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Interdisciplinary Arts as an Agent for Community Building in a U.S. Public School

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Interdisciplinary Arts as an Agent for Community Building
in a U.S. High School

Ida Marie Pappas
Lesley University

Author Note
A dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Dissertation in partial fulfillment of the PhD in Education, Lesley University, Ida M. Pappas
Abstract

The aim of my dissertation research is to understand the relationship between interdisciplinary arts experiences and the establishment of a community culture in a mainstream public high school in northeast United States. With this research, I hope to provide evidence to support the inclusion of interdisciplinary arts projects in the fabric of students’ high school curricular and extra-curricular experiences. Through engagement in design, art, video, music, dance, theater and the close study of a minority culture, high school participants provided regular responses to planned survey questions and open-ended survey questions (Experience Sampling), as well as through interviews, written prompts and my own field observations. This mixed-method approach allowed for a deep consideration of the pedagogical and social conditions necessary for students to experience a positive “psychological sense of community” (McMillan and Chavis, 1989). My research attempted to answer the following overarching questions:

• How does the collaboration of diverse participants from a community in a high school setting influence a student’s broader idea of what community means?

• How does immersion into an unfamiliar culture through interdisciplinary learning impact a participant’s perception of being a member of a global community?

• Do interdisciplinary arts performance projects build a sense of community for students in a school setting, and if so why and how?

• How do elements of democratic learning (Wyatt, 1999), creative design
opportunities and moments of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) contribute to a student’s feeling of being an essential member of a community?

Keywords: interdisciplinary, arts, community, education, sense of community, experience sampling method
Acknowledgements

Good teaching comes from community, not isolation. Seasoned professionals guide nervous, but ambitious new teachers. A true community of learners is interested in planning together, discussing new ideas, and benefitting from each member’s collective knowledge, passion and expertise. Early in my career, I was fortunate enough to be “raised” in a true community of learners at Bancroft School (Worcester, MA). I was treated as an equal on the team, despite my youth, and given great latitude by the administration to create new electives and take courses. Without that experience at such an impressionable age, I am certain that my passion for interdisciplinary arts would never have been stoked, and the burning question at the center of this research would never have been conceived. I regularly reflect on how indebted I am to the following professionals for providing that powerful foundation: Lea Hench, Paul Belanger, Bob Dec, and Winslow Myers - my first interdisciplinary arts team.

It was only recently that I realized that my daughters, Bronwyn and Linnea Pappas-Byers, have spent nearly half of their young lives with their mother in school. They never complained when I missed the occasional event in order to attend class, stayed back at the hotel room to edit a final paper while everyone went hiking, or fell sound asleep while helping them with their homework. Rather, they left me encouraging notes in unexpected places: “You can do it, Momma!” Just keep swimming!” As they got older, we would walk our dogs and they would ask me questions about school and my research, and often provide useful suggestions for approaching my writing. Towards the end of this process, they watched me present, and applauded at my research performances, always following up with insightful comments. Both girls attentively listened to my many stories - sometimes humorous, and other times heart wrenching, providing exactly the response I needed hear. Year after year, I have been hopeful that my search for knowledge will be considered a good role model to them. Though I can’t predict the future, I can only say how fortunate I am to share my life with these two remarkable human beings. I eagerly look forward to seeing the direction that their interests and talents will take them. I promise, Bronwyn and Linnea, to leave notes, listen, applaud and support you the best I can.

When missing the many carpoolss to dance classes, jazz band concerts, and doctor’s appointments, I have always been able to count on my supportive husband, Eric Byers, to pick up the slack and nourish us all. It was through our many extended conversations about the arts, creativity and teaching that many of my ideas took shape. Without his intellectual engagement, encouragement and consistent support, I would never have considered starting this degree, let alone finishing it. I am immensely fortunate to have someone to grow old with who loves to deeply discuss the same things
that I am passionate about!

Throughout this PhD program, I met a myriad of students at different places on their journey toward their degree. The one consistent has been the core of amazingly strong and smart women of my cohort. We have read each other’s work, offered feedback and suggestions, and sometimes pushed each other to set goals until our next meeting. Over coffee, wine, and countless plates of humus and salad, we have created a support group to get each of us over whatever hurdle was looming ahead. My sincere appreciation goes to Diane Stephens, Kristi Oliver, Maya Wizel, Jen Klein and Lorette McWilliams for their friendship and sisterhood.

There were times during this degree when I felt discouraged and exhausted. Without Dr. Pete Cormier’s generous gift of time when he truly listened and offered practical advice, I might not have found my second, third or fourth wind toward finishing my degree. His genuine interest in my topic gave me the courage to believe that I had useful and important information to share with the world. I am not sure how I can adequately repay that debt, but to pay it forward. Some future PhD will have you, Pete, to thank for all my doting attention!

Dr. Prilly Sanville came to my committee when I needed her most. Her creativity and open heart consistently urged me to remain focused on the core value that was the impetus for my interest in interdisciplinary arts—a commitment to developing my students’ human potential. I know I would have been disappointed if I had strayed from that point, and I will always be grateful to her for being a beacon for me in this area.

I vividly remember meeting Dr. Caroline Heller at the Lesley University Open House, as I was contemplating applying to the PhD program. Simply put - she was the reason I decided to apply. Throughout the many courses she led that I attended, her warm and encouraging manner, full of careful listening and regular validation of the tentative viewpoints put forth by me and my classmates, was a perfect balance to the detailed feedback she provided on our weekly writing assignments and the gentle nudging she gave when one of us made bold and unsupported statements. She never doubted the quality of our thoughts and opinions, but helped each of us learn to state them with clarity. Through a variety of obstacles, Dr. Heller stayed with me as chair of my committee, even when she could have easily insisted that she would need to step down. Instead, she always made time for me. Though not a specialist in arts, she provided me exactly what I needed to find my writer’s voice, my confidence, and a structure for my work. This acknowledgement really can’t relay my profound appreciation for her patience with me as I developed my own human potential.
Interdisciplinary Arts as an Agent for Community Building in a U.S. High School

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Ph.D. Educational Studies
Individually Designed Specialization

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In the judgment of the following signatories, this Dissertation meets the academic standards that have been established for the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

I have always had a preoccupation with power dynamics, valuing the voices of the disenfranchised and with what is fair. Though I know the privilege that comes with the being a White person in the United States, I do believe that it is the experiences within our families that shape our core. Our interactions in that isolated space called home, establishes the sound tracks of our minds about who we are and what our value is to the world. This sound track, or leaning against its talking points, has shaped me. This includes my choice of career in the arts and my desire to reach for a PhD. It also is very much an impetus for striving to learn about ‘otherness’ and especially the possibility of building new communities of understanding. All of this is evident within the research I share in the coming pages.

I am daughter of a Greek-American father. Generations of patriarchal habits did not fall away when his father and mother reached the United States shores. My aunts describe my father as a little king in their household growing up. After his own father died, my father was left everything in the estate. His mother and sisters received nothing. He, the son, had the responsibility of caring for his mother, who was never allowed an education in her native village and had never been taught to read or write, how to manage money or even write a check.
To his credit, and at the urging of his sisters, my father set my grandmother up with income by building an apartment in her home. He eventually divided the estate for all the grandchildren, me included. It is no wonder that he believed that he was a man of modern America. He became an architect and moved his family, finally, to a middle class life - a man from humble beginnings achieving the American dream.

He had three children - two boys and, the youngest, a girl. Raised female in a patriarchal family is a death by a thousand cuts. Everything, just everything, was for the benefit of my brothers. The little money we had supported their interests and athletic equipment. Family time was spent at their sporting events and practices. Conversations were directed toward them. As my oldest brother said jokingly when we were young, he was the sun (or son) around which we all revolved. If it weren’t so true, it would have been funny.

I simply wandered away. I tried never to be home. I stayed at friends’ houses for weeks on end, and tried to become part of their families for as long as they would have me. I carefully observed their family dynamics and adapted to what I saw. I purposely became their ‘favorite child,’ clearing the table, offering to do the dishes, picking up the vacuum, and unloading their cars of groceries. Over the years, these many families generously fed me, took me biking and camping, and taught me to catch fish. They took me on vacations to the beach and to amusement parks. They were all different from my family, and I loved the contrast.
I got jobs as early as twelve years old in order to never need to ask for anything from my parents, and in turn have them not be able to say no to the plans I made for myself. I bought my own clothes and my own car. I sent myself on two trips: one at sixteen to Arizona to visit relatives; another, after my high school graduation, to Europe to visit a friend who was a nanny in Switzerland. We traveled all over together. Eventually, I moved to Ireland and then Boston. I never asked. I simply bought my ticket and informed my parents of my departure. They never balked. I believed I conditioned them by having been absent for the majority of my childhood, but I always wondered if they just did not care.

A similar scenario happened when applying to college. I had taken private singing lessons, prepared all my audition materials, completed all my applications, and taken all my exams without so much as an inquiry from my parents. I had taken my auditions, been awarded a scholarship and accepted my place at university when my father finally asked me what my plans were for the future. When I responded that I was going to college for music and that I received a scholarship, he responded, “What will you do when you fail at that?” My response, burned into my mind, casts a long shadow on this dissertation: “I guess I will need to go back to school until I don’t fail.”

I never felt like a failure when engaged in learning in the arts. Success in the arts required grit and hard work, but to me it was satisfying in every way. My propensity for the arts is the bright side of my family background. The arts surrounded me throughout
my upbringing. The truest sense of folk music, with full-throated singing and strumming
guitars, mandolins and banjos, was common at gatherings on my mother’s side of the
family. Everyone was good enough to participate and everyone did. My father, an
architect and artist, eventually achieved his dream and designed and built our home, then
filled it with paintings. My middle brother pursued a career as a ballet dancer in New
York City and San Francisco before settling down as an architect. Early on, I found my
greatest joy in singing and pursued every avenue to share that pleasure with others. Later,
that passion extended to theatre. Throughout my life, I have needed to find new ways to
create. Creation has worked its way into every part of my existence: designing and
building my home, designing and planting gardens, in the large stained glass works I
made and installed in my home, and most through writing. It was through the arts I found
my self-confidence, my pride, my focus, my endurance, my persistence, my success, and
my family. The artists were my people - the ones who accepted me and valued my gifts.
Artists strive to understand and be understood. My experience in the arts was the joyful
chiaroscuro to the many dark things that I felt in my perceived lack of value growing up.

The one consolation to having that dark space in my life is that it started a fire that
burned inside and propelled me forward. It may have started from the need to prove
myself worthy and a need to escape, but it has flowered into some beautiful tendencies. I
am not easily discouraged or intimidated. I am tenacious in the face of challenge. As a
teacher, it has been why I have always extended extra energy and time toward students on
the periphery, the ones so used to nobody asking their opinion or seeing their strengths. I am fascinated by their stories and try to facilitate their pride and confidence, and give them the ability to be self-sufficient. I also have attempted to make my classroom a place where all students open their hearts and minds to learning about people different from themselves and to appreciate those differences. I find the constant need to learn about cultural differences alongside my students one of the most rewarding by-products of dedicating my life to teaching.

**Professional Life**

I will not pretend that a life of working in schools, particularly in the arts, was always easy. Schools and the curriculum they deliver are steeped in traditional ideas of power, both in structure and in the Western-biased topics they select as relevant. Schools do this while attempting to educate vast populations with varying English language skills, religions, and cultures. Fortunately for me, the arts typically cut across the entire school community, allowing me immediate and deep connections to students, families and faculty. This also gives me a platform to push against these power dynamics that affect all students, including students with disabilities, different from what is considered “mainstream.”
Throughout my teaching career, I have recognized the multiple dichotomies ‘specialist’\(^1\) teachers balance in their practice: experts in the field, yet marginalized in the school hierarchy; isolated in a peripheral classroom, yet on full display and critiqued by all observers; teaching with a unique pedagogy and a specific skill and knowledge base, yet assessed as if a general classroom teacher; the leveler of the playing field for special education and ESL students, yet the first class cut from their schedules to make room for double doses of reading and math. Schools have traditionally been designed to deliver arts in this type of environment, yet a great deal of what propelled the research I share in this dissertation is that I believe this tradition needs to be questioned to its very core (Arts Standpoint Theory\(^2\)). Is it equitable, efficient, effective, and in alignment with the common core and the 21\(^{st}\) Century Skills we propose to deliver (Harding, 2006)? It will not be sufficient to continue to think of arts as “tacked-on,” un-embedded in curricular mandates, and easily eliminated when money is tight. In order to find a solution to equitable, efficient and effective arts education, we must question the dominant structures of schools in relation to the arts (Minnich, 2005).

---

\(^1\) The term specialist in schools refers to the subjects labeled “non-academic”: performing arts, visual arts, and other subjects that do not have standardized test to secure their standing in United States schools.

\(^2\) Arts Standpoint Theory is my desire for a dedicated look at education from the viewpoint of the arts in order to gain a more objective account of how schools are structured to undervalue artistic courses and students with strengths in the arts.
Dominant structures in schools come in a variety of forms, but typically their “circular reasoning” center on the belief that one “kind...[is] better and higher than all others” (Minnich, 2005, p. 125). One can witness this in the Western bias in the arts curriculum, in the exclusion of ‘primitive’ cultures, and also in the male-dominated hierarchy within the structures of school arts programs (Minnich, 2005).

As early as third grade, male dominance was made perfectly clear to me when I was not allowed to play the instrument of my choice, a trumpet, because I was a girl. The Western composers on the wall of the classroom were all men, and all the great soloists in the music we listened to were men too. Males from the band room lead the more “serious students” and taught the advanced coursework that required mastery and knowledge, while females tended to teach the lower level, or general population courses and choral arts, rarely finding themselves in the few coveted supervisory roles in the arts positions. As is typical for “higher beings,” resources are given to the most visible, successful and representative of the group, thus perpetuating the disadvantages of the “lesser” (Minnich, 2005). I have learned that was true when I was in third grade remains true.

As a female, I have pushed myself to leadership positions and have used my position at the table to speak to issues of power, lack of respect, and lack of funding for the arts. I also believe that finding ways to break down Western bias in arts actually opens up possibilities of connecting with expertise from the greater community, a sharing

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through parents of school children, and a heralding of multiculturalism in authentic ways. I am dedicated to creating a “Stakeholder Society”\(^3\) through parent interaction and investment in their schools, using the arts as a vehicle (Shapiro, 2004).

Another obvious example of dominant structures within schools is the valuing of one type of knowledge or intelligence over others: “How, by whom, and by what effects is knowledge legitimated?” (Minnich, 20005, p. 6). Howard Gardner (2006), during his research on multiple intelligences, concluded that United States society suffers from three biases: Western cultural values, namely logical-mathematical thinking and linguistics; valuing those things that can be tested easiest above others; and a belief that the “smartest” will provide the best solutions to every problem (pp. 23-24). Education, Gardner and others may contend, should go beyond training professionals for “useful” jobs in the global marketplace, but to “hold knowledges in perspective as contributing to ongoing quests for meaningful lives for all people and peoples” (Minnich, 2005, p. 194). By understanding the cognitive underpinnings of multiple intelligences, I teachers believe are in a much stronger position to reach all students and to value their styles of learning.

Beyond simply presenting material with knowledge and sensitivity of multiple intelligences lies a deeper issue that I often mull over. It is the actual systematic de-

\(^3\) A Stakeholder Society is one in which individuals feel invested in all aspects of society and become actors for social change.
valuation of students with “certain” intelligences. For example, the dancer/kinesthetically intelligent among us are often labeled as ADHD and forced into chairs, or referred to doctors keen on prescribing their “problems” away rather than having teachers seriously finding avenues to use the child’s intelligence-strength to invite and reinforce their learning.

The devaluing of students with artistic intelligences is apparent in school credit requirements and scheduling as well. Particularly in small schools that cover the majority of America, students with musical and visual intelligences are only able to access a small number of elective course opportunities after scheduling for the mandated courses for graduation. In fact, the school at the center of my research only requires one 3-credit arts course is for graduation, and arts courses do not impact (positively or negatively) a student’s GPA. The small number of students taking arts courses creates a disproportionate number of what is called singleton courses, or courses with only one section. Having only one spot in the schedule obviously limits the arts when school personnel create a master schedule. For example, if you are a student who wants to take Jazz Band, which meets B block every day, but it conflicts with the AP Physics Lab or Mandarin, it is the arts course that is dropped. Guidance counselors will often explain how universities prefer to see students push themselves to take AP courses, and state that the committee that reviews the applications value upper level foreign languages.
The opposite is also true. When a student registers for a music ensemble for four years, as is expected, he or she will then have few opportunities to take other electives until senior year. Students with artistic intelligences are often talented and interested in multiple art forms, and also typically are high achieving in other academic subjects. With a schedule requiring few arts credits and limited access through conflicts with required or highly valued courses, artistic students often only get one arts choice. The unfortunate result is often that arts teachers have a tug of war over the same students.

The way schools are often structured, musical intelligences can be nurtured after school through clubs (musical, pep band, chamber ensembles, a cappella, etc.). This, too, results in struggling, sparsely populated music courses during the school day. Common logic is that a student could take the visual arts course that they have been interested in (photography, ceramics, TV production, etc.) during the day, and then pursue their musical interests outside of the school day. As much as that is a solution, dedicated courses in the school day are places for students to learn music specific skills, technique and its unique body of musical knowledge. By contrast, the highly populated afterschool settings for extracurricular arts activities, are really venues for students to put those skills, techniques and knowledge that they engage in during the day into practice. The limiting structure for arts in schools puts the arts intelligent students in the school at a disadvantage both in course work that employs their strengths and in college preparation in the arts.
Paulo Freire (1998) states that learning to think “correctly” is not enough. Educators need “to develop a pedagogy designed not only to help students generate their own meanings, but also help them reflect on the process of thinking itself” (Freire, as cited in Giroux, 1981, p. 132). I believe that this goal, as it relates to teachers offering students a well-rounded education, is worth serious consideration. I see this as a call to address systematic dominance and bias against the arts and against students with arts intelligences. In the research, I touch on elements of student choice, interdisciplinary/project-based learning, and I focus on multicultural learning toward the empowerment of students, as well as toward building a school culture of respect and generosity. I have already suggested that white male dominance that persists in curriculum creation, as well as ongoing emphasis on certain aspects of curriculum at the exclusion of the arts, is a disservice to learning and community building. This, to me, is the antithesis of a true multicultural education. Implicit in the research, I describe in the coming pages is my sense that multicultural education that includes strong interdisciplinary focus on the arts is not just an invitation to learning, it may well be fundamental to promoting community-building, inclusion, and ultimately social justice. Henry Giroux (1981) suggests that to create an “enabling structure” (p. 107), transcendence is required (p. 121). I hope that the research I describe in the coming pages will help provide that new and powerful inclusive curricular structure that optimizes the chance that all our children receive transcendental opportunities.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

The intention of the research that led to this dissertation is to understand the relationship between interdisciplinary arts experience and the establishment of a community culture in a mainstream public school in the United States. I hope my research might provide evidence to support including interdisciplinary arts into the fabric of a student’s school experience through both curricular connections and additional extracurricular experiences.

Interdisciplinary Research

INTERDISCIPLINARY: A knowledge view and curriculum approach that consciously applies methodology and language from more than one discipline to examine a central theme, issue, problem, topic, or experience. (Jacobs, 1989, p.8)

Interdisciplinary is not a new idea for education. The topic has surfaced and resurfaced along with the pendulum swing of education reform dating as far back as Plato. Debate has raged about the need for educators to hold specialized knowledge, jargon, history and mastery of skills specific to their discipline of focus (Huber & Morreale, 2002), versus highlighting the interconnectedness between broader interdisciplinary fields (Klein, 1996). Critics of interdisciplinary approaches to education describe poorly designed and implemented interdisciplinary curriculum in public schools resulting in topics that are only thinly covered and providing students with little useful
knowledge or skills (Hirsch, 1987; Bloom, 1987). Sowell (1995) goes as far as to state that the “academic disciplines exist precisely because the human mind is inadequate to grasp things whole and spontaneously… Thus, mathematics must be separated out for special study, even though it is an ingredient in a vast spectrum of other activities” (p. 205). Teachers have particular fears about interdisciplinary approaches to education. Some are concerned about their already overloaded curricula (Horowitz, 2004) and about the potential impact of elimination of discipline specialists in schools (Veblen & Elliot, 2000).

Critics of the interdisciplinary approach in public schools point out that researchers purporting the benefits of interdisciplinary methods have difficulty collecting the types of data that can serve as evidence of increased student learning (Horowitz, 2004; Mansilla, 2005). Berghoff (2005) and Borgmann (2005) also suggest that student-produced products and behaviors are not reliable indicators of student learning. This is particularly important to consider since public schools have primarily used high-stakes tests to determine success of school programs. Horowitz (2004) was especially interested in finding better tools that might indicate student growth when engaged in interdisciplinary projects. Mixed-methods approaches attempt to balance the data that indicates improvement of students through quantifiable test scores, while also seeking data that uncovers the students’ deeper understandings, intrinsic motivations, eagerness to engage in the work, and development of analytical thinking skills – all difficult to
measure (Horowitz, 2004). DeMoss and Morris (2002) indicate that researchers should develop a wider variety of ways to study, record, and understand the multiple kinds of possible student growth experiences. Gee (2003) also reminded us to consider who is conducting the research, what is the purpose of the research, and what are the methodological issues needed to be addressed to ensure validity and reliability. In Gee’s (2003) opinion, some methodologically weak studies, or ones with tenuous correlations, can be repurposed into meta-analysis presentations. The motivation to do this can range from garnering support toward a specific group’s position, as well as serve political purposes. Gee (2003) explains that certain topics are politically popular to be seen supporting, and the media attention that the support brings about can legitimize the maneuvering and posturing of weak data (p. 17).

Proponents of interdisciplinary approach. Advocates of using an interdisciplinary approach to education in public schools may debate the specifics of how it can be carried out in the most effective manner, but most point to the growing research that cite the benefits of its holistic approach to education through curricular connections made throughout a student’s day (Parsons, 2005; Wineberg & Grossman, 2000). To proponents, this is an improvement from the fragmentation of most public school curricula, in which individual courses meet in isolated blocks of time to focus on topics presented in a vacuum (Wineberg & Grossman, 2000). Such courses are generally presented without making the curricular connections to other disciplines apparent to
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students. Other researchers have indicated that an interdisciplinary approach to education actually improves critical-thinking and problem-solving skills for students (Billig, 2010; Furco, 2010; Mansilla, 2005). Additionally, a wide variety of studies indicate that an interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum improves academic achievement (Barry, 2010; Blair, 2009; Borman, et al., 2003; Catterall et al., 2012; Cervetti, et al. 2007; Furco & Root, 2010; Goldschmidt & Jung, 2010; Guthrie et al., 2013; Hendrickson & Oklahoma A+ Schools, 2010; Klemmer, Waliczek, & Zajiecek, 2005; Nelson, 2001; Romance & Vitale, 2012a, 2012b; Satchwell & Loepp, 2002; Smith & Motsenbocker, 2005; Smithrum & Upitis, 2005; Walker, et al., 2011). Parsons (2004) made a practical suggestion to public school teachers. Since teachers already need to alter their curricula to include technology (interactive white boards, hand-held devices, information sharing and instant communication), they might use this opportunity to turn toward an interdisciplinary approach to education.

**Emotional and intellectual stimulation.** Multiple researchers have focused on the emotional and intellectual stimulation that an interdisciplinary approach can offer students (Barrett, McCoy, & Veblen, 1997; Burton, Horowitz, & Abeles, 1999; Chrysostomou, 2004; Deasey, 2002; Goldberg, 2001; Mansilla, 2005; Veblen & Elliot, 2000). Their findings suggest that interdisciplinary teaching stimulates students by helping them identify and understand the interconnectedness of knowledge (Mason, 1996), the promotion of learning and creativity (Marshall, 2005), students’ reflection, and
engaging their curiosity (Parsons, 2004). Increased student motivation, participation and interest in learning has been particularly well researched (Catterall, Damais, & Hampden-Thompson, 2012; Goldschmidt & Jung, 2010; Guthrie, Klauda, & Ho, 2013; Hughes, Bailey, & Karp, 2002; Mac Iver, 1990; Smithrim & Upitis, 2005; Upitis, 2011). Kerr and Legters (2004) found a strong indication that adopting an interdisciplinary approach to curriculum and student grouping in public schools could reduce the student drop-out rates.

**Interdisciplinary studies.** The Association for Interdisciplinary Studies was founded in 1979. Peterson’s (2014) guide to college programs reported that students wanting to earn a Bachelor’s degree in Interdisciplinary Studies have the choice of 1,251 programs, and 576 graduate and doctoral programs throughout the United States. For purposes of comparison to approaches in secondary public schools, it is essential to consider how higher education interprets the term interdisciplinary, as the number of programs offered is indicative of student interest and its value as an academic and research approach. Geertz (1980) refers to Interdisciplinary Studies as a method of training one’s mind. In order to unpack what that means, one only needs to consider Repko’s (2008) synthesis of the research he unearthed relating to Interdisciplinary Studies and reflect on the list of traits and skills that are typical of interdisciplinarians (pp. 42-46).

The first trait Repko (2008) introduces is *enterprise*, or the willingness to venture
into areas outside of one’s knowledge base in order to see connections and gain novel insights. Because they often find themselves in unchartered territory, interdisciplinarians typically have a *love of learning* or an interest acquiring new language and skills in order to understand new situations. To interdisciplinarians, *reflection* refers to the emotional and cognitive transformation that occurs when a student considers his or her own self-concept in comparison to the reasoning and perspectives of others disciplines and points of view. Interdisciplinarians also have a strong *tolerance for ambiguity*. As they seek solutions and common ground, they wrestle with knowledge outside of his or her expertise. The interdisciplinarian needs to accept that it isn’t possible to know everything, but it is possible to know enough. Repko (2008) refers to *receptivity to other disciplines* as the willingness to take on another field of knowledge to gain an intuitive sense and broader perspective of problems being addressed. Interdisciplinarians are willing to achieve "adequacy" in multiple disciplines and not necessarily mastery of any. By having an understanding of the major tenets of multiple fields, one is better able to know the biases and limitations of each in light of one another. Repko’s (2008) synthesis of the common traits of interdisciplinarians also indicates that they have a deep *appreciation of diversity* of both viewpoints and traditions. In cultivating a reflective practice and awareness of others, interdisciplinarians become acutely aware of their own biases. They also have a *willingness to work with others*, and a *humility* of knowing the limits of their knowledge with a respect for other viewpoints.
Repko (2008) indicated the *ability to communicate competently* as being typical of interdisciplinarians. This encompasses the working knowledge of the technical languages common to each of the disciplines in collaboration, and the aptitude to cross boundaries and coordinate working teams with clarity and respect. Interdisciplinarians demonstrate the *ability to think abstractly*, or understand and express a concept using metaphor or symbols in order to integrate differing insights. Equally important is the *ability to think dialectically*. Dialectical thinking means solving a conflict through systematic reasoning or comparison of opposing ideas. Additionally, Repko (2008) explains that interdisciplinarians have the *ability to engage in nonlinear thinking* or thinking without influence of past solutions. They have the *ability to think creatively* through the creation of new ideas from combining previously unrelated ideas. And finally, the interdisciplinarian holds the *ability to think holistically*, or see the whole of the system under consideration, not just its parts.

It isn’t difficult to see the direct connection between the thinking processes synthesized by Repko (2008) and the working definition provided by Jacobs (1989) at the beginning of this Literature Review. However, my mind has taken this one step further. As a teacher, I imagine I would be hard pressed to find a colleague with a specialty in any discipline or grade level who would argue against the value of instilling in all students those thinking processes.

Klein and Newell (1997), on the other hand, have a different interpretation of
what it means to engage in interdisciplinary practices, particularly as it relates to research. They described it as a process of solving a complex problem that cannot be addressed by one discipline alone. Similarly, interdisciplinary research institutions interpret an interdisciplinary research method as one in which the specialized tools, data, information, perspectives and theories found in two or more specialized fields are integrated to solve a problem (Repko, 2008, p.11). Within this paradigm, the ultimate test of a topic’s interdisciplinary comes down to whether the very disciplines working in consort become in some manner “transformed” by the process (Carp, 2001, p.71).

Typically, the complex problem and type of transformation that research institutions consider impacts humanity on a large scale, like solutions for drought, biomedical cures, and issues of social justice.

Those who are engaged in interdisciplinary approaches at the primary and secondary levels in public schools often use the term interdisciplinary in a more nuanced way than their higher education colleagues. Geertz’s (1980) notion of training the mind still holds true for interdisciplinary work in K-12 school, and so does the researcher’s stance toward creative problem solving. However, public school teachers rarely have the opportunity, or are asked, to solve problems on a macro level, but instead strive to provide learning opportunities for students that are both relevant to their students’ current lives and mind-opening for their future. When I say solving problems, I mean putting students in an environment to struggle with open-ended projects that have multiple
answers, such as through a design or a musical composition. It is a ‘problem’ to be solved, but the importance is not in the solution but the journey toward a choice. The creative product of these problems will be vastly different for each group of students, as they had to consider all their options and invest themselves in their selection. Beyond the rule of staying within the boundaries, the “best” solution is often a matter of taste. This can be understood through the following analogy. With the boundary of a pentatonic scale (5 pitches: do, re, me, sol, la) and a 4/4 time signature (four beats per bar of music), each person might have a different favorite melody – nearly the entire American folksong catalogue to choose from. Some of these folk songs have stood the test of time through popularity, others are little known gems. Who is the authority to say which is ‘best’ at using the pentatonic scale and 4/4 time signature? Teachers assess students on how they stayed within the boundaries, perform, present/defend their choices, and reflect on the process and next steps toward improvement.

Most teachers invested in an interdisciplinary approach know that they cannot begin to adequately address the majority of important topics under one discipline’s umbrella, but rather opt to have students take a deep look at topics over an extended period of time and from multiple perspectives. They hope that through experiencing the interconnectedness of disciplines and through solving problems toward understanding, students are not only motivated, but their thinking skills are enhanced (Ackerman & Perkins, 1989).
Some public schools have been known to offer elective interdisciplinary courses taught by a team of teachers, where the curriculum focuses on specific topics through the lens of more than one discipline, but with the guiding knowledge of teacher-experts. An example might be a high school humanities course. Such a course might highlight the relationship between western and non-western cultures through an exploration of themes: hero, myth, creation, and space. These topics in a course like this are typically developed through the lenses of art, music, and literature. In order for the teacher and students to make the connections, movements, and trends clear, the curricular material may cross into history, geography, religion, philosophy, math, and science as well. Through a deep consideration of the themes, the teachers provide cooperative learning opportunities, a multisensory, experience-oriented curriculum, and an emphasis on the students’ responsibility to share their learning with others (Jacobs, 1989, pp. 40-41). Ultimately, students problem-solve through the making of art, music, and literature that encourages their cooperation and the use of high-order thinking skills.

Perhaps an even more progressive interpretation of interdisciplinary in U.S. public schools is the STEAM initiative (RISD, 2015). This approach requires students to solve

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4 The concept of higher order thinking developed from an understanding of learning taxonomies, such as Bloom’s Taxonomy. It includes “critical, logical, reflective, metacognitive, and creative thinking (King, et. al, 2013).
school or community problems in a collaborative environment through the use of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics. Proponents describe the approach as focused on innovation through project-based and hands-on collaboration. With the guidance of knowledgeable teachers, students using the STEAM approach might design and create a solar charging station for community use, biofuel derived from cafeteria refuse, or a roaming bicycle robot to collect recyclables from diners in the school cafeteria.

When reflecting on the basic tenets of an interdisciplinary approach, I cannot resist making the connection to Dewey’s (1897) recommendation for students to learn by doing, what he also calls experiential learning. Through experiencing and interrogating the subject matter from multiple perspectives, students are better able to experience the full emotional force of learning – frustration and exhilaration combined (Fishman & McCarthy, 1998, p.19). Embedded in the practice of learning through doing is another of Dewey’s observations - learning should be applicable to life (Dworkin, 1959). Students solving problems directly in front of them, instantly become aware of the subject’s vividness and attainability. On a larger scale, the technical and thinking skills developed are applicable to future careers. Teachers have long connected this type relevance to student motivation and knowledge retention.

However, it is Dewey’s (1934) observation that schools need to be places where students and teachers create a community of learners, which resonates with my own
suspicions of why interdisciplinary curriculum holds its greatest strength:

…it behooves the school to make ceaseless and intelligently organized effort to develop above all else the will for co-operation and the spirit which sees in every other individual one who has an equal right to share in the cultural and material fruits of collective human invention… (p. 13)

According to Wyatt (1999), Dewey dubbed his predecessor, Earle Kelley, with pushing forward the next frontier of education: “My work is not finished, it is your job to finish it” (p. 7). Kelley’s (1947) focus was on the idea of individual perception and the necessity of schools to individualize learning. Dewey and Kelley developed these basic concepts around democratic learning:

1. Be consistent with the basic tenets of democracy.
2. Enhance the self-concept of the learner.
3. Actively involve the learner.
4. Place the concrete before the abstract.
5. Be flexible.
6. Place the teacher in a helping relationship (Wyatt, 1999, p.9).

Though the spin offs of these concepts in public schools have not been particularly interdisciplinary (vocational education, school laboratories, home economics and physical education), democratic schools have sprung up all over the world. The three points above that directly link with the contained research are: “actively involve the
learner,” “be flexible,” and “place the teacher in a helping relationship.” In my mind, allowing students an opportunity to employ these aspects of democratic learning in order to shape a product using interdisciplinary arts may hold the key to community building.

