones. For the most part, students followed this instruction. However, many students

ended their test a few minutes into the test and immediately went to their phones. Clearly, they had more interest in their phones than taking the test, as Mr. X had to ask some of them to try to answer questions they had left blank.

When I talked to Mr. X about the widespread smartphone use that I had observed, Mr. X initially stated that he did not want to spend the limited time he has with students fighting over smartphone use, as it stood to derail his daily schedule and the learning potential of students who were ready to learn. I could see the logic in this argument given that over the course of my observation period, I saw upwards of one-half to two-thirds of the class on their phones at some point. If Mr. X were to spend his time battling students on smartphone policy violations, he wouldn't have time to do his teaching.

Mr. X's challenge with smartphones in his classroom is not unique to him. High school teachers across the United States have been complaining about this problem, and many have devised ways to extricate phones from the hands of their students during class sessions. Writing for the popular website *weareteachers.com*, which is dedicated to sharing practical classroom ideas to help teachers succeed, Elizabeth Mulvahill surveys some of the clever ways that teachers have coped with students' classroom smartphone use. These include phone jails to cellphone hotels (2019). In figures 2 and 3 below, you can see four kinds of options teachers use to hold student cellphones as showcased in Mulvahill's article, from clear plastic containers with sectioned insides, wooden compartments creatively titled "smartphone hotel," plastic wall-hanging pouched rack to an old school envelope aptly titled "phone jail."

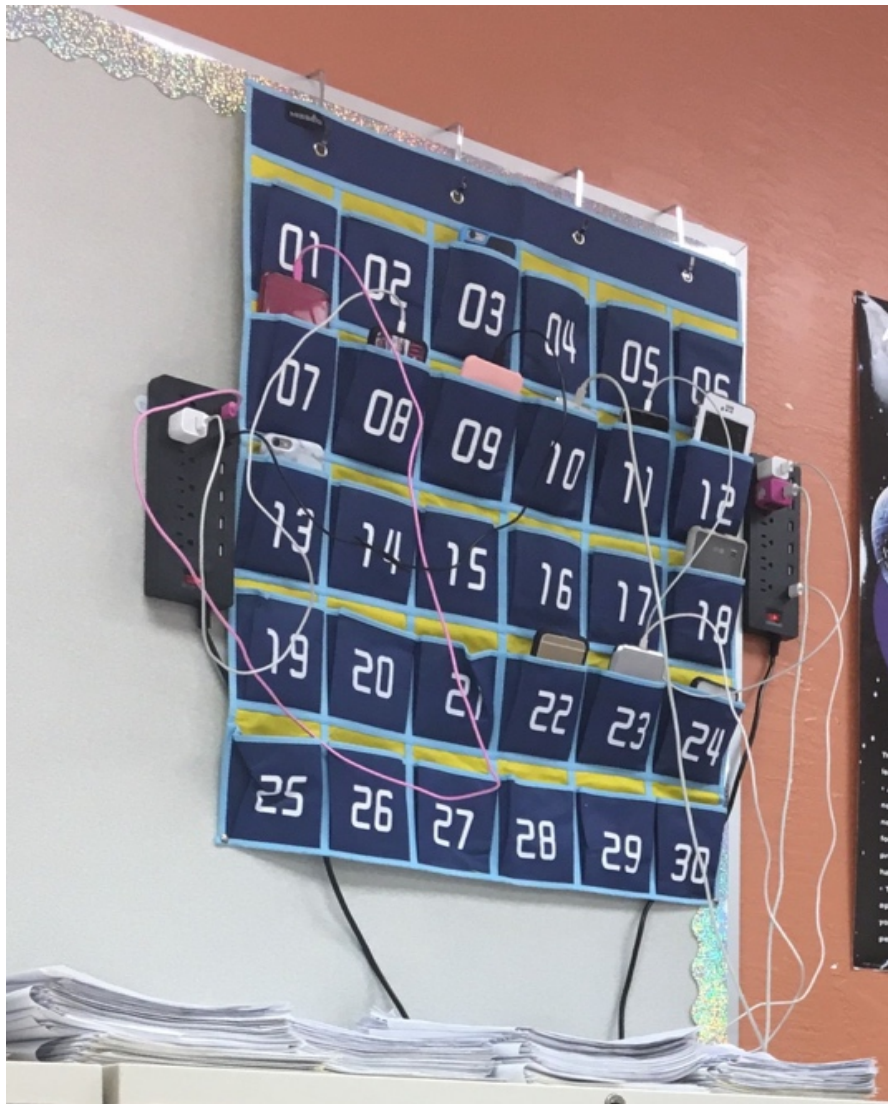
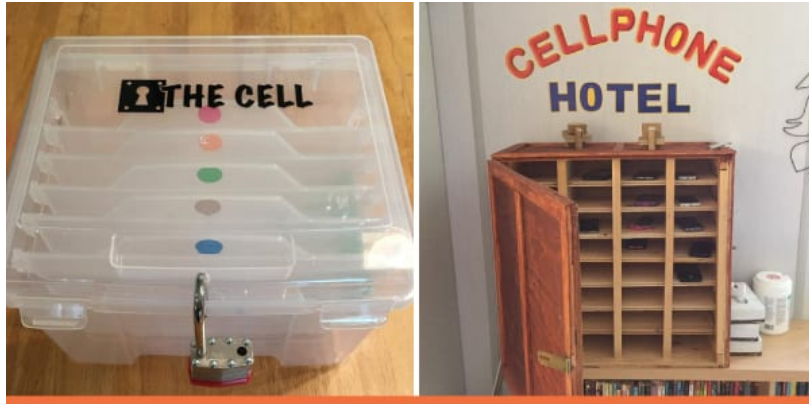


Figure 2: Classroom phone pouches with chargers



WAYS TO MANAGE CELL PHONES IN the CLASSROOM

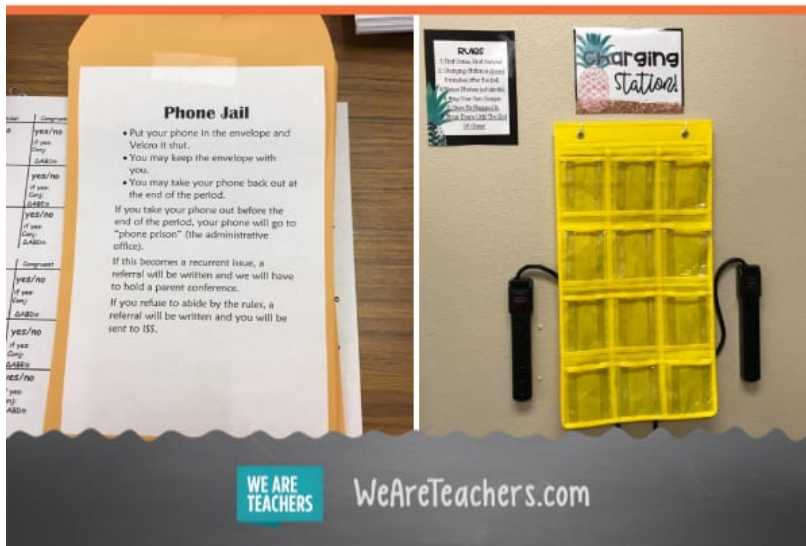


Figure 3: multiple strategies for managing smartphones in class.

Given that Mr. X mentioned his unwillingness to spend his time fighting with students over smartphone use, whether any of these measures would work is unclear, as he would still have to expend energy asking students to relinquish their phones at the beginning of or midway into lessons thereby disrupting his flow. Incentivizing students to relinquish their phones may be more successful than intervention methods that respond to cellphone misuse. As you can see

above, the wall hanging pouch is outfitted with a charging station for student phones. On multiple occasions during my observation period, I witnessed multiple students crossing the classroom to charge their phones in the classroom's few wall sockets. Because students were using their phones quite extensively, they also needed to charge them often. A measure such as the one in Figure 2 would incentivize students to relinquish their phones for a 45-minute class period by giving them enough battery power for the rest of their school day.



Figure 4: Industrial designed Cell Phone Locker with Access Panel (WGB1888366)

It must be acknowledged that measures such as shown in Figures 2 & 3 would require teachers to buy these things themselves. Added to other supplies that they must buy themselves, costs for teachers do add up. The corporate world has gotten involved in trying to solve this as well, with many expensive lockers on sale on the market. In Figure 4 above, you can see a model

from Global Industrial, a company specializing in delivery of industrial grade solutions to various hardware and supply of products. This model sells for over a thousand dollars. With it, teachers like Mr. X, who are wary of student's phones getting misplaced while it is in their possession, can rest at ease knowing student phones are safe. The models in Figures 2 & 3 would still make teachers responsible for the phones in their care. The industrial model takes this worry away from teachers because it is the student who sets the lock and then keeps the key. Regardless, it is likely that these models are out of reach for teachers like Mr. X working in school districts with tight budgets.

Some might argue that my fixation on smartphones in the class contradicts the anti-authoritarian values of critical pedagogy, which I detailed in Chapter One. After all, shouldn't students have the option to make decisions about smartphone use for themselves instead of having an authoritarian teacher force them to follow given rules? Proponents of student agency will likely answer in the affirmative. I will disagree here for various reasons. Childhood, power, and choice are very complicated concepts to detangle, especially when you consider the current neoliberalization of childhood through the advent of the smartphone, one of the most powerful marketing tools in human history. Despite rejecting positivist constructions of adult-childhood power relations, in "Kinderculture: Mediating, Simulacralizing, and Pathologizing the New Childhood," Shirley Steinberg identifies the deleterious impact of neoliberal consumerist culture which uses

the production of pleasure as its ultimate weapon, the corporate children's consumer culture we are labeling "kinderculture" commodifies cultural objects and turns them into things to purchase rather than objects to contemplate...subversive but in a way that challenges authority in an effort to maintain rather than transform the status quo [and] is produced by ingenious marketers who possess profound insights into the lives, desires, and cultural context of contemporary children. (12)

In fact, Steinberg couldn't have been more correct in her assessment. Contemporary social media juggernauts such as Facebook and Google have developed algorithms that serve users content that they might already like or be partial to, leading to what scholars have named "filter bubbles" driven by advertising needs of large corporations (Deibert 32-3). In many ways, students' unregulated smartphone usage does not subvert or shift power in a meaningful way. Rather, it is a manipulative tool used by much larger power players in the society. On multiple days, including day eleven (the first day of the movie), a white girl seated in front of me browsed various shopping sites for lip gloss, shoes, and new iPhones. On days she was not browsing shopping sites, she was on various social media sites including Instagram, TikTok, SnapChat, and YouTube. Though she was subversive to Mr. X in the classroom, her subversion was not in any meaningful way. She was under the thrall of much larger power players in the society.

One of the Black girls in the class who was constantly on her phone also spent her time flipping through Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. On the day the class began watching the movie, she was at one point watching a comic clip on YouTube with an entirely Black cast. Just as Deibert and Steinberg identify above, these kids are in a bubble that marketers have built around them to help sell products.

From my observation, none of these children were behaving out of line with what was expected of them. They were all consuming popular media and not paying attention to Mr. X's delivery. Instead of studying in the classroom, these students are turned into worker bees for Facebook and Google, busily generating data for these companies to create consumer surveillance profiles in a state of being that George Ritzer and Nathan Jurgenson defined as the "prosumer" (14). No online activity is purely consumptive. Today, video consumed on YouTube or Facebook is a source of revenue for those who hold the rights to the content through

advertising deals with the platforms. Searches conducted on Google or Facebook or Bing generate data for these companies to sell to data brokers, and video games played online generate data for developers and money for gamers. Every action on the internet is monetized somehow. Even if monetization is not seen as inherently negative, the intrusiveness of such surveillance can be seen as negative given that “data collected by a particular application can often be repurposed for a variety of uses” (Andrejevic and Gates 189). In fact, the evidence shows that we are entering the second decade of various actors and law enforcement actively integrating social media data collection into their law enforcement surveillance practices (Omand et al. 802).