Other interdisciplinary educators may think of the student collaboration element of project-based learning as simply an opportunity for students to develop brainstorming and listening skills, or as an expedient way of providing many hands toward completing projects. My personal perspective regarding the impact of working in communities is reflected in Vygotsky’s (1962) premise that children construct knowledge and that cognitive development is directly linked to social interactions. As Dewey points out, children develop a social imagination through seeing the interdependence of ideas, social conditions, and invention when groups of people “are working along common lines, in a common spirit, and with references to common ends” (Dewey as quoted in Dworkin, 1959, p. 39). I want to spin this community of learners thread a bit further though. I will contend that teachers who facilitate open-ended projects create a symbiotic classroom – one that is mutually beneficial. Teachers, alongside their students, are engaging in learning new material, as well as exercising the same thinking skills mentioned earlier, particularly the love of learning, the tolerance for ambiguity, the receptivity to other disciplines, adequacy, the willingness to work with others, and especially – humility. It is from this special place of mutual learning between student and teacher that I introduce the term interdisciplinary teaching and learning.
Obstacles and opportunities to the interdisciplinary arts approach. It is often joked that public schools are ten years behind any cultural or technological shift. In the case of interdisciplinary studies, it may actually be more like twenty years behind. Schools have been hit particularly hard by the economic downturn of recent years (Eisner, 2002; Roza, 2009). Many programs have been cut drastically or eliminated, budgets and paychecks have been frozen, and rainy day funds dried up. In this climate, teachers and departments have had to make choices and protect the courses and teachers they value highest, and those most needed to satisfy the state and federal testing mandates.

The arts in particular have been hit hardest of all (Armario, 2012). Money that might have gone toward piloting interdisciplinary projects or facilitating what are considered enrichment activities, such as arts engagement, have been consumed with the ever growing need to build technological infrastructure (O’Hanlon, 2012). The public has also played a part by demanding a particular type of testing accountability from teachers for their tax dollars.

At the same time, there have also been encouraging, opportunities, and possibilities for the future of interdisciplinary arts teaching and learning. These possibilities include: a. new National Arts Standards (NCCAS, 2014); b. national interest in training students’ habits of mind (Mezirow, 2000); c. public and private sector conversation about what 21st Century Skills the future workers of the United States should be able to do (P21, 2013); d. a growing consideration for students’ multiple
intelligences in the classroom (Gardner, 2006); e. a desire to consistently teach to the upper echelons of the revised Bloom’s Taxonomy of higher order thinking (Anderson et al., 2000, pp. 67-68) through innovative project-based learning and assessment (Gardner, 1989a); f. growing body of research focused on the relationship of cognition and participation in the arts (The Dana Foundation, 2015); and g. STEAM, a framework to teach cross-disciplinary subjects of: science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (RISD, 2015). Each, in its own way, could support a shift in education toward interdisciplinary curriculum design.

Interdisciplinary Arts Education

National core arts standards. Interdisciplinary teaching is not simply a choice of teaching approach for arts educators. Making connections across disciplines is actually an expectation of our 2014 National Core Arts Standards (NCASS, 2014). The National Core Arts Standards are structured with four thinking processes at its core, which serve as the foundation of all arts learning:

1. Creating.
2. Performing/Presenting/Producing.
3. Responding

It is through the Connecting Standard that the interdisciplinary expectations are most pronounced. It is particularly evident through Anchor Standard #11, which is shared
by all artistic domains (dance, media arts, music, theater, visual arts): “Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding” (NCCAS, 2014). Each Anchor Standard is then interpreted specifically for each artistic domain and the criteria for success is scaffolded every year until the high school advanced level. The following are samples of connections outlined through Anchor Standard #11, which generally centers on an awareness of other cultural interpretations around the world, the influence of history and context on the arts, and the relationships between disciplines:

- **Dance – High School: Advanced** - Analyze dances from several genres or styles, historical time periods, and/or world dance forms. Discuss how dance movement characteristics, techniques and artistic criteria relate to the ideas and perspectives of the peoples from which the dances originate.

- **Media Arts – High School: Accomplished** - A. Synthesize internal and external resources to enhance the creation of persuasive media artworks, such as cultural connections, introspection, research, and exemplary works. B. Explain and demonstrate the use of media artwork to synthesize new meaning and knowledge, and reflect and for cultural experiences, such as new connections between themes and ideas, local and global networks, and personal influence.

- **General Music: Grade 8** - Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.
• Music Theory Composition/Music Ensembles/Harmonizing Instruments/Music Technology – High School: Proficient – Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

• Theater - High School: Proficient – Explore how cultural, global, and historical belief systems affect creative choices in a drama/theater work.

• Visual Arts - High School: Accomplished – Compare uses of art in a variety of societal, cultural, and historical contexts and make connections to uses of art in contemporary and local contexts (NCASS, 2014).

The Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, a collaboration of the national organizations for theater, music, art and dance (AATE, MENC, NAEA, NDEO), published a guide for teachers entitled, “Authentic Connections: Interdisciplinary Work in the Arts”, in order to “…clarify how the arts can be taught with integrity through the interdisciplinary content standards” (NAEA, 2002). The consortium outlines learning experiences that promote meaningful connections between and among disciplines including in-depth study of the content of the disciplines, using accurate and carefully selected examples, materials, and terminology, involvement of students in processes that are authentic to the arts (creating, performing, responding, and connecting), and forms of assessment that are compatible with the arts (NAEA, 2002, p. 4). Furthermore, the
Interdisciplinary Arts as an Agent for Community Building in a U.S. High School

The consortium explains that interdisciplinary work in the arts provides students with opportunities to problem solve, synthesize ideas and create new ideas surrounding a cross-disciplinary topic.

Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education produced a report entitled, *The Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education* (Seidel, Tishman, Winner, Hetland, & Palmer, 2009). The researchers who wrote the report, a synthesis of hundreds of interviews, case studies, surveys, and a review of forty years of cognitive research in the arts, attempt to answer three main questions which they’ve determined are essential when evaluating arts education teaching and learning models, and ultimately serve to guide the future of arts education: How do arts educators define high quality arts teaching and learning? How do educators and administrators recognize high quality arts teaching and learning in classrooms? How do school structures affect the pursuit of high quality art teaching and learning?

The conclusion of *Qualities of Quality* points to seven most essential broad purposes of arts education (Seidel, et al., 2009, p. 18). The first purpose is to foster the capacity to think creatively and make connections through *Habits of Mind* (Mezirow, 2000) and the cultivation of skills (Seidel, et al., 2009, p. 18). This section of the report emphasizes prolonged periods set aside in the curriculum for students to dedicate themselves to the process of developing ideas: exploring, improvising, refining, and reflecting. The students’ connections to diverse topics and themes are seen as an
extension of creative thinking and a “cultivation of imagination” (Seidel, et. al., 2009, p. 19; Bruner, 1979; Dewey, 1934; Goodman, 1976; Langer, 1942, 1953; Scheffler, 1991). The report emphasizes that the cultivation of Habits of Mind (Mezirow, 2000) through artistic processes do not happen without encouragement and time provided by arts educators.

**Habits of mind.** President Obama’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities, a collaboration between the federal government, The National Endowment for the Arts, The National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute for Museum and Library Services, published a report entitled, “Reinvesting in Arts Education: Winning America’s Future Through Creative Schools” (Reinvesting in arts education: Winning america’s future through creative schools, May 2011). The report states that the “…development of habits of mind including problem solving, critical and creative thinking, dealing with ambiguity and complexity, integration of multiple skill sets, and working with others,” result from a high quality arts education (pg. 16).

Many theorists have approached the acquisition of habits of mind using the arts from a variety of vantage points. Some writers have connected this back to the German philosophers Droysen, Dilthey, and Max Weber’s idea of empathetic understanding, or verstehen, by interpreting meaning from the back and forth consideration between the whole and its parts (Bresler & Stake, 2006, p. 247; Weber, 1904/1949). The arts require in-the-moment evaluation and revision during the creation process, a constant crossing
from the internal and external view. In order to critique artistic works and uncover meaning, it requires a similar process of focusing on details and then the whole, and back again. Dewey’s (1938) term for this type of thinking is \textit{flexible purposing}. Eisner (2002) relates this to the improvisational nature of intelligence in the arts: shifting thought direction, choosing options for the direction of the work, redefining the purpose, and often discovering unintended outcomes that are more interesting than the original intent.

Harry Broudy, Philosopher of Education, has also contributed to the idea of the arts developing \textit{habits of mind} through his writings on the arts as a cultivation of the imagination and the “…realization of self-hood” (Bresler, 2002a, p. 18). To Broudy, the creation of the imagination is the result of the artist using sensory materials to heighten the aesthetic experience, thus training the intellect to create a catalog of feelings (Bresler, 2002a, p. 20). John Armstrong (2000), Director of University of London’s Aesthetic Program, expands on these notions of perception and imagination with his construct of five perceptual processes when engaging with an artistic work: 1. \textit{Animadversion}, or noticing detail; 2. \textit{Concursus}, seeing the relationship between parts; 3. \textit{Hololepsis}, perceiving the whole; 4. \textit{The Lingering Caress}, absorption without purpose; and 5. \textit{Catalepsis}, a transformative empathy (p. 81). He states that art is only accessed through private contemplation, a cultivation of the senses in consort with our perceptions, and a drawing upon our personal experiences and emotions. Armstrong (2000) explains:
“...satisfaction is taken in spinning out our engagement with the object... When we keep our attention fixed upon an object which attracts us, two things tend to happen: we get absorbed in the object and the object gets absorbed into us” (Armstrong, 2000, pp. 98-99).

Maxine Greene (1977) has a similar view of developing the imagination through reflective practice, which she refers to being “wide-awake” (pg. 121). She relates this awake-ness with an undaunted quest for meaning in all aspects of life, a sense of “feeling alive in the world” and the “inter-subjectivity” of beings throughout history (Greene, 1977, p. 123). However, Gadamer (1988) suggests that engagement, imagination and self-reflexivity is not enough to expand our thinking. It requires an opening of ourselves, allowing a dialogue between ourselves and another’s viewpoint to influence a revision of our thinking.

**Transcendence.** To Gadamer (1988), that dialogue toward revising our thinking can take place between two people, or between a person and the world. This philosophical hermeneutic standpoint situates humans as finite beings whose knowledge, history, traditions and language require effort to move beyond. To understand something, requires one to unpack a web of meanings and contexts. Gadamer (1988) maintains that humans having their traditional view of the world, allows them to see *otherness* with more clarity. He refers to this as a horizon in which one needs to look beyond in order to see better. The word transcendence comes from Latin meaning climbing, or going
by expanding our horizons, we go beyond our current understanding to find a higher truth. Gadamer equates this to the German word *bildung* – self-cultivation and self-transcendence through learning, understanding and growth. Obviously Gadamer’s (1988) interpretation of transcendence is a particularly private activity. It is centered on the change within one’s own thinking as the result of a personal experience or revelation.

Abraham Maslow (1971), best known for the theory of psychological health called *hierarchy of needs*, amended his model to include the highest level of development - self-transcendence. Maslow (1971) contends that by focusing on some higher goals outside of ourselves, we transcend our personal concerns and feel an awareness of the unity of all things and an ultimate truth. He states that some people might be able to reach this mental place (plateau experience) more readily than others, though everyone was capable of having them.

Gallagher (1992) connects transcendence to formal learning:

Educational experience is experience that expands my horizons as learner, reveals my possibilities as they are mediated through the unfamiliar. In confronting the unfamiliar, in coming to understand and to relate it the world which defines me, I open up that world, I transcend that world in a production of possibilities that reveal myself to me (p.144).

What is interesting about Gallagher’s (1992) interpretation is that he connects the usefulness of play, or the suspension of “real life,” in order to open up space in the
player’s mind for transcendence. To Gallagher (1992), allowing the player to reinterpret himself and explore a different way of being, allows for a transcendental experience, much like an actor. Furthermore, teachers, in Gallagher’s (1992) view, perform an important role in setting up the parameters for play and learning. Teachers design tasks with enough challenge to present the student a horizon, to use Gadamer’s phrase, to reach beyond. Through quality curriculum, or opportunities to wrestle with difficult topics, teachers essentially create opportunities for students to reach a transcendent experience.

**21st century skills.** President Obama “firmly believes” that the same habits of mind developed through the arts are key for the innovative and economic leaders of the future (Reinvesting in arts education: Winning america’s future through creative schools, May 2011, p. 3). He is speaking about an educational movement called 21st Century Skills. The Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) was founded in 2002 through collaboration between the U.S. Department of Education, the National Education Association, and corporations like Apple Computers, Dell and Microsoft, as well as many others. P21 has as its mission: “To serve as a catalyst and build collaborative partnerships among education, business, community and government leaders so that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in a world where change is constant and learning never stops” (P21, 2015, p. “Mission”). Today, nineteen states have joined the initiative to fuse core subjects and content to core skills. The arts were included in the list of core subjects, but perhaps equally important to arts were the list of skills:
critical thinking and problem solving; communication; collaboration; and creativity and innovation (P21, 2015, p. "21st Century Skills Arts Map"). A study in 2008 considered whether educators and business executives were aligned in their beliefs of the creative readiness of the United States work force (Lichtenberg, Woock, & Wright, 2008). The skills identified were completely in line with the habits of mind discussed previously. Furthermore, the research found overwhelming confirmation that an arts degree was the best indicator of abstract and critical thought, and the best indicator of creativity (Lichtenberg et al., 2008, p. 8). Lichtenberg, et al., (2008) specifically mention that 56 percent of employers and 79 percent of superintendents believed that a degree in the arts demanded the highest level of abstract and critical thinking skills compared to any other degree focus (p. 8). It is interesting to note that the abstract and critical thinking skills found to be indicators of creativity also closely align with the purposes of a quality arts education presented in *Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education* (Seidel et al., 2009), which reviewed decades of arts research on the subject.

**Multiple intelligences.** Howard Gardner’s (2006) theory of multiple intelligences was developed at Project Zero through many years of scientific research. Through his research, Gardner became interested in issues of human intelligence and became convinced that there were flaws in the popular Piagetian theory (i.e. cognitive development is linear and cause-effect based). Gardner contends that the human mind is modular in design, meaning “…separate psychological processes appear to be involved in
dealing with linguistic, numerical, pictorial, gestural and other kinds of symbolic systems” (Gardner & Hatch, 1989, p. 5).

Perhaps inspired by the earlier intelligence research of L. L. Thurstone and J. P. Guilford (Post et al., 1997), Gardner (1989) formed a new definition of intelligence: “An intelligence in the ability to solve problems, or to create products, that are valued within one or more cultural settings” (p. x). By 1998, Gardner (1998) eventually expands the set of criteria for what counts as human intelligence, he refers to as multiple intelligences, to include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intelligence</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic</td>
<td>Sensitivity to the meaning of words, the order among words, and the sound, rhythms, inflections, and meter of words (e.g. poet). (Sometimes called language intelligence.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical-Mathematical</td>
<td>The capacity to conceptualize the logical relations among actions or symbols (e.g. mathematicians, scientists)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial</td>
<td>The ability to conceptualize and manipulate large-scale spatial arrays (e.g. airplane pilot, sailor), or more local forms of space (e.g. architect, chess player).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodily-Kinesthetic</td>
<td>The ability to use one’s whole body, or parts of the body (like the hands or the mouth), to solve problems or create products (e.g. dancer).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Musical | Sensitivity to rhythm, pitch, meter, tone, melody and timbre. May entail the ability to sing, play musical instruments, and/or compose music (e.g. musical conductor).
---|---
Interpersonal | The ability to interact effectively with others. Sensitivity to others’ moods, feelings, temperaments, and motivations (e.g. negotiator). <br> *Sometimes called social intelligence.*
---|---
Intrapersonal | Sensitivity to one’s own feelings, goals, and anxieties, and the capacity to plan and act in light of one’s own traits. Intrapersonal intelligence is not particular to specific careers; rather, it is a goal for every individual in a complex modern society, where one has to make consequential decisions for oneself. <br> *Sometimes called self-intelligence.*
---|---
Naturalistic | The ability to make consequential distinctions in the world of nature as, for example, between one plant and another, or one cloud formation and another (e.g. taxonomist). <br> *Sometimes called nature intelligence.*

Gardner (1989) explains: “All normal human beings possess some capacity in each of these intellectual spheres; but as a result of...genetic-environmental interaction, we differ markedly from one another in our profiles of intelligences” (p. 74).
Gardner maintains that there is not one specific artistic intelligence, rather each of these intelligences can be directed toward an artistic end. Gardner (1989) explains that linguistic intelligence can be used to author a legal brief or compose a poem; spatial intelligence can be used by sailors or sculptors; and bodily-kinesthetic intelligence can be used by a dancer or a surgeon (p. 74). This perspective of human intelligences allows us to think about interdisciplinary arts in a new way. Using Gardner’s description of how an artistic mind works, one can support the notion that providing interdisciplinary arts programming in public schools actually facilitates the learning for a wide spectrum of career fields beyond that of art creators, including careers that are valued more by the public, like law and medicine.

There are many critics of Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences (Aiken, 1997; Barnett, Ceci, and Williams, 2006; Carroll, 1993; Collins, 1998; Klein, 1997; Morgan, 1996; Sternberg, 1985; Visser et al., 2006; Willingham, 2004). The criticisms range from conflicting theories in the areas of developmental and psychometric research, the quality and outcomes of the experimental studies, as well as the pedagogical implementation. For the sake of space, I have elected to focus on areas that directly relate to my interest of interdisciplinary arts.

The area of contention I shall focus on is if there are specific intelligences of which artistic domains are an essential element. Klein (1997) contends that if Gardner’s identified intelligences, or modules of the brain, can share information and cooperate
through a common executive, that Gardner essentially creates “a distinction without a difference (p. 380). Klein (1997) states that the crossover of intellectual strength indicates “that the system as a whole is one single intelligence, and specific ability, such as spatial reasoning, are mere components of this intelligence” (p. 380). This single intelligence theory is commonly referred to as the g factor (Spearman, 1927). Visser, Ashton, and Vernon (2006) sought to compare multiple intelligences and g factor theories and concluded that despite specific tests for each of the eight intelligences, there was evidence of the g factor throughout the tests. This research supports the idea of people having talents and not specific intelligences. However, through research using neuroimaging, Posner (2004) counters that notion: “results provide support for Gardner’s distinction among domains in terms of the separable anatomical networks they activate” (p. 25).

The second criticism that directly relates to interdisciplinary arts is whether multiple intelligences has applications in classrooms. Willingham (2004) states that the “hard data” are missing as support for the claim that multiple intelligences increases standardized test scores, specifically that the claimed results were not statistically significant (p. 24). Additionally, Willingham (2006) believes that multiple intelligences applications in the classroom are trivialized by teachers who believe they are engaging different learning modes by changing a single element of a lesson - say having students spell words with branches to engage the naturalist intelligence. Klein (1997) further
points out that there has yet to be a “reliable method for assessing intelligences” in order for teachers to adequately address the issues of remediation (p. 388). He additionally believes that by requiring teachers to cater to each of the intelligences, given their growing class sizes, would create a workload for teachers beyond what is reasonable to expect them to carry out. This is a very important point; however one needs to ask whether teachers should bother to add any additional instructional strategies, if they cannot add them all. It is generally believed that over time and through years of experience and additional professional development, teachers continue to add to their “toolbox” of methods and eventually can better accommodate the needs of more students.

Gardner’s (2006) theory of multiple intelligences was not originally conceived for education; however it illuminates shortcomings of the modern educational approach. He mourns the informal, apprenticeship settings of the ateliers of the Renaissance. Gardner (1989) explains that students would “observe a master at work, then participate in simple, supported ways, and then gradually tackle more difficult assignments, with lessened support from their coach or master” (p. 75). Education was one of hands-on participation constantly volleying between attempting a skill and reflection on skills requiring more review. Gardner (1989) complains that the current trend in education (i.e. sitting through lectures and reading a textbook) has “a near-stranglehold over [other] activities…including a much wider band of…intelligences – through formal or non-scholastic training regimens” (p. 75). He explains that painting or fiddling could never be
taught without a great deal of hands-on learning. Gardner’s (1989b) line of thinking also illuminates the need for some reflection by school administrators on the unique requirements of time and space when engaging in arts teaching and learning.

As a result of Gardner’s findings, Project Zero developed Arts PROPEL to research the development of domain projects and develop appropriate assessments.

PROPEL is an acronym:

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<tr>
<th>PROduction</th>
<th>PErception</th>
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<tr>
<td>Students study works of art to:</td>
<td>Students learn the basics of composition, design and technical production in order to create artistic works across multiple domains (music, dance, theater, drawing, etc.)</td>
<td>Students self-assess based on personal goals and professional exemplars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Understand the artistic process of selection</td>
<td>• See the connection between their own work and others</td>
<td>• Build introspective and reflective vocabulary</td>
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<tr>
<td>• See the connection between their own work and others</td>
<td>• Develop a language to critique and compare works of art</td>
<td>• Develop a language to critique and compare works of art</td>
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Arts PROPEL was a rarity in the field of arts education: it was research-based, well-documented, arts-specific, and had a hands-on/project-based approach with student creation at its core. Though the Arts PROPEL program was never intended to be the foundation of interdisciplinary arts, particularly as I have carried it out throughout my career, it has long been the impetus for my interest in seeking innovative solutions to the limitations of the traditional models of discipline-based arts curriculum, and therefore I feel the need to elaborate on it in this literature review.

**Domain projects and assessment.** Arts PROPEL was focused on school age children in the Pittsburgh Public Schools, and it considered their multiple intelligences in the development of an arts curriculum. The results of the research, curriculum process, and student outcomes became a catalyst to thinking about the benefits of interdisciplinary teaching and learning. The collaborative team at Project Zero believed that students needed to be “…introduced to the ways of thinking exhibited by individuals involved in the arts: by practicing artists and by those who analyze, criticize, and investigate the cultural contexts of art objects” (Gardner, 1989b, p. 76). With this approach, Project Zero hoped to develop new assessment systems that could both aid the classroom teacher and “…college admissions officers as a means of broadening their conceptions of student achievement” (Gardner, 1988, p. 162).

It became clear to Gardner (1989), as he began listing competencies and potentials that students were to master, that there had to be some real and tangible
experience working with artistic media (p. 78). To bring about those goals, a curriculum of domain projects linked to assessment were developed by an interdisciplinary arts team. It is this interdisciplinary arts domain project that resonates most with my research and reflects the purposes of a quality arts education (Seidel et al., 2009).

The domain projects require long-term, open-ended, and deep experiences on a topic, but through multiple modalities. It is a process – a vehicle for exploration and experimentation in areas previously untried. After the exploration and knowledge gathering stage, students settle into producing an original work using previous knowledge in innovative ways. It requires constant reflection and revisions at multiple points depending on the needs of the student.

Wootton (2004) described a best practice model of a domain project using the experience of Moisis, a child who recently came to the US from El Salvador at age 15 with no previous schooling:

[Moisis] went to the Rhode Island School of Design and looked at and talked about art… [He] attended a puppetry performance and talked about how to make puppets, what it was like to do performance on a professional level…[He] went to the puppet studio and actually worked with the puppets…Then, [Moisis] came back to the classroom and…did a lot of text experiences. [He] read Mexican poetry. [He] wrote about poetry. [He] really focused on the idea of dreams. Then [he] wrote [his] own …narrative. [He] rehearsed the narrative and [he] audio
recorded the narratives...Then...[he] created [his] own version of puppets...and did a whole lot of performance work...Finally,...[he] combined [his] self-portrait into a full performance for [his] community. (p. 16)

This particular domain project demonstrates how a teacher can individualize domain projects to suit the culture, ability level, and strengths or weaknesses of each student.

Gardner (2006) admits in *Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons*, that much of the energy for Arts PROPEL went into the construction of an assessment system, called *processfolio* (p. 161). Where traditional assessments test students’ abilities to remember facts, the processfolio is considered the perception piece of the methodology. It is a vehicle for the student to set personal goals and compare his or her work at different phases, as well as the work of others. Gardner describes the processfolio as a process record, or cognitive map, of a student’s artistic endeavors. It includes some beginning attempts, a multitude of drafts, sketches, and notes on what the students like and do not like. Students then make plans for improvement and hear suggestions and criticisms from teachers, peers, and mentors. The teacher also has an assessment sheet to comment on the student’s composition, discriminations, and perceptions, as well as other kinds of learning achieved.

Though it was likely not Gardner’s intention to create an interdisciplinary arts education methodology through his pilot of Arts PROPEL, it nonetheless remains the sole interdisciplinary model dedicated to the study of an interdisciplinary arts curriculum.
However, there are many obstacles that cannot be easily overcome in order to implement it in actual U.S. public schools. The Arts PROPEL examples that are most engaging require unprecedented amounts of time, budget, and space for each student to pursue his or her specific interests and goals. Field trips, hired specialists, the myriad of different media supplies and technology, as well as enough flexible spaces to collaborate or work alone would be difficult to be provided by even the most supportive public school. That having been said, the higher order thinking skills (Anderson et al., 2000) of create, innovate, and collaborate are undeniable through the domain projects at the core of Arts PROPEL. Additionally, its assessment model fully aligns with the creative process and the recent requirements of public school teachers to show individual student growth.

**Interdisciplinary Arts Research**

Interdisciplinary Arts Research suffers from an identity crisis. A general search will often result in examples of research using the arts in extremely broad ways. It seems that if any art form was employed in any way with any other field during the research process, one might find it as an example of interdisciplinary arts research. Quickly, a researcher is wading through projects centered on design-thinking and creativity in every discipline under the sun: science, math, technology, literacy, etc. Many other researchers suggest that including the arts in the learning process improves student learning and motivation, retention of concepts, and higher achievement on measurable assessments in...
non-arts disciplines. This practice is called arts integration, though many confuse it with interdisciplinary arts.

Arts integration, particularly as it applies to the arts in public schools, often means using an art form as a handmaiden (Harp, 1988; Miller, 1996; Mulligan, 1975; Renegar, 1990; Smithrim & Upitis, 2005) to teach other subjects. Bresler (2002) defines this type of integrative teaching style as subservient. I have read and digested much of this research, and I do not disagree with many of the research findings. In fact, many of the research studies included in the above section entitled Proponents of Interdisciplinary Approach includes arts integration research in which aspects of arts pedagogy were used to bring about the results.

Upon years of reflection, I have had one reoccurring question: Where is the research that concerns itself with arts specific outcomes? The research supporting Arts Integration’s academic success uses arts as resources to the learning gains in non-arts disciplines, and researchers are not measuring arts specific achievements (Bresler, 2002b; Seidel et al., 2009). The majority of research studies that surfaced focused on improved outcomes in science, math, technology, literacy, etc. There seems to be very little research in using the arts in an interdisciplinary fashion for benefits in arts learning. One

Bresler (2002) uses the term subservient integration style to mean that the relationship between disciplines is “…unidirectional, with music and the other arts serving the basic academic curriculum in contents, pedagogies, and structures” (pg. 21).
might ask why that is so. Richard Deasey, Director of Arts Education Partnership (AEP), explains: “Research needs to show [how] the forms of arts instruction will close the achievement gap for students who are falling behind” (CCSSO, 2002, para 9). I am not the only one who has become startled by this notion that the arts’ need to improve learning and achievement in non-arts disciplines. Gee (2003) responds to Deasey’s comment, “Falling behind in what? The answer is clearly not art” (p. 19). When the arts exist in schools for purposes unrelated to actual arts learning, the “field’s identity, credibility and purpose” are lost (Gee, 2004), and the larger lesson is missed - how can core subjects more closely resemble the way teaching and learning take place in the arts (Eisner, 2004)?

What I was hoping to find in my search of interdisciplinary arts research was a correlation between students’ improved understanding of artistic terms and history to exposure of commonalities across multiple art forms. I hoped to see heightened interpretive skills of student artists after a deep study of the interpretations of masters and practitioners in many fields of art. I desired some evidence that guided observation and listening for students would bring about a more nuanced awareness of artistic expression, and possibly result in more expressive student/artistic products. I wanted to find enhanced improvisations by student/artists who studied and practiced improvisation in a variety of artistic disciplines. I also expected to see culture, language, and history as a common thread through the arts toward enhanced understanding of artistic concepts and
themes, and a deeper appreciation for what artists were attempting to express through their art form. For one to grasp the power of this concept, one only needs to compare: the ornamentation in Renaissance architecture, painting, fashion, and music with the trends of European politics, language and high society; or the bleak existence and quiet rebellion found in African American folk art, blues music and lyrics, and African-American poetry and dance, compared with the societal norms of poor blacks in society during the end of 19th century and beginning of 20th century.

Lapidaki (2014) has struck upon a similar interest in interdisciplinary arts, a term she refers to as inter-arts. She focused on a course at the college level entitled, Inter-Artistic Creative Thinking. Her stated focus was the “stirrings and transformations of the role of the individual artist-student that are inexorably set in motion when learning occurs within an inter-arts collaborative environment” (Lapidaki, 2014, p. 150). Lapidaki (2014) was equally frustrated with the lack of interdisciplinary arts research as it relates to students: “While music education research has examined facets of inter-arts collaborations at professional level, there is little on inter-arts collaborations among students of different arts departments in the framework of common university courses…” (p. 150). For this literature review, the criteria for inclusion that I set out was: a. research
that uses multiple art forms in a collaborative, *co-equal* manner (Bresler, 2002); b. the art forms included in the studies are taught by arts specialist teachers; and c. the data collected and analyzed is focused on arts specific outcomes in school-aged students.

At this date, I have located a handful of studies that fill the criteria above. One such project found that the success of the interdisciplinary arts course depends greatly on the deep knowledge, skill and charisma of the arts teacher teaching the course (Dieleman, 2014). Another, focused on the teaching pedagogy during interdisciplinary arts projects, and the role of the teacher, the necessity of clear learning objectives, and the need to converse while learning is going on (Samuelsson, et al., 2009).

**Community Development Through Interdisciplinary Arts**

Research indicates that community cohesion is the result of experiencing comfort and care, a sense of being valued, a sense of belonging and being accepted (Corey, 2004; 

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6 *Co-equal*, or *cognitive style* of integration is referred to as an approach where two disciplines have equal footing in the curricular plan (Bresler, 2002).

7 There is a concern that as schools move to arts integration to deliver the sole art exposure that students are receiving, arts specialist are reduced to the role of “advisor” to classroom teachers of non-arts disciplines who will be carrying out the instruction (Hallmark, 2012). The question is whether students can acquire mastery of the National Arts Standards through only arts integration. Ironically, the required skills outlined in the standards are essential to the success of arts integration: one would struggle to compose a song using science vocabulary, if one has never written a melody, considered prosody, or has no working understanding of rhythm, musical form or harmony.
Yalom, 1995). At the center of my research is my desire to understand if a rich, interdisciplinary arts experience can bring about all of those elements toward community cohesion. The term community is broad and can include small and intimate groups like a single class or club, or it can mean groups in the larger population. For example, a community can also refer to an entire grade of students, a school, a school district, all school children and their parents, all tax-paying members of the town, all who share an interest, or the world. In an effort to identify the ways in which I view community for the sake of this research, I will focus on the following four levels of community and define each in regards to arts education in public schools. The levels are: Community Classroom, School Community: Collaboration and Social Capital, Community Into School, World Community: Social Outreach.

**Classroom community.** My interest in researching interdisciplinary arts and its possible impact on community building lies first and foremost with the students that I teach. As an arts educator, I understand that for students to feel safe enough to take chances toward their own individual growth and understanding, they need to be a respected and valued community member of my classroom. Jessica Hoffman Davis (2012), a cognitive psychologist and founder of the Arts in Education program at Harvard University has spent a career researching arts education, particularly around classroom culture that motivates students to remain in school and build self-confidence. From her research, she summarizes that there are four main ingredients that point to why the arts...
Interdisciplinary Arts as an Agent for Community Building in a U.S. High School

are particularly good at being places where students feel safe, valued and respected.
Those ingredients are: Product and Agency; Emotion: Expression and empathy;
Ambiguity and Respect; Process Orientation: Inquiry, Reflection; and Respect:
Engagement and Responsibility.

**Product and agency.** In the journey from childhood to adulthood, Davis (2012) states that the most important thing students can learn is the ability to imagine their future molded by their own actions and decision, and the confidence in their ability to make it happen. Through the works of art that they create, students become independent and critical thinkers that take responsibility for their choices. *Agency* is created when a student develops self-identity, initiative, and self-direction.

Davis (2012) describes the development of *agency* in this way: “From the creation or consideration of that tangible product that is a work of art, students experience the profound, essential, and relevant learning outcome; I make a difference” (p. 22). Her research uncovered that agency was key to embedding oneself into a community - each person’s contribution is essential to whole product. With that realization, students begin to feel that they do not want to let the members of their community down by being unprepared, unfocused, or absent. Students’ sense of their place in the community is heightened, as is their commitment to the common good.