Unrestricted student smartphone use is not an empowering thing given all these powerful corporate and governmental interests driving their popularity. As corroborated by Richardson, students understand some of the deleterious effects of social media, and some have even attempted to delete apps like Facebook and Instagram multiple times only to return to them, indicating the sense of helplessness that Richardson notes (379-80). In many ways, allowing students unrestricted possession of smartphones in the classroom strikes me as not only negligent but actively harmful, as teachers and school administrators are basically leaving them at the mercy of powerful corporations.

The smartphone constituted the biggest negative environmental factor in Mr. X’s classroom.

However, the smartphone did come in handy on day ten during what Mr. X called “movie planning” day (shown in Appendix U). Unlike most days, on this day most students seemed very engaged in the work, and their smartphones were helpful rather than deleterious. Students were to assume the roles of producers and/or directors for a hypothetical upcoming *A Midsummer Night's Dream* production. With complete creative control over the casting and script, students

could choose any real-life actor they deemed good for the roles in the play, and they used their phones to research good actors. As Mr. X and I roamed the classroom observing student work, I found that in many groups (the students were divided into groups of fours), students assigned the tasks of finding various appropriate actors to specific group members. Given that all students had their smartphones, the work went quickly. In this scenario, their smartphones became accessories to their education instead of a hindrance to it.

There is significant scholarship on how technology can be integrated into the classroom. However, in more ways than one, this is a privileged conversation. As I thought about these issues during my ongoing observations, I did an informal poll of my own students at Texas A&M, and there was a clear divide in terms of how their schools dealt with smartphone usage. Middle-class schools offered the most effective disciplinary approach for proper learning in the classroom when it comes to smartphone usage. Students who attended very wealthy schools said that their teachers were afraid of lawsuits from overprotective and affluent parents, and as a result, did very little by way of smartphone discipline. Those from very poor schools recollected and a lack of resources for dealing with student discipline, including smartphone use in class. Among my students, those who had classes that implemented some of the creative phone storage strategies (see Figures 2-4) attended schools in middle-class suburbs. In fact, most of these students attended schools that provided them with laptops and iPads to use for schoolwork. With these laptops, school authorities were able to restrict access to only educational sites and content. In fact, studies that indicate the usefulness of technology in the classroom—and, specifically, the efficacy of mobile devices—indicate that such devices were provided to the students instead of allowing students to use their own devices (Sandberg et al. 1338). For teachers and educators like Mr. X teaching at underserved schools, such expensive practices are very likely out of reach.

Two other issues affecting the learning environment deserve discussion here: Mr. X's sedentary nature and the choice of delivering Shakespeare. The first is simple, and I will not spend too much time on it. Mr. X is not very active in the classroom. He spent the bulk of his time at his desk. But when one considers that he repeats the same lesson to eight different classes from 8:20 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., his lack of activity is understandable. This tendency allowed many students to simply check out of the class and engage with their phones. Even though the substitute teacher had similar challenges getting the students to focus on the class tasks, she walked around among the students, which made them focus on their work (as least momentarily). In most of the classes observed, there were several students who from the beginning to the end of the class never paid attention and were not refocused unless they were being disruptive.

On the very first day, some students fell asleep during the class period. I believe this was encouraged by turning off the lights in the classroom for the PowerPoint presentation. It appeared to me that once the lights were turned off, the students got an easy opportunity to sleep, and neither did Mr. X move around to nudge them a little. At least two students could be heard snoring. Quite a few others had their heads on their tables, showing that they clearly were not paying attention to Mr. X's delivery.

In contrast, the most active and engaged day during my observation period was on the movie planning day as shown in Appendix U. In both class sessions, Mr. X was up on his feet answering student questions, looking in on the progress of their casting and production decisions, and generally encouraging those who momentarily got sidetracked to get back on track and do the class exercise. This clearly showed that increased activity in the classroom will have moderate to high impact on student learning. I pointed this out to him during our interview and he concurred with my assessment.

Mr. X organized the Shakespeare class with six different tools. Upon reflection, Mr. X appears to have put a lot of work into preparing for his class and it reflected in the many tools he employed in his class. Each day, students completed “daily warm-up” exercises. These were designed to pique students’ interest in the day’s reading. I thought this was an effective way to tune students’ minds into the day’s issues and get them ready for the text. Mr. X bought the entire class notebooks, which they were supposed to be writing their warm-up responses in. These notebooks were then graded to assess student participation and attentiveness. While the assignment design seemed sound, a significant number of the students did not regularly follow through and write their answers to the warm-up questions. I later observed students copying their friends’ notes from pictures they had texted to each other. Mr. X mentioned in our interview that those whose notes were the same later got a zero for those sections. In principle though, the warm-up section is a very good learning tool.

From days three to nine, the class listened to a BBC Radio 3 performance of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* while reading along in their Glencoe textbook. When I asked Mr. X how he chose that particular performance, he said he found it on YouTube and it appeared to be a good performance. Upon checking, this was uploaded by a user named pudupudu on March 7, 2013, and the video did not provide any information (including the date) of the production (Midsummer Night’s Dream (BBC Radio 3) 00:00-02:09:00). After my observation sessions, I was able to confirm that this was indeed a BBC production, a copy of which was available on BBC Radio 3’s “The Shakespeare Sessions” website. The only information on the website about the production is the director’s name, the cast, and a statement saying that this was “[r]ecorded on location in 22 acres of Sussex woodland... [and] has an all-star cast” (de Wolff 2018). This was uploaded five years after pudupudu uploaded their own video in 2013.

I attempted to find definite production information from the BBC but contact information for neither “The Shakespeare Sessions” nor the director, Celia de Wolff, are available. Additionally, neither The World Shakespeare Bibliography nor The Texas A&M library database has information on it either. However, I was able to find a record of the production on the British Universities Film & Video Council website. The council identifies this as being produced in the summer of 2011, available for internet download, and archived at the British Library Sound Archive in the Oral History section. I can definitely understand why chasing this into the rabbit hole will be unproductive for Mr. X, who is overworked with his many students in a challenging work environment.

Despite the possibility that Mr. X did not research the production details, he chose a very solid radio production from a reputable source. De Wolf is a prolific director and Roger Allam who plays Bottom in this production is a well-respected award-winning stage actor. Both Toby Stevens and Leslie Sharp, who play Oberon and Titania, respectively, are award-winning stage actors as well. So, Mr. X chose very well here. My favorite moment during the class’s audio read-along sessions was on day eight, when the class read Act 4 Scene 1. When Theseus commands Egeus to “Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns,” (4.1.135) (them being the lovers Hermia, Lysander, Helena, and Demetrius), the production’s horn was particularly effective in waking up a significant portion of the class. Otherwise, day eight was particularly lethargic, as the students were not responding to questions from Mr. X’s guided notes. He even prodded them a little more forcefully than on most days because even the two or three normally engaged students were rather subdued on day eight.

As I have already discussed above, the primary text for Mr. X’s class was Glencoe’s 2000 *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, which has modernized the original Shakespeare. It has very

few footnotes that clarify or explain the play's language, ranging from zero to three words explained on a page. Four short supplementary essays are included in the text, including one by Christopher Fry explaining what a comedy is; Norrie Epstein detailing excerpts from various critics, actors, and scholars on Shakespeare criticism; Victoria McKee's newspaper article on Hollywood adaptation of Shakespeare; Lynne Heffley's theater review of the Los Angeles Women's Shakespeare Company's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* production; and Jennifer Lee Carrell's literary history of Shakespeare's rise to dominance in the Western world. I am not going to go deep into these additional readings or footnotes and what they might have added to the experience of the students' encounter with Shakespeare because Mr. X did not wind up using them.

As you can see in Appendix V, the most innovative (in my eyes at least) measure Mr. X implemented in his classroom was the guided notes element. I hadn't encountered the practice before, and I thought it was an effective way of increasing student engagement. Mr. X told me in the post-observation interview that he came up with the guided when he was teaching *Beowulf*. When he found that it worked well for that class, he decided to use it for the Shakespeare section as well. In fact, Mr. X made the guided notes twenty percent of the course grade. Some students were avid note-takers, and their guided notes and their warm-up responses were always done. However, a significant number of students in both classes tended to wait until a counterpart wrote their notes, and they then copied from them. The implementation of graded guided notes, which scholars such as Konrad et al. recommend as possible ways to get students to effectively engage with the assignment appears to not necessarily work if not paired with other measures, as shown in Mr. X's class (441). The fact that students could easily share answers using their smartphones or openly copy from their classmates' notes undermined the learning

potential of the assignment. Again, as you can see here, the availability of the smartphone in the classroom undermined Mr. X's teaching.

As I have already indicated above, Mr. X included what he called "movie planning" (Appendix U) on day ten of my observation. This was the most productive, active, and engaged day of my observation period. Students were expected to decide on a whole host of issues in making a choice to adapt Shakespeare's play into a movie. They were asked to explain and justify a number of creative decisions, including who they cast into which role, why they chose to set the play in a specific time period, as well as why they undertook certain plot changes or chose specific set designs. When I asked Mr. X about the length of the work and the unlikelihood of students finishing it in time, he said he was more interested in getting the students engaged than them necessarily finishing the work. The students appeared happy and looked like they were enjoying being up and moving around, as opposed to sitting and listening to a play or watching a movie.

Mr. X selected the 2017 Casey Wilder Mott rendition, which sets the play in present-day Los Angeles. It employs contemporary costumes including computers, smartphones, microphones, cars, and motorcycles. It also involves aspiring Hollywood actors, directors, and producers. I dare say the most jarring of directional choices made by Mott is the decision to keep the Shakespearean language while changing everything else about the play. One of the most engaged and perceptive students checked out of the movie on the first day because she did not approve of the choice. She disapproved of the filmmakers' decision to modernize the setting and costume but maintain the language. To her, and I am inclined to agree, the language was just as much a costume as the rest.

Taken together, these six assignments were a lot more than I have seen or expected to see in a high school English classroom. In fact, Mr. X seemed to include as many tools as possible in an attempt to cater to the learning needs of different students. I will discuss the outcomes of Mr. X's methods below.

4.3.7 *Student Learning Outcomes*

One of the first questions I asked Mr. X during our exit interview was what he wanted his students to get from this specific Shakespeare play. Mr. X gave me three reasons for his choice:

“I thought that the romantic element in the play will get them more excited given that they are teenagers and are at that point in their lives... I believe teaching them to read Shakespearean texts will help them become better at parsing things, and... It will also help them to understand things that may not make sense at first.”

I then asked Mr. X how he thought his own reasons for selecting this text aligned with that of the state and common core standards. Mr. X was very blunt, stating that there was incongruence between the state and common core's goals and the realities of teaching “on the ground.” In his own words, Mr. X said that he

suspect[s] that the reasons the state wants us to teach Shakespeare are not pragmatic at all. Saying that teaching Shakespeare will fulfill the kids' need for culture in their lives is not realistic. The kids have music, movies, games etc. So, they already have culture in their lives.