**Emotion: Expression and empathy.** The interviews and observations which are at the center of Davis’s (2012) research, revealed the importance of emotion and self-
expression toward student connectedness to their school. She explains that the self-discovery format of art creation aligns with the adolescent desire to explore and understand his or her powerful emotions. Here, she describes the phenomenon:

The focus on emotion in the arts – whether in the soulful interpretation of a theatrical monologue, the vibrant motion of a modern dance, or the powerful construction of a drawing or sculpture – results in two learning outcomes that are of great interest and importance to high school-age students: 1) expression, the opportunity to give shape to one’s own feelings and 2) empathy, the discovery of others’ similar or different emotions as embodied in works of art. (Davis, 2012, pp. 45-46)

Through collaboration within a classroom community, students learn to listen and hear differing viewpoints, then navigate a respectful balance. Not unlike the cohesion of an army battalion or sports team, students engaged in a group artistic product emotionally bond into a cohesive unit, essentially a tight-knit community.

*Ambiguity and respect.* As students engage in the act of creating art, they learn to interpret what they see and find meaningful. They also learn that the construction of meaning can be different for the observer, the presenter, and the creator. Davis (2012) reminds us that “…repeated experiences with the work often awaken additional and/or new understandings” (p. 53). It is in the ambiguity of a definitive meaning in art, that students learn that their perspective matters, and so does that of others’. This is an
important element of creating a classroom culture where respect for one another is key and necessary for learning to happen.

Process orientation: Inquiry, reflection. Art making requires a mastery of skills and knowledge, but then it additionally needs to be put into action through creation. Davis (2012) explains that consistent reflection is necessary in art-making: “…the process-oriented interaction between the maker and the work is interactive, with discovery and intention responding to and inviting shape and direction” (p. 69). Unlike in passive activities, students who are actively engaged in the process of creation are more likely to experience flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997a, p. 47). Csikszentmihalyi (1997b) describes flow as the moment when a person fully invests his or her attention and skill in a task, then completely loses any sense of time, or his or her emotional state. Furthermore, “The more flow, the more likely we are to feel happy overall” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997b, p. 11). Collaborative arts classrooms, say a dance troupe, cast of a play, or a performing ensemble, by design have flow as its quintessential goal precisely at the moment of unveiling to the public.

Respect: Engagement and responsibility. Through collaboration and reflection within the arts, students are better able to “take on” another person’s life, delve deep into imagining their motivations, and discover a viewpoint they may never before have considered. As a result, their sense of community widens to include humanity. Davis (2012) describes how the arts are uniquely situated to propel individuals to widen their
concerns to include others: “The notion of ensemble is the experience of being involved in and dedicated to a production that, taken as a whole, is larger than the sum of its individual parts” (Davis, 2012, p. 80). Whether in a stage production, musical ensemble, dance troupe, collaborative video project, or mural, students are provided an opportunity to unite toward a common goal. Community is created through mentoring from more experienced students; through membership, there is a sense of place. It is in the act of cooperation that students heighten their ability to empathize and trust one another. This connectedness results in happiness: “Students reported that participating in art classes increased their mood and motivation more than participating in other courses” (Shenoff, et al., 2003, p. 171).

Davis (2012) reminds us that the artistic process is uniquely human. When participating in a performance, or presenting a piece of artwork, artists are essentially connecting with their audience. Thus, the idea of community is expanded to also include anybody who has ever made sense of the work. Davis (2012) describes this phenomenon as “…a cultural continuum – that human connection that fuels and frames our individual worldviews and our shared humanity” (p. 82).

**School community: Collaboration and social capital.** Community in schools can be built between colleagues through collaboration, trust, and shared experience. Cooperation toward positive goals benefits all of the members of a school, essentially facilitating the creation of school community. Though school faculties have diverse
philosophies, past experiences, passions, and biases, they also share deep commonality-commitment to teaching and the well-being of children. If that commonality is highlighted as are the benefits of working in collaboration for the sake of students and learning, it would seem that interdisciplinary connections could find a foothold in the fabric of school life toward the creation of a positive school community. What might also result are unexpected benefits to the teachers themselves, through well-being and job satisfaction.

This section is referred to as School Community: Collaboration and Social Capital. “Social capital” consists of the daily interactions that humans rely on and which create a social unit: goodwill, fellowship, and sympathy (Putnam, 2000). Robert Putnam (2000) explains that the benefits of building “social capital” goes beyond the obvious connections to teaching and learning: “A society characterized by general reciprocity is more efficient than a distrustful society… Trustworthiness lubricates social life. Frequent interactions among a diverse set of people tends to produce a norm of generalized reciprocity” (p. 21). Working on complex artistic endeavors in a collaborative fashion builds what is called bonding capital. Putnam (2000) describes bonding capital as the “superglue” within groups that can bring about powerful and positive social changes (p. 22-23).

Drawing on a multitude of studies, Putnam (2000) concludes that the overarching positive social effect that social capital imparts is improved health and happiness that
enhances our body’s resistance capabilities (p. 331). The old model of community, where people interact regularly at marketplaces, civic groups, and religious affiliations has been given over to longer work commutes, highly scheduled free time, and families with two working parents. This limits people from connecting to members of their communities, resulting in the loss of social capital: “…social connectedness has been declining, depression and even suicide has been increasing” (Putnam, 2000, p. 331).

Teachers in particular have been suffering from the negative social climate in their workplace, namely emotional burnout, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Emotional burnout is the result of feeling as if stress and fatigue is an obstacle to meeting the emotional and physical needs of students. When one’s emotional resources are drained, depersonalization results, which is a general cynicism toward students, parents, and colleagues. It is displayed through cold attitude, derogatory remarks, and a physical distancing of others (Maslach & Leiter, 1996). The feeling of reduced personal accomplishment is the result of educators feeling they are not contributing to their students’ development, which is the motivation for many who enter the field (Schwab, 2001).

There are a variety of studies (Kumcagiz et al., 2014; McCarthy, et al., 2014; Petty, 2007) that explore why teachers have low job satisfaction, and others that consider different aspects of supervision, school organization, and leadership opportunities toward
changing school climate, satisfaction, and commitment. One such aspect is collegiality and social emotional learning (SEL):

…it is clear that the promotion of positive school climates and SEL are key actions that schools can take to foster greater teacher commitment. In particular, the results suggest that by nurturing better relations between teachers and students and by promoting and supporting an SEL culture across the school, schools will be more able [sic] to encourage higher levels of teacher commitment. (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2011, p. 1046)

Furthermore, Huang and Waxman (2009) found in their research that organizational commitment is the result of greater collaboration amongst teachers. When teachers experience greater collaboration, they foster better relationships and have a more enjoyable and supportive work environment.

School interdisciplinary arts programs have been touted for the benefits of skill-building, higher order thinking, and the development of a variety of cognitive processes in students. Through my research, I want to uncover whether interdisciplinary arts programming can also tout the benefits of building a positive community, resulting in improved job satisfaction.

Community into school. Right at the threshold of Community into School is a grey space where students’ two worlds meet: home and school. Their school world consists of teachers, expectations, rules, and the clear influence of social norms. Their
home world may include the use of a language other than English, a unique cultural background, and possibly conflicting social norms and expectations. Teachers teaching multicultural students, or students from several cultural or ethnic groups in society, often look at their differences as an obstacle to learning, resulting in cultural blindness, rather than seeing culture as an asset (Landa, 2011, p. 6). Since teachers are disproportionately white, school districts, as in the one at the center of this research project, have been searching for ways to bridge the achievement, understanding, and empathy gaps through school-wide initiatives centered on *cultural proficiency*. The term cultural proficiency is often defined as: “the ability of educators to successfully serve children and youth of all cultural backgrounds represented within school populations, particularly those from racially/ethnically, linguistically, or economically marginalized groups” (Landa, 2011, p. 9). The purpose of setting cultural proficiency as a district-wide goal is to help teachers match their instructional practices to the cultural experiences of the students in front of them each day. School administrators also hope to shine a light on how negative stereotypes impact student learning, and to facilitate positive ways different cultural groups interact throughout the day.

There is a growing body of research which support the need for schools to focus on cultural proficiency, and the academic and social gains of students that result (DeJaeghere & Zhang, 2008; Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001; Lambert & Cazabon, 1994; Wills, Lintz & Mehan, 2004). However, one avenue toward meeting this goal, which
relates to this body of research, is to engage the community. Hanley (1999) suggests inviting the community into the school for decision-making activities, allowing community members to offer workshops, and the establishment of a cultural resource library. Knowing the demographics of the community is not enough. Knowing the individuals and then tapping into their knowledge base and talents is a powerful way to make a lasting impact on mutual understanding and respect, and meet cultural proficiency goals.

Interdisciplinary arts projects, depending on the design and scope, can be that opportunity to invite the public community into schools. This practice is not only beneficial for the bridge building effect, but also for students to experience diverse ways of being and doing from those willing to engage with them in an artistic endeavor. The literature is full of examples of community arts programs that act as enrichment for school children outside of the school day (Chappell, 2006; Charmaraman & Hall, 2011; Wright, 2007). The literature also focuses a great deal on paid, professional artists-in-residences (Bresler, et al., 2000; Eckhoff, 2011; Redfield, 1990). Though not thoroughly researched, community booster groups have become both ubiquitous and essential to the financial survival of school arts programs in nearly every school district in the United States (Beckham, 1993; Elpus, 2008; Hicks, et al., 1989; Hoffer, 1988; Simons, 2008).

There is also research on parent participation in schools, particularly in literacy programs (Bamblett, 2013; Gaitan, 2012; Ramirez, 2014). However, there is a paucity of research
regarding community participation in school arts programs during school hours. In a recent study, I (Pappas, 2013) found that some teacher resistance to collaboration with community members due to negative personal experiences and suspicion. One participant who had a community member take over control of a joint project, reducing his classroom autonomy, as his reason for a lack of commitment to community, and because he “didn’t have the time or energy to follow through” on the organization (Pappas, 2013, p. 41). Another participant responded warily: “the school should not rely on outside people…they should support the right kind of staff to support the students” (Pappas, 2013, p. 41). Educators might also mention their opposition to community inclusion as a burden of acquiring Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI), new requirements for fingerprints by those working with students in schools, coordinating rotating and personal schedules, and concerns that parent and community members will respond negatively to a teacher’s teaching methods or curriculum choices.

The experiences that I have had with inviting community members into my classroom and after school projects were none of those things: a student whose parent played gospel piano, accompanied the chorus for a suite of songs; a community member who was trained in traditional Japanese dance taught actors how to put on kimonos and do an a traditional fan dance for a stage production; a community artist with a show at the local library came into school to demonstrate her particular technique of turning close-up photography into watercolors. In each of these experiences, I noticed a palpable increase
in student motivation. Students clearly learned a new appreciation for people in their community. The community members who participated were more than pleased to share their talent, answer questions and provide constructive critique when asked. I never felt guests had over stepped their bounds or took over my program or project. The only residual response from the collaboration was equal enthusiasm on the part of students and participants toward each other.

I cannot help but wonder if an accumulation of shared positive experiences through community engagement between schools and the public would not have an even greater impact. Shapiro (2004) reminds us that families who are more actively involved in their communities, as homeowners and citizens, begin to push for better schools, police departments, fire departments, libraries, and other public services. Regular invitations to the public, not just the parents, to invest themselves in the school’s interdisciplinary arts projects could possibly create a powerful symbiotic relationship resulting in stronger arts programming, stronger support, and possibly result in a stronger community in general.

World community: Social outreach. In a project focused on community, I would be remiss to exclude the opportunity to help my students situate themselves as citizens of the world community. For many of my students, their life experiences have rarely allowed them to contemplate people and situations outside of their homogenous surroundings. In order to open this awareness, students need to have an opportunity to build their knowledge of “others” and be provided a vehicle to develop understanding
and empathy. By discovering their place as a citizen of the world, students are then able to envision themselves able to make positive change through collaboration. This sense of purpose and power can stay with students for a lifetime. I refer to this section as World Community: Social Outreach.

According to Walter Parker (1999) developing “world citizens” means creating students’ sense of stewardship beyond their immediate location, as well as exposing them to wider breadths of knowledge about the world, promoting democratic learning, tolerance and non-violent expression (Collie et al., 2011, p. 1044). In the effort to create citizens of the world, Nussbaum (2007) proposes that we cultivate humanity and create what she calls a narrative imagination: the ability to intellectually understand another person’s situation and respond in a positive way. My experience tells me that the same processes that artists use to inhabit a subject and tap into flow are the processes that allow our narrative imagination to “feel” a stranger’s experience and motivate our action to help. David Hansen (2011) beautifully describes this type of narrative imagination through an arts experience:

The students still live in their local world, but they are no longer merely of it. They have the same names and are the same ages but their orientations are now different. They have had an opportunity to cultivate a deeper intimation of what it means to take the world seriously, to learn from the reality of its offerings, and to appreciate it (p. 105).
Hansen (2011) connects Dewey’s idea of educational democracy and the modern arts teachers’ ability to facilitate discussion on important issues that cross cultures, communities, and nationalities. By becoming aware, open, reflective, and welcoming to the many ways of being in this world, students are able to see themselves as important players toward a more cosmopolitan worldview. Hansen (2011) explains that the arts provide opportunities for problem-solving and knowledge-building, but also that “they open a door to participating in the world’s very transformation – something which occurs with every creative act on the part of a community or individual’ (p. 117).

As I stated in the introductory pages, this sensibility, the active building of this sensibility through interdisciplinary arts, is the very formation of multicultural education and ultimately of a society based on social justice.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Topic & Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to present the methods that best answered my research question: How do interdisciplinary arts performance projects influence a person’s sense of community? My hope and expectation was to better understand the relationship between high school students experiencing design-focused interdisciplinary arts modules with teachers, hired experts and interested community members, and the establishment of a community culture in a mainstream public school in the United States that serves them. I hoped my research would uncover what types of activities, whether collaborative, requiring physical challenge, personal choice, or the result of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997), enhance a student’s experience of connectedness to others, and a feeling of being an essential, contributing member of a project. Depending on the results, I hoped my research would support the inclusion of interdisciplinary arts into the fabric of a student’s school experience through both curricular connections and additional co-curricular experiences. But more importantly, I hoped to add to the body of knowledge concerning the impact and role of the arts in secondary schools.

Research Questions

- How does the collaboration of diverse participants from a community in a high school setting influence a student’s broader idea of what community means?
• How does immersion into an unfamiliar culture through interdisciplinary learning impact a participant’s perception of being a member of a global community?

• Do interdisciplinary arts performance projects build a sense of community for students in a school setting, and if so why and how?

• How do elements of democratic learning (Wyatt, 1999), creative design opportunities and moments of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) contribute to the feeling of being an essential member of a community?

Participants and Site Selection

The participants of my research project are the public high school students, teachers and community members in a town outside of Boston, MA where I teach. I refer to this town as Landingham. I chose this site for several reasons: I have access to this site as the K-12 Performing Arts Coordinator for the district; I know that the school has community culture that is neither toxic, nor especially positive and inclusive; it is a school with few opportunities for active project-based learning, particularly across artistic domains, and therefore the study may be generalizable to many districts throughout the country; and I have a staff around me whom I believe in and who trust my judgment to guide the design of this project. Conducting the research at my own school seemed the best possible case scenario given that I will need to rely on these professionals, and hire others, to carry out the project, while I take the time needed to be a participant observer.
The participants are the self-selected high school students (ages 14-18) who are the cast, crew, and artistic contributors of a stage production. These students were categorized into groups by their job descriptions. The cast refers to people who took part on the stage during the production, typically singers, actors, and dancers. The crew refers to people who took part in the technical aspects of the production: set builders and movers, painters, lighting and sound technicians, props managers, wardrobe mistresses and assistants. The task-oriented descriptor included people who participate in peripheral interdisciplinary tasks: photography (candids, headshots, photo journalism), video (journaling/editing, recording of rehearsals and performances), make-up (design and application), allied artistry (set designers, poster and program designers), specialty costuming and props (design and creation), and writing (speeches, promotional and advertisements). These participants did not attend the rehearsals and run-throughs regularly, but were given tasks away from the theater to design and execute either alone or with a crew, to do on their own schedule.

**Phenomenology as Philosophical Stance**

This dissertation research is focused on both persons and situations (Larson & Delespaul, 1992) participating collaboratively in a stage production using a variety of interdisciplinary modules, and including a variety of community members. My interest resides in what the individuals are feeling and thinking after participating in
interdisciplinary tasks with people whom they may not know, particularly what factors and situations facilitate their feeling of an emerging sense of community over time.

Both the distinct boundaries of the study (the rehearsal and performance period while preparing a stage production) and my interest in understanding the participants’ common *lived experience* pointed to a phenomenological research approach, particularly the psychological approach (Moustakas, 1990) within phenomenology. Using this approach, I relied more on the described experiences of the participants, than on my own interpretations of the meaning of the experience (Cresswell, 2013) for them, though my own interpretation is always embedded in how I bring forth the data.

Several philosophical interpretations of phenomenology have existed throughout its history. The first is Hegel’s (1807) focus on the conscious, or logical meaning behind an experience. This has traditionally been called *dialectical* phenomenology. Husserl’s (1859-1938) *transcendental* approach focused on the generalized essential features brought about through reflection. He was interested in the phenomenon from a first person point of view. Heidegger (1927), on the other hand, moved beyond the subject and object experience and expanded phenomenological inquiry to include a person’s *being*. The research described in this paper springs from last this line of thinking. Cresswell (2013) describes it as an interest in “the lived experiences of individuals and how they have both subjective experiences of the phenomenon and objective experiences of something in common with other people” (p. 78).
Collecting qualitative data lends itself to a researcher understanding a process over time because the researcher examines details about setting and context, specifically through listening to the participants’ voices and observing their actions. Luttrell (2010) explains: “qualitative research insists upon a face-to-face, heartfelt encounter between the subjects, a recognition that each of us is unique in our effort to make sense of ourselves and the world around us” (p. 1). This perspective speaks to my interest in this research.

As a teacher and performer steeped in long term performance projects over the course of my career, I have seen a variety of responses from the cast and crew upon each performance project’s conclusions. These feelings range from a certain type of mourning, not unlike the reluctance to turn that last page of an especially satisfying book, juxtaposed relief to have their free time back. My initial experiences made me wonder how a seemingly similar experience can result in such dissimilar responses? What are the features of the production process that impact those feelings? For example, one student may feel more invested in a project because of a decision-making opportunity, or a struggle to master a particular choreography, while another may feel frustrated or incompetent. Uncovering each person’s world of feeling relies on a variety of qualitative techniques: interviews, observations and certain arts-based techniques within qualitative methodology. Leavy (2009) explains that arts-based practices are particularly effective in research where process is a central design feature: “The capabilities of the arts to capture process mirrors the unfolding nature of social life, and thus there is a congruence between
subject matter and method” (p. 12). Theater, outside of professional repertory companies, brings mere strangers together, and within the boundaries of audition to performance molds them into a cohesive group. The process of change on such an accelerated schedule happens personally, socially and artistically. It unfolds in unexpected ways, similar to the creative process.

However, quantitative methods offered a unique opportunity for me to be able to apply results from the data for other professionals in the field to consider. By intentionally collecting both qualitative and quantitative data through a mixed methods approach, I will benefit from the strengths of each data set toward answering my research questions. Additionally, Moustakas (1994), building on Husserl’s idea of epoche (or bracketing), cautions investigators to approach their work in a way “in which everything is perceived freshly, as if for the first time” (p. 34). This is referred to as scientific phenomenology reduction, or isolating past knowledge and limiting things intentionally connected to conscience (Giorgi, 2009). By combining descriptive phenomenology and quantitative methods, the influence of the researcher on the data is minimized, and I can achieve an additional form of triangulation or cross-validation.

Jaeger (1997) describes survey research as optimal for investigations into the characteristic of large groups of people, particularly if the interest is well-defined and the group has at least one characteristic in common. For this research, the common characteristic was the desire to participate in a high school stage production.
Data Collection Method

**Qualitative research.** Human perception is subjective, and qualitative research records that interpretation of reality. For this research project focused on collaboration and community building, Bogdan & Bilken’s (1992) statement seems especially apt: “Interpretation is not an autonomous act…Individuals interpret with the help of others” (p. 36). It is through personal interactions that people create meaning. In order to best uncover that meaning, Cresswell (2013) describes optimal data collection as multiple in-depth interviews with participants, field observations, and journal writing - all of which I employed throughout.

The enduring research contributions of Jessica Hoffman Davis toward Arts Learning, Advocacy, Development, and Community Education is a foundational model of the type of qualitative research I pursued (Davis, 1997; Davis, 1999; Davis 2010; Davis, 2012a; Davis 2012b). Davis’s diverse knowledge base as a cognitive developmental psychologist and a founder of the Arts in Education program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education has allowed her to take the quotes of her interviewees and infuse the commentary and analysis with an array of theories, art history and the perspective of the wide variety of specialists she has the benefit of knowing (Davis, 2012b, p. ix, 5).

I hope to integrate excerpts from my data into my writing in a similar manner as Davis accomplished in her writings:
The arts awaken possibilities in student thinking that liberate heart and mind and, most importantly, assert one’s personal potential, agency, or power. A high school music teacher wants her students “to value their individuality and respect their final product,” and to “help them see the value of sharing their work with others.” “I can do that,” one might say from the audience. “You did that!” resounds for the performers in the audience’s applause. As if he’d heard Dollie McLean’s choice of high, a 9th grader said of his work: “All of the art I do is special to because it is a place where I have the control, the world of my art is mine and my own so when I can be in my world, it is a moment of true ecstasy” (no drugs involved). (Davis, 2012b, p. 22)

The humanity Davis brings to her inquiry by allowing her participants’ words to resound throughout history, travel around the world, and mingle with the foremost experts in the field inspires me. Davis and coauthor Sarah Lawrence Lightfoot’s The Art and Science of Portraiture (1997), which builds on Davis’s works, was a particularly powerful influence on my work.

*Sense of community.* The research of McMillan and Chavis (1986) and McMillan (1996) resulted in the development of the McMillan Theory of Psychological Sense of Community (PSOC), and provided a strong framework from which I could develop questions for my respondents to answer. Sense of community is typically studied through participation in community-based projects that are not sponsored or generated by a
school. The focus of sense of community, in these contexts, rely solely on adult feelings within the boundaries of their neighborhood. Though I have not found research that measures a sense of community starting from the students in a school, or considered the rippling circles of engagement with the greater community of business professionals and willing townspeople, I believe the framework’s guiding principles are appropriate for my research. McMillan (2011) define the elements for consideration in measuring a sense for community as:

1. Membership/spirit.
2. Influence/trust.
3. Integration of fulfillment of need.
4. Shared emotional connection.
5. Rituals and traditions.

Nowell and Boyd (2010) present an additional lens to consider sense of community. They describe the need to delineate between viewing the community as a responsibility or as a resource. There are a handful of points that keep me from adopting their theory fully. The first point is the idea that the participants in my research who reach a state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) in collaboration with others, or individually, may or may not have a heightened sense of community as a result. When I consider my own sense of flow moments as a member of a performing instrumental ensemble, or a flow
moment when designing and painting a mural alone, I believe there is much more to discover about how flow experiences might make one feel more connected as a community member – that the flow experience somehow became essential to one’s sense of participation and membership in the larger work.

The second point that I included in my approach, but is not necessarily found in McMillan’s elements of sense of community, is the notion that cultural immersion might serve as a vehicle for a transcendental experience. Could the challenge of “becoming” a person with a very different culture and worldview than the metropolitan high school student at the center of this research, facilitate a state of satisfaction that results in heightened level of commitment and sense of community? I believe this point is specific to the interdisciplinary arts approach to building a sense of community and needs to remain central to my method design.

**Arts-based research.** Cresswell (2013) also suggests various forms of art, such as poetry, music, films and formal writing by the participants to provide an additional source of data. Narrative inquiry (Leavy 2009) is a common arts-based research (ABR) method, which I have envisioned over the past few years in anticipation of this research. The opportunity presented itself with an additional source of data via the common cast and crew biographies, which are typically published in the show’s printed program. In professional organizations, this means a list of impressive past productions and television/movie credits. It may also include a list of famous mentors or simple gratitude
to people who have long believed in their talent and tenacity. In high school productions, these cast and crew notes can be difficult to gather and equally difficult to read. Students new to theater often have few credits to their name and even often fewer mentors. The void of important information to share can sometimes lead to a list of inside jokes or code language for a handful of friends to enjoy. I have long wanted to find a way for these renderings to be more meaningful to both the writer and the reader. Usually, the extensive list of last minute tasks involved in getting a production up and running by opening night, places improving the output of cast and crew notes dead last in the preparation process. Year after year, this part of the program has been a disappointment. This year was an especially meaningful and rich source of data.

Leavy (2009) explains that narrative inquiry allows the researcher to access a participant’s life through a storytelling process in order to “reveal multidimensional meanings” (p. 27). For research purposes, the participants’ story was facilitated through a guided, yet open-ended prompt in order to allow for personal and artistic expression. McNiff (1998) reminds us “The simpler, the deeper,” in order to allow the creative process room to breathe (p. 147). I have consistently invited participants to employ the use of free form poetry, haiku, or other creative writing forms in any of their responses. Full responses or excerpts were selected for the performance attendants to read and reflect on at the culminating performance of the production.
Artifacts. At different points, participants were given an opportunity to participate in two different anonymous activities. The output of which were shared as artifacts and publicly displayed. The first was a bulletin board with a tree, which was central to the production’s storyline. Different leaves were provided for any participant to share their thoughts on the provided prompt: “Theater is…” The leaves were presented in a display as a teaser for a prospective audience and enjoyed by the participants. I saw participants adding leaves up until the performance.

The second set of artifacts was a reflective tool for participants to notice the work of their peers. Scraps of paper with a cartoon logo were printed and set to the side of the work arena. Anyone could take a scrap and make note of an especially well done job, someone taking chances, kindness, or remarkable enthusiasm and energy. There were no requirements or limits to the types of statements that could be offered, only that the offering was anonymous and discreetly left in the receptacle. These became known as Pickle Points, and the reading of the entries each day was a regular ritual, read right before the students engaged in the survey.

Quantitative research. For my research to be successful, I needed to tap into the participants’ immediate thoughts and feelings. Time is of the essence, since memories fade and participants’ opinions can change based on feedback of others and their own reflection. My challenge was to reliably capture the participants’ stream of consciousness
over time. After careful consideration, I settled on a combination of the qualitative approaches offered above, along with Experience-Sampling Method.

*Experience-sampling.* Sometimes called *ambulatory self-report* (Conner & Barrett, 2012) or *intensive longitudinal designs* (Bolger & Laurenceau, 2013), experience-sampling method (ESM) focuses on understanding the content and context of an individual through self-reporting, while he or she is living the experience under scrutiny. Typically, this is done through closed and/or open-ended surveys at either random or designated times during a participant’s day. For this research project, the participants were asked to respond to the survey at the conclusion of their work on the project each day.

The immediacy of the data to the participants’ experience using ESM allows for an accurate representation of their “present self,” rather than having the respondent reflecting backwards after an extended time on their “retrospective self” (Connor & Laurenceau, 2012). Data solely reliant on reflective reporting can result in participants distorting their memory through a variety of reflective and cognitive processes (Kahneman, 2011), or begin boldly inaccurate in their estimations (Prince, et al., 2008). Though removing all bias through *in situ* reporting is impossible, the proximity to experience reveals a more nuanced and unfiltered gradations of the participants’ feelings. It allowed me to see spikes in the number and intensity of responses, related to a
particular event, and then engage in follow-up with interviews to uncover the meanings in more depth.

Depending on the number of scheduled ESM responses, a researcher could find themselves with as many as 50 data points per week for a single respondent. The ESM method “allows intrapersonal as well as interpersonal comparisons” (Hektner, Schmidt & Csikszentmihalyi, 2007). This could provide enough data to truly unravel whether participant responses are related to individual differences or the context in which they are being experienced (Schmidt, Lyutykh, & Shumow, 2012). Additionally, the data is complex and multileveled as the “reports are nested within individuals, individuals within classroom, and in some cases, classrooms within schools” (Zirkel, Garcia & Murphy, 2015). The immediacy of the data collection provides education researchers an advantage when focused on students who might have little ability to recall or reflect on the patterns of their behavior, as in the case for instance of nine year olds (Larson and Richards, 1991). All of these factors contribute to the statistical power and the high rate of reliability.

*Limitations of experience-sampling.* A challenge that I need to consider when selecting to use ESM is that it can be labor-intensive and potentially expensive for the researcher. Traditionally, the method required a team to manage the collection of data and assist responders at any hour of the day or night with the survey process. It also demands a great deal of attention on the part of the participants, as they must be able and
willing to stop what they are doing throughout their day. As a result, self-selection bias results as those willing to withstand interruption participate, while others select not to respond (Mulligan, Schneider, & Wolfe, 2000; Zuzanek, 1999). This research project typically had one response a day by the participants who were working on the project, but the study included 72 days of collection. The majority of participants were provided time to focus on the survey, while others were trusted to fill it out as they completed their work off site.

Different types of technology implemented into the ESM research design have made the data collection process more efficient over recent years, though it has also made it potentially more expensive to carry out. In the early 1980s, researchers relied on pager technology that would signal to respondents when to stop their activity and fill out paper surveys (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984; deVries, Delespaull & Theunissen, 1984). Though inexpensive to rent, the pagers could only work in an approximate 30-mile range. In 2002, Ellwood developed the TimeCorder, a small computer, to study a respondent’s time use. However, it was too burdensome for research beyond 24 hours. Conti (2001) developed an electronic planner, which later proved to be prohibitively expensive and difficult for participants to keep with them at all times. Personal Data Assistants (PDAs) have been very successful for ESM research, as the palmtop computers offered the convenience of portability and direct input of responses, with the programmable data collection program developed by Barrett (Feldman, Barrett, & Barrett, 2001). The
computerized studies also have resulted in higher compliance rates (Stone, Schiffman, Schwartz, Broderick, & Hufford, 2002). However, in 2007, providing each participant with a PDA ran the research between $100 and $600 (Hektner, Schmidt & Csikszentmihalyi, 2007). Mobile ESM (mESM) studies that use Smartphone technology have become the newest development in data collection using this method. There are several advantages to the new platform. First, the regular integration of smartphones into the average person’s life has eliminated the feeling of intrusion and related burden to participants. The real-time sensor technology embedded in the devices can provide context to the collected responses (proximity, light, and movement) without any additional work, and it automatically uploads to a data collection site further augmenting the results (Pejovic, Lathia, Mascolo & Musolesi, 2015).

My research is concerned with the feelings and impressions of people while participating in creative activities, which required them to take visible chances and collaborate with strangers of all ages. This is a vulnerable place for adolescents and adults. According to Frable, Platt and Hooey (1998), ESM is effective in probing a person’s inner life. Through private and regular inquiry requiring no face-to-face interaction with researchers, responders are more likely to divulge things that they might otherwise conceal. Additionally, the mESM technology and the commonplace and extensive use of smartphones removes the public from knowing a participant is part of a study (Trull & Ebner-Priemer, 2013). The anonymity this provides eliminated
embarrassment for responders who were considering the delicate subjects race, class, power, cultural bias, and economic equality. It seemed necessary to provide participants a way to reflect and respond in less visible ways to ensure their free thoughts to come forward.

*Instrumentation of experience-sampling.* Though mESM platforms are becoming the standard because of the sensory data that can be uploaded automatically, in my study I hoped to implement the mESM platform for data collection primarily because of finances - nearly every student and adult in the school has some form of smartphone. It was of great importance to include every person who was willing to participate. Smartphone technology is definitely an efficient avenue for data collection, but it is not the only avenue. A contingency plan, if there were technological difficulties, was to rely on paper and pencil survey forms. There were stacks printed and accessible at each meeting and the data was inserted afterwards.

The pre-established schedule with participants who called by the director, music director, technical director, assisting teachers, and hired professionals allowed me to set aside time each day for the participants to follow the link to the survey. The dashboard setting on the website allowed me to follow up with students with an interview to further understand his or her responses.

The mESM platform has a variety of options to choose from, as universities and researchers have been developing different tools for their different needs. Wellness
studies have implemented wristwatches to take pulse samples. Other studies monitor speech or movement. These types of platforms are heavy on analysis of useful data and provide ways to ramp down the battery use when not collecting useful data. This research had none of those requirements, and standard survey format sufficed.

I used Survey Monkey, an online custom survey data collection platform. The benefits were the Android and iOS app compatibility and tools like the dashboard, which allow for the researcher to zero in on the data in whatever way was necessary for a check-in on attendance, or responses after particular events. Survey Monkey also integrated seamlessly with my SPSS program and provided regular print outs via Microsoft Excel for note taking and tracking. For students without Smartphone technology, I offered a school owned, or my personal device, or students were directed to the paper copies, which few actually used.

**Timeline.** Data collection took place between January 2016 and March 2016, which was when the production went into rehearsal and continued to the end of the performance, with the addition of three weeks to finish exit interviews.

Since I am interested in how the participants felt after engaging in the interdisciplinary approach of the production preparation, and did not focus on their lives beyond that scope, I considered the data collection *event-focused sampling* (Zirkel, Garcia & Murphy, 2015). This means that participants were only surveyed after doing tasks related to the production process. Though other survey methods are valid, I felt this
approach allowed the focus of the research to be strictly on the effects of the interdisciplinary project and its possible community building impact.

**Data Analytics Methods**

My research included many data gathering techniques, such as survey, interview, observation, open-ended written response, and collection of artifacts. The project happened over an extended period of time, so participants had time for reflection and meaning-making, which demonstrated a change in perception from beginning to end of the project.

Analysis and coding, as a result, was equally diverse. There were opportunities for *pattern construction*, and *interaction, interplay, and interrelationship* as an analysis, method particularly during field observations and reviewing the recorded interviews (Saldana, 2011). I witnessed the patterns and interactions between students and teachers during the learning process and related that to responses offered in the interviews and surveys. *Category construction* and *developing concepts* were particularly useful when analyzing transcription and comparing responses across participants (Saldana, 2011). When several participants mentioned similar feelings, influences, or understandings, I tracked and explored further to see if similarities were an important factor in the research outcomes. *Deduction, induction and abduction* was toggled between each other as themes, categories, and perceived outliers emerge (Saldana, 2011). It was necessary to do this in order to scrutinize assumptions I made have made during the process.
I was "living" with this project at my workplace, and data intimacy was a result. This intimacy and extended time to "steep" also allowed for analytic memos. I definitely had flashes of ideas throughout the day, as to possible interpretations and further questions, and I relied on jottings and journaling to both keep track of ideas and exorcise preoccupying thoughts from interfering with my ability to observe and listen with fresh eyes and ears.

Throughout this project, I found myself immediately taking note of questions I have about particular language (in vivo) that participants chose to use. Strong language was a flag for me to tease the meaning through further questioning and comparison of other responses. Other times, I made notes of word emphasis, frequency, and emotion, as well as pauses and laughter (value coding). This is useful in interpreting a participant’s emphasis, intention, or caution in forming a response. Descriptive coding, theming the data, and developing the concepts happened organically as I began to digest all the information toward assertion development. As tedious and exhausting as transcribing interviews might be, I found that through doing the transcriptions the thoughts I had in the moment were key signposts, indicating next step investigations and follow-up conversations.
Reliability and Fieldwork Ethics

Reliability and ethics have been on my mind since I chose to do my research at my place of work. The power that I had over my students and faculty, some of which I hired for this project, could influence their answers. I was aware that some participants might respond in a manner that they believe I expect or desire. To avoid this influence, my participants were made aware that they could opt out of participating in the project, refuse to answer any question and could end any interview at any point. I consistently attempted to build rapport with the participants in order to put them at ease, and never gave the impression that they were being coerced or offered a gift, fee, or grade that might be considered a bribe. I explained to my participants that while I would use their actual words and responses in my research, I would protect their anonymity through the use of pseudonyms of both people and place.

Analysis and Uses

Mills (as cited in Shaw, 2008) cautions researchers to be aware of their own agendas. By focusing on our expected outcomes, we may “miss what we are being told” (p. 409). We owe our participants the time and effort to interpret their meaning in ways that are authentic to them. When we discover less than flattering things, or see things as “deficiencies” in our subjects, Eve Tuck (2009) urges us to consider what she calls, incongruously, a desire-centered stance. Rather than focusing on how the subject is damaged, even if we believe that the information may create positive change, employ a
desire-centered stance in order to provoke “further analysis of otherwise overlooked findings” (Tuck, 2009, p. 418). I have embraced the tenets of a desire-centered research stance, which allowed me to consider the complexity and contradictions in all the participants and their situations. This has been especially important as I worked with participants who were financially disadvantaged. Beyond the obvious need to extend empathy when a student’s lack of resources and flexibility directly impacted my own life (i.e. the need to provide extra money for food or t-shirts, the need to wait with them for their ride to come, to remain understanding faced with spotty attendance, etc.), there was also the desire to shield them from other participants’ scrutiny. Particularly in the Discussion chapter, I made an extra effort to use the desire-centered approach when developing a broader picture of all the participants I chose to use in cameo, truly trying to see beyond the group they represented and toward their full life experiences, motivations and aspirations. A desire-centered mindset guided me to see and hear their perspective in contexts to their life experiences. It helped me realize that these are just teenagers doing the best they can every day.

Elliot Eisner (as cited in Shaw, 2008) also provides words of caution in regard to utilizing our research: “We are using the participant for our own professional ends” (p. 401). That is a chilling way to bring the need for ethics in research into focus. However, Kellner (2002) provides a different perspective, by asserting that it actually is not ethics that are in question, but morality. She argues that it is the researchers own “unlimited

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obligation to the welfare of others, that must inform these more important aspects of our conduct in the field . . . Where ethical requirements and moral requirements conflict, the latter must take priority’ (Kellner, 2002, p. 32). As a researcher, I made the core guiding principle to first do no harm. I feel confident that I fulfilled the obligation to keep my participants’ welfare at the center of all my decision-making and writings.

**Considered Dilemmas**

I hoped that through my research and a review of the literature, I could recommend commonsense changes to improve both culture and curriculum in secondary education through the arts. Janet Finch (as cited in Shaw, 2008) speaks to my concern in this area: our “findings are not being used merely to illuminate our knowledge of the social world, but potentially to change it” (p. 404). By intending to create change from the outset, there were many more ways I could influence the outcome of the data. I needed to continually revisit these dangers at each stage of the research.

Shaw (2008) points out another obvious dilemma: “as we encourage people to tell their stories, we become characters in those stories, and thus change those stories” (p. 408). Since I was on site, I also needed to be careful not to become part of the research. The boundaries that I set for myself was to manage everything outside of the typical jobs a production team would need to do. This meant I designed the structure of the project with its interdisciplinary arts design, democratic learning and cultural learning modules at its core. I met with and made connections with the faculty and community members that
would assist with the project. I organized all needs relating to space and materials for those units to be carried out. I was present at the conclusion of every work day, to facilitate the taking of the survey. I also kept my administration informed of my progress and invited stakeholders to events and provided free tickets as a sign of appreciation and inclusion in the production. I alerted the local newspaper of the event, and was interviewed in order to inform the community of the project and invite their participation. None of these things are in the realm of a typical stage production team. I promised from the onset to allow the production team to take control and shape the artistic product in ways they saw fit. I made no influence during the audition, nor did I make any artistic choices once the project was under way. At first, I felt anxiety letting go the reigns, since this project has preoccupied my thoughts for almost two years. Once I let go of the decision-making process and the artistic direction, I tried to view the time it alleviated as an indulgence for the sake of good research, focusing only on studying of the phenomenon in front of me. I believe I lived up to that commitment, as the only mention of me in the program is as the Community Outreach Director, and in the section of Special Thanks.

**Steps I Took**

A desire-centered research stance is one that I kept close to the surface during my research and analysis, as I was aware that it would be very easy to create scapegoats and villains. I needed to train my mind to consider the reasons for student, teacher and
administration reluctance to engage or reticence to visibly support the project. I also tried to mentally probe the reasoning of different parties for decisions, which made the research more difficult and stressful.

As Glens (2006) suggests, I considered whether everything told to me was necessary to the data, or if it betrayed my participant (p. 137). I tried to be careful in creating my research questions to elicit unbiased responses from my participants. As Shaw (2008) suggests, I avoided taking sides and allowed subjects to speak for themselves (p. 406). I took the extra time needed to try to hear the truest meaning of my subject’s words and resisted spinning it to support my own agenda. I have considered whether my work created knowledge and positive outcomes that benefit my subjects and the field in general (Glesne, 2006, p. 134). Finally, I followed the advice of Clark (as cited in Shaw, 2008): Good research practice “is not sufficiently described either by technical competence or by grand ethical principle; it also subsists essentially in the moral character of the practitioner” (p. 411). Keeping the welfare of my participants at the center, guided me well.

**Triangulation.** I built triangulation into the research design through using a variety of research tools (interviews, field notes, journaling, artifacts, open-response, ESM). I believe I have enough cross checking that the findings are considered reliable and valid. I spent a great deal of time considering the wording of the survey questions and created non-leading questions during the interview process. I asked my committee
and cohort members to review my questions and take my survey, in order to revise for clarity and concision.

Beyond the necessary board approval and informed consent, I was also keenly aware that with minors I needed to shape the research carefully and disclose/inform parents and administrators throughout the process what I was doing and where I set my limits. I created a PowerPoint with the objectives of my research and samples of the tools I intended to use. I offered to present to the school committee after sharing with the superintendent, and assistant superintendent, my direct supervisor and mentor. I additionally prepared a packet of information, which students took home after I introduced the project prior to the beginning of the research process. When using and describing the data, I was cognizant of how my comments could disclose the identities of my participants. I remembered that not everything is up for disclosure, nor should my participant words be manipulated to suit my needs during the analysis process.

Finally, I believe that my own personal moral compass guided me in my interactions and design. As much as I looked forward to uncovering whatever my research presented, I was always aware that I would remain a member of the school community at the conclusion.

**Constraints.** There were a myriad of practical challenges to this project, the first being financial. Several of these financial challenges will be presented in more detail in the Discussion chapter through sections titled *Obstacles to Community Building.* Though
the use of smartphone technology streamlines the data collection process and, for the majority of students, the equipment was already in their hands, it was important to include the voices of those participants who did not have the economic means to have that technology. The best I could do was to offer my own smartphone and the one school-owned iPad that I had access to, in order for disadvantaged students to participate, though paper surveys were always available. I will never know for certain if some students did not participate because of their lack of personal technology. Not only would participation without a device have been cumbersome in having the school owned devices and paper version accessible each and every day wherever participants were working, the distinctly visible evidence of being a student “in need” would no doubt have been a daily embarrassment.

Additionally, there were financial obstacles to offering some of the deep cultural immersion modules that had been in the design plan from the beginning. In a typical stage production, there is a stipend in place for a choreographer. However, the type of learning that was necessary went well beyond the scope of a typical choreographer. What was needed was an expert in a particular field of dance, and the need to present to the larger school community in order to entice more participants. This is expensive. I submitted a cultural grant through the town since the project would reach over 1,000 people through the school, and the public was actively being solicited to participate. The description of the intent of the Massachusetts Cultural Council grants matched the intent
of my project perfectly. It was to support the study, performance, exhibition and appreciation of cultural activities through the arts and humanities. This is how the council (MCC, 2016) describes those two points:

**Arts** refer to the creation of work in the crafts and performing, visual, media, folk, design, literary, and inter-disciplinary arts. In addition, they also include the presentation and preservation of, and education about works in these disciplines.

**Humanities** are types of learning that deal with human values and aspirations, human thought and culture, language, and creativity. Examples include, but are not limited to, history, social studies, philosophy, criticism, and literature. (p. 9)

I was optimistic that the project would be supported through the grant process, and knew from other towns that I have worked in that the local cultural council boards often struggled to find enough grant applicants, often putting out press releases for interested parties. However, the timing of the awards did not match the project well. For this particular project the dance presentation needed to happen at the beginning of the production process, in order to open the door for new participants and inform the cast’s work in the coming weeks. That meant the need for an early January presentation, with the grant awards process following in the spring. Unfortunately, the grant for the project was declined.

The other financial constraint was the Haitian feast portion of the research design. In order to bring a greater number of town community members into the process to create
this feast, I needed the willing parties to understand my sincerity for the gift of their time and energy for the cast and crew, and in turn my research. I also needed them to believe that I trusted their decision-making to use the money I provided well and honestly. These parents were traveling great distances to collect rare ingredients. I had no choice but to offer them cash so as not to burden their own finances. I was left to hope that they would return with a receipt. Things purchased with receipts, eventually were able to be reimbursed through the dwindling Drama club budget. However, there were a disproportionate number of purchases that arrived without receipts.

I feel a certain amount of guilt for the strain my research has put on the school’s Drama Club budget. Though the research demonstrated that the participants had many positive experiences and did indeed build the participants’ sense of community, it may take years to recover a comfortable monetary balance for future productions. The optimistic view is that with a more engaged student body, parent group and community more invested in the performing arts program, particularly within theatre offerings, tickets sales are on the rise. The profits from the year before pay for the following year’s licenses, building, and promotional costs. I see the investment in this project as essential to building the program and its visibility to new patrons.

An additional constraint was finding willing faculty members to participate on any level, or allow for creative elements of their courses to connect to the project. This was more difficult than I thought it would be, but I was only in my second year at the
school and had not yet made close connections amongst my colleagues. The regular reasons for declining to connect with this project had to do with the rigidity of their own curriculum, the necessity to prepare students for state mandated testing, and general teacher unwillingness to give personal time after school to the project. I was unable to tempt them into participation even if their own students would benefit or if they were give the latitude to connect in any way that excited them. Perhaps if I had I money to offer them a stipend, I might have been able to establish connections to science, history, math and English language arts. This has been a typical struggle in doing interdisciplinary work, and why I usually limit my goals to the arts, or even my own classroom.

Though it was through consistent personal effort to get commitments, the project did inspire a handful of faculty to create that bridge. It was most pronounced through the art department with a program and poster design task in a handful of the upper level art courses, which required the artist to do dedicated research into Haitian folk art before beginning their design. These teachers were the only ones who allowed me to come in their class to introduce the project, discuss the storyline, and invite participation into the research. These teachers additionally provided time in class for students to work and reminded them to do their surveys at the conclusion of their work session.

The TV Production Studio teacher supported independent student projects outside of class time in the creation of a video special effect hurricane, which opened the show.
Other students involved in the TV Production courses opted to use the show and its preparations as a vehicle to learn documentary style production in the classroom setting. Without collaboration from me, they set about interviewing students and teachers engaged in different aspects of the production. The two students edited the footage into a presentation for which they then received a grade.

A teacher in a design-build class was much more reluctant to connect, though I saw the open ended format of his course as a wonderful compliment to the design solutions the research was seeking. He was protective of his planned project, with good reason. But once he saw the completion of that project, he opened up his classroom to solve the design-build challenge of the tree, which was the focal point of the show. It needed to be symbolic, sturdy, artful, and yet embody the fact that the island, just prior to the opening of the show, had been pelted by a terrible storm. It also needed to be built in two pieces: one as a tree trunk and the other as the foliage that was flown in from a fly bar mid stage.

Mostly through persistence, I was able to bring about the inclusion of the school’s community service network. Eventually, I was connected with one student who was highly motivated by the project. I could imagine many other community service projects that could have been invested in by many more members of the community, and made the production a more supported and celebrated endeavor within the school – possible having a larger community building effect. If I had even one other adult willing to expand on the
ideas and interests of the student body, I sincerely believe that Langingham might have made a meaningful dent in its goal of cultural proficiency.

**Contribution**

The peripheral areas around the subject of interdisciplinary arts, is rich in research. There are many new studies on the cognitive benefits of the arts, the motivational impact the arts have on low achieving students, and even on pedagogies and curriculum connections that cross the boundaries of the arts into other disciplines.

Tangentially connected to my topic, there is also a growing awareness of mindfulness, if/how people can learn/teach empathy to others, and the benefits of guiding students to problem-solve specific issues that can improve the lives of others. This is becoming more and more visible through selected science fair projects such as a recent project that focused on solutions to filtering trash out of the ocean, or technology courses in public schools, which holds as this mission to design solutions for school-wide problems such as accessibility for the disabled.

Finally, a great deal of research is being created that considers the impact of community arts, artists in residence, how community connectedness improves health, and even parents-school connections toward improvement in literacy. However, there is a gap in the literature where these topics intersect and is the focus of this research - engaging the community in and out of our school through interdisciplinary arts projects, and how the arts generally can be the vehicle toward building a positive school, town, and world.
community. I would like my project to further that conversation, and hopefully provide another point of advocacy toward the inclusion of interdisciplinary arts in the regular programming of a public school.
Chapter 4: Results

Managing the Data

The data, Table 1, were first bundled and filed by type of evidence, either in paper, recording, or as word documents on the computer. The data from the survey questions were transferred from Survey Monkey online site into an excel file, and student’s names were removed and replaced with number codes. The Likert responses of the survey were separated at this point from the short-answers, and the data was cleaned (unfinished or incomplete responses omitted) for the quantitative analysis.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Evidence</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IRB</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Responses</td>
<td>Online - Likert and Short Answers</td>
<td>586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Responses</td>
<td>Paper - Likert and Short Answers</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Inquiry</td>
<td>Bios - Written Responses to a Prompt</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Inquiry</td>
<td>Program Notes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Inquiry</td>
<td>Baseline Questions</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact</td>
<td>Leaf - Written Responses to a Prompt</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact</td>
<td>Pickle Points - Left Behind</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact</td>
<td>Rehearsal Reports - Daily Happenings</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the transcriptions of interviews were being done, jottings of thoughts and questions needing further attention were filed together (analytic memos). Once the transcriptions of all interviews were completed, the student documentary was viewed and transcriptions of different quotes were extracted and filed. All short answers from the surveys were then copied and inserted into an excel file under created topic headings pertaining to their content. Once the system and headings were established, all of the other qualitative data was reviewed in detail and inserted into this excel file, often expanding the topic headings. Sometimes excerpts were filed under multiple topic headings, in order to cross-reference their content.
Quantitative Analysis

The initial step in analyzing the quantitative data was performing a series of descriptive statistics in order to organize the participants who took part in this study. This information is displayed in the following tables indicating the sample sizes and the percentages of response associated with each response category. The measures of central tendency, or typical value, and the variability reported for the data, or continuous measures, are also reported. The measures of central tendency that the analysis focused on were the mean and standard deviation. The measures of variability consisted of the standard deviation, range, and an indication of the minimum and maximum scores. In order to ensure internal consistency reliability, Cronbach’s Alpha values are also presented.

To answer each of the research questions, a series of Panel Regressions were conducted. These included fixed-effects, random-effects, and between-effects panel regressions. The panel regressions are typical in research that expands over time and includes the same individuals. It allows for a comparison of data with more than two dimensions (time, individuals, and another dimension). The specific method of Panel Regression selected included Breusch and Pagan Lagrangian Multiplier Tests for Random Effects, as well as Hausman Tests comparing fixed-effects and random-effects models.
Descriptive Statistics

The analysis of the Descriptive Statistics was conducted on these data and summarized in Table 2. Relating to the respondents of the surveys, slightly over 63% were female, with close to 37% being male. When considering the respondents’ description of their job descriptions, over 85%, consisted of Actors on Stage, with slightly over 5% consisting of Stage Managers, close to 4% consisting of Tech Assistants, slightly over 3% consisting of Art Students, and close to 2% consisting of Directors. With regard to the number of arts the respondent was engaging in at the time of the survey, slightly over 41% of the time they were engaged in one art form, while nearly 18% of the time they were engaged in two art forms. Thirty-three percent of the time respondents indicated three art forms, and nearly 6% of the time respondents were engaged in four art forms, with only a little over 2% of the time did respondents indicate they were engaged in five art forms simultaneously.
Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics: Categorical Measures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>36.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>63.25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actors on stage</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>85.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage manager</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech assistants</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art students</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directors</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N of Arts</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>41.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>17.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>32.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Table 3, the Descriptive Statistics conducted focused on the activities that the respondents took part in. Singing was reported as the activity most engaged in with slightly over 78%. Respondents reported Dancing 54% of the time, and slightly over 53% stating that they took part in Blocking. Slightly over 10% of individuals stated that they were involved with Costume/Sewing, with slightly over 5% providing Artistic Support, slightly over 4% working in Stage Managing, slightly over 3% working in Set Construction and Moving, close to 3% working in Makeup, slightly over 1% working in Technical Support, and close 1% working in Directing.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics: Singing to Technical Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>21.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dancing</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>46.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blocking</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>46.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costume Sewing</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>89.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makeup</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>97.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage Managing</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>95.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Support</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>98.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Construction and Moving</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>96.53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The information in Table 4 summarizes the initial set of Descriptive Statistics conducted on the survey question focused on how each respondent best describes his or her feelings at the time of the survey, based on a Likert scale of 1 to 8. The rating of one generally represents the most extreme negative response, and the rating of eight generally represents the most extreme positive response. Only the largest percentage of response per measure will be highlighted here, all other ratings can be found in Table 4.

This set of questions measured the following: Drowsy to Alert, Sad to Happy, Angry to Friendly, Bored to Excited, Anxious to Relaxed, and Frustrated to Satisfied. With respect to this set of questions, close to 27% of respondents provided a response of “8,” representing the highest degree of Alertness, with close to 34% of respondents providing the same response to the next question, which was associated with the most extreme degree of Happiness. Similarly, slightly over 39% of respondents provided a response of “8” with respect to highest degree of Friendliness, with close to 33% of respondents providing the same response to the highest degree of Excitement. With respect to the next question, focusing on the extent to which respondents felt Anxious or Relaxed, close to 28% of respondents provided a response of “8,” which was associated with the highest level of relaxation, while close to 34% of respondents provided a
response of “8” with respect to the final question in this section, which was associated with the highest degree of Satisfaction.

Table 4

*Likert-Scale Items: Feelings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drowsy/Alert</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.73%</td>
<td>7.86%</td>
<td>9.51%</td>
<td>8.41%</td>
<td>13.71%</td>
<td>17.37%</td>
<td>15.90%</td>
<td>26.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad/Happy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.37%</td>
<td>.55%</td>
<td>1.83%</td>
<td>6.22%</td>
<td>14.26%</td>
<td>22.67%</td>
<td>20.29%</td>
<td>33.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry/Friendly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.18%</td>
<td>.18%</td>
<td>1.28%</td>
<td>4.02%</td>
<td>13.53%</td>
<td>17.55%</td>
<td>24.13%</td>
<td>39.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bored/Excited</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.37%</td>
<td>2.01%</td>
<td>5.12%</td>
<td>7.68%</td>
<td>14.63%</td>
<td>19.74%</td>
<td>17.73%</td>
<td>32.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious/Relaxed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.73%</td>
<td>3.11%</td>
<td>4.94%</td>
<td>8.04%</td>
<td>14.26%</td>
<td>22.67%</td>
<td>18.28%</td>
<td>27.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustrated/Satisfied</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.18%</td>
<td>.91%</td>
<td>5.30%</td>
<td>7.68%</td>
<td>13.35%</td>
<td>20.11%</td>
<td>18.83%</td>
<td>33.64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dissertation in partial fulfillment of the PhD in Education, Lesley University, Ida M. Pappas
Next, the following set of questions fell within the Interdisciplinary category. With respect to the four questions within this category, based on the same eight point Likert scale, responses ranged through the following: No Collaboration Opportunities to Collaboration Required Throughout the Session, No Personal Choices Allowed to Personal Choices Required Throughout, No Risk-Taking Necessary to Risk-Taking Regularly Required, and No Multicultural Connections Made to Cultural Immersion.

With respect to this set of items, slightly over 32% (Table 5) of individuals provided a response of “8,” representing “Collaboration Required Throughout the Session,” while close to 17% of respondents gave the same response to question two, representing “personal Choices Required Throughout.” Next, with regard to question three, Risk-Taking, close to 20% of respondents provided a response of “6,” which was closer to “Risk-Taking Regularly Required” as opposed to “No Risk-Taking Necessary.” Finally, slightly over 31% of respondents provided a response of “1” with respect to the final question included within this set, which was associated with “Cultural Immersion.”
Table 5

Likert-Scale Items: Interdisciplinary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.81%</td>
<td>7.30%</td>
<td>5.24%</td>
<td>8.05%</td>
<td>10.30%</td>
<td>16.48%</td>
<td>17.42%</td>
<td>32.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Choice</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11.52%</td>
<td>9.48%</td>
<td>9.29%</td>
<td>13.20%</td>
<td>14.13%</td>
<td>14.31%</td>
<td>11.15%</td>
<td>16.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Risk/Taking Risk</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.88%</td>
<td>4.83%</td>
<td>9.85%</td>
<td>11.71%</td>
<td>14.50%</td>
<td>19.70%</td>
<td>13.75%</td>
<td>18.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31.23%</td>
<td>10.22%</td>
<td>5.02%</td>
<td>10.41%</td>
<td>9.11%</td>
<td>10.22%</td>
<td>10.22%</td>
<td>13.57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following set of items focused on the respondents’ condition of Flow. With regard to the responses of “1” and “8,” the associated responses for these items consisted of the following: Task Was Not Challenging to Task Was Very Challenging, No Skill Was Required to Great Skill Was Required, Goals Were Not Made Clear To Me to Goals Were Made Very Clear To Me, Did Not Feel Personally Involved to Felt Deeply Involved In Task, Minimal Concentration Required to Required Deep Concentration,
Leader Directed to Self-Directed, No idea how others view me or my work to very aware of how others view me and my work, given no feedback to given instant feedback, and Time Went By Very Slowly to Time Flew By Quickly.

First, slightly over 22% (Table 6) of respondents provided a response of “6” with respect to the first question, which was closer to “Task Was Very Challenging” as opposed to “Task Was Not Challenging.” With regard to the next question, close to 26% of respondents provided a response of “8,” which was associated with “great skill was required.” Close to 46% of respondents provided a response of “8” with respect to the next question, which was associated with “goals were made very clear to me.” Regarding the fourth question, close to 36% of respondents provided a response of “8,” which was associated with “felt deeply involved in task.”

With regard to the next question, focusing on concentration, close to 28% of respondents provided a response of “8” to this question, with this indicating “required deep concentration”. Next, slightly over 28% of respondents provided a response of “1” with respect to the next question, which was associated with “leader directed.” Next, close to 33% of respondents provided a response of “8” with regard to the next question, which was associated with “very aware of how others view me.” Close to 33% of respondents also provided a response of “8” with respect to the response “given instant feedback.” With regard to the final question, focusing upon the process of time, slightly
over 29% of respondents provided a response of “8,” which was associated with “Time Flew By Quickly.”

Table 6

*Likert-Scale Items: Flow*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenging</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.72%</td>
<td>2.79%</td>
<td>6.89%</td>
<td>13.22%</td>
<td>20.30%</td>
<td>22.35%</td>
<td>16.20%</td>
<td>14.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Required</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.49%</td>
<td>2.05%</td>
<td>3.91%</td>
<td>9.87%</td>
<td>18.25%</td>
<td>21.04%</td>
<td>17.69%</td>
<td>25.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of Goals</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>246</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.56%</td>
<td>2.05%</td>
<td>3.54%</td>
<td>10.24%</td>
<td>17.50%</td>
<td>20.30%</td>
<td>45.81</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personally Involved</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.12%</td>
<td>.74%</td>
<td>3.17%</td>
<td>6.89%</td>
<td>15.08%</td>
<td>19.18%</td>
<td>18.06%</td>
<td>35.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.30%</td>
<td>.37%</td>
<td>3.17%</td>
<td>7.26%</td>
<td>17.88%</td>
<td>23.84%</td>
<td>18.44%</td>
<td>27.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direction</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28.12%</td>
<td>14.53%</td>
<td>13.04%</td>
<td>9.12%</td>
<td>8.38%</td>
<td>7.08%</td>
<td>7.26%</td>
<td>12.48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dissertation in partial fulfillment of the PhD in Education, Lesley University, Ida M. Pappas
How Others View   26   16   28   38   76   98   79   176
Me                  4.84%  2.98%  5.21%  7.08%  14.15%  18.25%  14.71%  32.77%
Given Feedback     17   9   22   44   85   92   93   175
                        3.17%  1.68%  4.10%  8.19%  15.83%  17.13%  17.32%  32.59%
Passage of Time     13   14   46   44   93   101   68   158
                               2.42%  2.61%  8.57%  8.19%  17.32%  18.81%  12.66%  29.42%

The final set of Likert-scale measures focused upon Community (Table 7). Again, the responses were limited to the eight point Likert scale with the following extreme measures: I Do Not Feel a Member of the Group to I Feel I Am An Important Member of The Group, I Do Not Trust the People I Have Worked With Today to I Completely Trust The People I Have Worked With Today, I Do Not Feel People Were Sensitive To My Feelings and Needs to I Feel My Needs Have Been Met and Respected, I Did Not Feel Emotionally Connected To The Group I Worked With Today to I Feel Emotionally Connected To The Group I Worked With Today, I Feel the Routines And Traditions During the Session Were Pointless to The Routines and Traditions Made Me Feel Satisfied, and I Do Not Feel I Have Shared Similar Experiences/history With This Group to I Feel I Have Shared Similar Experiences/history With This Group.

Dissertation in partial fulfillment of the PhD in Education, Lesley University, Ida M. Pappas
With regard to the first area of questioning, close to 46% of respondents provided a response of “8,” which was associated with the response of “I Feel I Am An Important Member of the Group.” With regard to the second question, close to 35% of respondents also provided a response of “8,” which was associated with the response of “I Completely Trust The People I Have Worked With Today.” With regard to the third question, focusing upon sensitivity, close to 40% of respondents provided a response of “8,” which was associated with the response of “I Feel My Needs Have Been Met And Respected.” The next question focused upon emotion and in response to this question, close to 37% of respondents provided the response of “8,” which was associated with the response of “I Feel Emotionally Connected To The Group I Worked With Today.” Respondents were then asked about routines, with slightly over 37% providing a response of “8,” which was associated with the response of “The Routines And Traditions Made Me Feel Satisfied.” With regard to the final question, slightly over 26% of respondents provided a response of “8,” which was associated with the response of “I Feel I Have Shared Similar Experiences/History With This Group.”
Table 7

*Likert-Scale Items: Community*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feel A Member</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.56%</td>
<td>.38%</td>
<td>1.32%</td>
<td>6.58%</td>
<td>14.10%</td>
<td>15.41%</td>
<td>15.98%</td>
<td>45.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust the People</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.38%</td>
<td>.19%</td>
<td>1.88%</td>
<td>3.95%</td>
<td>11.09%</td>
<td>19.92%</td>
<td>27.82%</td>
<td>34.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>212</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.19%</td>
<td>1.50%</td>
<td>4.89%</td>
<td>15.41%</td>
<td>19.36%</td>
<td>18.80%</td>
<td>39.85%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel Emotionally</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.32%</td>
<td>.56%</td>
<td>3.20%</td>
<td>5.64%</td>
<td>11.84%</td>
<td>20.68%</td>
<td>19.92%</td>
<td>36.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routines</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.19%</td>
<td>.56%</td>
<td>1.32%</td>
<td>4.14%</td>
<td>12.97%</td>
<td>19.74%</td>
<td>23.68%</td>
<td>37.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Similar</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.50%</td>
<td>2.26%</td>
<td>5.08%</td>
<td>10.34%</td>
<td>19.17%</td>
<td>19.17%</td>
<td>16.35%</td>
<td>26.13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 8, each of the areas of research (Feelings, Interdisciplinary, Flow, and Community) are summarized for internal consistency reliabilities, using Cronbach’s
Alpha. It is commonplace, in the field of statistics, that a reliability of 0.70 or higher indicates acceptable to high reliability. In all portions of this research, reliability ranged from acceptable to very high with regard to the four areas of focus outlined above (Feelings, Interdisciplinary, Flow, and Community).

Table 8

*Internal Consistency Reliabilities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>N Items</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feelings</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flow</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.925</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 presents the Descriptive Statistics conducted on the four areas of focus (Feelings, Interdisciplinary, Flow, and Community), which include: mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum score and score range. As shown, means were found to range from approximately 5 to 6.5, with the standard deviations to be moderate in relation to the means. These factor scores ranged from a minimum of approximately one or two to a maximum of eight, producing ranges of approximately 6 to 7.
Table 9

Descriptive Statistics: Factor Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feelings</td>
<td>6.30</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flow</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inferential Tests

A series of inferential statistical tests were conducted on these data in order to explore the specific research questions and consider if time was a factor in the respondents’ responses. Since the data collected consisted of panel data, or measurements taken on a specific sample of respondents at multiple time points, panel regression was felt to be the most appropriate analytical choice to consider the study’s research questions. Diagnostics were conducted, in order to determine the most appropriate method of analysis to use. First, Breusch and Pagan Lagrangian Multiplier tests for random effects were conducted in order to determine whether ordinarily least-squares, a simpler method of analysis, would be an appropriate analytical choice, as opposed to panel regression, which is more complex. The results of this diagnostic indicated that ordinary least squares regression was inappropriate in all cases. Following these tests, Hausman tests were also conducted, in order to determine whether random effects or
fixed effects panel regression would be most appropriate. This diagnostic considered all models conducted, with the exception of the panel data regression model. This was because of the respondent category, which required a between-subjects effects model as the category was a between-subjects variable. The following results describe these panel regressions.

The first panel data regression model (Table 10) conducted focused on the association between the Interdisciplinary factor and the Community factor. First, the Breusch and Pagan Lagrangian Multiplier Test for Random Effects was found to achieve statistical significance, indicating that ordinary least squares regression was inappropriate in this case, $\chi^2(2) = 11.27, p < .01$. Next, the Hausman test conducted on these data, comparing the random-effects and fixed-effects models, was also found to achieve statistical significance, indicating that a fixed-effects model would be a more appropriate analytical choice, $\chi^2(1) = 1892.29, p < .0001$.

Based on the results of these diagnostic tests, a fixed-effects panel regression was conducted to determine the impact of the Interdisciplinary factor on the Community factor. It includes date as a control measure in order to account for and determine changes over time. Table 10 presents the results of this analysis. As shown, significant effects were indicated with respect to the Interdisciplinary factor on Community, including the effect of time. First, with regard to the Interdisciplinary factor, a one-unit increase in this measure was found to be associated with a .251-unit increase in the outcome,
Community. In regards to the effect of time, each following day was associated with a predicted value on Community, which was increased by .014 units. Overall, these results indicate a positive impact of the Interdisciplinary factor on the Community factor, with average scores on the Community factor also found to significantly increase over time.