I was not surprised at all at Mr. X's response here, as I got similar responses at NCTE (as shown in Chapter Two). Many teachers were clear that they did not buy into the logic of the state or the common core.

When I read sections of the common core to Mr. X to see what he thought about it, he had a “hard time believing Shakespeare is the best way to teach students how to be a democratic citizen.” I feel like newer and more contemporary works might be best if that is what we are looking to teach,” he said. “If we are talking about the human condition, why not teach sitcoms?”

Clearly, Mr. X felt the state was not realistic in what they thought high school students would learn from Shakespeare, especially in urban high schools like School X.

As I indicated above in the teacher preparedness section, Mr. X shared the district's scope and sequence with me. He also believed it was too advanced for his students. One of the expectations of the district's scope and sequence document was getting students to "understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about how an author's sensory language creates imagery in literary text." Alongside their recommendation of *Macbeth*, Mr. X believed that the district's scope and sequence was unrealistically advanced for his class. And after observing his class, I am inclined to agree with him.

I asked him about how he then assesses his own goals or, at least, how he assesses his own success in meeting those goals. Mr. X indicated that he was not a big fan of testing. He believed that most of his students would end up failing if he "did more cerebral tests." As a result, Mr. X's goal was to "get [students] used to predicting questions" or at least "knowing the actual story." Because his initial survey at the beginning of their senior year showed that most of his students had never read an entire book of more than one-hundred-and-fifty pages, he wanted to get them into the habit of finishing a book or a story. His praxis reflected this insofar as he had the students read along together for seven days in order to finish the play together. He knew that left to themselves, the students were unlikely to finish reading a play with such unfamiliar language. He wanted very much to teach and give tests that featured more on the cerebral side but bemoaned the lack of time in the school curriculum for reteaching which is needed to instill that kind of knowledge. Accordingly, Mr. X said that he had "about five to seven students in each class who are really paying attention, and I don't want to fail twenty out of thirty students if my test involves a whole lot of cerebral stuff."

Without access to student test scores, I can only use my observation of test day to comment on the learning outcomes, at least insofar as it comes to test scores. I talk more about this dilemma in the recommendations section of the final chapter. Based on how his test questions were split up, it is possible that Mr. X was testing more cerebrally than he thought. Out of twenty-five questions, twenty were multiple-choice recall questions. One question that is indicative of this section asked students to identify what Oberon sends Puck to find. Possible answers were, “the bark of a tree,” “a flower,” “a leaf,” or “some twigs.” These twenty multiple-choice questions were worth sixty points. Four questions were short-answer fill-in-the-blanks. One of these questions read, “How are relationships in the play similar to relationships in our modern society?” Altogether, these four questions were worth forty points. The final question, which demanded at least a paragraph, asked them to list at least three important differences between the movie and the play, indicating the purposes those differences served. This was worth twenty percent of the total points. In my estimation, this was a well-balanced test, with one half of the test being analytical and the other half recall.

Mr. X shared the redacted aggregate data of the class’s test results with me after he graded them. The first period’s average grade distribution was as follows: A (3.88%), B (90.7%), C (3.1%), and D (2.33%). The second period had the following scores: A (1.55%), B (0%), C (10.08%), and D (88.37%). I was surprised by the test scores, especially for the first period. In the first period during exam day, multiple students turned in their work quite early, and Mr. X had to return their work to them, encouraging them to at least try to answer some of the questions. I was therefore surprised to see that ninety percent of them made a B. For the second period, I was not surprised. Throughout the observation period, they were less enthusiastic compared to the first period.

Per the test results, it is safe to say the students performed at an average rate given that they had quite a bit of cerebral elements in their test. I expected a worse performance given my impression of the two periods. In fact, the control class which had impressed me with their level of engagement had similar test scores as the first period. Because I tend to favor engagement, I had expected that class to do a lot better in the test than these two periods I observed.

Something extremely important to note is that student engagement differed from assignment to assignment. Given that I was mainly looking at the overall daily engagement relative to the entire class, I may have missed nuances in terms of which students were engaged on which days and by which assignments. In fact, on the first day of our movie (observation day eleven), one of the students who I had found to be rowdy and inattentive actually spent the entire day watching the movie. I noted this behavior in my daily notes. I believe that engaging students with different mediums, as Mr. X did, helped students with different learning needs get something from the class. Those who liked reading might have finished reading the Glencoe text. Those who are auditory learners might have finished the BBC production. Those who are visual learners might have followed the story through the Mott production. And those who are activity-based learners might have gotten more engaged through the movie planning project.

Overall then, it appears Mr. X achieved his goals in the class. He had wanted them to at least finish reading a story and remember it, and the test scores indicated that they had done that. However, the Common Core's mandate for Shakespeare education to create better citizens appears to have featured very little in the class. So, I was eager to talk about this with Mr. X given that it appeared to not even be on his radar when teaching *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

4.4 Race in a Color-Blind Classroom

As indicated by the research instrument shown in Appendix R: Interview Guide for Teachers (which I shared with Mr. X during the recruitment process), you can see that my primary goal had to do with race and difference. I did not want to hide my mission from the potential research subject even though scholars in the field have noted that fully informed subjects may “either refuse to take part in an investigation or... respond in misleading ways” (Bok 2). In fact, as I mentioned earlier in the recruitment process section of this chapter, I believe that my research questions may have played a part in my inability to secure access to more schools. So, Mr. X must have known (because I shared my dissertation summary and research questions with School X’s authorities to give to potential teachers for recruitment) that race and othering was a significant component of my dissertation and, by extension, would factor into my class observations.

Because of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* multifaceted nature, especially regarding the multiple identities (fairies, aristocrats, and laymen), I expected that a high school English class in a school as diverse as School X would feature some discussion of race and otherness. Even though race in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is not generally discussed like it is in Shakespeare’s major African plays, the teaching environment at School X provides the right atmosphere for the exploration of otherness in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Nevertheless, there was no discussion of race or otherness at all. Perhaps, and not surprisingly, Mr. X did touch on class differences in the play but failed to engage the racial, colonial, and othering tendencies replete in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. On day one of the observation, when he gave an overview of the Globe Theater, Mr. X mentioned that Shakespeare wrote for all social classes. On day three of my observation, he also mentioned early modern English class anxieties surrounding marriage. The English

aristocratic tradition of arranged marriage was used to explain Egeus' insistence on having Hermia marry Demetrius instead of Lysander:

Egeus. Full of vexation come I, with complaint
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.
Stand forth, Demetrius!—My noble lord,
This man hath my consent to marry her.
Stand forth, Lysander!—And, my gracious Duke,
This man hath bewitched the bosom of my child.
...
I bid the ancient privilege of Athens;
As she is mine, I may dispose of her;
Which shall be either to this gentleman
Or to her death, according to our law (1.1.22-25, 41-44)

Mr. X attempted to get the students interested by framing the day's warm-up as a question about parents' roles in children's dating lives. I thought it was a good warm-up question especially given the fraught nature of interracial relationships in the United States, both historically and contemporaneously. Three students in the first period brought up issues of safety and privacy, and many of their classmates agreed with their points. Mr. X then mentioned that perhaps parents can intervene in their child's dating lives if the person their child is dating does or peddles drugs. The students appeared taken aback by this suggestion. In fact, all of the students became non-responsive. This incident reminded me of Milton Reynolds's concept of "affective under-skilling," discussed in Chapter One. The immediate silence in the classroom after Mr. X brought up drug peddling and Mr. X's inability to address it carefully indicates the possible color-blindness that constituted his own education and preparedness to teach in a majority-minority urban classroom (Reynolds 360).

In fact, what happened in the second period was even more astonishing and indicates the color-blind approach to the classroom Mr. X took. One of the students in the second period mentioned that "parents can intervene in their child's dating lives if the person the child is dating is racist." This statement was made by a white male student. Mr. X completely ignored this

response from the student. He did not even acknowledge it as he again brought up the issue of lawbreaking as grounds for parental intervention. The idea that Egeus can intervene in his daughter's spousal choice can easily be connected to racial discourse and race relations in the United States. But as Reynolds says, colorblind conditioning works in "service of creating the impression that one does not see color" even when it is right in the person's face (362). In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, race and othering are everywhere, and any teaching of this Shakespearean text cannot be done justice to unless the twenty-first century teacher fully engages these incidents in his or her classroom. I will explore three of these areas that, if Mr. X had engaged his students, he may have been able to get more of them to get excited about reading the play.

A Midsummer Night's Dream begins on a decidedly dreary note for Hippolyta as she is getting ready to marry the Duke of Theseus, her vanquisher. Who is Hippolyta one might ask? The dramatis personae, titled as "characters" in the Glencoe text, names her as Queen of the Amazons. Greek mythology often painted the Amazons as a race of warrior women who could match Greek heroes in battle (Mayor 19). They were the quintessential "other" in Greek mythology, as they organized their society in a way that was completely opposite to the patriarchal Greeks (Mayor 27). The Amazons, or historical female figures who fit that description, came from all over the Mediterranean and North Africa. The women referred to as Amazons could range from Persian and central Asian to Nubian Queens, such as Amanirenas the Brave, a one-eyed *kandake* of the second century Nubian Kingdom of Meroe (Mayor 390).

This quintessentially othered foreign queen, defeated and to be married to the Greek Duke (note the superimposition of the English title to this Greek leader) can serve as a great starting point to discuss the relationships among different people groups in *A Midsummer Night's*

Dream and if possible, extend that discussion to contemporary inter-ethnic or racial relations. But Mr. X did not even notice this as far as I observed in the class. The only time Mr. X commented on Hippolyta's Amazon identity is in Act Four, Scene One when the Duke Theseus' court goes hunting. In his guided notes, Mr. X asked why the court was out in the woods early in the morning, and as students struggled to respond, he suggested that the Duke was probably trying to please his Amazon bride-to-be because she might be good with a bow and, by extension, love hunting. This was the last time that Mr. X mentioned Hippolyta's Amazon identity. Insofar as the play treats Hippolyta as an ethnic or cultural other, Mr. X never discussed it.

Another major opportunity lost in Mr. X's teaching of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was the question of the changeling boy whose fate causes the fight that drives all the mix-ups in the play. When we meet the fairies in Act Two, Scene One, Puck warns the fairy servant of Queen Titania, the Fairy Queen, to admonish her queen to not come within sight of Oberon, the Fairy King, because

For Oberon is passing fell and wrath
Because that she as her attendant hath
A lovely boy stol'n from an Indian King;
She never had so sweet a changeling,
And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild. (2.12024)

As Margo Hendricks notes, Shakespeare's choice in naming the changeling Indian, and later Hippolyta's reasoning for not relinquishing the changeling to Oberon is "rich with the language of English mercantilism" (52-53). The idea that these two fairies are fighting over an allegedly stolen Indian boy seems rather suspect and maps easily onto the early European kidnapping of natives from India, the Americas, and Africa for human trafficking and slavery. The possessive nature of the conversation demands explicit exploration in the English classroom instead of just

casual treatment. Any reading of the Indian boy that gives even a little weight to the idea that he was stolen from his birthplace and is being fought over in Greece, a substitute for England in the play, evokes the later colonial kidnapping of native children in places such as Australia, Canada, and the United States (Kurian 10-11). Even though this seems far removed from Shakespeare's play, it is equally known that English monarchs and aristocrats had Black servants as pages during Shakespeare's era evidenced by Queen Elizabeth's own Black page in 1577 (Sherwood 40). The racial politics in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are not tangential to the play's action but integral to it, and students notice these fraught racial politics even if teachers do not mention them.