Table 10

Fixed Effects Panel Regression: Effect of Interdisciplinary on Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Coef.</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary</td>
<td>.251</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>9.86*</td>
<td>.201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>5.80*</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>4.954</td>
<td>.141</td>
<td>35.20*</td>
<td>4.678</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p<0.01, **p<.001; N (Observations) = 530, N (Groups) = 56; F(2, 472) = 67.63, p < .0001; $R^2$ Within = .2227, $R^2$ Between = .3524, $R^2$ Overall = .2647; Sigma u = 1.185, Sigma e = .661, Rho = .763.

Next, a between-effects panel regression was conducted focusing on the impact of cCategory, or the specific jobs respondent’s had, on the Community factor. A between-effects panel regression was required, because category is considered a between-subjects variable. It was included as a predictor (the only predictor, with the exception of time) in...
this model. Table 11 summarizes the results of this analysis. In respect to the predictor of category (or jobs), this variable is measured on the nominal level of measurement. One of the categories represented needed to be selected and omitted from the analysis as the comparison category, with dummy measures representing each of the remaining categories created and included within this regression analysis. The results indicate the impact of each of these remaining categories of response as compared with the omitted comparison category, which is a required method whenever a nominal variable is included as a predictor in a regression analysis, including panel regression analysis. Within the context of the current analyses, “actors on stage,” which represents the vast majority of the sample (84.75% of the entire sample), was selected as the comparison category and omitted from the analysis.

As shown in Table 11, with respect to category (jobs), art students was found to achieve statistical significance in comparison with actors on stage. In this case, art students were found to have a significantly lower predicted value on the Community factor as compared with actors on stage. This result indicated that art students had a predicted value on the Community factor 1.975 units lower, on average, as compared with actors on stage. None of the remaining categories presented in Table 11 were found to achieve statistical significance in comparison with the category, actors on stage. Additionally, the effect of time was not found to achieve statistical significance in this
model. This indicates no significant change over time in the Community factor, based on this specific panel regression model.

Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Coef.</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>95% CI Lower</th>
<th>95% CI Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage Manager</td>
<td>-0.929</td>
<td>0.598</td>
<td>-1.55</td>
<td>-2.130</td>
<td>0.271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech Assistants</td>
<td>-0.317</td>
<td>0.548</td>
<td>-0.58</td>
<td>-1.417</td>
<td>0.784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Students</td>
<td>-1.975</td>
<td>0.620</td>
<td>-3.19**</td>
<td>-3.220</td>
<td>-0.730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directors</td>
<td>-1.082</td>
<td>0.781</td>
<td>-1.38</td>
<td>-2.651</td>
<td>0.487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>-0.011</td>
<td>0.020</td>
<td>-0.53</td>
<td>-0.051</td>
<td>0.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>6.837</td>
<td>0.501</td>
<td>13.64***</td>
<td>5.831</td>
<td>7.844</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p<0.01, **p<0.001; N (Observations) = 532, N (Groups) = 56; F(5, 50) = 2.65, p < .05; $R^2$ Within = .0346, $R^2$ Between = .2096, $R^2$ Overall = .0212.

In Table 12, a panel data regression model conducted focused on possible links between the Flow factor and the specific Community question of whether each respondent felt he or she was an important member of the group. First, the Breusch and Pagan Lagrangian Multiplier Test for Random Effects was found to achieve statistical
significance, indicating that ordinary least squares regression was inappropriate in this case, $\chi^2(1) = 393.72, p < .0001$. Next, the Hausman test was performed on these data, comparing the random-effects and fixed-effects models, and was also found to achieve statistical significance. This meant that a fixed-effects model would be a more appropriate analytical choice, $\chi^2(2) = 30.00, p < .0001$.

Based on the results of these diagnostic tests, a fixed-effects panel regression was conducted determining the impact of the Flow factor on the Community question of whether each respondent felt he or she was an important member of the group. This test included date as a control measure, in order to determine if time was a factor. Table 12 presents the results of this analysis. As shown, significant effects were indicated with respect to Flow, but not with regard to the effect of time. The Flow factor showed a one-unit increase in this measure and was found to be associated with a .500 unit increase in the outcome, or whether respondents felt that he or she was an important member of the group.
Table 12

**Fixed Effects Panel Regression: Effect of Flow on Community (Feeling I am an Important Member of the Group)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Coef.</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>95% CI Lower</th>
<th>95% CI Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flow</td>
<td>.500</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>10.05***</td>
<td>.403</td>
<td>.598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>3.687</td>
<td>.278</td>
<td>13.27***</td>
<td>3.141</td>
<td>4.233</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *p* < 0.01, **p** < 0.001; N (Observations) = 532, N (Groups) = 56; F(2, 474) = 62.80, *p* < 0.0001; $R^2$ Within = .2095, $R^2$ Between = .5238, $R^2$ Overall = .4599; Sigma $u$ = 1.349, Sigma $e$ = .840, Rho = .720.

One last set of analyses were conducted in order to determine what variables impact whether a student feels like a member of the community and how this changes over time. This required a focus on the Feeling section of the survey. The Breusch and Pagan Lagrangian Multiplier Test for Random Effects was found to achieve statistical significance, indicating that ordinary least squares regression was inappropriate in this case, $\chi^2(1) = 422.65, p < .0001$. Next, the Hausman test conducted on these data, comparing the random-effects and fixed-effects models, was not found to achieve
statistical significance. This indicated that a random-effects model would be a more appropriate analytical choice, \( \chi^2(4) = 2.31, p = .6784 \).

The results of this model, presented in Table 13, indicate statistical significance with respect to the effects of the Flow, Community, and Interdisciplinary factors, but not with respect to time. Flow showed a one-unit increase in this measure, and was found to be associated with a .161 unit increase in the outcome, Feeling. With regard to Community, a one-unit increase in this measure was associated with a .423 unit increase in Feeling, while a one-unit increase in the Interdisciplinary factor was found to be associated with a .100 unit increase in Feeling.

Table 13

Random Effects Panel Regression: Effect of Factors on Feeling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Coef.</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flow</td>
<td>.161</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>3.22**</td>
<td>.063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>.423</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>8.57***</td>
<td>.326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary</td>
<td>.100</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>3.19**</td>
<td>.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>-.86</td>
<td>-.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.074</td>
<td>.291</td>
<td>7.13***</td>
<td>1.503</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dissertation in partial fulfillment of the PhD in Education, Lesley University, Ida M. Pappas
Qualitative Analysis

Interviews and field notes brought to light a variety of questions about the changing demographics and students who are economically disadvantaged in Landingham High School. Using the School and District Profiles tool, one can access the data that the Massachusetts Department of Education publishes on student race/ethnic distribution by state and by school district. The earliest published record is 1993-1994, but the following chart (Table 14) presents the data from 2016, 2006, 1996 (ten year increments from the year of research) in order to see trends in demographic change.

Table 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>% of District</th>
<th>% of State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>79.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dissertation in partial fulfillment of the PhD in Education, Lesley University, Ida M. Pappas
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (1996-97)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (2006-07)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (2016-17)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15 (A/B) shows the difference in each race/ethnicity category between 1993 and 2016 in Massachusetts. The chart highlights the increase in percentage of African American, Asians, Hispanics, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multi-Race/Non-Hispanic populations in the town of Landingham. Native American populations have stayed the same at 0%. Only the category of White has decreased between 1993 and 2016, at a rate of 23.4%. All minority race/ethnic categories grew faster in Landingham than in the rest of Massachusetts, except Hispanic. Additionally, the White category decreased 5.4% faster in Landingham, than in the rest of Massachusetts.
Table 15B – Enrollment in Landingham by Race/Ethnicity by percent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>(-23.4)</td>
<td>(-18)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(MADOE, 2017)

Table 16 (A/B) presents how the Massachusetts Department of Education has published Special Populations using a category called Low-income. The first year of

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record is 1993, and the selected target years (ten year cycles from the year of research - 2016) are also included. In 2014, the Massachusetts Department of Education changed the way this Special Population has been calculated, which will be addressed in Table 16. From the year 1993 to 2006, the state increase in Low-income students increased at a faster rate (4.8) than Landingham, which increased at the rate 2.9%.

Table 16A – Low-Income in Landingham and Massachusetts by percent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of District</td>
<td>% of State</td>
<td>% of District</td>
<td>% of State</td>
<td>% of District</td>
<td>% of State</td>
<td>% of District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-income</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(MADOE, 2017)
Interdisciplinary Arts as an Agent for Community Building in a U.S. High School

Table 16B Low-Income in Landingham percent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Landingham Low Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993-1994</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-1997</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17 A/B Compares the new calculation for Special Populations entitled Economically Disadvantaged for the years 2014 and 2016. The Massachusetts Department of Education website, in a section called “Redefining Low Income - A New Metric for K-12 Education Data,” explains the change in calculation:

This new metric, which we are calling *economically disadvantaged* to differentiate it from the old "low income" measure, will be used to report data from all schools and districts, not just those participating in CEP. The new measure will be based on a student's participation in one or more of the following state-administered programs: The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); the Transitional Assistance for Families with

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Dependent Children (TAFDC); the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) foster care program; and MassHealth (Medicaid).

In the same section, The Massachusetts Department of Education cautions researchers from using the information to make any comparison between the two types of data (Low-income and Economically Disadvantaged). The rate of increase between 2014 and 2016 is 3.1% for Landingham, and 3.9% for the state of Massachusetts. The state of Massachusetts has increased in the area of Economically Disadvantaged students at the rate of 3.9%, and Landingham similarly increased at the rate of 3.1%.

Table 17A Economically Disadvantaged in Landingham and Massachusetts by percent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>% of District</td>
<td>% of State</td>
<td>% of District</td>
<td>% of State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(MADOE, 2017)
Table 17B Economically Disadvantaged in Landingham by percent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Economically Disadvantaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Analytics Methods. Once the qualitative data was processed, roughly evaluated and filed based on content, the analysis process began in order to see any connections and similarity across the many different types of data (category construction, descriptive coding). First, an excel file was established and topic headings were organized and color coded in the following fashion:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External/Personal</th>
<th>External/Public</th>
<th>External/Internal</th>
<th>Internal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Under External/Personal heading, I derived the following themes:

- Family/Relationship
Under the External/Public heading, I identified the following themes:

- Cross Section of People
- Community
- Interdisciplinary
- Culture

The heading which includes both External and Internal forces, resulted in the establishment of following themes:

- Love/Gratitude
- Celebration
- Pride
- Fun

The heading titled, Internal, had many different themes, some sparsely addressed through the data, but present nonetheless:

- Time Marker
- College Resume
- Skill Building
- Reflection
• Best Self

• Self-Expression

• Escape

• Memories

• Feeling Essential

• Feeling Overwhelmed

In the end, I did not find that the External-Internal distinction had much meaning, as the internal comingled with the external on too many levels. For example, a sense of internal pride was the result of external celebrations. I did, however, use the headings and themes to find what I was looking for, or to file additional data quickly.

Upon analyzing the themes that were highly populated in the excel file, I dug deeper and revisited all the raw qualitative data again, as I stated in the Methods chapter. It is impossible to include all the details of the hours of interviews, pages of notes, or the 586 entries of multiple short answers, but I will highlight the areas of analysis that will be addressed in the following Discussion section.

Table 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent: Jewish roots and current population</td>
<td>More heavily Jewish in the 50s and 60s, but still about 1/3 of the town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers: Changing Demographics</td>
<td>More minority students than in the past, more needs: economically and in educational support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers: Renovation of the school</td>
<td>Meeting the growing populations needs, where corners were cut to save money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers: Sports - Arts Dichotomy</td>
<td>Past was full of football wins, for the past 15 years the quality of the stage productions has been poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers: Lack of Diversity in Performing Arts</td>
<td>Students new to school, not yet imbedded, needing to work, don't value the arts - sports is the focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonny</td>
<td>States student Lack of Experience and the play’s topic as additional ways of considering diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabby</td>
<td>Students connect things they learn about real people and project it into the motivations of their characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>Student connected the dances learned in Master Class in the folkloric style to choreography in the show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quincy</td>
<td>Student heard negative things about the Haitian Dance Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>Student heard positive things about Haitian Dance Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodney</td>
<td>Student wasn't initially going to participate in the dance master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>Student observes how much stronger communities are when they solve problems together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quincy</td>
<td>Felt the cast would be receptive to the Haitian Feast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quincy and Hector</td>
<td>Felt that education could open people's minds to other cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hector</td>
<td>American teens don't like change, and are only open to things that are common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hector</td>
<td>Code switches in order to manage his many identities and ways of being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mallory and Cayla</td>
<td>Felt proud to be a part of the production through their art. They were more interested in the Performing Arts department as a result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allison</td>
<td>When students need to perform in a way that requires intimacy, they become closer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hector</td>
<td>Could not recognize immediately that he was given great latitude in developing his character and developing his blocking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lenny</td>
<td>Didn't understand the function of the Greek Chorus on the structure of the story telling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interdisciplinary Arts as an Agent for Community Building in a U.S. High School

Overcoming struggles together builds a sense of community

The poster tradition celebrate the work of seniors

Felt that being given the second highest Pickle Points meant that he has been accepted by the cast. He has friends. He is a different person that when he started

Traditions provide a sense of acceptance, and gives participants a feeling of confidence

Felt that the Drama club had gotten him through some difficult times since arriving in America

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Field Notes</strong></th>
<th><strong>Analysis</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographic situation</td>
<td>Proximity to Boston, pockets of prosperity and poverty, lack of town planning, population reaching/clinging to middle class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School tour - physical presentation</td>
<td>Representing immigrants, beautiful vs. ugly, unexpected changes in elevation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation of new teachers</td>
<td>Overwhelmed, not community-minded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Community</td>
<td>Limited and not unified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Sports - Arts Dichotomy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trophy case and dated pennants; Music Plaques of silver, platinum and gold, students cannot describe the functions of the Performing Arts rooms during tours. During opening day &quot;treasure hunt&quot; faculty either do not bother to, or cannot, find the Performing Arts rooms in the school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### School Pride - sports and extra-curriculars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bulletin boards and announcements list various accomplishments, not all sports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Audition Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Football players arrive with confidence, leave nervous before auditioning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Manuel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talented, yet lacking confidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Rodney

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Large stature, need to physically connect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Ronnie

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shy, incongruous in his football jersey, wanting to find his place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Lisa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inability to handle stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Quincy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advocates for himself, his wheelchair disappears as he performs every task with modifications, opens lines of conversations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Quincy's disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allows for creative casting, blocking, costuming</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Techies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predominantly, females are Asian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
## Interdisciplinary Arts as an Agent for Community Building in a U.S. High School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Need/Concern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ting</td>
<td>Unexpected talent as a make-up artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Team</td>
<td>Sensitivity for transgender and gay students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dirk</td>
<td>Needed a clean break to be viewed as male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amal</td>
<td>Hid food onstage, limited money to eat all week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Team</td>
<td>Sensitive to students unable to participate for financial reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazards of the stage</td>
<td>Fire and egress violations, lost items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students without smart phones</td>
<td>Embarrassment to ask for school provided device</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonny</td>
<td>Respected for being kind, smart and talented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>Wanted to connect how the community solves problems together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polly</td>
<td>Wanted to protect her Haitian family and friends from disappointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polly and Rose</td>
<td>Wanted to pick food that Americans would accept easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haitian cooks</td>
<td>Hesitant until I demonstrated sincerity, respect, and appreciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hector</td>
<td>Has experiences in his past that shadow his current interactions and make his acting and improvisations more important to him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hector</td>
<td>Reminds me that teachers/directors need to help students make</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dissertation in partial fulfillment of the PhD in Education, Lesley University, Ida M. Pappas
**Table 20**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Photo Evidence</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First read through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student grouping during rehearsals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student focus and engagement during rehearsals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenters and their families and artifacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student improvisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents and students planning feast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blocking the scenes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading of the Pickle Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing the feast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students engaged in blocking that requires intimacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage Director meditating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Tree: &quot;Theatre is…” prompt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pit Band rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitzprobe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costume and Make up parade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance of Final Dress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Invitation to the Haitian Feast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech written to present to audience regarding social outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business card for Contact at Saint Rock Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTI Study Guide for the production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student sign in sheet for feast preparations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First rough diagram of the different elements of interdisciplinary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Dept. Requirements for the artwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blank Theater Grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 Saint Rock Newsletter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Rock Pamphlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pickle Point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theater is… leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehearsal reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video Footage of Haitian storm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Common Word Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Connect</th>
<th>Helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 23

**Open Responses**

- Students felt that in the beginning of the learning process, they were just taking orders and not equal creators to the directors.
- Students felt that during improvisation work and games, they had more opportunities to control the direction of their work.
- Students could sometimes identify times when they were given an opportunity to control the direction, but chose to follow instead.
- Students who are new to art, sometimes need to rely on the teacher to provide guidelines and ideas to get their creative ideas started.
- Students enjoy controlling the artistic process.
- Students gradually began to take control in large and small ways of the decision making process, as the project continued.
- Student exhibit pride when they are in charge, or offer a solution, or design idea that is...
Being helpful was a source of pride

Students felt a heightened response on stage when the costumes, make up and lighting were added to the performance

Students, at the beginning of the process, did not feel essential to the whole

Students eventually saw their individual blocking, lines, solos, tasks as essential to the success of the whole

By the end, students felt enthusiastic about their contributions to the whole

Students, felt that taking chances and sharing personally helped them to form connections

Students felt that they had changed in significant ways since beginning the project

Students who gave senior speeches and were met with great respect felt a sense of love

Table 24

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BIOS: student/students feel/felt that…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...working hard together on a common goal made their friendships stronger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...meeting new people made them enjoy the process more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...they became a sort of family through the process of putting on the production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...the friendships they made during the production would stand the test of time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
…learned a great deal about themselves during the process

…the theater community helped him through their personal issues

…he had learned new skills and helped him to build confidence to try again

…participating in the project was the best decision he had ever made

…had become the best version of herself

Summary

The results of the many quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted for this study were presented. Following the initial descriptive statistics conducted, measures of internal consistency reliability using Cronbach’s Alpha were presented for all four scale items (Feelings, Interdisciplinary, Flow and Community), with acceptable to high reliability being indicated in all cases. A series of panel regressions were then conducted focusing upon the interrelationships between the scale items as well as the impact of category of job. These analyses indicated four things:

- a significant, positive impact of the Interdisciplinary factor on Community
- a significant difference between Art Students and Actors on Stage with respect to Community
- a significant, positive impact of Flow on Community
and a significant, positive impact of Flow, Community, and Interdisciplinary factors on Feeling.

Demographic data was presented demonstrating that between 1993 and 2016, Landingham has seen a steady decrease of students who identify as White and a steady increase in all minority categories, except Native American, and a faster increase in all minority categories than the rest of the state, except Hispanic. Additionally, the data was provided demonstrating a steady increase in students categorized as Low-income, and then Economically Disadvantaged between the years 1993 and 2016.

The variety of qualitative data (interviews, field notes, artifacts, photos, short answers, open responses) revealed 21 different themes under three headings: Internal, Internal/External, External. Within the vast amounts of data, the commonalities that resonate throughout are the following:

- to students, diversity includes ethnicity and race, economic status, and gender orientation, but also includes knowledge base/experience.
- though the cast and crew were diverse, those that were from minority cultures were expected to assimilate.
- learning about different cultures is considered necessary, in order to educate people and celebrate differences.
- participants were open and accepting of learning about new cultures.
• students’ understanding of community broadened as they learned about another culture that counts on community commitment in the face of adversity, or to solve problems that improve the lives of many.

• students who had never participated before in the school’s performing arts program, were proud of their contributions to the project and felt more invested and interested in seeing the project complete.

• students respond to being personally invited to participate.

• at the beginning of the process, directors took a great deal of control of the process and set a vision.

• the more opportunities that participants had to contribute ideas, take a leadership role, or help others, the more they enjoyed the process and felt essential.

• risk taking and sharing made students feel closer and more connected.

• costumes, lighting, make up and fellow actor’s responses heightened their feeling of flow, and improved their responses on stage.

• as time went on, the participants felt essential to the whole.

• traditions and celebrations play an important role in feel accepted into the community.

• participants felt that they had changes over the course of the project, generally more confident.
• participants felt like a close knit family who would continue to be friends for years to come.
Chapter 5: Discussion

Sense of Place

How one forms one’s impression of the Massachusetts town at the center of this research project depends on which road one takes. One can enter what I will refer to as “Landingham” from the coast on winding, desolate roads and see modest ranch and Cape Cod style homes with fire pits and pickup trucks outside. As you get closer to the shops in the town center, you may see bucolic hills of farms of bygone eras, some which have been repurposed as memorial tree parks and a rehabilitation hospital. Or you can meander from the posh suburbs of Boston a little further out to find street after street of mansions, a synagogue, a prayer chapel, remnants of the thriving Jewish community, still about a third of the town. You can also roll off the major highway from the Mass Pike and see new, as well as run down, industrial areas. Once you finally reach the main road through Landingham, you are met with traffic congestion, forcing you to idly sit pondering the people who purchased the houses mere feet away from the steady stream of highway and exhaust. You will see small lots and houses in various states of disrepair right next to well-appointed homes with window boxes, school logos, and Patriot flags. Enter from the southwest and you will find a variety of rental complexes - more seemingly being built all the time. These complexes are typically places where you see the black and brown members of the community greeting each other on the sidewalks, waiting with their children for the school bus, running for the train, or riding their bikes. You can also peer
down side roads and see people struggling to stay in the middle class, with their identical cookie cutter houses, known locally as “McMansions” sitting mere feet away from their neighbor’s identical house. Similar to many other New England towns, the town managers became concerned with thoughtful zoning and planning a little too late. The result is a mish-mosh of houses, industry, business and rental properties all placed seemingly in disregard of one another.

When talking to students, parents, teachers and other community members, it became clear that Landingham has many residents who, with their extended families, have made this town their home for generations. However, from the driving tour, it is also clear that the demographics have been steadily changing in this town. In fact, with the gentrification of the typically poorer, largely minority neighborhoods in and around Boston, people of color have been coming to Landingham in order to find affordable housing and quality education for their children.

The high school mirrors that reality - both in demographics and in planning. Though on the surface it is impressive in size and design, the building sits cock-eyed on the lot looking away from the center of town and the main road. This skewed stance and the circuitous route to its entrance are confusing for visitors and even longtime residents who graduated from the school. It is the result of a major renovation in 2007, ten years ago. The addition made the most of the long-standing structure, yet resolved the need to expand and adapt by stretching in the opposite direction from what might be expected.
The resulting structure is functional, at times beautiful, and yet also a hodgepodge of isolated corners and random changes in elevation where some disciplines reside, making it difficult for teachers’ communication and collaboration. Again, depending on where you walk, the architecture can be both inspiring and dismal.

Upon entering the high school, you are immediately impressed with the well-lit foyer that forces your eye up to the long row of colorful flags. Every country flag of an immigrant student is represented. This impressive display immediately made me wonder about the community that I would find within. Would it be proudly diverse, with opportunities to celebrate and learn about its recently arrived members? Is the faculty equally diverse, and are they what modern education calls “culturally proficient?” Are the curricula that are taught inclusive of a broad spectrum of human experiences?

As I embarked on this project, I had already been teaching for 25 years. I had worked in different types of schools, from private to public, from single sex to coed, from
Pre K to Grade 12. Given that breadth of experience, I had the luxury to work for years with faculty that embodied true professional learning communities, engaging in the cutting edge of professional practice and progressive trends of project-based learning and interdisciplinary. I have also spent years in toxic places where animosity, spite and suspicion are rampant. In these schools, the teachers did not seem to respect each other’s expertise, experience or specific disciplines of knowledge, and would often be seen huddled with like-minded people creating teacher-cliques that take years to penetrate.

Since arriving at this school two years ago, I can honestly say that this community is on neither end of this spectrum. It is somewhere in the middle and seemed like an appropriate place to collect data that might apply to other schools. Old guard teachers have been steadily retiring, and young teachers are now in the majority. From the frenzy around the copy machines, it seems that these new teachers are with their noses slightly above water, and for the most part paddling as quickly as possible to make it to the end of the year. Between the need to master the curriculum and collect the data necessary to prove that they are quality teachers, worthy of being given another year’s contract, it does not feel like there is time to build camaraderie. By default, there does not seem to have any common, cohesive, or community feature to the school, rather heads are down and people stay in their rooms.

There also seems to be some type of circular reasoning (Minnich, 2005, p. 154) going on at this school. As an example of this phenomenon, consider the fact that many
decades ago the school had a strong football team and a poor music and theater program. Curious about my new school and having a desire to find where community lives, I have attended football games and have presided over the music concerts and theater productions. I have come away knowing that these realities are no longer true. Though the perception that “We are football!” seems to resonate in the psyche of those generations of people who have stayed in the town, it has also become the script handed to the recent arrivals to the school and its new teachers. The fact is that the stands are nearly empty during football games, and their pennant winning seasons are a thing of the past. Women’s field hockey, track and field, and ice hockey are on the rise, yet football strong is still the talk of the town. Today, the Math Team, and more recently the Mock Trial and Robotics teams are the crowning jewels of the school. Equally spoken as fact is that the performing arts program is weak, if not dismal. However, in recent years the Concert Band has earned gold, and the Orchestra and Chamber Singers have earned platinum medals. Yet somehow, the majority of the student body and the teachers seem to be completely unaware of this, even unable to identify the music classrooms and their functions when giving tours of the building.

As an outsider to this school community, I have thought deeply about feminist scholar Minnich’s (2005) comments regarding circular reasoning in regards to the arts programming in this school:
We cannot afford to forget that, when we deal with thought and knowledge, with conceptual matters, we are also dealing with preconscious cultural assumptions and habits that can reflect not only the ignorance but also the systemically created and reinforced prejudices of dominant cultures. None of this helps us think responsively. On the contrary: it keeps the circle closed (p. 166).

As a researcher, I have wondered what the impact of this type of circular reasoning will have on the current student body, their openness to participate in this interdisciplinary arts project, and how their responses to the research questions will expose the shadow of the preconceived ideas around arts and sports culture within the school.

Q1: How does the collaboration of diverse participants from a community in a high school influence a person’s broader idea of what community means?

The Diverse Participants. I was especially keen to observe the students during the audition process and first read through of the script for signs of diversity in both race and class, but also to uncover the hidden layers of social cliques. The students know me as the Performing Arts Coordinator - someone who is perpetually present, but equally elusive because of my work behind the scenes. Yet, some came to the audition because of my urging after making some connection in the hallways or through performing arts classes.

Consider a student I will call Manuel. I met him while covering for a colleague in a Music Technology class. It was Manuel’s spontaneous and spirited rap over a drum
loop that he had just created that propelled me to ask about his performance background. Something about his confidence and ability to seem immediately familiar with everyone around him that said he should be encouraged, (I was soon to learn) for the first time in his life, to audition for a stage production. In our regular banter leading up to audition, which he continually brought up (I believe) to further our relationship, he disclosed that he is Haitian and clearly proud to have that unique knowledge base when I described the Haitian roots of the musical’s story.

To my surprise, Manuel and his group of pals, typically known for their talents on the football team, all came to audition. They were really keyed up and clearly making their arrival known to the other auditioners; it was not unlike the noise and pageantry of psyching out the opposing football team. Manuel sat next to his regular sidekick, Rodney, who has a quick wit and ability to speak knowingly on a wide variety of topics. He is immensely easy going and quick to smile, but as I learned later, equally stubborn and defiant if he feels an injustice or any disrespect. Manuel’s humor eggs him on, yet Rodney displays himself as distinctly physical in all his interactions. Every gag is punctuated with a bear hug, punch to the shoulder, or someone being picked up and moved to a different place in the room. Rodney is a big guy, both in height and weight. When you see all his physicality on display, at first it is concerning. You wonder whether he is intruding on people’s space and unwittingly freaking them out, or whether he might hurt someone. After constant observation, I am fully aware that Rodney’s size is in
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conflict with his need for physical contact and his desire to demonstrate his affection through physical gesture to those he feels close to. He has resolved this need in the typically male maneuver of the wrestling move, though he can occasionally be seen putting his giant arm gently around anyone sitting next to him. He is the embodiment of a giant teddy bear.

The quieter members of this group are Bevin, who has a mischievous smile and engaging eyes, and Ronnie, with his big black glasses, shy and a bit nervous when one tries to engage him in conversation. Each time I greet him, give him encouragement or ask about something he mentioned the last time I saw him, I cannot help but notice his suppressed smile. It is in him that I see a real desire to find his “place” in the school. He is not your typical football player and it seems incongruous to discover him wearing a jersey. He is on the extreme end of slender, and not particularly tall. He is also unlike the gregarious members of his group, in that he is always watching their antics from the periphery.

I admit to being excited to see this lively group of black students, each with his connection, either direct or once removed, to the local Haitian community. In this school, the stage productions have been known to be extremely self-perpetuating - and mostly white. The same students have typically audition year after year, and there has been the reluctant expectation that the productions are already cast even before the audition.
However, this production staff is almost completely new to the school, from the director to the choreographer to the stage manager. Additionally, since the story is set in the Caribbean and basically an exploration of race and class, it was essential that the show have a diverse cast. However, the long wait of the audition process proved difficult for Manuel’s group. Their intense energy began to waver, and an obvious shadow of doubt in their ability to sing the parts set in. Two hours into the audition process there were signs of cracks in their confidence. They were annoyed at the wait, and each threatened to leave. It was Rodney who reasoned with them to stay since they already had done the work of learning the music. In the end, Rodney was the only one who persevered and found himself in the final performances of the show.

Through the burgeoning choral program, there were other students of color brought into the process, some for the first time. Additionally, there was a special needs student, Lisa, whose talent and passion was singing and dancing. Lisa, who eventually passed the state mandated tests to eventually graduate, was a regular in all things performing arts, and was very much nurtured and protected by the community. That being said, Lisa always knew her lines, vocal parts, dance steps, and blocking. She carried them out with a beautiful smile on her face, no matter how heart wrenching or tragic the scene, always scanning the audience for her supportive family. Lisa’s biggest challenge was being able to handle the effects stress had on her and those around her. When one thinks about stage productions on a shoestring budget and in a short amount of
time, one quickly realizes that stress is unavoidable. Eventually, temperatures would rise and voices with them. Lisa, unable to manage those emotions, would shout for everyone to stop being angry, and run crying from the room. It was impressive how her outburst could bring all parties into check, and provide an impetus for reasoned conversation, if not compromise. Several people would usually follow Lisa out the door in order to calm her and walk the halls chatting with her for distraction.

Unlike Lisa’s special needs, Quincy’s were more visible to the audience. Quincy, a Haitian-American student, is restricted to an electric wheelchair. At first, the production staff wondered how to create the set so that he could access enough stage to allow him some variety. After several considered designs, the set turned out to be a three-foot wide walkway along the back wall, and a wide ramp down center stage. Since the production requires an ensemble approach, where everyone is on stage for the duration of the production, Quincy and his wheelchair were used in really creative ways. Sometimes, his wheels were decorated in order to blend into a scene centered on the natural beauty of the island. Other times, Quincy was fierce guard with a spear, who was quick and nimble on his wheels in order to block the way of a trespasser. Another time, his wheelchair acted as an access gate, when the rest of the cast stood shoulder to shoulder to form a wall. Quincy, gate and gatekeeper in one, moved and gestured for the character to enter into the forbidden plantation beyond.
One thing that impressed me about Quincy is his comfort level in knowing his strengths (his beautiful singing voice), and his lack of hesitation to do everything the rest of the cast is doing. He did all the choreography, quietly offering modifications if his hands needed to be too far overhead. He very matter of factly stated what he needed, without any fanfare: “Could someone open the door for me?” Most importantly, Quincy was never offended when the director or his fellow actors asked specific questions in order to understand where his limits were of mobility and how to accommodate placement in different formations to make his access and timing easier. Brueggemann (2001) argues that “…disability can create knowledge, open doors wider, build ramps to awareness that we all essentially have in us any way” (p. 800). To this point, Quincy’s ability to advocate for himself, allowed all of us to open conversations that previously might have been thought too offensive to ask. Anderson (2005) concurs with this viewpoint, noting that disability not only facilitates a sense of community within the classroom, but can also deepen "levels of trust and exploration among the learners” (p. 375). To the cast, crew and production team, Quincy’s wheelchair was a non-issue. He was just a regular teenager getting his work done and leading the underclassmen in his diligence. Quincy’s non-stop presence on the stage throughout the show allowed his wheelchair to quickly disappeared for the audience as well, and they ended up focusing only on his stellar stage skills.
What is unique about this project is that the “techies,” the students who build, paint, create props, apply make-up, run light and sound, as well as the peripheral art elements of program, poster creation and specialty set pieces, are all equally important to the process. Within this group, the diversity of students nearly doubles. For example, a crew of Asian girls came out full force for set build, paint and make-up. Each is positive, pleasant and up to doing anything you ask. Though they describe themselves as too shy to
be on the stage, they are certainly not shrinking violets. They are silly in their interactions with each other, and yet serious about doing their work. Perhaps the techie who quietly ended up becoming instrumental to the final performance was Ting. At first, she was quietly at each work call. Eventually, her fun personality caught the eyes of Rodney and quickly a romantic relationship brought Ting to even more rehearsals. When it came time for full costume parade, the production staff was still struggling with what to do with the “other worldly” make-up required of the Haitian Gods, who are the main characters. It was Ting who asked if she could create some make-up prototypes for the staff to consider. Doing this type of face paint was exactly in her wheelhouse of talents and on a bucket list of experiences that she has always wanted to have the opportunity to try. Ting’s beautiful work transformed the students from teenagers in a handmade costume into Gods, allowing each to embody the swagger and confidence required to make their part come alive.
Within this wide group of tech support and cast and crew, we also had our population of gay and transgender students. Some students are out to their friends, but not to the school. The production staff, pretty astute in their radar around this point, in a variety of ways make it clear to students that they are open for cross gender casting, and making students comfortable in a costume gender and pronoun of their choosing. The production staff are always careful to never press the issue of having a student publicly reveal their choices, as that decision has ripples into their home life that many of us can never fully grasp. Rather, students have met with different production staff privately to voice their discomfort in certain overtly gendered costumes, or scenes that require interactions based on traditional models, and the director or wardrobe mistress easily accommodated.
However, there are some students who are very open about their status, like Emily. Emily, at the start of the year, announced to everyone that he wanted to be referred to as Dirk moving forward. Dirk has been perhaps the most talented singer and actor on the Landingham stage for several years - as a girl. It has been a huge personal struggle for Dirk to come to terms with his beautiful, high, feminine singing voice and slight and short stature. I heard him each morning trying out more brash and husky voices while practicing his singer/songwriter compositions in the practice rooms. Occasionally, I would hear a heart-wrenching scream, “I hate my voice!” Dirk’s general hostile demeanor for the majority of the months leading up to the audition, made me worry about him. Reaching out to him, I became aware that he felt he needed to make a fresh start on a different stage that never knew him as Emily. He was opting to play the male lead in a neighboring town, which seemed to make him happy. Dirk, who is also a gifted artist, was open to participating in the project through the design of the program cover. It was a collage of brightly colored paper with the tree as a symbol of life in the forefront. Dirk’s participation, as limited as it was, was hugely important to me, and the actors who had shared the stage with him for many previous productions.
The one group of students who rarely come into focus when talking about diversity, are the students who are low on the socio-economic spectrum. Sadly, at this school these students do not often participate in after school activities. One might suggest that it has to do with the access to transportation after school bus hours, or perhaps the need to hold a part time job to cover his or her own expenses. Others may point to confidence and connectedness to the school, as many of these students are new to the
community. Yet others may point to values, and the arts not being one of them. Some part of all of these reasons may be true and worthy of a separate research project; however, this project definitely exemplified economic diversity across socio-economic categories. There were definitely wealthy students in the cast and crew who easily could have gone to private schools, except that their limited arts offerings could not compare with what this public school is able to provide. These students graciously opened their beautiful homes to the cast for dinners and the cast party. However, there were also those in the extreme other end of the economic spectrum.