I had expected beauty standards to feature prominently in Mr. X's teaching of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* given that one of his major reasons for selecting the play was that it was a romantic comedy, which he believed worked well for teens. The topic of beauty did come up on observation day seven, as the class touched on the lovers' squabble over Hermia's height in Act Three, Scene Two, when Helena insults Hermia as a "puppet" and "short." However, Mr. X could have engaged the students further on this topic, and it would have likely interested the class given the number of teenage girls of color in the classroom.

The word "fair" is used several times in the play, from Act One, Scene One until the end of Act Four, when the lovers' confusion is resolved. The importance of its usage lies in its contextual juxtaposition with terminology that evokes dark skin or Africa. For the purpose of discussing beauty standards that can matter to inner-city high school students, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* could not have offered any better opportunity. The first use of the word comes from Duke Theseus, who uses it paternally, as many fatherly patriarchs do to young women of their subjects. Theseus opens the play by informing "fair Hippolyta" that their marriage hour

draws near (1.1.1). It can be expected that the Duke will want to address his Duchess-to-be and Queen of the Amazons as beautiful. So, the use here is ceremonial and uneventful. The same can be said of the next few instances in which Theseus addresses Hermia regarding her father's right to select a spouse for her: "What say you, Hermia? Be advised, fair maid" (1.1.46) "Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires" (1.1.67), and "For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself/To fit your fancies to your father's will (1.1.117)." Nevertheless, Theseus opens the use of the term "fair" very well for us as he decidedly uses it to mean beautiful.

In Act One, Scene One, Hermia and Helena, who are childhood friends, use "fair" in the same congenial way as friends are likely to do with each other. However, Helena's speech is very important; it deserves reproducing in full here.

HERMIA. Good speed, fair Helena! Whither away?

HELENA. Call you me fair? That fair again unsay.

Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!

Your eyes are lodestars, and your tongue's sweet air

More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear

When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.

Sickness is catching. Oh, were favor so,

Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;

My ear should catch your voice. My eye, your eye.

My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.

Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,

The rest I'd give to be to you translated.

O, teach me how you look and with what art

You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart. (1.1.180-93).

What is interesting with Helena's outpouring of admiration for Hermia's beauty is the complete qualification of that beauty, tying it to specific body parts and "art." Hermia simply said 'hey beautiful, where are you going?' and Helena proceeds to describe what makes Hermia beautiful, including her striking lodestars (guiding stars) for eyes and her melodious tongue, which sways Demetrius' heart so. Helena bemoans her bad luck when it comes to love and compares her beauty to Hermia when she says that "Through Athens I am thought as fair as she" (1.1.227) and

goes on to emphasize what Demetrius find beautiful about Hermia as “And as he errs, doting on Hermia’s eyes” (1.1.230). These qualifications are important as we will see later.

It is important to note that some Shakespeare editions, such as the Cambridge Dover Thrift edition (a reprint of the 1600 Thomas Fisher quarto of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*), actually describe Hermia “as short and dark” and Helena as “tall and fair” in the dramatis personae (2, 78). This means that their appearance should be taken into consideration when they are being cast in their roles to ensure that their comparison to each other is clearer to the audience.

In *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, the first time we get a direct juxtaposition of Hermia and Helena’s skin color is when Lysander, abruptly turned into an abusive rogue by Puck’s love potion, argues that he is right to change his passions from Hermia to Helena because “who will not change a raven for a dove?” (2.2.120). Clearly, the raven is a black bird and the dove is a white bird. Left to itself as a standalone comparison, it may not have much meaning, but further black/white imagery juxtaposition gives this instance more relevance. Demetrius compares Helena’s “beautiful hands to the pristine white snow on mountain tops (3.2.141-44), and Lysander again brings up Hermia’s skin tone when he dismisses her when he says “Away, you Ethiop!” (3.2.258). By this point, the lovers' quarrel dissolves completely into skin-based insults, and Helena and Hermia’s beauty is judged by their skin color. Given that we are told that one is dark and the other fair, there are clear racial dynamics going on in the play by this point. In fact, Duke Theseus makes these racial politics clear when he argues that

Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact:
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold;

That is the madman. The lover, all is frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt.
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth (5.1.4-13)¹⁶

This scene, which we covered on day ten offered Mr. X an excellent opportunity to discuss the question of beauty and beauty standards in the play. One of the Black girls seated by me on that day was fixing her eyelashes, indicating that her looks were important to her. Given that Mr. X's main goal was to get students interested in Shakespearean texts, this seemed an opportunity to do so. Despite Mr. X's multimodal approach, which involved audio, video, and hands-on activities, a sizable portion of the students in the class appeared uninterested in the story. I strongly believe that the elision of race in the discussion is one of the biggest lost opportunities in the Shakespeare classroom. The fact that these students, overwhelmingly Black and brown, spend an inordinate amount of time on photo-sharing apps like Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter, and many of them were on these apps in the classroom liking and commenting on photos of social media models, tells you that they care about these topics. Scholars like Raven Maragh (356-57) and Timeka Tounsel (101) have started charting some of the performative discourse on beauty and color by Black women and other women of color on social media platforms like Twitter.

¹⁶ The critical placement of the lover's frantic gaze in seeing Helen's beauty in Egypt's brow, among the absurd and the lunatic, showcases what is beautiful in the Athenian society that our lovers inhabit. It is important to note that accusations of anachronistic reading of Shakespeare's setting are abundant. But the identification of Shakespeare's Athenian setting as a kind of Shakespearean usage of English courtly and domestic drama to craft a Hellenistic court is critically as old as scholarly debates on Shakespeare has existed, as some of his contemporaries such as John Dryden and later eighteenth century scholars like Richard Farmer believed that Shakespeare's use of Hellenistic sources was marginal and the content of his Greek plays like *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was largely educated by local concerns (Martindale 5). It is, therefore, worthwhile to read the stirrings of our own racial discourse on beauty in these proto-racialist discourse on beauty we find *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

That students spend so much time on these platforms indicates that, as teachers, we stand the chance of getting the attention of our students if we can connect their interests to class texts that deal with the same issues they engage with online. As I have noted above, Mr. X argued that students do not need Shakespeare to teach them culture, as culture is around them in their movies and music and sitcoms. However, Shakespeare explores the same issues, and it is up to teachers to coax students into seeing this.

When I asked Mr. X about his lack of engagement with racial othering in the play, he had two responses. Mr. X at first seemed surprised when I mentioned some of these racial issues in the play, as he did not even notice them in the text. Again, this indicates the issue of affective under-skilling that I discussed above. It is that ability of white teachers to not see race in clearly racialized events or texts. This can be addressed through teacher training and pedagogy programs that clearly address these issues. As outlined above, Mr. X had no training in Shakespeare-specific pedagogy, much less twenty-first century Shakespeare pedagogy that takes into consideration all of these thorny issues. Given that white teachers are still overrepresented in high school classrooms, there needs to be a special emphasis on equipping teachers with cultural competence so as to help students understand the “significance of sociocultural constructions of identity in literature” (diRoberto 2).

The second response Mr. X gave me for his reluctance in engaging race in the classroom was his weariness in engaging the topic. This reminded me of observation day three when the student brought up racism as a good reason for a parent to intervene in the dating life of their child and Mr. X completely ignored him. Mr. X indicated that he simply did not want strife in the classroom; he chose comfort over education. In her opening address to NCTE 2018, Adichie directly addressed Mr. X’s attitude when she said that “it’s important for us to make peace with

discomfort. That there's something perverse about expecting always to be comfortable. Life is messy. Sometimes discomfort opens us up to growth and to knowledge and to meaning." When Mr. X argued that, as a white man in a majority non-white environment, he did not feel like it was his place to discuss race in the classroom, he was avoiding discomfort. He further argued that his position is sensitive because he knew that "you have a lot of people of color who have really bad takes on race," but as a white man he was unsure about how to tackle that in the classroom and come out unscathed. Without approaching and taking on this apparent discomfort, the problematic views on race he identified are left untouched and growth averted.

Mr. X lacked training in race-conscious pedagogy, and he was afraid of sounding offensive in the classroom discourse on race. These are intertwined in the color-blind Shakespeare pedagogy I observed in Mr. X's classroom. As I have discussed above, I believe this kind of pedagogy misses the mark when it comes to what is needed in twenty-first century pedagogy that takes into consideration the need for continued teaching of Shakespeare as well as the needs of an increasingly swiftly changing demographics of the United States.

5. CONCLUSION

Like Former President Obama said to the *New York Times* in 2017, at the end of his historic presidency and when I began this project, Shakespeare continues to be a touchstone in American education. The past three years' experience on this project, my exploration of the intellectual traditions that set the stage for my work, the observations of teachers and professionals in Shakespeare Studies from around the United States, my foray into fieldwork and struggles with access, as well as my time in the American high school classroom, have only served to underscore the former president's words. What is most clear is my realization that my experience shows how true and applicable President Obama's observation that Shakespeare helps us see the recurring patterns in human behavior is. In my observation, the most salient recurring pattern in American high school teachers' behaviors is that of repeating the pedagogical models of their own high school teachers. This pattern reifies the problems and imbalances that have been identified in Shakespeare pedagogy.

5.1 Reflection – Shakespeare at NCTE

The NCTE provides teachers of Shakespeare from all over the United States with a good opportunity for professional development. With over ten conference sessions devoted to Shakespeare pedagogy, the NCTE offers ample opportunity for high school teachers to get contemporary teaching methods to take back to their schools. The Folger Shakespeare Library's prominent role at the conference every year is a testament to the conference's importance.

Other important sources for professional development include teaching aids offered by institutions such as *myShakespeare* and PBS, who were at the NCTE. These resources, especially the media clips on PBS' *Shakespeare Uncovered* program, can help teachers utilize

professionally produced Shakespeare plays and commentaries in their classrooms. Given the increasing importance of visual media in education today, teachers' ability to access these resources can help enhance the teaching and learning of Shakespeare in the high school classroom. The challenge with these resources is that teachers often do not even know about them. The NCTE offers attendees the opportunity to learn about these resources and it can therefore serve as a one-stop-shop for teachers looking for new teaching resources.

The other important aspect of the NCTE is that it offers teachers the opportunity to exchange ideas about effective teaching methods. Of the five sessions on Shakespeare pedagogy I attended, all of them had a strong teacher-as-participant component to the sessions. In fact, especially in the Folger sessions, the teacher-participants and presenters offered more useful suggestions about how to handle tackling some of the thorny issues regarding Shakespeare and race.

Based on my interviews, the teachers at NCTE displayed two dominant issues. The first is that text selection in high school Shakespeare studies is still heavily biased towards a few texts. This imbalance is mainly because text selection is made by the school districts. *Romeo & Juliet* still dominates high school Shakespeare. The second issue, which follows from the first, is that textual selection determines whether or not a given high school class will discuss race and othering. Teachers who discuss race in Shakespeare are in the minority, thereby confirming Thompson's observation that people still don't think of Shakespeare and race as fitting together. For that to change, Shakespeare's African plays will need to be taught more. This should take the form of a purposeful choice to engage students on race and othering as it appears in the bard's text. However, Shakespeare's other plays can also be used to take into consideration issues of othering, given the example we have from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Even in plays such as

Much Ado About Nothing (which might seem to have little to do with race) can be used to discuss race, as lines such as Claudio's "I will hold my mind were she an Ethiope" serve as important learning moments for students in the classroom (5.4.38).