Amal brought this point into focus for me. After each rehearsal and before a day of teaching on the stage, I typically tried to organize the stage wings of set pieces, props, and the occasional costume rolled in a ball on the floor. Theater is messy and wrought with potential fire and egress hazards, so making our space safe was a priority of mine. I find many unusual things doing this task (a unicorn head, a Pokemon onesie, etc.) and I have learned to ponder, but not question. When I discovered under a bench in a corner of the stage wing, a brown bag full of soda, pre-packaged cinnamon buns (two for the price of one), and pub fries (a snack found at convenience stores, known for its cheap price tag and harrowing impact to one’s digestion system), I simply put it in a safe place. I reminded myself to mention to the cast and crew the rule about no food in the theater. Later that evening, Amal was near tears, pacing and holding her head in fear. She was muttering, “My bag? My bag? Who took my bag?” Immediately, everyone in the vicinity
was looking for a bag. She was describing it, “It is a brown bag full of food. This is all the food I have for the week. You have to help me find it. I don’t have any more money!”

When I heard that, I quietly walked Amal into the hall and told her where I put her bag. I told her where she should keep her things so she didn’t have to worry about it being thrown out or taken.

Amal was not the only student to be described on the low economic level within our cast and crew, though she was the student who brought my awareness of the unique difficulties this population has while participating in such a long, drawn out process such as a theatrical production. Participating in this production required students to attend randomly ending rehearsals and spontaneously added calls on weekends. In order to comply, students would either need to have access to a car, or have parents or guardians willing and able to drop what they are doing in order to drive students back and forth. The Amals of the cast were constantly asking for a ride home from others, or more often still sitting with the production staff waiting, with our coats on by the door, for their rides to appear. When Amal didn’t turn in her Consent Form to participate in the research, I asked if she needed another form in the event that she lost the original. She stated she could not participate because she did not own a smartphone to take the surveys. I explained to her that I really needed her unique perspective to be included in the data of this research project, so we worked out a system where she could use a school provided device to do her surveys. As I read through the data, I wonder who I did not personally
approach like I did Amal, thinking I would seem like I pressuring their participation in the study. I now wonder if similarly disadvantaged students might have been too embarrassed to ask for help, or seen using the school equipment, despite my offering to find an accommodation to the entire group. My inability to have a bank of devices at the ready for any student to use at each session has disappointed me well beyond the end of the data collection period.

Amal also made me aware of the many things that require student pocket money in order to make participating in this type of project even more enjoyable: the collection of money to buy pizza dinner on late nights; a group visit to a movie after a Friday rehearsal; or the purchase of a memento t-shirt with the picture of the show’s program cover - to proudly wear prior to opening night. Amal and many others quietly made excuses for why they did not participate, so that their peers would not suspect that it was because they could not afford to. The production team, after a deep discussion, started to put in some of their own money when purchasing pizzas and t-shirts, in order to have “left overs” for needy students to participate fully without any embarrassment. It was clear to all of the production team that it absolutely had to look like a happy accident, or Amal and her counterparts would be too proud to partake.

It was through interviewing Sonny, perhaps the most well respected member of the cast, that I began to understand that the students interpreted the term diversity more broadly than I did - beyond race, ethnicity, socio-economically, or even LGBTQ
considerations. In order to fully appreciate his perspective, you need to understand who Sonny is and what he represents in the cast and school community. Sonny is a second generation Vietnamese-American, who also happens to be the Math Team captain. To everyone’s surprise, Sonny successfully convinced the school to allow his continued participation on the Math team, despite his adamant refusal to enroll in the required Math Team courses during the school day. He argued that by taking the mandated Math courses, which he could master on his own after school, limited his ability to have room in his schedule to participate in the Concert Band with his flute, and sing as a tenor in Chamber Singers - things that require an ensemble of people for participation. So while doing the daily work on this production, taking five AP courses, and participating in two ensembles, Sonny was also taking an additional Math class unassisted after school. It is no surprise that he later was named Valedictorian of the graduating class, a nominated Merit Scholar, and someone who eventually earned a full scholarship to Harvard. However, to this cast and crew, he held the coveted spot of “Leading Recipient of Pickle Points.”

Pickle Points were developed to celebrate when the cast and crew take creative chances in their work, and to highlight when they excel at a task or are especially compassionate. The production team, all teachers, understood that it was necessary to create a regular reason to reflect on our work and actions. The hastily cut papers with a cartoon pickle in baseball cap, heralding, “I Got Your Pickle Right Here!” became the
highlight of our evening’s rituals. Here is a sample of Pickle Point Awards in order to understand the personal power Sonny held as the highest earner: “Sonny - great energy!” “Amal - remembered all her lines and blocking”; “Quincy, The Best! Killing it!” One participant describes the impact of Pickle Points this way: “When we did Pickle Points, it was a nice way to reflect on the day and praise people for doing new things. It really brought us together.”
So when Sonny, a minority student, describes diversity in an unexpected way, I really took note. His take was that the cast and crew had *diverse prior knowledge* which made the stage tasks more challenging, or easy in different areas. He pointed out that there were people involved in this production who had never participated in any music or theater project prior to this one. Some students struggled to following the music, or understand stage direction, or understand what a grapevine dance step was. These students were regularly dealing with others visually and aurally observing their ignorance, while others had years of training, confidence and instincts for what to try next in their improvisations. To Sonny, this type of diversity, in the context of a theater production, is especially challenging in a student’s self-construct, perhaps even more stress-inducing than even race, ethnicity, special need or gender preference.

In this exchange, Sonny is asked about similarities and differences in this production to others that he participated in. He additionally touches on the fact that the material itself is diverse through its content:

SONNY: ...the differences... the level of dedication, this year, with this group...The dedication that I see in this group, is just amazing...I never expected it, and the three years I have been doing drama, I’ve never seen this kind of motivation before.

INTERVIEWER: Where do you think that comes from? I mean, it’s still just a musical here...it’s still the same place, same people. So, what’s different?
S: I have no idea to be honest, because…The musicals before…they had…similar concepts and… themes of this musical. Which is, you know, similar fast-paced songs that you can dance to. Similar… kind of, story progression, I guess. Um, maybe, I, I don’t know, it might, it might go back to the cultural emersion piece. Where it’s a completely, different culture. Whereas you know…the past musicals… They all happened in America. They all happened in the… history of America in some sense. And yet, this one is completely, you know. This is Haiti, this is…somewhere…most of us probably…never had any contact with… Um, in some shape or another, they probably heard about it, but they never got to really know it… So, I think that interest might, that curiosity, might…fuel this motivation… I think it’s just… it’s new. It’s not… something we see every day. It’s not an everyday high school musical… I think it’s just that it’s very novel… it’s something… different.

Sonny, in a single interview, astutely opened my eyes to other forms of diversity coming together with this research project. He pinpoints that the diversity piece is essential to the process, which results in cast and crew motivation, and has a greater emphasis on the feeling of community by its members.

**Feeling of Community.** The quantitative data (Table 7) indicates that the diverse participants of this study overwhelmingly felt positively in all areas of community measure: inclusion, trust, sensitivity, emotional connectedness, routines, and shared
experiences. As a long time professional in field, this did not surprise me. However, I expected the positive responses to increase more over time. I imagined students and staff, many strangers at the start, would come to know and understand one another over repeated exposure and collaborative experiences together, and therefore have stronger positive feelings regarding the community over time. After all, there are many research projects that support the idea that the more people interact, the more likely they are to become close (Allan & Allan, 1971; Festinger, 1950; Sherif, White, & Harvey, 1955; Wilson & Miller, 1961). The Random Effects Panel Regression (Table 13), indicates that time is not a statistically significant factor in the feeling of community for this project. However, the qualitative data reflect that there was a change in the feeling of community over the extended period of time that this project took place. Each time/date stamped open-ended response in the survey repeatedly confirms the student’s own awareness of this change over time. It also surprised me at how open the students were to receive that community right from the start, which may have impacted the baseline response to the community factors.

In an effort to understand the main themes in the story (racial and economic disparity, and segregation), the first two days of the process were dedicated to what is typically called table work. The director asked students to talk about times when they personally felt society’s expectations of them were in conflict with their personal desires. He also had the cast and crew play improvisation games for students to try out different

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characters from a variety of social classes and then articulate how they might interact with each other verbally and physically. The participants, some complete strangers, were immediately willing to share their personal stories and many were moved by the stories of others. They quickly identified their changing feelings around the community they had just entered: (Day 1 and 2)

- ...observing the table work and listening to the cast share their personal stories of adversities they have faced in life. I cried. I couldn't help it.
- ...I met new people I had not interacted with before, and they were excellent to work with as well as talk to...they are a part of my personal community now
- [We are] much closer! We talked about our struggles and expectations and I now feel closer and I trust everyone more. It was an excellent experience to relate and learn more about people… [I] absolutely got to work with everyone and it helped me realize that the community is way bigger than just me and my friend group...there are so many people who are in `this musical that I ever would’ve thought to be.
- ...it shows me that for a community to work, all members have to participate equally and work hard...
• I do not know every person in this group extremely well, but I feel like the conversation made us closer…. It’s nice to know that we are dealing with the same things together and we can share them with each other.

• During the improv., I went out of my comfort zone, and was accepted and [I] am much less scared to do stuff like that now!

• I have gotten to know well all the students I worked with today. The community we have is built first from a group of people spending a lot of time today working collaboratively on something everyone has a passion in common in. These bonds will last a long time, and the community forms out of this.

Throughout the study, the participants used language, most often the term “closer,” to imply a positive increase in their feelings toward their fellow cast and crew members. The chronological sample of a variety of participants indicates that there is a disconnect between what the participants believed was an optimal community experience indicated in the overwhelming scores of 8 on the Likert scale found in Table 7, and how the process exceeded their expectations, a continued level 8 score throughout the process. This could be one reason for the high responses on community measures at the beginning and also at the end of the process on Day 72.

• Day 18 …All of a sudden, I feel closer to my fictitious family, as if they really are related to me
• Day 31: I felt closer to the people I worked with as most were very helpful…

• Day 37: Today's rehearsal was very unifying. I got to know underclassmen better, build friendships, and try new foods and create new memories. One of my favorite rehearsals!

• Day 45: [I feel] closer, because I now had to include others into my scene [and] perform as if it was show night.

• Day 51: The group’s energy made me enjoy the experience more and built a sense of unity, more than I've experienced before.

• Day 54: ...closer-coming together to be committed during ‘crunch time’

• Day 58: I felt closer to everyone as we are doing so much together. I just feel one with the community because we are so together.

• Day 60: I have found that we are closer now in the stress of doing the whole show

• Day 63: [I] asked two guys to prom with my best friend, who we have gotten really close to lately.

• Day 70: The whole running the show and eating together made me feel closer to everybody. That was great! I just felt closer working together.

• Day 72 (final): I've never been so close with a group of people in my entire life. I feel like this isn't real life. We have all seen each other at our
most vulnerable points and we all accept each other for who we are. I couldn't be happier.

**What is Community?** As outlined in the Literature Review chapter of this dissertation, I have struggled defining the limits of the research simply because the term community embodies concentric circles of inclusion. With our growing connectedness through technology, and ability to learn about others far removed from our experience at the press of a button, I wondered how my participants would define the term community, and whether the meaning was fluid - changing with the context of conversation. One participant, early in the process, described community like this: “...community is about the people around you.” Over the course of many weeks, the students’ definition became more detailed and wider in scope. It is interesting how the students’ definition expanded parallel to their interaction with a wider group of participants.

The students’ first understanding of community comes from a comparison of their family unit: “Communities are a new type of family, or a sort of copy of a family.” Upon expanding their friend circle through the process, so did the expansion of the members in their direct circle of community: “[Through this project, I was] able to work well with people I never expected to be friends with. [It] helped me trust others and build connections I hadn't built before, building the sense of community.”
To understand further their development of what community means and how it intersects with a diverse group of people, we need to consider the other research questions. The overlap of the answers to the questions is immensely rich.

**Q2: How does immersion into an unfamiliar culture through interdisciplinary learning impact a participant’s perception of being a member of a global community?**

**Cultural Immersion.** The majority of the time spent on this project was on site within four walls and with the same people regularly working together through collaboration. There were two ways I planned to discover if there were other influences that might require students to expand the concentric circles on their definition of community beyond the bonds of cast and crew. The first was by asking students to be someone completely different than himself or herself, even otherworldly. Could they begin to “understand” the motivations and desires of someone foreign to themselves with empathy, furthering the idea of a world community? Connected to this idea was the second design plan - providing the vehicle of a minority culture to study in relation to our storyline and the characters the students needed to represent. I was interested in whether the God-like and poor rural characters on a Caribbean island could be seen as “the same” as a community similar to the one these students reside in, so close to a major city, and fully immersed in popular culture and technology. So, one part was more theoretical and individual in nature through self-reflection and character development, and the other
more tangible through meeting and learning about real people in another part of the world.

A supremely empathetic student, Gabby, who naturally embodies the traits of her character, a Goddess of Love, tried to put her finger on the connection of experience of another culture, and the ability to inform her stage performance:

I’m really interested in what I’ve learned so far, from people. I think their stories are incredible and what they’ve been through is incredible and it kind of makes me think the characters [in this play] have dealt with so much more than it seems like just on the paper...just from learning what I have about the culture and things...I definitely...draw parallels all over the place...with the show…

**Cultural Immersion 1.** The second part of that design, having students engage in learning about Haitian culture, was easier to achieve, but definitely had its difficulties. I designed a variety of learning modules that brought other voices into our theater community, several from the wider town community. On Day 19 in the process, I managed to find the funding to bring Jean Appolon, a premier Haitian choreographer to the school, with his company. One of the requirements set by the music booster group who provided partial funding was to present some enrichment assembly to the entire high school community. The additional cost came from the Drama Club, who wanted to use the opportunity to invite new students into the theater program by hosting an open door master class with the choreographer. Though attendance was required for the cast and
crew, any student in the school who wanted to perform some of the steps they saw in the formal presentation was invited to participate or watch the dance master class.
The dance presentation and master class proved to have many positive outcomes, based on the data. One participant saw the direct connection to the choreography that was created throughout the production to this enrichment assembly:

One of the best [learning modules] was the Haitian Dance Assembly. So, dancers from Jean Appolon came to our school. And they performed Haitian dance and folkloric - a cool show for us. And after school they led a dance workshop and that was cool because we got to learn traditional Haitian dance and through that we got to really kind of understand the culture and it helped with our show, because then our show was choreographed based on some of the moves we learned from that master class.

Other participants, perhaps a little concerned about how this project would be received by the school community, had their ear to the ground and reported back both positive and negative reviews:

- The choreographer was Haitian and he blends Haitian themes, or like problems he sees in Haiti into his dancing. The school appreciates it greatly. Like I heard a lot of people buzzing about it.
- ...people... appreciated... the dance... I talked to some of the kids after to see how they thought it went... Some were like, ‘Oh, it was really good.’ And then, others were like, either asleep or making jokes about it.
Rodney, the gentle giant who definitely walks the line of coolness in the eyes of the school, had a surprising response. When he heard about the master class and the possibility that non theater students would attend and possibly see and mock the cast for embracing the unconventional, athletic dance moves, he had decided prior to attending that he was just going to watch:

The dance class, that was really fun because I didn't think I was going to do any dancing. But I am like, forget this! I am gonna dance, and people who were not even in the play came.

**Obstacle to community building #1.** I need to take a moment to add some additional commentary for the benefit of future researchers who might consider a similar
project, but also to completely lay bare the parts of community building that are not celebrated, and quickly filed in some deep dark memory vault with childbirth. In this instance, it is the conflict between best intentions and great energy used toward bringing people together, and the fact that sometimes unexpected things actually fracture the community. This was one of those times when I employed journaling to examine my thinking and exercise my frustrations. I could sense that my preoccupation with my own emotions around the event, were keeping me from being able to focus on the many positive responses I was finding in the research in front of me. I share this in its painful detail for future interdisciplinarians who also find the deep connections to culture a natural fit to building meaningful curriculum.

The Haitian Dance Event, as mentioned earlier, was difficult to pull off because of funding. It was a stressful, but I continue to know that this piece was essential to everything that followed in the plan. Even after I had managed to pull the money together, I had tepid support and enthusiasm from the principal for a variety of reasons. The first being his concern with the lack of funding support from the grant providers. The other reasons had to do with protecting the faculty members’ time and teaching spaces, as we would need to take over the gymnasium in preparation and during the school assembly. But perhaps the most resistance came from the faculty themselves. It was the end of the grading term and even though the presentation was only an hour, it was during the last moments (semester courses, and mid-term for full year courses) to give
assessments, hear presentations, and collect missing assignments. I intellectually understood all of that, as I was myself teaching and grading. The part that was difficult to swallow was that the school has had ZERO arts enrichment assemblies beyond seeing a handful of their own performing groups. I saw this as a beautiful gift to the school that has had no funds for this type of professional presentation in anyone’s memory. The amount of complaining and negative talk on the part of my colleagues was eye-opening. One, because of their lack of professionalism as I was within ear-shot of their comments, but also their comments demonstrated a general lack of respect and appreciation for the arts, and it was glaringly apparent.

The second part of the turmoil it caused had to do with a small handful of parent and student complaints about the connection made between the original folkloric dance choreography, and its Vodun tradition. The director/choreographer mentioned the history of dance in Haiti and the early connections to ceremonial dance of the African slaves brought there to harvest sugar cane. Immediately, about six students stood up and walked out of the gym. Upon leaving, they called their parents to report that there was an assembly with Voodoo ceremony dance. The principal immediately talked to disgruntled students, and took phone calls of irate parents. The principal made a visit to my office, not a common occurrence, to ask me to explain what my reasoning was for bringing this particular event to the school, and a request to take over the fielding of the angry calls. Rather than celebrating a wonderful concert and master class, I was trying to explain that
there were no Voodoo dances being done, and that the choreographer was trying to give the student body a perspective on the history of Haitian dance and the inspiration for some of his original choreography – no ceremonies were actually being enacted.

I assured the parents that the choreographer was Haitian, and lives in Haiti part of the year still. I explained that I was trying to approach the celebration of Haitian culture with great respect and sought out experts in their field to assist me. In the end, I was told by multiple parents that I could not possibly understand because I was not Haitian, and that I unleashed an evil on the school by having this assembly. While my intention was to open minds to different ways of being in the world, the parents told me that they did not even want their children to know that there were people in the world who believed in more than one God. Shaken to my core, I invited one particularly irate parent to come to school and share with the cast and crew during our immersion modules, her specific viewpoint regarding Vodun and her story of how she came to the town. Her response was equally confusing. This mother stated that she came to the United States as a young child and actually knows very little about Haiti in order to share.

Several things rattled me after this assembly. First, the stress of money never left my mind. But more concerning was the fact that I had used all of my political capital with my principal and colleagues. I never got that bright greeting in the morning again. In fact, I sensed a general impatience when I spoke at departmental meetings afterwards. Maybe the hardest realization to put behind me was the feeling that I failed to be the respectful
researcher that I set out to be. I completely miscalculated how the Haitian community of the town would interpret my actions. Of course, every group, whether based on cultural background, proximity, or participation in a common project, is comprised of people with differing viewpoints, values and past experiences. If I were to do this project again, I will not assume that all members of the Haitian community would feel similarly about anything, let alone something as deeply personal as religion. I also will not assume that all Haitians know or interpret Haitian history similarly. I believed I could seek out and know the best representatives of their common collective experience. In the future, I will start with the community to help me to design the modules. I will not assume that I would know on my own what would be meaningful or authentic. If I had taken that important step toward gathering their input first, I would have sensed immediately that the Gods in the story line are viewed nothing like the Greek Gods we learned about in Ancient History, or in literature, drama, and music courses. Through this experience, I see that there are two very different camps around the idea of multiple Gods in the Vodun religion. To many Haitian-Americans, these Gods are still very real. To others, there is a real sense of embarrassment that because they are of Haitian heritage that they might be mixed up as a Vodun believer – a kind of guilt by association. This was such an important point that one student was forced to quit the production to demonstrate her dedication to one Christian God.
Cultural Immersion 2. The second learning module was a presentation by a local doctor who works part of the year providing medical care to a rural Haitian orphanage and neighboring town, and part of the year in Landingham, and seeks supplies and funding to go back to the orphanage. She brought a visual montage of the children in the orphanage, explaining how they ended up at the orphanage and what their daily lives are like. Much of the lecture centered on basic needs, like clean water and daily nutrition. The doctor explained how the entire community came together to create a clean water station, and worked together to fortify both the living quarters and the health clinic attached to the orphanage for the benefit of the town. She also brought many artifacts created by the local people, for students to hold and ponder. Through this experience, the following participant began to see a different definition of community more broadly than had been voiced at the beginning of the process:

We viewed images of life after the earthquake in Haiti, which showed how a community reacts similarly to distress by forming tent homes together to protect one another. Community is working together when you are at your most difficult points in life, to grow and to change for the better.

Cultural Immersion 3. The third event was arranged through a literacy program at a neighboring town’s library. The head librarian connected me to a gregarious Haitian man who had a personal learning goal of being able to speak in English to a group about his experiences at home and his journey to Massachusetts. Ironically, the person who was
his personal mentor through the library also happened to have been the theater director at Landingham High School years before. He helped our Haitian speaker plan his talking points with a slideshow and came to the event as a support. His message was one of survival as a community effort. He presented some vivid photos after the earthquake and the slow pace of rebuilding. He never spoke to illicit a feeling of pity, but rather great pride in his community’s resourcefulness and adaptive spirit. Perhaps the participants’ radar on defining community had been broadened by our earlier presentation by the doctor, but several students were beginning to retool their thinking on the subject:

- There are other things that go into a community other than living in a specific region together, but like in the Haitian culture, a community bonds through love, loss, and beliefs as well.
- Today's speaker did influence my thinking about what community means, as in the people of Haiti following the earthquake would have to come together as a community to simply survive.
- ...the guest speaker talked about the earthquake...It was something that made me more aware...[I] realized that community is not only within a certain border.

**Cultural Immersion 4.** The fourth event was developed over several long meetings - a Haitian feast. It was a personal goal of mine. It was the only way I felt I could bridge the gap between “outsiders” as experts in Haitian culture coming to impart
knowledge on the cast and crew and our own school and town community members, including students, sharing their pride and personal tastes. A particularly outgoing girl in the orchestra, Polly, wanted to be a part of the project, but was too deeply involved in mock trial to participate in the usual ways of cast and crew: “When I first heard about [the feast] I kind of...really wanted to do it because it's where I am from, so I kinda wanted to bring that into it.” Polly and I talked at length about a feast, and she insisted on bringing her mother and a friend of the family, with children in the district, into the process.

I met with Polly and Rose, a Haitian student who was participating as an artist in the cover design project, and the two parents to discuss what they believed were the signature dishes of Haiti. It was a spirited discussion with the students, arguing with the mothers,
but providing thoughts about whether certain foods were accessible to American tastes. What I most wanted was what they viewed as authentic Haitian meal, trying to forget cost and tastes for a moment. By the conclusion of the meeting, we had a very wide menu, which was going to be pondered further by the mothers on their own time. At the third meeting we had a narrow list of dishes. We then put together a shopping list, and made a plan for collecting things we needed. We planned the preparation of certain elements of the dishes that required sitting time at home and created a cooking schedule. While I furnished the cash for the parents to go to their favorite suppliers, I got permission for the event, reserved the rooms, sent out invitations to all the people who have assisted the project thus far, including administrators, and began stockpiling my family’s cutlery, platters, and staples in the old Home Economics room. I also needed to round up students interested in cooking to assist the moms in the short window for preparation. I walked up to complete strangers in the school, as well as sent email invitation to the Cooking Club and Asian Culture Club, known for cooking regular meals together, all to begin pulling in a wider community of people to participate in the project. It is amazing how motivated students become to help when there is a feast to partake of at the end of it. Several Haitian students happily volunteered to assist, joining the efforts of other forthcoming volunteers: other immigrant students, our own cast and crew, and performing arts students.
Polly and Rose were so passionate and excited for this event, but when it was only days away Polly stopped to talk early one morning when it was quiet in the performing arts wing. She looked like she had a change of heart, so I inquired was on her mind. The amount of preparation work and time commitment that her mom and other mothers who got roped into participating made the event very important to her. I could tell she wanted to protect her mom who was acting so selflessly, despite having a taxing job. She also knew how the Haitian students were looking forward to being the object of celebration. I knew she felt like she needed to protect them as well. Polly finally laid out her concerns: What if the students are rude and make fun of the food and culture? It was clearly going to break her heart.

I was surprised by her concern though, in retrospect, I could definitely see why she came to that conclusion. The only thing I could do was to remind Polly how respectful the cast and crew had been when the dancers and lecturers came in, and how serious they are taking the learning to prepare for the performance. She smiled and agreed, but the shadow of concern never left her face. I immediately floated that thought to my next few interviewees, one to test if my impressions were correct, and two to maybe put the buzz in the air that everyone remain appreciative, despite their personal tastes:

INTERVIEWER: What is your reaction to that?
QUINCY: I mean like, I wouldn’t say anything disrespectful about it, but like, other people, I can’t speak for them, so…
I: ...Do you see our cast...I mean you’ve been with them for a long time now... Do you think they’ll react negatively?
Q: ...Most of the cast, I’d say, would react it rather positively…

I wanted to understand what Quincy, a Haitian-American student in a wheelchair, felt would open the minds of students outside of the cast and crew to be more receptive to “others”:

I: Where do you think that comes from?
Q: ...lack of understanding.
I: So, you just think that if we spent more time...talking about it, educating, they would be more open?
Q: Yeah.
I: ...if we do more cultural immersion throughout the school, then that would disappear.
P: Yeah, over time...Not like, within a year, or two. But, over time it would.

My next interview happened to be with a student who had moved to the U.S. from a war torn Middle Eastern country. Hector came to Landingham the year before with his twin sister and parents. He has had many ups and downs assimilating into the school over
the past year, and he had been dealing with a variety of worries about relatives at home and memories. He had since immersed himself in the camaraderie of the orchestra and jazz band, which seemed to have given him a purpose and place to go. With his participation in this project, Hector had become more animated, light-hearted, and embraced by the cast and crew. He was cast in the important antagonist role as the God of Death. The part requires some challenging technical singing skills, something Hector had never tried before, but it also provided him a safe place to explore some of his raw feelings about the darker side of life. I came back to Hector for several interviews, since his perspective is both as an insider and outsider. I really looked forward to hearing his insight on why some students in the United States are unaccepting of other cultures, despite its very foundation is often referred to as a “melting pot.” It was interesting that both Hector and Quincy had come to the same conclusion - education:

HECTOR: It comes from...the American teenagers fear of change…

INTERVIEWER: So, tell me a little bit about what you mean?

H: ...I feel like my friends here in the United States, they don’t like to change their usual order...That would be detrimental to their...routine. I feel like, having them try something new, such as, Haitian food, would be a big jump for them. I feel like this crew [referring to the participants of this production]...wouldn’t really necessarily face this problem much...

I: Why is that?
H: Because...they’re minds have been opened in the past month and...They’re getting into the Haitian culture more and more...No...I believe that this cast in particular. If they don’t like it, they would just, um, they wouldn’t say anything.

I: Do you think they’d show...appreciation?

H: ...I believe...yeah...they would...I know this much...this cast, is consider[ate] and polite in that way.

Perhaps the most interesting response I had throughout all of the interviews around learning about different cultures, came from Hector. His perspective was that if you actually come from a rich cultural background and it wasn’t one of the majority cultures in the area, then you were expected to suppress your own. He describes a kind of code switching technique that he has learned to master:

HECTOR: ...a lot of American students don’t know a lot of stuff about other cultures, and especially here, in the United States, they should.

INTERVIEWER: So, why do you think that is?...

H: ..I think they try and um, ignore that there’s *anything* other than the United States...They try and think that; eh, hey, there’s a lot of different cultures in the United States itself, so let’s just talk about these... ones.

I: Ok, so you feel like there are certain ones they value more than others?

H: Yeah…

I: And which ones do you think they are?
H: Um, the Irish culture, maybe. The, um, Italian, kinda. Yeah, I mean the cultures in *these* areas.

I: Ok, so you’re saying that because where we’re near Boston it’s a very big Irish population (P: Yeah) and the town has a big Irish population. (P: Mm-hmm) Is that about the only ones that you see?

H: Those are the ones I hear about, yeah.

I: Interesting, um, when you’ve had an opportunity to share your culture, do you feel people, especially people that are your friends with, do you think they’re interested?

H: Well, we had an article written about us...This one. [points] So, um, people, a lot of people…of my friends came to me and they were like, hey we read the article. That’s how, when you know people actually care. But some of them, I’m fine with it, I, I, I’m totally fine if they didn’t read it. And yeah, that’s how we know some people care and some don’t.

I: Interesting...I’m really curious about your perspective as somebody who is maybe, living with, um, this rich cultural past that maybe you’re kind of subduing, you’re sort of suppressing it.

H: Yup.

I: So that you can sort of assimilate into the school, am I wrong?

H: No, you’re not. You’re good.
I: And then how...I’m trying to sort of *pump* up knowledge of another culture that a lot of us are very ignorant about. You know, and how you’re sort of managing...this assimilation, suppression, and balancing all these sort of, different cultures...all in your head.

H: Mm-Hmm. Yeah, so… I turn stuff off and on in my head. That’s exactly the way you kind of described it. So... for instance, I know I’m gonna turn everything, everything off tomorrow and just focus on the Haitian, culture cause I need it. It has a major affect how I dance, how I sing, how I act, and the musical itself. So, I’m gonna need to be a hundred percent focused on it, and, yeah, maybe I’ll tune it off, afterwards.

Hector’s voice made me constantly aware of how teachers/directors need to frame our learning of other cultures, always with great respect and with a conscious eye toward explicitly stating how it informs and influences our American culture. That interaction, though no surprise for many immigrants, including my own relatives, has stayed with me.

It is both fascinating and depressing that America, which brings together so many cultures, does not seem to be able to create the space to value but a few.

It is with great relief that I report that the Haitian feast was a huge success, which can be witnessed through all the data, particularly the student open-ended surveys and interviews. Some participants reflected on the effort they personally made in trying something new, and the bonding they made with others through the event:
One of my biggest moments is when we tried all that new Haitian food together. Me and some other girl I really didn't know before this tried all this food and we are really picky eaters, and that really brought us together.

Other participants were truly grateful for the effort that went into the preparation, and the variety of people who contributed, some who had no other connection to the project:

- We had a huge Haitian meal, which was awesome, and people cooked it for us and it was absolutely incredible. There were a lot of different foods that none of us have tried before…

- …those parents were, not all of them were associated with the show, they were just Haitian mothers who wanted to help and show food and give food, and be mothers, I guess. You could see how not only those parents, but the students of those parents were… willing to help…. Even the theater kids were helping cook and everyone came together to cook that meal.