The other issue that I identified in my interviews with teachers is that almost none of them had any training in Shakespeare pedagogy. This is perhaps the most crucial issue in the teaching of Shakespeare in American high schools today. Having come out of general teacher certification programs that offer little by way of how to teach Shakespeare, teachers are generally left to their own devices. This indicates that despite Shakespeare's alleged importance to the Common Core, there is not a serious approach to Shakespeare pedagogy. This leaves students at the mercy of teachers who appear to be imitating the styles of their own teachers.

Despite the non-existent Shakespeare pedagogical training, the good thing is that professional development opportunities such as those offered at conferences like NCTE provide teachers across the U.S. the opportunity to improve their pedagogical skills. However, the NCTE, the Folger, local school districts, and university partners need to offer more funding for travel to their conferences, especially for teachers in underserved schools. Teachers at these schools are the least financially equipped to attend conferences and professional development programs such as the NCTE. All the teachers I interviewed came from high-ranking schools in their states. This indicates that teachers who are getting access to these new and cutting-edge methods are already privileged, and this might inevitably widen the knowledge gap between well-funded schools and schools with less funding.

5.2 Reflection – Shakespeare in Central Texas

Researching Shakespeare pedagogy in the classroom has been a daunting task. My time with Mr. X and his students offered many insights into undertaking this type of mixed-methods research in Shakespeare pedagogy. Foremost among these insights is the central role of the classroom environment in the teaching of Shakespeare.

Mr. X's class shared most of the characteristics and insights into teacher preparation and text choices that my interviews at NCTE had led me to anticipate. Like his colleagues who I met at NCTE, Mr. X was not particularly prepared by way of actual training on how to teach Shakespeare. Unlike the majority of my NCTE interviewees though, Mr. X was able to choose his own texts because he felt the school district's choice was too advanced for his students. Unfortunately, Mr. X's choice of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* fell right in line with texts that are often the choices for lower-level classes in the teaching of Shakespeare in high schools. Like his NCTE counterparts, Mr. X didn't really teach race and othering as an integral part of his classroom praxis. In general, I would say my interviews with Mr. X did not deviate much from my expectations of a color-blind high school Shakespeare teacher. He fit right into that hypothesis.

The variable that ended up playing the biggest role in my data-gathering in Mr. X's classroom was the issue of smartphones. In fact, I took a significant number of notes on how smartphones affected Mr. X's classroom dynamics. The fact that students were allowed to have their phones in class led to missed learning opportunities for both students who were very serious in class and those who appeared less serious. One of the challenges critical race theorists as far back as Du Bois see with white teachers in minority classrooms is the sense that these teachers don't care if these children learn or not. Mr. X's apparent disinterest in the students' use of

smartphones gave the impression that he fit the mold of white teachers not caring about Black children learning. As I mentioned in chapter three, one of my biggest disappointments came from seeing one of the students who often offered insightful responses to Mr. X's questions slide down the path of smartphone use in the classroom once she found Mr. X's choice of movie objectionable. Without a mechanism for controlling student access to smartphones in the classroom, there is very little teachers can do to be effective—no matter how innovative they are in the classroom. The simple fact is that teachers cannot compete with multi-billion-dollar technology companies for the attention of students. Consequently, I think there are two ways teachers and schools can approach this smartphone problem in the classroom. One way schools can solve this problem is to provide students with their own devices, such as iPads, to help with (for example) viewing some of the media resources from PBS that I mentioned in Chapter Two. The second option for schools that have no resources to buy these devices for their students is to get their teachers wall-hanging smartphone pouches or the more secure lockboxes if they can afford them. This can help the teacher maintain student attention in the classroom, without which very little learning can be done. These two approaches should be good enough for the various types of schools based on their financial capacities.

5.3 Limitations

The main limitation for a project like mine is how applicable the insights gleaned from the research are to wider similar situations. I believe the range of my interviews does it credit. In total, I interviewed sixteen teachers from twelve states across the United States. This should mean that the trends I talk about here are not just applicable to one state or school.

Despite all the above, my project has some shortcomings that limit its range and applicability. The first is that all the teachers I interviewed for this research (save Mr. X in Texas) came from very good schools that are highly ranked in their respective states. This means that despite the range in diversity of location— rural, urban, and suburban— there was little diversity in school quality. What this indicates is that research such as mine, conducted in the way I conducted it, tends to favor gathering data from already privileged places. This biases the data against poorer schools. This imbalance was somewhat corrected by my observations in Mr. X's low-income classroom. So even though I had access to more teachers from highly ranked schools, I got more data on classroom dynamics from a poorly ranked school. Nonetheless, it would have enriched my data if I had interviewed more teachers from less well-funded schools.

Another of my project's limitations is that I only had data from one major professional development event. Even though the NCTE offers a vast data set to pool data from, the fact that my data came from this one source means that it is inherently liable to be skewed since I might be gathering data from teachers who think alike. Perhaps data from other similar national or regional conferences might help expand the applicability of insights arrived at after the study. This limitation might also be overcome by evaluating data from multiple years of NCTE conferences, as this might help show a pattern in the evolution of ideas on the teaching of Shakespeare in high schools. Again, my focus on the Folger sessions at NCTE meant that my data favors the Folger's approach to the teaching of Shakespeare in high schools instead of a wider variety of institutions.

As indicated in Chapters Two and Three, my access to teachers and administrators was limited by gatekeeping, among other challenges. Even though I had planned on interviewing administrators for Chapter Two, I was unable to secure a successful interview with any school

administrator. This meant that I had no input or data on the teaching of Shakespeare in high schools from the ELA administrative standpoint. This limitation is especially biting when it comes to my conclusions regarding preparing teachers to teach Shakespeare. Administrators might have been able to offer useful insights into why there is institutional inertia on that front despite the professed importance of Shakespeare by the same institutions. As indicated by my data in Chapter Three, I was only able to observe one teacher's class in one school even though I had planned on observing at least two teachers from different schools. This limited the data I could gather in central Texas and undermined the validity of my conclusions insofar as they related to talking broadly about the teaching of Shakespeare in high schools. Again, limited data in the classroom (student interviews and assignment responses) has affected how confident I am in the applicability of the insights gleaned here on student learning outcomes.

All in all, my project was limited by the paucity of accessible data.

5.4 Potential for Future Research

The limitations above provide a great opportunity for future research. I have plans to further this project in the future, especially its field research. As indicated above, I was only able to interview sixteen teachers nationally and observe one teacher in central Texas. Even though I engaged the high school Shakespeare classroom more than some of the texts that motivated my work, I plan to increase the number of classrooms I observe in the future with similar and expanded research questions to ensure that I can provide more reliable data to back up the conclusions and insights made in this project.

In addition to expanding the data and range in the United States, I believe the vast data sets that the Anglophone world has offers researchers the best pathway to research on Shakespeare pedagogy. Given that Shakespeare has become a staple in former British colonies like Ghana and India among others, it will be interesting to see variations in how different colonized populations relate to Shakespeare. I remember listening to one of my professors at the University of Ghana argue that the English Department there was one of the most conservative in Africa (as compared to institutions like Makerere University in Uganda). The differences in Shakespeare pedagogy that come out of institutions such as the University of Ghana and Makerere, which produce English teachers in their respective countries, would be a good area to study. This research could build on and expand work in this area by scholars such as Ali M. Mazrui, Simon Gikandi, and Obi Wali.

I also believe that a promising research area is looking into ELA administration and its relationship to Shakespeare. Given that I missed out on interviewing school and ELA administrators for this project, this will be one of my foci in the future. Shakespeare's relationship with institutional authority in education appears fruitful. In fact, given many of Shakespeare's characters' fraught relationship with authority, from Prince Hamlet to Caliban, a sociological analysis that is paired with textual analysis in studying the bard's current relationship with authority appears a worthwhile endeavor.

Based on my interviews with teachers across the United States, as well as my observation of Mr. X's classroom in Texas, I believe there is still a long way to go when it comes to ensuring inclusive teaching of Shakespeare in high schools in the United States. This conclusion comes from two major observations. The first is that teachers continue to receive no pedagogical training in how to teach the bard. The second is that the professional development conferences

and seminars are easily accessible only to teachers from high-ranking and well-funded schools. Without any large-scale effort to improve Shakespeare pedagogy, teachers are left to their own devices, which leads to them relying on outdated teaching methods. They either repeat what they remember from how they were taught in high school or they rely on older teachers in their schools. Either way, the result is the same and not in a good way. I believe that large-scale nationwide professional development conferences like the NCTE offer teachers the opportunity to update their teaching skills and access new resources for teaching. However, they need to be more accessible to all teachers—not just teachers from elite schools. The NCTE and other state and non-state actors can offer regular grants and funding for teachers from poorly-funded schools to attend these conferences.

In order for students to construct a healthy relationship with Shakespeare and themselves in the twenty-first century, teachers need to actively engage Shakespeare in holistic ways that consider the complicated exploration of othering in his work. This does not have to be exclusively relegated to the major African plays, as we saw in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Othering is replete in Shakespeare, and teachers must confront it head-on. The comfort of teachers and students alike must not override the need to engage these sensitive but essential parts of Shakespeare's work. Without the active engagement of Shakespeare and "othering," it is quite likely that Shakespeare's popularity will continue to decline among an increasingly multicultural United States even if institutions continue to claim his unending relevance.

POSTSCRIPT

Last semester, I was very enthusiastic about teaching Othello because my ELA administrator is a very progressive woman. The main thing I want my students to get from Othello is that racism is real in literature and must be confronted. It is a huge disservice to my students if I don't prepare them on how to handle racism in literary texts. But what I quickly realized was that in my most conservative class, I had to kill the conversation on race because my students reported me to the administration that I was being racist to them. I retreated from these conversations and I have been treading lightly on these conversations because I don't want to get fired. I am waiting to get tenure and security before I can go back to some of these issues with vigor. – Mr. M, Massachusetts.

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APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT (VERBAL) FOR NCTE CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

Howdy,

My name is Umar Mohammed and I am from Texas A&M University. I am conducting interviews as part of my research and data collection for my Ph.D. dissertation and will like to ask you to participate. My project is on Shakespeare pedagogy and I believed I'd be able to meet many teachers with experience teaching Shakespeare in this year's conference. I have a chapter on the NCTE conference in my dissertation.

If you can spare some time to participate, I need to ask you about your teaching process including your training and qualification, lesson preparation, classroom management, and assessment. I have a summary of my dissertation as well as an information sheet (here) to share with you to read if you want additional information before you commit.

Thank you.

Umar Mohammed

APPENDIX B

INFORMATION SHEET FOR NCTE ATTENDEES

Project Title: Shakespeare Pedagogy: An Inclusive Approach to Teaching Shakespeare in the Twenty-first Century

You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Nandra Perry and Umar Mohammed, researchers from Texas A&M University funded by the Department of English and the Humanities. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. If you decide you do not want to participate, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits you normally would have.

Why Is This Study Being Done?

The purpose of this study is to learn about the teaching strategies and student responses to Shakespearean texts.

Why Am I Being Asked to Be in This Study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you are a teacher of an English class with a Shakespeare component and an attendant at the 2019 NCTE and CEL Conference in Houston.

How Many People Will Be Asked to Be in This Study?

Current teachers of Shakespeare in attendance at the 2019 NCTE and CEL Conference in Houston who have agreed to participate in this study.

What Are the Alternatives to Being in This Study?

The alternative to being in the study is not to participate.

There will be zero consequences for choosing to participate or not to participate in this study.

What Will I Be Asked to Do in This Study?