That was great…

Some participants mentioned the pride they felt having a public celebration in their cultural heritage, as well as their contribution in cooking and sharing it:

It was really fun making the food actually... cooking it and... sharing it. It helped me, especially, to be proud of where I am from and what I do, I guess - having other people appreciate it
Other participants were taken aback by the number of people who stayed late just to attend the event: a variety of school administrators in attendance, all who had been following my research progress; teachers who had contributed in video, art, and set; and others who support any opportunity to make cultural connections; as well as students who were coming out of sports event curious about what was going on:

I think a lot of people were excited. A lot of people showed up to the Haitian dinner that I was not expecting. Like a bunch of different people from different cliques in school showed up and I was like this is actually... bringing the community together.

One participant articulated what I had hoped would be an outcome in designing the event:

[We] appreciated that there are other cultures in this global community. We are the world and we better be appreciative of everyone else.

Obstacle to community building #2. Despite the positive reception from the overwhelming majority of the people associated with the Haitian Feast, there were a variety of happenings, which required me to spend additional time journaling in order to reflect and gain perspective. Again, I learned the hard way why community-building events that include actually rubbing elbows with the community are so few and far between. I hope the following information will not to dissuade others from a similar project, but provide guidance for structuring a similar event with a consideration of the possible pit falls.
As stated earlier, money was a huge stressor in relation to this feast. But equally stressful was my cooking team’s fluid sense of time. When I briefly lived in Ireland, I quickly learned that other cultures have different ways of looking at time and distance than people in the northeast of the United States. A fifteen-mile trek over a mountain could be called, “A good stretch of the legs.” A meeting in the morning of a school day could mean the fifteen minutes right before lunch. As someone who has done a fair number of large and complicated projects, I could sense that we were going to be cutting things very close to the time dinner was to be served at our event. I tried always to push their suggested time table up, but these parents were devoting so much of their personal time outside of their own long work day, that I just could not ask any more of them.

I decided as an effort to counter our time crunch to enlist more people for help. Unfortunately, most of those enlisted were complete novices at cooking and needed an eye overseeing their every move: What does golden brown mean? How carefully do I sort the mushrooms? How do I use this grater? Can I stop stirring now? In retrospect, I am not sure I helped anyone by bringing in reinforcements. I also miscalculated the usefulness of the Home Economics room as our base. The actual school kitchen was off limits because of the very strict disinfection regime required by law, and that there would not be time for the kitchen workers to carry it out before prepping for lunch the day after our feast. The Home Economics room seemed like a perfect solution. However, the sinks had not been used to the extent that our feast required in all its years of service. The sink drains
disconnected and spilled greasy water onto the floor causing a safety hazard. There were no mops to access after school, as the school wing was silent except for us. But more importantly, there were no hoods over the stoves. This was really when the fiasco got under way.

The feast was scheduled on February 11th, a bitter cold day with the remnants of a snowstorm outside. The Home Economics room was full of students and parents, sloshing through the greasy water that poured out from under the sink, stepping over bits
of food. All four six-burner stove tops were being used to cook rice in giant pots, but also
to fry a myriad of meats, fish and vegetables. I was trying to push things along, yet
remain upbeat and appreciative of all the work everyone was doing. The administrators
that were invited to the feast were starting to assemble and talk in the cafeteria, and yet
we were nowhere in sight with the food.

The inevitable happened – the fire alarms went off. That day also happened to be
a big day for basketball. The patrons in the packed gym were filing out into the snow, and
athletes sweaty and in shorts stood shivering. We cooks knew that we caused the alarms
to go off. We also knew that there was not a fire, simply a lack of ventilation while we
were frying food. We also knew we were behind schedule in getting food on the table.
We sent the students out into the snow, but the adults stayed behind frantically cooking
while everyone else was distracted by the fire trucks. Before too long, we were sternly
told by firemen to turn everything off and get out of the building. Getting our fry oil up to
temperature again should not be under estimated as important as you imagine this fiasco
to its ending.

I happened to bump into the principal with his arms crossed out in the snow. I
tried to seem upbeat as I confessed that it was my cooking that set off the alarms, and he
assured me that he knew that to be true. He also informed me that his wife expected him
home an hour ago, implying that the feast, or poor planning, pretty much ruined his
evening. As I looked at my many other administrators huddled in the snow, I got that sick
feeling that happens when, despite your best intentions, you manage to make a complete mess of things. I dug deep in my bag of acting techniques and reached for what my theatre colleagues call my “Game Face.” The only thing that came from me during the presentation of the food, was joy and appreciation. I celebrated parents, and had Haitian students talk about the food choices they selected. I handed out bouquets. I took photos. I served up conch. I mingled with every table like it was a wedding reception. Inside, I was fighting back tears and the desire to lock myself in my office.

I am pretty certain that nobody felt, or were even aware of any of the things that were going on inside my head. I know that parents and students had a wonderful time. I know they felt appreciated and celebrated, and that the food was amazing. I think that only the principal and I were privy to my internal hell. The worst part was that I had already used all my political capital with him just a few weeks earlier with the dance assembly, and knew that I would need a very long tenure at the school to work my way back to the list of respected professionals in his building. This was so disappointing because I was only in my second year at this school. Perhaps more disappointing is that I am pretty sure I will be much more tentative when considering taking on a similar, impactful project like this one any time soon. I never wanted to be THAT teacher. I can only hope that time will heal that part of me and allow me to jump with both feet once again for the benefit of students, learning, and community-building.
It had been a long and exhausting day, both physically and emotionally. After the crowd had gone, I was still looking at a long evening of disinfecting the Home Economics room (I had been warned by the teacher who uses the room that it better be back to normal when she arrives the next day), and packing my van of all the supplies I borrowed from home. However, I was still in store for one more disappointing moment. The director, after the feast, was furious at me for using some of his scheduled rehearsal time to extend the event and take photos. I honestly was not sure I would be able to remain calm and collected. I simply asked how he thought I should have handled it better, and still have honored the time the parents and students dedicated to the feast. I never asked him what made him back away from that conversation at its conclusion, but I was pretty sure my bone-tired weariness was at least part of it.

**Cultural Immersion 5.** The last effort I made to bring another voice into the mix, but also to have the cast and crew feel empowered in their ability to effect positive change, was a fundraiser to educate poor Haitian elementary to college age students. The non-profit I engaged, Saint Rock Haiti Foundation, provided biographies of different students of a variety of age groups who needed the basic fees covered in order for them to continue their education. Through the Landingham High School community service program, I located and approached a student, Sammy, who expressed interest in the project. He attended all the other Haitian learning modules to understand the purpose and vision of including this fundraiser in the project. He also spearheaded the setup of the
displays in the lobby, and prepared, all on his own, a speech that he delivered at the beginning of each show. Sammy managed the table upon the conclusion of the performances and stood with the representative of the non-profit to answer questions and help in the collection of sponsor money. In my later reflections with him, Sammy was quite moved by the entire experience. He had never participated in a theater project before on any level, but felt deeply connected to the wider mission of the project, helping students just like him in another part of the world. This is Sammy’s heartfelt speech:

[The show you are about to see] is a tale of human compassion and love. But the real story of compassion lies in the tales of the Haitian people and the Saint Rock Haiti Foundation. Working in harmony with the people of Saint Rock and the neighboring communities, the foundation assists through:

- Providing quality primary health care
- Helping children and young adults access valuable education opportunities
- Instituting community outreach programs that support economic sustainability
- Investing in infrastructure to support overall health, and
- Empowering members of the community to advocate for their rights in the future

Founded in 2002, the Saint Rock Haiti Foundation has been working with the Haitian government and non-governmental organizations for the goal of creating
self-sufficiency and education. Saint Rock is a rural community 3 KM from the center of Port-Au-Prince (the capital of Haiti). Saint Rock has the population of only a few thousand more than [Landingham]. The Saint Rock Foundation created, with the help of the local communities, The Educational Sponsorship Program in 2005. Today, over 120 children have the opportunity for schooling they otherwise could not afford. Due to Haiti’s economy, only $20 a month is enough to sponsor a student their tuition, and extra food for an entire month. Beyond those doors is more information about Saint Rock Haiti Foundation. Please stop by during intermission or after the show. Thank you and enjoy the show.
A powerful video montage of actual footage of Haiti immediately followed this during a massive storm - real video of catastrophic damage by wind and surf. Upon its conclusion, the makeshift video screen was dragged off revealing debris across the stage. A small child, crying, is left an orphan clinging to a tree in the center of the stage.

As the audience filed out of the theater, I had the opportunity to see the people writing sponsor checks, including the request to forward a $1000 check by one of our music booster members after the show closed. I believe the grand total of donations came to $1655. My final interaction with the contact regarding the fundraising portion of the project had a hint of wonder in it, and she put her finger on the term that has been alluding me with regard to the importance this specific outreach offers our students - mindfulness:

On behalf of the Saint Rock Haiti Foundation thank you so much for inviting us to join in this truly special project. The incredible effort and mindfulness of your students shone through so clearly in not only the performance but in each small interaction.

The student surveys were equally thoughtful. The following comment represents the sentiments many shared regarding the experience: “The Haitian donation made me feel good, that we were doing something so beautiful for something so wonderful!”

What is missing in all of this analysis is the quantitative data. When looking at Table 5, specifically at the Multicultural element, it is clear that there is again a
disconnect in the two types of data (quantitative and qualitative). On a Likert scale 1 (no cultural connection) to 8 (cultural immersion), the participants responded the majority of the time (31.23%) with a 1, meaning they were not asked to engage in cultural tasks. In the minds of many of the participants, they only responded that they were engaging in cultural immersion when an actual event (dance workshop, lecturer, feast, etc.), or table work around the Vodun religion was happening. When those moments happened, the participants’ answers flipped to the opposite end of the scale, 8 (13.57%), indicating cultural immersion. For the majority of the participants, it was a yes or no question, and did not relate to their daily work of dancing using the traditional steps, making art inspired through research of folkloric traditions, or acting as a religious figure or a person from another place, though fully informed by those teachings. That was disappointing to me and made me wonder how I might have framed the daily work differently for students, or if I could have worded the question differently, in order for them to reflect on connections to the learning modules. There were clearly some participants who understood the implication of the question, as well as interpreted the question on a sliding scale of whether they were engaging in cultural immersion as an observer, or as a participant. Thus, there are some subtle variations in the other possible selections on the Likert scale: 2 (10.22%), 3 (5.02%), 4 (10.41%), 5 (9.11%), 6 (10.22%), and 7 (10.22%).
Q3: Do interdisciplinary arts performance projects build a sense of community, and if so why and how?

Interdisciplinary Arts. At the center of the research design is the desire to have the widest number of participants participating in the largest variety of art forms. The arts are known to provide regular engagement in the creative process and continued risk-taking by the artist. Some art forms require large groups of people collaborating together toward a common goal. Other art forms are known for their solitary process. Could any or all of these factors influence a person’s sense of community?

Considering the descriptive statistical data in Table 1, there are responses from a variety of members of the community: stage actors, stage managers, technical assistants, art students and directors. It is not surprising that the majority of the responses came from stage actors, since it was a daily activity overseen by the director in charge and required all actor/participants to sit quietly until their survey was complete before leaving. The other participants were asked to respond at the end of any work session that they may have self-imposed in making their art, set or costume/props. Without the reminder, students could forget and not fill out the survey. It was impossible to know who was working on any given day in order to send the reminder. It is also a contributing factor for the low predicted value art students had in the community factor (Table 11). Their mere participation from the beginning of the project, but in a solitary fashion was not enough to make the same kind of community connection that the cast and crew were having with
their repeated interactions. However, artists/workers who participated in a limited fashion, but in a collaborative group, felt a certain amount of pride and a stronger community connection to the project than their solitary counterparts. The following are reflections of two female students who, through a design/build class, were put to the task of creating the main set piece of the show - a tree:

MALLORY: We are helping build the tree for the play. We are cutting out metal scraps for leaves, and putting on bottles and lost stuff that you would find washed up from the ocean. I do think it will make us more of a community because it's bringing in a lot kids that wouldn't have usually be helping with these kinds of things and making it together.

CAYLA: I think it is pretty cool that we get an opportunity to be involved in this. Because I have never done anything with the play... I think it is pretty cool that in this class, which I wouldn't expect, you know, to have something to do with the play.
The data on Table 3 concerning the number of art forms engaged in at each session, indicates that, as in most productions of this type, art forms (singing, dancing, blocking, costume/sewing, make up, stage managing, lighting/sound, set construction/moving, artistic support - sculpting/photo/artwork, and directing/music directing, choreographing, teaching) are mastered one at a time, then later consolidated. The data indicates that 41% of the time, participants were only participating in one art form, 17.96% of the time they engaged in two art forms simultaneously, 32% with three art forms, 5.56% with four art forms, and 2.41% with five art forms. The actors on the stage were expected to eventually meld artistic activities together, while other participants were only interested in sharing their single expertise, and on a limited scope.
The qualitative data indicates that despite only engaging in one art form, the students’ sense of community grew based on the intrinsic satisfaction, risk-taking and collaboration that the single activity provides. This was especially evident during the tasks of singing and dancing. Hylton (1981) found that singers report that their vocal experiences are not only opportunities to develop their musical skill, but also allow for heighten spiritual expression through artistic growth, collaboration with others and communication with the audience. Additionally, Hylton (1981) found that vocal experiences are so motivating that they are considered optimal, and the singer seeks out additional experiences over and over again. The participants in this project hint at these points, and make the connection to their growing sense of community:

- Singing together is always fun. And it made me feel more connected.
- Singing together with great projection was just such a fun experience and made feel closer to everyone...
- I felt closer singing with the lot of people. Just because singing binds and heals, somehow. We bonded over how sad... a song is.
- I think dancing with the cast made me feel closer...It was so so fun to finally have a number to dance in, even though I'm not a very good dancer.
- ...when we were learning and choreographing dances I felt a real sense of community all working together and laughing and having fun.
• Just the mere act of dancing together felt like all our souls were in tune with each other. I [felt] especially closer to everybody in the semi-circle because it reminded me of what my church does during prayer.

• [I felt a sense of community] when we were ballroom dancing and helping each other learn to waltz. Also, when we were giving out pickles, people were complimenting and praising others and it was so sweet.

To someone outside the arts, this may come as a surprise, however, Frith (1996) has been writing about the power music has on our psyches for decades, both through engagement individually and collaboratively. It may be the common denominator between the high responses in singing and dancing:

Music seems to be a key to identity because it offers, so intensely, a sense of both self and others, of the subjective in the collective...The experience of identity describes both a social process, a form of interaction, and an aesthetic process (Frith, 1996, p. 110).

The other area that gathered a great number of positive responses was centered on the acting and improvisatory aspects of their work. Several people described some type of risk taking and stage direction that required intimacy as an entry point for feeling closer to the community. In this exchange, Allison, both explains why blocking brings about bonding between members of the cast, and why it is different than other collaborative extracurricular activities, like sports:
INTERVIEWER: So... how is it that the play process allows you to know people differently than if it were something else. Say field hockey, or whatever…

ALLISON: Well, I feel like, during play practices we talk a lot… We have a lot of conversations...about emotions, or...experiences and things and that can get you closer to someone because you learn a lot about them...while they’re trying to develop their character. Also, you might be asked to do things that are, things like, I don’t know...I have to...hold hands with [one particular cast members].

I: Mm-hmm

A: And...so it was a little awkward at first...but now, we...are closer because of it, I think...we...are more comfortable with each other.

I: Mm-hmm

A: And I feel like, like, [another cast member] has to touch my face, too.

And...that was a little awkward, (laughing) but, you, you get over it.
Greene (2001) a dedicated proponent of using the arts in education describes the transformative power these types of experiences provide students in such poetic terms:

Opening ourselves to encounters with the arts awakens us, prepares us for deeper living because our imagination is at work, and with imagination, a possibility of our transformation (p. 16)... Opening perspectives… enlarges the spaces—the perceptual, imaginative, and conceptual spaces—in which the young come in touch with and try to interpret their worlds (p. 139).

In the above excerpt, Greene (2001) hints at the necessity of students doing some sort of close reading, or observation in order to free their creative ideas. Through this
research project, I was also interested in sorting out whether design or creative choice, requiring dedicated and careful focus, and exhibiting itself as a flow experience, also had a positive impact on a person’s sense of community. This is especially interesting as many students were working on their part of this collective whole in a vacuum of their own studio space. Could the intrinsic benefits of creative freedom and a flow experience provide a connection to the many others contributing in big and small ways?

Q4: How do elements of democratic learning (Wyatt, 1999), creative design opportunities and moments of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) contribute to the feeling of being an essential member of a community?

Risk Taking and Personal Choice. Looking at the data, I now see how complex this question is to answer. In order to decipher the conditions for democratic/design related opportunities, we first need to consider the quantitative data on whether students felt they were required to take risks and were allowed personal choice. Table 5 indicates that the participants of the study felt that they were required to take risks a majority of the time, at level 6 (19.7%), 7 (13.75%) , and 8 (18.77%) on the Likert scale (1 - 8). However, the Personal Choice indicator is less decisive in its outcome. The responses were more evenly distributed, yet still with the largest outcomes on the scale at 5 (14.13%), 6 (14.31%), 7 (11.155), and 8 (16.91%).
Additionally, during the daily survey process participants were asked this open-ended question in order to further understand their interpretation of choice and how it impacted their feelings:

Did you have a moment during the work session today when you were allowed to make a choice in the direction of things, or influence how an activity was completed? If so, did it impact your thinking and mood? How so?

As the data was coming in, I expected the numbers in this area to start the process on the low end. The first few weeks of the rehearsal schedule are for the director to set a clear vision and participants to begin learning skills, mastering the book, both music and script, and learning the basic blocking and choreography. The participant responses reflected this:

- Followed our parts and did the songs and parts we were told to do.
- No. I had to take orders.
- [It] was entirely leader directed-no personal choices.
- Everything was leader directed, and made the process feel longer.
- No I did not. I just followed and did my job, occasionally helping others when I could but not directing anything.
- Did not have much of a say, but was guided to new experiences.

Particularly in the beginning of the process, the director used games and improvisation work to get the cast and crew to know, understand and trust one another,
while wrestling with the major themes in the story. It was clear that this was an effective way to start the process for both creative and community building results. These moments provided spikes in the participants’ positive responses:

- I found in the Gods activity that I was able to think more creatively than usual, and to good results when it was performed!
- Yes, giving us room to work with others (even if it was a game) to allow us to be creative and interpret things our own way.

Occasionally, a participant’s response was negative, but full of self-realization around his or her own ability and desire to reach beyond taking direction:

- I made no influences, but perhaps I learned I am a better follower than leader when it comes to activities.
- I probably had an opportunity but I didn't need to make any choices.”
- Yes, but I didn't take that opportunity.

Artists, video editors, wardrobe and prop crew, and set and light designers begin the creative process by doing research, then gradually they begin developing ideas for their work. At first, the blank slate of possibilities seemed daunting: “Yes, I felt a little confused because we didn't have much detail.” Many of the design-centered tasks required the attention of a single artist, or a small team who work collaboratively. All artists present their ideas to the director for approval, and go back to the literal drawing board, if they do not fall within the set vision for the production. Otherwise, they are
given a green light to begin their work, allowing ample opportunity to control the outcome of their specific project:

• Yes, I had a choice on what colors I wanted to use while painting and when I picked certain colors I felt happy and that it was all coming together.

• Yes, I decided to do a certain pattern/theme in my artwork and it made me happy.

• Yes, I could choose from a variety of different materials to use.

• Yes, incorporated my own art style. It made me enjoy the project a bit more.

Amateur stage performers with few skills and prior experiences, rely heavily on their directors (stage, music, artistic, and choreography) to guide their character building, artistic choices, and to create work-arounds for an actor’s/artist’s limitation. Eventually, if the directors are mature and interested in developing student artists with their own personal style, they should begin to be encouraged to see where they can exert their own voice on the larger framework of the production.

• I changed the way I would sing the song based on feedback given by the group and things [the director] asked me to incorporate.
• Just a few parts in dances where I made my own decisions, which was mildly stressful as I still wanted the dance to look together despite making decisions on my own!

• Somewhat, when I got slapped, I had to make a choice as to how to fall...

• [I] was able to choose how to act in the background...shows how even in directed environments you can still add a personal touch to the show.

• Just small things: how I interacted with [a cast member]... in the entire show.

• I developed my character further during the scenes.

• Yes, when I had to decide what movements to do for my solo. It made me feel like I was part of this and more included because my ideas were asked for.

• Yes, I was allowed to react freely in any scene.

• Just some acting things; face and movements.

• I am allowed to make choices throughout the play on how I would like to react to the scenes.

• Yes, I could decide how much effort I wanted to put into this show today and I wanted to end this great show with a bang so I put in as much effort as I could and strived to help produce something that I'm proud of.
• Got to make the choice to project more and have more energy...after a long hard rehearsal, it was great to see everyone come together.

• Yes, the improvisation [and] our very own expression of the movements which influenced the direction of things and how they were completed. It made me think more of how freeing and fluid the movements are which reflects the nature in what they represent. Being able to improvise also just further involved me in the task.

When participants were asked for input in solving technical issues, or had their ideas for blocking and choreography taken, they felt more positive and important to the process:

• Yes, when I provided an idea for blocking and it was considered.

• Yes, when we were trying to figure out how to symbolize a storm ending and the sun.

• I helped with the direction of the fabrics in the staging [of a number] ... to help with two of the fabrics crisscrossing. I felt accomplished and helpful to the group, which felt good.

• I suggested we roll our eyes and people liked it.

• I was allowed to contribute opinions after a performance.

• Yes. It made me feel more a part of this production and like my ideas was worthy.
• Yes, when we were trying to decide how to do certain dance moves and it made me feel included.

Participants who had leadership roles regularly identified their skill in guiding the work of others as a source of pride in the development of the final product:

• As dance captain, I blocked a lot of the number[s].

• Yes, I was in charge of tech today and telling [tech crew] the things they need to do, how they should go about it, and asked for feedback on how it went.

• I had to make sure that everyone stayed on task to review everything.
Choosing to be helpful and encouraging to others was also a theme that resulted in positive feelings impacting the direction of work. Without a doubt, this type of choice had the most positive responses:

- [I] was able to help [the stage manager] as she directed us - [it] made the rehearsal more of a group collaboration which I enjoyed.
- The only influence I would have would be helping out other people who are confused in stage directions and able to collaborate with them.
- [I] got to help others with remembering notes and stage directions giving us a better feel of community and helping each other.
- I was able to make the slipknot for the whiten tire drape, and I felt so helpful because that's one of the key moments for the show. So yay!
- I was able to give tips on the flashlight situation and wailing in [a number]. I felt helpful and good.
- I just helped with the staging as much as I could remember.
- Able to help others with singing and stage directions- felt more connected.
- Just spreading as much helpful feedback and positivity as possible.
- Able to rally the cast to sing the song energetically before dancing. Helped me realize we all, in the end, want a successful show.

**Flow.** The second part of the question has to do with flow. There has been a great deal of research in what conditions are necessary for a person to reach a flow experience.
Interdisciplinary Arts as an Agent for Community Building in a U.S. High School

(Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). The first indicator is a balancing act related to the performer’s (Table 6) level [No Skill Required/Skill Required] and the challenge that they are being presented [Not Challenging/Challenging]. If the artist [Not Personally Involved/Personally Involved] is being asked to do something too easy, they are bound to feel bored. But if the task is too difficult, it might result in feeling anxiety (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). When working with a cast and crew who arrive with varying levels of experience and confidence, directors (stage, music, technical, choreographer) struggle to find that place of balance where participants are reaching for a challenge that is within their grasp. Individuals are more likely to enjoy the activity and build self-esteem when that balance it found (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989).

Two important elements to flow experiences (Table 6) have to do with participants understanding the expectations [No Clarity of Goals/Clarity of Goals] and what they need to do to meet those expectations [No Feedback Given/Regular Feedback Given] (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). In artistic endeavors, that feedback comes in many forms. Obviously, directors are giving immediate feedback based on what they are seeing and hearing in relation to their vision, but artists receive other feedback as well. The interactions and reactions to their work by other artists involved, provides important feedback to a participant. However, other elements that are further removed from the creation process also allow for an artist to reflect and change the direction of their work, like audience, lighting, and music (Hefferon & Ollis, 2006).
Each of the time tested indicators were included in the survey and that participants felt that the conditions were present in all indicators for an optimal flow experience, except one - Director Led activities were in the majority rather than Self-Directed activities (Table 6).

In follow up interviews, I asked participants how they interpreted the survey question around directed and self-directed activities, and where they felt they had decision making space in their work. Hector, perhaps because he was always using his terrifying role of God of Death to exercise some of his personal demons, was perpetually restless about his part. Every day, he would take chances, sometimes scaring all of us by suddenly leaping off a four-foot platform, or suddenly appearing by crawling out from under a set piece. He desperately wanted to make the performance his own, and by the end of the interview it is clear that he has been given a great deal of latitude for decision making on a daily basis:

INTERVIEWER: So one of your questions was “you have personal choices or you have no personal choices.” Do you see the acting process as a place for you to make choices, or do you feel like you just follow orders?

HECTOR: In my case it is 50%/50%.

I: So explain.

H: I feel like everyone else is 75%/25%.

I: Explain both of those.
H: Well, my case, [The God of Death], has already been set out in [the director’s] eyes and, for instance I wanted a top hat.

I:…But he gave you a bowler

H: Yeah. But I can see it in a way. He has his own character in his mind. He told me exactly what he thought, but I still sometime get to choose stuff. For instance, I got to choose my face make up.

I: Yeah?

H: I got to choose the cigar thing.

I: I love the cigar. It is very effective.

H: Mm. I get to put my hands here and there. Umm.

I: How about the choices in acting. I know he tells you “Walk here and lean over here.” But you get to choose?? What? Do you get to choose, anything?

H: Yeah.

I: How you get there? What hand you get to use? What choices do you get?

H: I remember the first time he ever let me do something.

I: Improv?

H: Not improv., but let me change something in his orders. It was when I [asked] him if I [could] instead of hold the mango, but squish it in my hand.

I: It was perfect too and you do it right on cue.
H: And he was like, “Of course. Try that!” I did and it is still there. That is one example. Sometimes he doesn’t want me to change, but sometimes he accepts it.

I: ...There was that scene where you would lean over and sniff the guy laying down in front of you. It is so interesting and it is startling almost because we don’t think of people doing that, but then we realize you are a God.

H: He is a God.

I: He can do those kinds of creepy sort of things. Now, I didn’t see you do that this last time. Did you?

H: I didn’t do it, no.

I: Is it because [the director] said not to do it?

H: No. He never said anything about it.

I: You just chose not to? Is there a reason?

H: It’s like …this time I didn’t feel the sniff. I just didn’t feel it.
Several participants described how the makeup and costumes, some quite frightening, received a stronger reaction from their stage counterparts, which allowed their own response to become heightened. In this interview, Hector seems less restless. He is no longer concerned about his character development, or feeling constrained by the director’s vision. He has made his stamp on the part on a macro level (entrances, props, gestures), and is now finding the nuance in the micro level, like reveling in the polish of becoming the character through carrying himself in his costume and makeup. He has recently found joy in the real reactions of his cast to his convincing embodiment of his part.

INTERVIEWER: I noticed you are starting to get into your character more. So, what has changed? How has it changed for you from when we were just learning the scenes to now?

HECTOR: I think I’ve grown into the character. Umm… I’m learning more and more about the character. I’m finding it easier, by the date – to become [The God of Death] when I’m on the stage.

I: What do you think was the thing that switched it for you?

H: It’s the state of mind - the way I think. Earlier, I just thought he was a bad guy. I know he is not just a bad guy. I know who [he] is.

I: You have seen some your costume. You have really cool hat. Umm You have some really scary makeup. Does that help you?
H: Yeah it does.

I: So you feel...that the make up or the hat or whatever, sort of inspired you to reach the same level as sort of the image?

H: Not from my point of view. I think that the way, for instance, [Allison], reacted when she saw the face paint, it gave me a boost. All the cast, the way they react to me, plus the costume changed.

Eisner (1998) and Greene (2001) at different times made a strong connection between having choice in the creation of a product (techne = craft or art), aesthetic experience, and meaning making. Both view the aesthetic education as essential in
providing students a way of looking at the world from unique viewpoints, which becomes a reward in itself. When describing the role of artistic creation, Eisner (1998) stated:

[T]he making of something is a techne, and for good techne one must be artistically engaged and if artistically engaged, then aesthetic considerations and criteria must operate to some extent" (p. 40).

Overall, I believe this project provided students with optimal conditions for flow experiences, including the opportunity to have a creative influence on the work. It was through the processing of the open-ended and interview data that this fact became most apparent. The participants’ answers and their definition of self-direction changed over time, as they became more mature artists after the directors, or ala Eisner aesthetic educators, developed, praised and supported their decision making and reflective process. The following quote demonstrates this point best. The participant is referring to an emotionally tense peak moment in the production, which required the greatest sensitivity in lighting, timing, acting, choreography, and music from all artists involved in order to be most effective to the audience. It also clearly pinpoints this participant’s flow moment on the stage: “I was somewhat thinking of how to absorb myself more during [a peak scene]... It made me feel excited, because I felt so immersed in the task.” According to Goleman (1995), the highest form of emotional intelligence is being able to enter into a flow state. Furthermore, heightened performance and learning are the result of a person harnessing their emotions in a productive way, resulting in flow.
Feeling Essential. The final part of the research question relates to feeling essential to the process and an important member of the community. In order to unpack the connection between a positive sense of community and the feeling of being an essential member, it is important to consider the bidirectional concept of influence. In one direction, people are attracted to groups that they have some influence over (Peterson & Martens, 1972; Solomon, 1960; Zander & Cohen, 1955). In the other direction, the group’s ability to influence its members results in cohesiveness (Kelley & Volkart, 1952; Kelley & Woodruff, 1956).

McMillan & Chavis (1986) looked deeply at the role of membership as it relates to a sense of community. First, membership provides emotional safety in order for
intimacy to develop, through the formation of boundaries - who is in and who is not (Bean, 1971; Ehrlich & Graeven, 1971; Wood, 1971). In the following quotes from the survey data, it is clear who feels they are safely within the boundaries. Particularly in the beginning of the rehearsal process, when the participants do not know many people or are interacting alone in their studio:

- I feel...easily replaced - someone else could have taken my place without a hitch and I would have been fine.
- I'm not sure.
- Someone else could come up with a more creative concept.
- I mostly worked on my own project.
- No I didn't get far.
- Easily replaced, I noticed many people doing a similar design to me.
- Easily replaced, I'm expendable.
- No, because I worked alone.
- I could be easily replaced; my part is not a huge part.
- I didn't have much of an impact.
- I feel like today they could be easily replaced because I didn't have many singing solo parts.
Structure. During a review of the data the first few weeks, I saw this trend toward not feeling essential. I wondered if the cast had not grasped the concept of the production being an ensemble/opera structure, making even the smallest role important to the entire development of the storyline. I decided to ask a particular student, Lenny, about a comment I heard him say at rehearsal. I felt that it related to this baseline feeling of not being essential to the process.

INTERVIEWER: ...So when we had our first rehearsal, which was incredibly long and intense...you said to me, “Is this really going to be the rehearsal schedule?” Did you say that?

LENNY: Yeah.
I: Ok, so explain what you meant by that.

L: Like it’s so long, like all the time and like...almost every week, every day of the week.

I: Yeah. So and then what did you say after that. Do you remember? (...) You said something like, “Even vacation week?” Do you remember that?

L: Yeah.

I: Yeah, and what did you say after that? Do you remember? (...)

L: Mm-mm

I: ...Maybe you didn’t say this as a direct quote, but I just want to make sure I understand what you said. You said, “But they aren’t gonna miss me.” You said... “not everybody’s going to be there right?” And I’m like, “Well yeah, if you’re called.” And you’re like, “Well yeah, but they’re not going to miss me.” Do you remember...saying that?

L: Yeah.

I: Ok, so what did you mean by that?

P: Well, like, I don't have a huge part, like, you know, like, [Rodney]. He can’t miss a day, or [Hector], ‘cause they have, you know, big parts...I’m part of the chorus. I don't have...a defined part, so... I just provide emphasis for other people’s good singing. I’m not, like, you know...

I: Do you still, do you still believe that?
L: ...Yeah.

I: ...So what you’re saying is the storyteller’s parts are less important than say, a soloist, who might not be a storyteller at all?

L: (...) Well, it’s still important, but it’s like, not as important as like, a lead role.

I: ...What do you think the value of your role is, as a storyteller? ...What’s the point of having storytellers?

L: ...To tell the story.

I: Ok, so they’re pretty important then.

L: They’re important, yeah.

I: Ok, so, but what you’re saying is that I’m just one of many storytellers.

L: (...) Yeah.

I: Yeah. So (...) now I’m just trying to understand...Has [the music director] talked at all about, the fact that there are almost no lines in this play?

L: Yeah, he just did.

I: Yeah... that’s I think where... People who’ve done shows for years, they learn four songs and they go home, and then they let the leads say all the lines. [In this show] (laughing)... it’s actually the storytellers who do all the work, like, the whole show. They work the whole show and the lead comes in just for a special moment and then they go. And then, this lead comes in for a special moment, and then they go away.
L: That’s true but... The main roles... speak by themselves... Everybody stopped just to listen to them, and they have to remember their lines. There’s nobody to help, them. But... the chorus, we’re all together, so we can just basically... follow along with each other.