We would like to conduct an open-ended interview with you at your convenience about your experience teaching Shakespeare in a US high school. This may last up to 2 hours maximum. We may also ask you to share your lesson plans with us. You may choose some or all of these methods is acceptable to you.

Are There Any Risks to Me?

The study will present no more risk than you would come across in everyday life.

Will There Be Any Costs to Me?

Aside from your time, there are no costs for taking part in the study.

Will I Be Paid to Be in This Study?

You will not be paid for being in this study.

Will Information from This Study Be Kept Private?

Our observations about your classroom experience will not be kept private, but they will not be associated with your name. At most, we will refer to you as instructor A-D. All of your

comments will be recorded anonymously. No identifiers linking you directly to this study will be included in our end product to be published as a dissertation for a Ph.D. in English at Texas A&M. Research notes and this consent form will be stored securely in a locked office, and only Nandra Perry and Umar Mohammed will have access to these records.

Information about you will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law. People who have access to your information include the Principal Investigator and research study personnel. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may access your records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly.

Who May I Contact for More Information?

You may contact the Principal Investigator, Nandra Perry, PhD, to tell her about a concern or complaint about this research at 979-845-8336 or nandraperry@tamu.edu. You may also contact the Protocol Director, Umar Mohammed, graduate student, umarmohammed@tamu.edu.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may call the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program office at 1-855-795-8636 or irb@tamu.edu.

What if I Change My Mind About Participating?

This research is voluntary and you have the choice whether or not to be in this research study. You may decide not to participate or to stop participating at any time. If you choose not to be in this study or stop being in the study, there will be no consequences.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR NCTE TEACHER ATTENDEES

Research Instruments

The focus of this project will be on teachers undergoing their regular teaching. The pedagogical component will be the most important of this hence teachers' material and class competence and management will be the focus of this study. To that end, the investigators will be observing how teachers' mastery of Shakespearean texts and their teaching methods impact student learning. As top teachers in the nation, the interviewer intends to gauge current trends and cutting-edge ideas on the teaching of Shakespeare in US high schools. Below are open-ended questions the researchers intend to ask participating teachers.

Teachers (Guiding Questions for Open-Ended Conversational Interview)

1. Did you receive any pedagogical training on teaching Shakespeare and the early modern period?
2. If so, what were the highlights of your pedagogical training? Did you get any guidance from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) on which Shakespeare plays you should teach?
3. How did the TEA guidance affect your choice of Shakespeare texts to teach?
4. What do you want your students to get from the Shakespeare text(s) you choose?
5. What teaching challenges do you encounter teaching Shakespearean texts?
6. Do you discuss race in your teaching of Shakespeare? If so, which texts or scenes lend themselves to this topic?
7. Can you elaborate on some discussion points regarding race in Shakespeare?
8. What tools do you use to help your students discuss race in Shakespeare?
9. Do you make connections to contemporary conversations or controversies about race in your discussion of Shakespeare?
10. What challenges do you face when discussing race in Shakespeare with your students?
11. How do you respond to those challenges?
12. What difference do you see in student discussions and written responses when it comes to discussing difficult topics like race?

Administrators (Guiding Questions for Open-Ended Conversational Interview)

1. Have you taught Shakespeare before?
2. What was your training before you first taught Shakespeare?
3. How has your teaching affected how you administer your school's ELA (Shakespeare) program?

4. How much control over content and teaching does your school (district)'s teachers have?
5. What are your challenges as an administrator and how do you approach resolving them?

Additional Instruments

Copies of teachers' lesson plans and syllabus

1. To observe the themes teachers highlighted in syllabus

NB: Participants in this study may choose to accept some and not all of these instruments.

APPENDIX D

EMAIL SCRIPT FOR CONSENT OF TEACHERS IN CONTACT

Date _____

Dear: _____,

Thank you for agreeing to a conversation about your work as a teacher of high school Shakespeare. Before we can talk together, our university requires your informed consent. We've attached the consent document we need you to read over and sign, but first let us say a little about the interview you're agreeing to and how your comments may be used.

The purpose of this study is to learn about the teaching strategies and student responses to Shakespearean texts in a rapidly changing twenty-first century classroom environment. The aim of this study is to find how different students and different teachers deal with the work of the most important author in the English language based on their place of seeing.

We'd like to have a conversation with you about your experience teaching Shakespeare in high school. We've also attached a list of interview questions to start the conversation, so you can get an idea of what we'll be asking. We may use the information we gather in these interviews in a couple of short papers, and a dissertation for a Ph.D. that's about the management of the classroom environment when teaching Shakespeare in a multicultural twenty-first century classroom environment.

With your permission, we'd like to audio record our interview so that we can use direct quotes from you in future publications. We will anonymize your responses in my work if you prefer not to be quoted on record. If you'd prefer not to be recorded, you can note that on the form. In that case, we'll take notes on the conversation and will summarize or paraphrase your comments instead of quoting you directly.

You also have the option to remain anonymous. In that case, when we quote or paraphrase your comments, we'll leave out any identifying information such as your name, the location, and the name of the school you teach at.

We'll be having conversations with a handful of teachers like you from multiple schools in the area. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and there are no consequences for choosing not to participate or for cutting the interview short at any time. There are no risks or costs to you for participating in this interview except for your time. We'll also be asking you to suggest a neutral or public location for the interview – wherever you feel comfortable.

If you have questions about the project, what you're consenting to, how the interview will go, or how the information we gather will be used, please contact me either by email or by phone at 979-XXX-XXXX. We'll ask for your signature on the consent form when we meet for the interview.

Thanks for your willingness to participate in this research.

Best,

Nandra Perry

Umar Mohammed

APPENDIX E

INTRODUCTORY TEACHER RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Date _____

Dear _____,

My name is Umar Mohammed, and I am a graduate student in English Literature at Texas A&M University. I'm researching the environment surrounding the teaching of Shakespeare texts. My area of focus is Shakespeare pedagogy, Race and Postcolonial literature. I'm interested in learning more about your work teaching students Shakespeare and the exciting opportunities and challenges that brings up in the twenty-first century multicultural sensibilities and classroom environments. I will be interested in having a conversation with you regarding my research questions as well as observe you at your work in the classroom. I will also be grateful to have copies of your lesson plans, assignments, and hopefully copies of student responses to assignments. My project also includes giving questionnaires to your students to answer. No identifying information will be in the questionnaire.

I'm based in College Station, TX, and I have been teaching undergraduate students here for the past three years some of whom I believe passed through your hands which influenced my research topic. A face-to-face conversation will be much preferred, but I will be grateful for skype conversation if your schedule can only permit that.

Because my research is related to high school children, my university requires informed consent for this conversation. Let me know if you're interested in talking with me, and I'll send you those details and a list of the questions I'd like to ask you.

I look forward to hearing from you and appreciate your help with this project!

Sincerely

APPENDIX F

FOLLOW-UP ADMINISTRATIVE RECRUITMENT EMAIL AFTER PHONE CALL

Date _____

Dear _____

I am the Graduate Student Professor Nandra Perry from Texas A&M spoke to you about earlier today. I am writing to let you know that I am interested in interviewing and observing the teachers of Shakespeare. I am interested particularly in how teachers handle the teaching of Shakespearean texts involving difference in general and race in particular. My research will be anonymized and all identifying information will be stripped from the findings unless a teacher requests otherwise. My class observations will be as innocuous as possible and the teacher interviews will be done at the convenience and location of any participating teacher.

I have been told by Dr. Perry that I will need to undergo a criminal background check as part of the process. I will be completing the form right after I send you this email. I will be grateful for your help in facilitating my research.

Thank you very much

Sincerely

Umar Mohammed

APPENDIX G

FOLLOW-UP SITE AUTHORIZATION CONSENT FOR SCHOOL 2 (RECRUITMENT)

Date _____

Dear _____

I am grateful for the conversation we had two weeks ago regarding my Shakespeare pedagogy research at _____ High School. I am looking forward to working with your administrative staff and your teachers of Shakespeare this fall. I am also excited about the prospect of joining your language instruction team in the near future.

After my initial submission to the A&M IRB board, I have been asked to revise my application for clearance by providing the following additional: Minor Consent Form, Parent Permission Form and Teacher Consent Form. Other schools informed me that I did not need the first two because I was not doing a video recording of their students. I am not sure of your exact policy on that so I will like a letter stating what your policy is for my application purposes.

I have attached the Teacher Consent Form for you to distribute to teachers identified who have agreed to participate in this study. I will appreciate the consent forms emailed back at your earliest convenience or a date can be set for me to come collect them at _____ High School.

I would actually like to come around to talk to principal _____ and the teachers to familiarize myself with _____ High School before I start my observation. I will actually be grateful to attend the _____ ISD Board Public Hearing on September 10th.

Thank you for your usual and prompt response.

Umar Mohammed

APPENDIX H

DATA USAGE AND REFERENCES + DESTRUCTION GUIDE

Data Markers

Schools	Classes	Teachers	Students
X, and Y	A, B, C, and D	A, B, C, and D	Students (general)

Data Usage

In this study, participants are not directly named in any published research. In the research, all participants are either named student or teacher. Teachers are distinguished from one another in this study by an assigned letter. A total of four teachers and two English program administrators are expected to participate in this study. They will be identified as teacher A, B, C, and D. The administrators will be identified as administrator A and administrator B. Below is an example of a sentence that could occur in the study.

“Teacher A had an advanced grasp of King Lear and that was very apparent in Teacher A’s handling of student questions which were very varied. But because Teacher A knew the material, Teacher A had anticipated these questions well and appeared to have prepared adequately for such questions.”

Schools and classes will be assigned letter names as well. In this case, this will be school X and Y.

Students will not be identified by or assigned data markers. A general reference language will be used when referring to student responses. An example of possible reference to student participation in published research will look like something below;

“Responding to teacher C’s prodding for reaction to one student’s comment on the nature of evil in Macbeth, students looked eager to showcase their understanding of ethics and ideology on what constitutes evil and who defines what is evil.”

Data Confidentiality and Destruction

Given that an opt-in or out form is signed by students, and a consent form by teachers, these files will be the main way participants may be identified. As a result, the researchers will leave the consent forms under a locked cabinet in the office of Prof. Nandra Perry at Texas A&M University. Access to them will be restricted to Professor Perry and Mr. Mohammed. After the period required for data storage by federal law, they will then be shredded by professional shredder in the office and disposed of.

APPENDIX I

STUDENT CONSENT FORM (PRE-IRB APPROVAL)

Project Title: An Inclusive Approach to Teaching Shakespeare in the Twenty-first Century

You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Nandra Perry and Umar Mohammed, researchers from Texas A&M University funded by the Department of English and the Humanities. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. If you decide you do not want to participate, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits you normally would have.

Why Is This Study Being Done?

The purpose of this study is to learn about the teaching strategies and student responses to Shakespearean texts in public school classrooms in the Brazos Valley.

Why Am I Being Asked To Be In This Study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you are a student in an English classroom, with a Shakespeare component in _____ High School, a school that is part of my area of research.

How Many People Will Be Asked To Be In This Study?

Current students and teachers in classes designated as relevant to this study by your school administrators may partake in this study.

What Are The Alternatives To Being In This Study?

The alternative to being in the study is not to participate.

There will be zero consequences for choosing to participate or not to participate in this study.

What Will I Be Asked To Do In This Study?

You will be asked to participate as you normally do in your high school English classroom. We will observe your classroom discussion and take notes. We will make audio recordings of classroom discussion for research purposes. We may ask to make copies of your lesson plans or assignment responses. Your participation in this research will last the duration of your class's discussion of Shakespearean texts.

Are There Any Risks To Me?

The observations will present no more risk than you would come across in everyday life.

Will There Be Any Costs To Me?

Aside from your time, there are no costs for taking part in the study.

Will I Be Paid To Be In This Study?

You will not be paid for being in this study.

Will Information From This Study Be Kept Private?

Our observations about your classroom discussion, our notes, recordings about your comments, and redacted copies of course assignments and lesson plans will not be kept private, but they will

never be associated with your name. At most, we will refer to you as student A-Z. All of your comments will be recorded anonymously. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research notes and this consent form will be stored securely in a locked office, and only Nandra Perry and Umar Mohammed will have access to these records.

Information about you will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law. People who have access to your information include the Principal Investigator and research study personnel. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may access your records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly.

Who May I Contact for More Information?

You may contact the Principal Investigator, Nandra Perry, Ph.D., to tell her about a concern or complaint about this research at 979-845-8336 or nandraperry@tamu.edu. You may also contact the Protocol Director, Umar Mohammed, graduate student, at 979-XXX-XXXX, umarmohammed@tamu.edu.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may call the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program office at 1-855-795-8636 or irb@tamu.edu.

What if I Change My Mind About Participating?

This research is voluntary and you have the choice whether or not to be in this research study. You may decide not to participate or to stop participating at any time. If you choose not to be in this study or stop being in the study, there will be no consequences.

Statement of Consent

I agree to be in this study and know that I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. The procedures, risks, and benefits have been explained to me, and my questions have been answered. I know that new information about this research study will be provided to me as it becomes available and that the researcher will tell me if I must be removed from the study. I can ask more questions if I want. A copy of this entire consent form will be given to me.

Participant's Signature

Printed Name

Date

Investigator's Affidavit:

Either I have or my agent has carefully explained to the participant the nature of the above project. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the person who signed this consent form was informed of the nature, demands, benefits, and risks involved in his/her participation.

Signature of Presenter

Printed Name

Date

Signature of Faculty Sponsor

Date

Printed Name

APPENDIX J

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

Research Instruments

Teachers (Guiding Questions for Open-Ended Conversational Interview)

1. Did you receive any pedagogical training on teaching Shakespeare and the early modern period?
2. If so, what were the highlights of your pedagogical training? Did you get any guidance from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) on which Shakespeare plays you should teach?
3. How did the TEA guidance affect your choice of Shakespeare texts to teach?
4. What do you want your students to get from the Shakespeare text(s) you choose?
5. What teaching challenges do you encounter teaching Shakespearean texts?
6. Do you discuss race in your teaching of Shakespeare? If so, which texts or scenes lend themselves to this topic?
7. Can you elaborate on some discussion points regarding race in Shakespeare?
8. What tools do you use to help your students discuss race in Shakespeare?
9. Do you make connections to contemporary conversations or controversies about race in your discussion of Shakespeare?
10. What challenges do you face when discussing race in Shakespeare with your students?
11. How do you respond to those challenges?
12. What difference do you see in student discussions and written responses when it comes to discussing difficult topics like race?

Additional Instruments

1. Classroom observation during discussion of Shakespeare texts
 1. To take notes and observe classroom etiquette
 2. To see how students respond to questions in the classroom
 3. To experience the atmosphere of teaching and learning about Shakespeare in High School settings
2. Copies of teachers' lesson plans and syllabus
 1. To observe the themes teachers highlighted in syllabus
 2. To see how syllabus and actual teaching differ when it comes to teaching Shakespeare
3. Copies of relevant assignments from students to see how student responses to assignments differ from in-class discussion
4. Audio-Recordings of classroom discussions
 1. To be transcribed and used as primary resource to help in the finalization of reference in the entire dissertation process.

NB: Participants in this study may choose to accept some and not all of these instruments. This study is designed to take place in the Fall semester of 2018 between the months of September and December.

APPENDIX K

ISD RESEARCH OFFICER EMAIL SCRIPT (RECRUITMENT)

Date _____

Dear _____

I have been referred to by Mr. Blake Allen regarding a proposed research project I am looking to undertake involving _____ High School. He's asked that I confirm from you that this qualifies for or requires the IRB process.

I am a graduate student at Texas A&M doing this research under the supervision of Professor Nandra Perry. I am writing to let you know that I am interested in interviewing and observing teachers of Shakespeare. I am interested particularly in how teachers handle the teaching of Shakespearean texts involving difference in general and race in particular. My research will be anonymized and all identifying information will be stripped from the findings unless a teacher requests otherwise. My class observations will be as innocuous as possible and the teacher interviews will be done at the convenience and location of any participating teacher. Do let me know what the IRB process at _____ High School is and I will be happy to get the process started. My targeted period for this observation and interview section of my research will be in the coming fall semester.

Thank you very much

Sincerely

Umar Mohammed

APPENDIX L

SITE AUTHORIZATION LETTER FOR IRB

Date _____

Texas A&M University Institutional Review Board

c/o Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety

To Whom It May Concern:

We authorize Umar Mohammed, a doctoral student at Texas A&M University, to conduct research at _____ High School for his study, “Shakespeare Pedagogy in High Schools in the US.”

Mr. Mohammed may come to our campus during the 2018-2019 school year to conduct research. He will perform classroom observations on days when Shakespeare is being taught. Additionally, he will conduct interviews with our teachers.

Mr. Mohammed has agreed to provide to my office a copy of the Texas A&M University IRB-approved, stamped consent document before he contacts any teachers, and will also provide a copy of his completed study.

If there are any questions, please contact my office.

Respectfully,

Director _____

APPENDIX M

PRINCIPALS' RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Date _____

Dear _____,

My name is Umar Mohammed, and I am a graduate student in English Literature at Texas A&M University. I am researching Shakespeare pedagogy in High Schools in the US. I went through the research approval process set up by _____ ISD and got my research approved.

Dr. _____, the _____ ISD Director of _____ upon approval of my research directed me to contact you regarding undertaking my research in your school. I would be very grateful for a meeting with you to discuss my research and what your school's logistical peculiarities are in doing this kind of research.

I have attached Dr. _____'s letter for your perusal.

I look forward to hearing from you and appreciate your help with this project!

Sincerely,

Umar Mohammed

PhD student, Department of English

Texas A&M University

umarmohammed@tamu.edu

APPENDIX N

RECRUITMENT SCRIPT (EMAIL) FOR TEACHERS (POST IRB DENIAL OF ACTIVE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT)

Date _____

Dear _____

Thank you for taking the time to consider my request for participation in this study. As an aspiring teacher, your participation will be very helpful in my research. I am a Ph.D. Candidate in the English Department at Texas A&M University. I am a specialist in Renaissance Drama with Shakespeare as my concentration. For this dissertation, I am interested in Shakespeare pedagogy in second cycle institutions. I chose high schools because I believe this is the area most important in the education of the populace and where humanist education makes the most impact in the widest section of the population. Less than 35% of American adults have a college degree meaning most citizens enter the workforce with only a high school diploma. I am interested in how Shakespeare is taught to the majority of the citizenry.

To that effect, I will be requesting to observe your class sessions when you are teaching material with Shakespearean component in it. I will take notes of classroom etiquette and how you handle the Shakespearean material. I will also be grateful for copies of your assignments and lesson plans. If you can spare extra time, I will love to have an open-ended interview/conversation (up to 2 hours maximum) with you about your teaching since face to face conversation often better clarifies questions passive observation may not be able to address. You may grant me the opportunity to one or all of these areas of my research above.

I am here to learn so I am looking forward to observing you and learning from your pedagogy and hopefully get enough material to fertilize my study.

APPENDIX O

SCHOOL DISTRICT PASSIVE CONSENT POLICY

Date _____

To Whom It May Concern:

Please allow this letter to serve as confirmation that _____ Independent School District prefers to utilize passive parental consent forms for situations when the data collected is not part of the official student record. The form should include notification of the research study as well as an option for parents who wish to exclude their child to opt-out.

Please contact me with any questions.

Regards,

Official's Name

Director of _____

_____ School District

APPENDIX P

STUDENT OPT-IN FORM (POST IRB & SCHOOL DISTRICT APPROVAL)

Project Title: An Inclusive Approach to Teaching Shakespeare in the Twenty-first Century

You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Nandra Perry and Umar Mohammed, researchers from Texas A&M University funded by the Department of English and the Humanities. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. If you decide you do not want to participate, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits you normally would have.

Why Is This Study Being Done?

The purpose of this study is to learn about the teaching strategies and student responses to Shakespearean texts in public school classrooms in the Brazos Valley.

Why Am I Being Asked to Be In This Study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you are a student in an English classroom, with a Shakespeare component in ____ High School, a school that is part of my area of research.

How Many People Will Be Asked to Be In This Study?

Current students and teachers in classes designated as relevant to this study by your school administrators may partake in this study.

What Are the Alternatives To Being In This Study?

The alternative to being in the study is not to participate.

There will be zero consequences for choosing to participate or not to participate in this study.

What Will I Be Asked To Do In This Study?

You will be asked to participate as you normally do in your high school English classroom. We will observe your classroom discussion and take notes of general discussion and your teacher's preparedness. Your participation in this research will last the duration of your class's discussion of Shakespearean texts.

Are There Any Risks to Me?

The observations will present no more risk than you would come across in everyday life.

Will There Be Any Costs to Me?

Aside from your time, there are no costs for taking part in the study.

Will I Be Paid to Be In This Study?

You will not be paid for being in this study.

Will Information from This Study Be Kept Private?

Our observations about your classroom discussion, our notes, and redacted copies of course assignments and lesson plans will not be kept private, but they will never be associated with your name. At most, we will refer to you as student A-Z. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research notes and this consent form

will be stored securely in a locked office, and only Nandra Perry and Umar Mohammed will have access to these records outside Bryan High school teachers.

Information about you will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law. People who have access to your information include the Principal Investigator and research study personnel. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may access your records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly.

Who May I Contact for More Information?

You may contact the Principal Investigator, Nandra Perry, Ph.D., to tell her about a concern or complaint about this research at 979-845-8336 or nandraperry@tamu.edu. You may also contact the Protocol Director, Umar Mohammed, graduate student, at 979-402-6682, umarmohammed@tamu.edu.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may call the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program office at 1-855-795-8636 or irb@tamu.edu.

What if I Change My Mind About Participating?

This research is voluntary and you have the choice whether or not to be in this research study. You may decide not to participate or to stop participating at any time. If you choose not to be in this study or stop being in the study, there will be no consequences.

APPENDIX Q

PASSIVE PARENT CONSENT FORM

Project Title: An Inclusive Approach to Teaching Shakespeare in the Twenty-first Century

Your child has been invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Nandra Perry and Umar Mohammed, researchers from Texas A&M University and funded by the Department of English and the Humanities. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether or not your child should take part. If you decide that your child not take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. If you decide you do not want your child to participate, there will be no penalty to you or your child, and you will not lose any benefits you normally would have. Participation in this study is voluntary.

Why Is This Study Being Done?

The purpose of this study is to learn about the teaching strategies and student responses to Shakespearean texts in public school classrooms in the Brazos Valley.

Why Is My Child Being Asked to Be In This Study?

Your child is being asked to be in this study because he/she is a student in an English classroom, with a Shakespeare component in _____ High or _____ High School, two schools that are part of my area of research.

How Many People Will Be Asked to Be In This Study?

Current students and teachers in classes designated as relevant to this study by administrators of _____ and _____ High Schools may partake in this study. The study looks to cover 2 classes each in both _____ and _____ for a total of 106 students and faculty.

What Are the Alternatives To Being In This Study?

The alternative to being in the study is not to participate.

There will be zero consequences for choosing to participate or not to participate in this study.

What Will My Child Be Asked to Do In This Study?

Your child will be asked to participate as he or she normally does in his or her high school English classroom. We will observe his/her classroom discussion and take notes. Your child's participation in this research will last the duration of his/her class's discussion of Shakespearean texts.

Are There Any Risks to My Child?

The observations will present no more risk than your child would come across in everyday life.

Will There Be Any Costs to Me or My Child?

Aside from your child's class time, there are no costs for taking part in the study.

Will My Child Be Paid to Be In This Study?

Your child will not be paid for being in this study.

Will Information from This Study Be Kept Private?

Our observations about your child's classroom discussion, our notes, will not be kept private, but they will never be associated with your child's name. At most, we will refer to your child as student A-Z. No identifiers linking your child to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research notes and this consent form will be stored securely in a locked office, and only Nandra Perry and Umar Mohammed will have access to these records.

Information about your child will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law.

People who have access to your information include Nandra Perry and Umar Mohammed of Texas A&M. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may access your records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly.

Who May I Contact for More Information?

You may contact the Principal Investigator, Nandra Perry, PhD, to tell her about a concern or complaint about this research at 979-845-8336 or nandraperry@tamu.edu. You may also contact the Protocol Director, Umar Mohammed, graduate student, at 979-XXX-XXXX, umarmohammed@tamu.edu.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may call the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program office at 1-855-795-8636 or irb@tamu.edu.

What if I Change My Mind About My Child Participating?

This research is voluntary and your child has the choice whether or not to be in this research study. Your child may decide not to participate or to stop participating at any time. If your child chooses not to be in this study or stop being in the study, there will be no consequences.

Parental Consent Signature (select one)

I give consent to my child, _____ to participate in the above research.

OR

I do not give consent to my child, _____ to participate in the above research.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Investigator's Affidavit:

Either I have or my agent has carefully explained to the participant the nature of the above project. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the person who signed this consent form was informed of the nature, demands, benefits, and risks involved in his/her participation.

Signature of Presenter

Date

Printed Name

Signature of Faculty Sponsor

Date

APPENDIX R

UPDATED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS (POST IRB)

Research Instruments

The focus of this project will be on teachers undergoing their regular teaching. The pedagogical component will be the most important of this hence teachers' material and class competence and management will be the focus of this study. To that end, the investigators will be observing how teachers' mastery of Shakespearean texts and their teaching methods impact student learning. To that end, notes taken during class observation will be focused on teaching. After the classroom observation, the researchers will like to interview teachers regarding their teaching from lesson preparations to managing the classroom and beyond. Below are open-ended questions the researchers intend to ask participating teachers.

Teachers (Guiding Questions for Open-Ended Conversational Interview)

1. Did you receive any pedagogical training on teaching Shakespeare and the early modern period?
2. If so, what were the highlights of your pedagogical training? Did you get any guidance from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) on which Shakespeare plays you should teach?
3. How did the TEA guidance affect your choice of Shakespeare texts to teach?
4. What do you want your students to get from the Shakespeare text(s) you choose?
5. What teaching challenges do you encounter teaching Shakespearean texts?
6. Do you discuss race in your teaching of Shakespeare? If so, which texts or scenes lend themselves to this topic?
7. Can you elaborate on some discussion points regarding race in Shakespeare?
8. What tools do you use to help your students discuss race in Shakespeare?
9. Do you make connections to contemporary conversations or controversies about race in your discussion of Shakespeare?
10. What challenges do you face when discussing race in Shakespeare with your students?
11. How do you respond to those challenges?
12. What difference do you see in student discussions and written responses when it comes to discussing difficult topics like race?

Additional Instruments

1. Classroom observation during discussion of Shakespeare texts
 1. To take notes and observe classroom etiquette

2. To see how students respond to questions in the classroom (general/not specific)
 3. To experience the atmosphere of teaching and learning about Shakespeare in High School settings
-
2. Copies of teachers' lesson plans and syllabus
 1. To observe the themes teachers highlighted in syllabus
 2. To see how syllabus and actual teaching differ when it comes to teaching Shakespeare

NB: Participants in this study may choose to accept some and not all of these instruments.

APPENDIX S

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION GUIDE (RUBRIC)

Class: A-Z, Grade: 9-12

Teacher Component

Component	Very Good	Good	Needs Improvement	N/A
Preparedness (organized lesson plan, goal oriented, mastery of Shakespearean text of choice)				
Incorporation of real-world contemporary examples into Shakespeare lesson plans (example: consent in <i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i> or <i>Measure for Measure</i> , independence and cross-group romance in <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> or <i>Othello</i> , race and ethnic bigotry in <i>Merchant of Venice</i> or <i>The Tempest</i> etc.				
Handling of student challenges (arcane linguistic challenges, navigating difficult cultural issues indicated above)				

Student Component

Component	Very Aware	Willing to learn	Obtuse	N/A
Sees the importance of Shakespeare				
Can make connections from Shakespeare to real world issues				
Respect to fellow students' contributions in class				

For the most part, copious notes will be taken during classroom observations. So, these are guidelines.

APPENDIX T

SCHOOL REGULAR BELL SCHEDULE

1st Period	8:20-9:10
2nd Period	9:15-10:03
3rd Period	10:08-10:56
4th Period	11:01-11:49
5th Period	11: 49-1:21
A Lunch	11:49-12:19
Class	12:24-1:21
Class	11:54-12:20
B Lunch	12:20-12:50
Class	12:55-1:21
Class	11:54-12:51
C Lunch	12:51-1:21
6th Period	1:26-2:14
7th Period	2:19-3:07
8th Period	3:12-4:00

APPENDIX U

MIDSUMMER MOVIE PLANNING

Congratulations! You're a producer/director and you're in charge of making the next A Midsummer Night's Dream movie happen. You have complete creative control over the project.

How are you changing it? How will it stay the same?

Time Period: _____

Why do you want to change this or leave it the same? _____

Location: _____

Why do you want to change this or leave it the same? _____

Language (How will each set of characters speak?):

The Court: _____

The Lovers: _____

The Mechanicals: _____

The Fairies: _____

Casting (What actors do you want for this play? If you don't know actors feel free to look them up. Cast at least The Lovers, Bottom, Oberon, Titania, and Puck. If you would remove or combine any characters, mention that too!)

1. The Court

1. Hippolyta - Queen of Amazons, engaged to Theseus

1. _____

2. Theseus - Duke of Athens, engaged to Hippolyta

1. _____

3. Egeus - father of Hermia

1. _____

4. Philostrate - Master of the Revels (parties) to the Athenian Court

1. _____

2. The Lovers

1. Hermia - in love with Lysander

1. _____

2. Lysander - in love with Hermia
 1. _____
3. Helena - in love with Demetrius
 1. _____
4. Demetrius - Egeus' choice as a husband for Hermia
 1. _____
3. The Mechanicals
 1. Nick Bottom - a weaver who plays Pyramus
 1. _____
 2. Peter Quince - a carpenter who speaks the Prologue
 1. _____
 3. Francis Flute - a bellows-mender who plays Thisbe
 1. _____
 4. Tom Snout - a tinker who plays Wall
 1. _____
 5. Robin Starveling - a tailor who plays Moonshine
 1. _____
 6. Snug - a joiner (window maker) who plays Lion
 1. _____
4. The Fairies
 1. Oberon - Fairy King
 1. _____
 2. Titania - Fairy Queen
 1. _____
 3. Puck/Robin Goodfellow - Oberon's attendant (servant)
 1. _____
 4. Peaseblossom - Titania's attendant
 1. _____
 5. Cobweb - Titania's attendant
 1. _____
 6. Moth - Titania's attendant
 1. _____
 7. Mustardseed - Titania's attendant
 1. _____
 8. Unnamed Fairy - Works for Titania
 1. _____

Explain your choices for the main characters:

1. Hermia
 1. _____
2. Lysander
 1. _____
3. Helena
 1. _____

- 4. Demetrius
 - 1. _____
- 5. Titania
 - 1. _____
- 6. Oberon
 - 1. _____
- 7. Puck
 - 1. _____

1. Act 1: We meet most of the characters. Lysander and Hermia decide to run away from her marriage with Demetrius. Egeus is a jerk.
2. Act 2: We meet the fairies. Oberon and Titania are fighting over the changeling. Demetrius and Helena are looking for Lysander and Hermia. Oberon hatches his scheme and The Lovers get wrapped up in it. Lysander leaves Hermia
3. Act 3: The Mechanicals badly plan and practice their play. Puck turns Bottom's head into an ass head. Titania falls in love with the unholy creation. Puck has used the love flower on the wrong man! The Lovers fight in their confusion. Oberon and Puck plan to fix things.
4. Act 4: Oberon gets the changeling. He gives Titania the antidote to being in love with Bottom. The Court find The Lovers in the forest and decide that since Demetrius loves Helena now, all three groups of lovers will get married tonight. Bottom returns to the Mechanicals and they get ready to do their play for The Court.
5. Act 5: Theseus decides to see The Mechanicals' play. It is terrible and everyone makes fun of it, but the Mechanicals don't seem to mind. Oberon and Titania bless the marriages and the home they took place in by dancing the night away. Puck tells us if we didn't like the play, it's because we fell asleep (like everyone he has played tricks on so far.)
6. Fin.

Plot Changes: What, if any, plot changes would you make? How would these changes make the movie more relatable, easier to understand, better flowing, or otherwise improve it?

If you wouldn't make any, describe what you think makes this play stand up to the test of time after four hundred years. Why is it still so relatable and easy to read?

1. What? _____

a. Why? _____

2. What? _____

a. Why? _____

3. What? _____

a. Why? _____

4. What? _____

a. Why? _____

5. What? _____

a. Why? _____

Costuming (How will the characters dress?)

The Lovers: _____

The Court: _____

The Mechanicals: _____

The Fairies: _____

Set Design: (What will the locations look like?)

The Forest: _____

The Palace: _____

The Wedding Place: _____

The Practice Stage: _____

The Actual Stage: _____

Titania and Bottom's Escape: _____

APPENDIX V

ACT I GUIDED NOTES

- a. How is Hippolyta's reasoning concerning how quickly the next four days will pass different from that of Theseus? Note how Shakespeare portrays the patience and calmness of Hippolyta in contrast to the impatience and need for action of Theseus.

She thinks they'll go quickly because she's dreading it but he thinks they'll go slowly because he's looking forward to it.

- b. Why has Egeus brought his daughter and her two suitors to Theseus? What does Egeus expect him to do?

His daughter loves the wrong man! Egeus expects Theseus to make Hermia marry Demetrius instead of Lysander

- c. What was the proper role for women/daughters in Athenian society according to Egeus and Theseus?

Submissive to men in their lives

- d. What is Theseus's ruling concerning Hermia?

She can marry Demetrius, become a nun, or die.

- e. How does Lysander's comment about Demetrius's previous love affair with Helena complicate things?

It implies Demetrius is not faithful

- f. What do Lysander and Hermia plan to do about this seemingly impossible situation?

Run away and get married at his rich aunt's house in the woods

- g. Why do they tell Helena what they plan to do?

To make her feel better and like she has a chance with Demetrius

- h. Even though Helena loves Demetrius and is Hermia's best friend, why does she decide to tell Demetrius of Hermia and Lysander's plans

She has a hair-brained idea that Demetrius will love her for tattling.