I: Right. Have you ever heard of a Greek chorus? (...) So, the Greek chorus is traditionally...a core of people...that have, in Ancient Greek times,... furthered the story. So, the Greek chorus would come in and say, because they didn’t have special effects and they didn’t have fancy costumes...the Greek chorus would come in and say the action. They would say, “So and so’s poked his eyes out...he fell on the ground, and he was dying.” And... give you all the bloody details that you can’t really depict on a stage in Ancient Greek times. And they tell how people are thinking inside. You know, “So and so’s distraught. He just killed his brother and this one just found out,” ...and then they go off. Then the audience sees the person, sort of reacting at the moment that they’ve set up. So, what actually you...are doing, is kind of like the Greek chorus. Does that make sense? You... are... telling... most of the story and interpreting things for the audience. And then, [the leads] come in and they get to just sort of... pinpoint it into a moment. Does that make sense?

L: Mm-hmm
I: Yeah, so your part is actually, (softly) enormous. It’s maybe the most important part - the Greek chorus. Without the Greek chorus we have these little, boop, boop, boop, that don’t tie together really at all. [Does] it change any way you look at your part at all?

L: A little bit.

I: (Laughing)...I just, I think that we haven’t prepared you for the actual role that you’re playing. I bet you’re on stage almost the whole show.

L: I was told that...I was practically going to be.

I: Yeah, you’re going to be on stage the whole time and that’s why you’re essential - and not because you have the solo line, and not because you have the biggest voice. You are present the whole show and the audience looks to you to tell them what is going on. You know, cause’ these Gods...are so freaky to them. They don’t really get it...Do you know what I mean?

L: Yeah.

I: Yeah, so, anyway, I just wanted to make sure I understood you. I have a feeling, you’re going to be very surprised at some point. You’re going to be like, “Oh, actually, if I missed that rehearsal, I would be very confused.” You know what I mean?
Interdisciplinary Arts as an Agent for Community Building in a U.S. High School

Sacrifice. The sense of belonging, or the belief that one has a place of acceptance in a group, comes from a willingness to sacrifice for the greater good. The open-ended daily survey question: “Do you feel your personal contributions to the work you achieved today were essential to the entire production or easily replaced? Why or Why not?” provided data that reflects the seriousness in which each person took the task they have been assigned.

- Yes, because to make it work we all have to contribute.
• Essential because I had lines that were needed in the song.
• Yes, I felt that my contributions in singing and participating were needed to make the rehearsal go well.
• I think I contributed in an important way because my input was built upon by others.
• Yes. The staging of these songs are a bit complicated and required people to all know what to do.
• Essential. We all need to work together to create the desired effect for these songs.
• Yes, everyone had their own positions and moves.
• Yes. They were group ensembles that required a full group understanding.
• Essential because we each had different roles and lines that helped move along the staging.
• Essential as male voices are scarce.
• Essential because there aren't many people per part.
• Yes, the platforms built today we're critical to the production.
• Yes, because I’m the prop person/I organize things.
• I helped make the stage more colorful.

In light of the above interview with Lenny, it is clear that being present for so many long rehearsals were in and of itself a sacrifice of time and energy, but it also puts
an additional burden on the cast when people are missing and need to be caught up.

Again, the theme of helpfulness is tied to feeling essential to the community:

- Yes, we helped each other reteach and review and we each had individual roles.
- Personal contributions helped catch up others who missed rehearsal.
- They were essential because I feel like I helped a lot.
- I think I helped some people out with some of the dance moves, which I think helped make the dance better.
- Yes, we all helped share ideas and collaborate during rehearsal.

**Personal investment.** Another important contributor to a person’s sense of community is his or her personal investment. Working to become a member results in people feeling that they have earned their place in the community. This personal investment through effort and focus makes the membership in the group more personally important (McMillan, 1976).

- Essential – required great concentration and had to memorize things from other rehearsals.
- I felt somewhat important, for enthusiasm and energy and motivation to be energized.
- Yes, because we had to be completely focused on getting through the show.
• Essential—we all fed off each other’s energy.

• Essential! I sang much louder today when we were directed and felt as if I was starting to play a more important role in the show through my own actions.

• Yes, I’m improving.

• Yes, the whole group needs a great attitude going into the show to make it go well.

Interpersonal risk. There is also a connection between the amount of interpersonal emotional risk one is willing to take with members of the group, and a positive sense of community (Aronson & Mills, 1959; Peterson & Martens, 1972). This is even more apparent in the data as the performance approached and the participant’s emotions were heightened: (beginning of the process to the end of the process)

• When we were talking about our burdens and expectations, I feel as though every contribution helped us understand expectations and the story of the musical.

• It helped us bond as a cast and crew, and by putting ourselves out there, it started a slight growth of comfort with each other.

• Essential because the task required great concentration and for you to step outside your comfort zone and I feel like I achieve that today.

• Yes, feels very important for us all to give 100%.
• Essential, as every part at the moment is essential as we are about a week and a half away from the show!

• Essential, even with everyone here today it's important that ALL of us shape this show into something great!

• I felt essential as a crew member in general, not just as a principal, because today was the first time we had perfect attendance (yay!) And I realized that I contributed to this amazing feat of ours.

• I felt necessary because of all the scenes I am in. I just felt one with the group and thus necessary.

• I felt important as an actor. As a person. As a teammate.

• I felt important because I was an actor in the middle of a fantastic show.

• Essential- show night! Everyone knew lines and needed to be there.

**Shared valent event.** Even more extreme than personal risk taking, is the Shared Valen Event hypothesis: A greater bond is formed between people who share an intense experience together (Myers, 1962; Wilson & Miller, 1961; Wright, 1943). Though a musical is not crisis or a tragedy, to many students it is by far the most exhausting and challenging event that they have ever encountered. In this reflection, Sonny tries to put his finger exactly what the phenomenon does to a person’s sense of community:

SONNY: Really, I think that the main idea is that the struggles we go through is worth it because - there is struggle…um the biggest thing about musicals, is that,
of course, it is hard, there are a lot of hardships, there's going to be difficulties, and challenges and obstacles, but the journey where we go over these things where we overcome these things, that is the most important thing...and the fact that we do it together, as a group, as a community is the biggest thing that unites us and makes it so worth it because, well it's an experience like no other.

Rituals. Peterson & Martens (1972) found that rituals on college campuses also strengthened group cohesiveness, further emphasizing the role of personal investment in developing emotional connection. Theaters across the country are full of rituals that serve that same purpose. There are the daily routines of checking in, warming up, and hearing notes. However, theaters pride themselves on their unique traditions that often have been handed down for generations, or are special to the current production. Unique to Landingham this year was the gathering at the conclusion of each day’s work to read the Pickle Points and do the survey for this research. I was quick to learn from the cast and crew that there were many other rituals that were necessary to carry out, before the production could open. Each served a purpose, and I was curious if the students could fully grasp the symbolism that each represented. White (1949) defined a symbol as "a thing the value or meaning of which is bestowed upon it by those who use it" (p. 22). Understanding common symbols systems is prerequisite to understanding community. According to Nisbet and Perrin (1977), "First and foremost of the social bond is the symbolic nature of all true behavior or interaction" (p. 39).
One tradition that I had never seen before coming to Landingham is Senior Poster Night. I asked a stage manager to explain its significance to me:

INTERVIEWER: We are standing here in the hall looking at the senior posters. Can you tell me a little bit about this tradition?

DELLA: This tradition is something that I have been doing, or participating in since freshman year in Landingham High School. We call it Senior Night. We do it on the last day/night of the show. The junior class of drama club… people plan it out. We have each underclassman… they’re assigned to a different senior and we each make different posters for a senior and we decorate this hallway. It is kind of a surprise but the seniors kind of know about it anyway. We decorate the entire hallway with the senior posters. There is always a lot of nice quotes and pictures and it’s a good time…and then they can take the posters home.

I: Is there a number of posters per person?

D: Each person has three to four posters each. Just because that is how we split up for underclassmen doing one poster.

I: Is each poster supposed to reflect all the shows they were in or just this show?

D: It varies sometimes it is personal. Sometimes they’re pictures from a bunch of different shows they have done. It depends on who makes them. I am a junior and I have known my senior who I was assigned to, Sonny, since my freshman year. I
had a lot of photos that I could put on his posters. It all depends on what senior you get and what photos or poster you end up making for them.

It is in this tradition and a new one, the Awarding of the Pickle Point Winner, that I make the connection to another avenue for a shared emotional connection toward community building - the effect of honor. Festinger (1953) posits that if one is rewarded in front of the community, they will be more attracted to it.

I approached Lenny again after the show had closed, as he was brand new to theater and he knew only one person when he walked in for the audition. I imagined all of the rituals and symbols were a huge surprise to him, since there was never any
explanation or indication to the cast and crew that they were coming. I wanted to
understand his take on these traditions after some reflection. Initially, we talked about the
gypsy robe award to “MVP” female and male of the production. We talked about the
focus and heightened awareness that comes from holding hands in the dark and passing a
pulse around the circle. We discussed the visceral physical response one has when
screaming full-throated in the dark, and how one’s adrenaline is spiked just before
heading onto stage. However, it became clear that Lenny felt the Pickle Points were
symbolic to his complete personal transformation and acceptance in the community.

**Transformation.** To appreciate this complete change, it is necessary to imagine
Lenny at the beginning of the year. When I first met Lenny, he was one of the quietest
and most reluctant members of my Acting and Media class. During a unit I developed in
the image of the Moth Radio Hour, students were to tell a personal story with the
standard story structure, but they were to employ different skills they had learned on
pacing and vocal variety. Nobody was prepared for the honest, raw and gut-wrenching
story that Lenny told. It was about a very public rejection by someone he had dared admit
his feelings to. The class sat in complete silence, reflecting on the intense emotion and
the artistically presented skill he had used. It was then that I knew there was much, much
more courage and depth to Lenny than he allowed show on his exterior. All of that came
to a head during the traditions associated with this production. This excerpt is from an
interview a few weeks after the production closed:
INTERVIEWER: What did you think when you were seeing all of this unfolding in front of you?

LENNY: I thought it was, you know, fun and interesting.

I: Like what kind of things do you think were fun...

L: I liked the Pickle Points.

I: Well, you kind of ruled. Didn’t you?

L: Yeah, me and Sonny were tied at one point and he snuck ahead by like three.

I: What were your thoughts about that?

L: What? Winning?

I: ...and being head to head with Sonny? What is a Pickle Point? What is the point of it all?

L: Being a member of the group. You know, helping out and doing a good job every day.

I: ...OK. You are neck and neck with Sonny.

L: Right. That’s hard to do…

I: Why do you say that?

L: Going head to head with Sonny?! ‘Cause Sonny is like Jesus!

I: What do you mean?

L: The guy takes 5 APs; and he is like the nicest person; and he can do Rubix cube in like 5 seconds; and he’s going to Harvard.
I: Yeah, but that has nothing to do with theater. None of that.

L: I know but he’s not...everyone knows who he is. He’s wicked nice to everybody. He helps people out and does all his work.

I: What about his actual stage work?

L: His performance is great. He has a great singing voice. He has great acting skills. All that stuff.

I: Dancing?

L: Dancing too.

I: What kinds of ways does Sonny help?

L: He helps [the director] out a lot with staging everything. Give ideas, all that kind of stuff.

I: Did he ever help you?

L: Yeah. I can remember…I have not the foggiest idea how to read sheet music or anything like that. So, he was helping me with that. I didn’t know what [line or page] we were on either. So I looked on with him. So he helped me with that.

I: He knew you were looking and [was] like, “Here, I’ll point out where we are”? 

L: Yeah.

I:... So, LENNY was second in command [with Pickle Points]. What does that say to you?

L: Umm. Well it was kind of like a hoax.
I: Wait, a lot of people wanted that.

L: What?

I: A lot of people...wanted you to be the winner of the Pickle Points.

L: Yeah. I was one of the winners, but it was mostly Rodney putting in “Yes, Girl!”

I: ...So you felt like, “OK, I’m not Jesus (Sonny),” but did it say anything to you?

L: Umm. Yeah. Yeah. It helped me know that everybody liked me...that I was funny and that I was a part of the group.

I: If you’re not even thought of, you don’t even have someone putting “Yeah, Girl” on your Pickle Point. Right?

L: Right.

I: So, that does mean something, even though you don’t think it means the same thing as what Sonny’s means. It means something.

L: Right.

I: Did you walk away, “Eh, it’s a bunch of baloney”?

L: No I walked away thinking “Oh Damn, I won!” - mainly because of Rodney. I still have all my Pickle Points for some unknown reason. They're all nice things...most of them about how I was the best frog.

I: Yes, you were - totally...nothing against the other frogs.

L: Yeah.
I: But that you went for it. I think that’s what they recognized. A lot of people might be like “I can’t do this. This is weird,” but you went for it. Did it give you courage to go for other things?

L: Yeah. A lot more open with people. Especially people I don’t talk to. I try to expand my horizons a little bit…

I: Can you make a direct line from something you learned through the process to that skill?

L: What do you mean?

I: When you did you feel that change in yourself...and where...and when did you see yourself going, “Hey, I can become this person!”

L: Over the length of when we were rehearsing.

I: You did not walk in that guy.

L: I walked in saying “Why am I here? This is a waste of time.” [My friend] dragged me in. We stayed until 6 that night. I couldn’t believe how late and then some nights we stayed until 9:30, so that was normal. So, yeah. ..It was right when I started making friends.

I: When did it suddenly become “This is the Lenny that we all know that has been inside there.” When did that happen?

L: After probably like five weeks.

I: Five weeks! Wow. OK. Why all of a sudden? What clicked?
L: I like making people laugh. That’s my thing.

I: Yes it is.

L: So, I was just… some are off in the corner on their phone and I’ll just do something funny… something like that.

I: …So you realized that you have this skill, this talent to make people laugh. Then you employed it more often. Then you were brave enough to see whom else it would impact?

L: Yeah

I: …When did you feel completely comfortable - with everyone, not just a couple people?

L: With Everyone?

I: I mean by the end, literally, there was a blow up bed, with…[all of] you...piled all on top of each, just plopped there… At the sitzprobe, when we were running through with the band and it was horribly long and horribly tedious and everyone was just piling on that blow up bed. This is the Lenny that I hadn’t seen before. He is completely comfortable here.

L: Yeah. It was mainly because of my closest friends in that group… We still do things together.

I: Good.
L: So, umm yeah. I don’t know. They like opened up. Like I had never gone out with friends before to a restaurant, or anything like that or gone over somebody’s [house]…We are friends. That was the first time I have ever done that and I liked it. I feel like, I feel like I am way different person now. You know. I would never have tried a play before, but...
I: Now you will not - not try the play?
L: Yeah.
What is remarkable about this interaction and what gives me hope with where this research into community building might lead to in future schools, is how remarkably quick and profoundly life changing this type of project is to so many students. This was just one excerpt from one interview. It was the common thread in much of my research. For Lenny, it took five weeks to change the direction of his high school life, and it did not take that much cajoling to get him to participate. If I had not suggested that he and his friend audition, what other event would have brought him to this point of confidence and security? It makes me realize that some students just need that personal invitation. Could that be the root to all successful community-building endeavors in high schools - a personal invitation? Is this equally true of community-building with the general public? This possibility has propelled me into lunchrooms and hallways, inviting people to audition for Chamber Singers and to join A Cappella. This is definitely an area of action research that should be explored.

Another powerful tradition Lenny and I talked about was the senior speeches prior to each performance. Since the speeches are restricted to seniors only, there is a sense of finality and closure that even the freshman sense is important. As the cast and crew stand in a circle, each senior gets everyone’s undivided attention to say basically anything they want. If you have never worked in a high school, you might not understand the significance of getting a large group of teen’s undivided attention. The only time I have

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ever seen it is in the circle during senior speeches, which indicates the importance it has to this community. Usually, seniors take the opportunity to thank different people, reminisce about memorable events, and say goodbye, as it is often the last show they do as a high school student.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about the senior speeches. What were you thinking? I was looking at your face. Trying to read [your] face, “What’s he thinking?”

L: Well, everyone else started crying. I am like…(sniff).

I: “I am not going to cry.”

L: I tried not to, but...I was doing it. [A friend] was just sitting there [with a] face like “Real men don’t cry.”

I: Yeah. What about Ti Ti’s speech? ...that really struck a chord with you.

L: When she started … started crying...That’s what got me…

I: So what about that? Would you have ever guessed? If I said to you, “Lenny, just wait. In twelve weeks, you will stand here in the circle and you will have tears.” And you’re gonna be like, “No way – not me!”


I: So what happened? How did we get there?

L: ‘Cause I am friends with everybody and I know they are leaving.

I: So does it matter - them being seniors?
L: Yeah. Everybody...[has] this weird need to do what everybody else does. If everybody else is crying - like Allison and Gabby.

I: Sobbing.

L: Yeah.

I: Yeah. So, when we talk about traditions, what is...the point? What do you think the point of traditions are?

L: The point of traditions is to remember...Make me feel accepted in the group, I think.

I: Does that help you perform better?

L: Yeah. I feel like I have nothing to be afraid of. I thought I was going to be a wreck on stage, but I wasn’t.

It is clear that the seniors took the job of preparing their thoughts seriously, trying to be inclusive and succinct, as curtain is waiting to open after their speeches are finished. It is also clear that to the circle of cast and crew, these moments hold a rare sacred place in high school. Bernard (1973) refers to this as “community of spirit” and contends that it is present in all communities. Unbeknownst to me, two students were irate that I broke the sanctity of the moment by recording the speeches for this research, even though the speaker agreed to my recordings. They are still begrudgingly talking to me two shows later. That indicates to me the power this quiet moment holds over even the newest members.
Senior speeches hit the listener directly in that place of interpersonal emotional risk that is necessary for acceptance in a community, and there is an unspoken rule that everyone, no matter what their past grievances might have been, rise up to support the speaker. At the completion of a senior speech, the participant added this to an open-ended response: “As I did the senior speech I realized how many people loved me so much. I’ve never felt so appreciated nor happy before!”

Hector, who had a bumpy start as he assimilated into the school, and someone who is still becoming a fluent English speaker, attempts to put into his senior speech how important the community has been to him since arriving in Landingham from the Middle East:

HECTOR: Things happened over there and ah… Made me lose hope that I … I… made me lose hope that I would have friends. The friends I had there. Family. The family I had there and I lost. And um… same environment I used to have there, and my church where I used to live my life there. I never believed there is even slightest chance that I would even come near that again. But here I am now. Because of keeping me family, friends and you have given me hope that I can have what I had there - again. That I can find what I am lost and rebuild and I can have a new start. Even though it’s across the continent. Ironically, it is Drama Club where I act, where it is not me on the stage. I am the God of Death, now I am the God of Tears. You know me more than anyone in this school. You have
been there for a year and a half... You have all been there through this year and a half - I found myself again…

As one more data source toward answering the question of whether interdisciplinary arts can be an agent for community building in high schools, I posed one last question to the participants: *Why did you participate in this project, and what did you find at its conclusion?* The responses served as the cast and crew’s bios in the playbook. Though each response is a little different, there are some definite themes that run through...
them and are perhaps the most powerful pieces of evidence that this interdisciplinary arts project has served as a vehicle for community building. Since these students were given plenty of time to prepare and submit these responses, and there was the expectation that their submissions would be printed for the audience to read, I take the content to be of the most carefully worded and sincere of all the data that was collected throughout the entire research process. In my opinion, there is no better way to finish this discussion section than with a summary in the words of a sampling of the participants:

DIRECTOR NOTES: Mostly we are a family in our little corner of the school. Like a family, we ride a roller coaster every day. Creating a piece of theatre is not an easy task. However, there is nothing that bonds people together in the way we have. We are together so often that we really didn't have much choice, but I don't think there's one member of our team that would have it any other way. All the tears, joy, and stories are worth it because we are family.
STUDENT NOTES:

• I joined this community looking for a safe place to express myself. I never could have predicted what I would discover when I became a part of the cast... I created unexpected bonds as this place became my home away from home. I found a unique family that understands me and supports me in everything I do, something I never knew I needed, but now I can’t live without.
• I got to know this amazing group of people in a way that I have never experienced before. We have all worked so hard on this production I can't wait to be onstage and show our audience how much we all enjoy doing the thing we love with the people we love. Theatre is love. Theatre is life.

• …so many new people were brought into this production. People who work on all the different aspects of a theatre production including actors, techies, musicians, and artists who helped design our poster and sculpt our tree. So many of these new people had never participated in theatre before. It made me so happy to see new people getting involved in the show and love what they are doing just as much as I do.

• I found a true sense of community and friendship. People I would normally never even glance at in the hallways at school, I get to share laughs and stories and love with them. I found a home outside of home.

• I found friends, but more important than that, I found a family and a home that I could always rely on. A family that enjoyed just being together, and that was more than I could have asked for. We laugh together. We smile together. We cry together. They make me feel welcome and wanted. Every day is a new experience and no day is ever the same as another.
• I discovered more of myself this year and through this production than in any other part of my life. I found my identity, which is greater than anything I could have expected from this show.

• Where there is life, Theatre is. Where there is love, Theatre is. Where there is not, Theatre still is. In my heart forever be where Theatre is.

• I came here to escape my reality. Instead, I found all real things: love, life and death.

• I have never done anything involved with acting nor did I have the confidence to try, but I felt that this was a great opportunity to start. I thought of it as a way to expand, experience, and explore as well as discover...new things about myself. After joining the cast, it came to pass - met great friends who are incredibly talented and supportive, and worked with an awesome director and teachers who have guided and helped me shape my craft. I have gained more confidence in my talents and abilities and will continue to move forward in making it better.

• There's no such thing as making a fool of yourself in drama club. Everyone supports everyone. I found a new home here...It's one of the most influential and one of (if not the) best decision(s) I have ever made. I owe it all to the fantastic cast members, crew, and directors, who have changed my life. I have found a home here at Landingham. Thank you.
I'm so excited to be part of this family for the next few years. While we may tell the story on stage tonight, for as long as we are together, it will continue to be written.

• And I love being here because I get to work with amazing people all the time: everyone I work with in this auditorium makes me want to be my best self...And most importantly, I found a version of myself that I can live with and love and accept.
Chapter 6: Conclusions

Earlier in this document, I alluded to the work of McMillan and Chavis in terms of the role of a sense of "membership" in community building. Here I return to McMillan and Chavis to help me to understand the ways in which community building took place in this interdisciplinary arts project. McMillan and Chavis (1986) identified four necessary ingredients for a sense of community to be created within a group of people:

Membership, Influence, Integration and Fulfillment of Needs, and Shared Emotional Connection. As demonstrated throughout this study, each of these ingredients was present within the group of cast and crew who were participants in this interdisciplinary arts project toward building a sense of community.

Table 25

1. Membership
   - Common Symbol System
   - Sense of Belonging and Identification
   - Personal Investment

II. Influence
   A. Member openness to influence by community members ➔ power of member to influence the community.
   B. Member need for consensual validation × community’s need for conformity = community’s power to influence members (community norms).

III. Integration and Fulfillment of Needs
   A. To the degree that communities successfully facilitate person–environment fit (meeting of needs) among members, members will be able to develop sense of community.

IV. Shared Emotional Connection
   A. Formula 1: Shared emotional connection = contact + high-quality interaction.
   B. Formula 2: High-quality interaction = (events with successful closure – ambiguity) × (event valence × sharedness of the event) + amount of honor given to members – amount of humiliation.

McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p.15
My data suggests that membership was established within the boundaries of the rehearsal process. Through skill building, shared traditions, daily rituals and pickle point celebrations, the community came to share a common language and symbol system. The establishment of a safe zone for participants to engage in improvisational exercises, table work and daily, often intimate, interaction established a sense of belonging. The personal sharing and risk-taking that this work required, in addition to their self-inspired speeches, improvised stage work, and their sharing of ideas and artistic passion demonstrated the community members’ commitment to personally invest themselves in the project.

The data indicating influence came as something of a surprise to me. It was clear that the participants felt an openness toward hearing, understanding and respecting each other and our invited guests who brought to the project unique perspectives and experiences. However, I was expecting this give and take of influence to happen over time and through repeated exposure. The data indicated that the self-selected members of this project came into the process already willing to embrace differences, and yet that capacity continued to grow to its conclusion.

The data offers no doubt that participants felt most happy when they were able to influence the direction of the creative work and help their peers. The creative process, whether in group improvisation, in solo endeavors, or in a collaboration based on a larger vision, provided participants with ways to be useful, resulting in their feelings of being essential to each other and to the process of creation. Feedback and in the moment
reactions from the participants’ peers were hugely influential to the participants’ future creative choices. That bidirectional influence of member on community and community on member, was clearly necessary to build a strong sense of community, and fits well with McMillan and CHavis’s theoretical construct of ingredients for community.

Each person involved in this project had different needs and expectations upon arrival. Some needs were necessities because of individuals’ physical impairments; others had to do with social-emotional sensitivity, while others were the result of financial strain. I concluded that the only way to calculate whether participants felt their needs were being met, and whether they felt heard and understood, was to consider their regular personal responses to the survey questions. The participants responded overwhelmingly that their needs were met completely (8 out a scale of 8) during their time working on this project.

In the area of Shared Emotional Connection, Chavis and McMillan (1986) distilled the required conditions toward building a sense of community into two heuristic formulae:

**Formula 1:** Shared emotional connection = contact + high-quality interaction

**Formula 2:** High-quality interaction = (events with successful closure - ambiguity) x (event valence x sharedness of the event) + amount of honor given to members - amount of humiliation (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p.15)
In my opinion, *formula* is an interesting language choice when researchers attempt to generalize the feelings of a group of people. I learned from my immersion in this project and this research that aspects of experience cannot be represented in a numerical fashion, nor can its perceived value be multiplied or added in order to see a definitive solution to McMillan & Chavis’s proposed equation. As I ponder the authors’ intent, I come back to my original curiosity about why one performer is moved to tears at the conclusion of a large project, and yet another might be eager to begin a new project or have down time again. Each person involved in this project had different experiences. Some were in attendance at different events and participated in different aspects of the project from those around them. Each arrived with experiences, stresses, and concerns that may or may not have allowed them to participate to the same degree as others. Essentials, such as different levels of nutrition, sleep, and basic health, impacted each individual’s capacity to engage in each day’s planned activities. As a result of that variation, each person’s sense of community had a different solution for the equation of Shared Emotional Connection. The best I can do is identify the elements of the equation that I was able to witness; no doubt there are many elements outside of my sight that could additionally influence the outcome for each participant, both positively and negatively.

When I consider the two formulae, it becomes clear to me that to find the solution to the second one it is necessary to find the solution to the first. I opted to look at the
equation using an approach similar to dealing with indefinite values in calculus. Each element of the equation has supporting details from the data, and summarized as having overall positive or negative attributes. Table 26 presents the supporting information for Formula 2: High-quality interaction = (events with successful closure - ambiguity) x (event valence x sharedness of the event) + amount of honor given to members - amount of humiliation. The solution for Formula 2, presented in Table 26, is positive overall in High Quality Interactions.

Table 26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Quality Interaction</th>
<th>Events with Successful Closure</th>
<th>Ambiguity</th>
<th>Event Valence</th>
<th>Sharedness of the Event</th>
<th>Amount of Honor</th>
<th>Humiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Completed Shows</td>
<td>Table 6: 93.85% of participants responded with a 5-8 out of a scale of 8 Clarity of Goals</td>
<td>Table 6: 73.38% of participants responded with a 5-8 out of 8 in Feeling Challenged</td>
<td>Table 7: 80.82% of participants responded with a 5-8 out of 8 in a Feeling of Shared Experience</td>
<td>Pickle Points</td>
<td>Table 4: 91.04% of participants responded with a 5-8 out of 8 in Feeling Happy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Preview</td>
<td>Table 7: 80.82% of participants responded with a 5-8 out of 8 in a Feeling of Shared Experience</td>
<td>Table 7: 91.17% of participants responded with a 5-8 out of 8 in Feeling A Member</td>
<td>Senior Speeches</td>
<td>Table 4: 83.18% of participants responded with a 5-8 out of 8 in Feeling Relaxed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profits</td>
<td>Table 6: 79.95% of participants responded with a 5-8 out of 8 in a Feeling that Skill Was Required</td>
<td>Table 7: 89.28% of participants responded with a 5-8 out of 8 in Feeling an Emotional Connection</td>
<td>Headshots</td>
<td>Table 4: 85.93% of participants responded with a 5-8 out of 8 in Feeling Satisfied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Qualitative data reflected that students felt the struggles, exhaustion, obstacles, and hardships united the cast and crew.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contribution to High Quality Interaction</th>
<th>(+)</th>
<th>(o)</th>
<th>(+)</th>
<th>(+)</th>
<th>(+)</th>
<th>(o)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Quality Interaction</td>
<td>Events with Successful Closure</td>
<td>Abiguity</td>
<td>Event Valence</td>
<td>Sharedness of the Event</td>
<td>Amount of Honor</td>
<td>Humiliation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first formula derives the Participants Shared Emotional Connection through the addition of Contact and High Quality Interactions as calculated in Table 26. For the majority of the cast and crew, the contact hours were extensive. Several participants described the commitment of hours as a sacrifice, and their general exhaustion by the end of the project as extreme. The qualitative data also uncovered shared intimacy and a growing closeness to others throughout the process. As summarized here and through the Results and Discussion chapters, I conclude that the participants of this research experienced both elements necessary for a Shared Emotional Connection, as well as all of the other three ingredients contributing to a Sense of Community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986): Membership, Influence, and Integration and Fulfillment of Needs. This supports...
the established hypothesis that interdisciplinary arts project were agents of community-building in this U.S. high school, and discovering that was the purpose of this study. I also concluded that similar outcomes are possible in similar schools throughout the country or abroad, though this area of research should be studied further.

Given the amount of data that supports the thesis, the next question to ask is *why* interdisciplinary arts projects are not more common and not a priority in all high schools? The answer may have to do with topics similar to the ones addressed in the sidebar writings of the Discussion Chapter, called obstacles to community building. At the time, the sidebar comments seemed specific to my school, and at times highly personal. Upon reflection, I realized that when I, an absolute enthusiast of working in an interdisciplinary arts fashion on large and complex projects in collaboration with my colleagues, feel bone-tired, anxious, and reluctant after an obstacle throws itself in front of me, it must be how others feel. This negative emotional roadblock must be scrutinized for common solutions.

Obviously, different projects have different obstacles; this project had several. Many obstacles centered on funding essential elements and finding partners in the project including both colleagues who would directly guide and teach the students, we well as those who were willing to be generous with their time for the benefit of the school and students. Money might be a solution through paying stipends, but more often than not, teachers are idea rich and time poor, already stealing from their own classroom prep and
assessment time to continue student learning. Money might not be the solution to inspire them to engage. Not surprisingly, close personal connections and mutual respect, something that is often a byproduct of interdisciplinary work, need to be in place for an interdisciplinary commitment to be made between colleagues.

For this project, finding the community members outside of school whom I could approach was also an obstacle. If the many aspects of research that I learned during the course of this work, the challenges of including parents and community members in this project is high on this list. There is no school database of family talent and cultural background. I quickly learned that having a specific cultural background does not necessarily mean common values or experiences with others of that same cultural background. To this end, I have learned that having a long history in a place is a huge advantage. A veteran teacher has a long memory of siblings whose stories have been understood, and a history of parent meetings to refer back to. The young optimistic and energetic teacher who would like to explore this rich area of interdisciplinary arts community building is wise to work in consort with a willing, established teacher who knows not just the population of families and fellow teachers’ expertise, but also who is

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8 As I complete this dissertation at the beginning of the Trump administration, I can only imagine the myriad of ways Trump’s proposed immigration restriction will impact immigrant families’ willingness to participate in school activities, potentially endangering them.
in charge of equipment, storage spaces, room use policies, and how to acquire supplies. Even if that veteran is reluctant to engage with their time, having him or her serve as a mentor could prove beneficial.

This project required the use of social capital. This is perhaps the most painful of the obstacles confronted. Again, a veteran teacher has more social capital to expend, and a newer teacher is observed carefully, perhaps with some skepticism. Often impressions are made early in one’s tenure, and it is difficult not to acknowledge that any misstep of a pre-professional status teacher will count. However, equally important is that if the outcome of an endeavor is overwhelmingly positive, the administration will be equally impressed in ways that might garner more social capital toward greater confidence and responsibility. The enormous risk posed by a large interdisciplinary arts project may be what prohibits teachers from doing more than just reading about such projects. Ideally, this risk should not be the deciding factor, but it is likely that it is.

I can easily imagine myriad other potential obstacles had I picked different material to build my project around, or had the school been in a different part of the country, of a different size, type, including its population comprising a demographic, or building structure. The types of obstacles that made me most cautious have to do with a project focus coming in conflict with the values of the greater community. Highly controversial topics such as colonization, homosexuality, police brutality, racism, or religious extremism can garner negative press in opposition. Yet, these are all topics that
many teens are eager to learn about and explore through art. Luckily for me, Massachusetts is a relatively progressive state in which I would feel confident treading into any of those topics for the many benefits of opening up an audience’s mind to “otherness” and facilitating a conversation with my students about their own experiences with these topics – provided I did some careful research and planning in my design.

Some projects are limited by physical space. Ideas, interest, and willingness of volunteers might be in abundance, but a project must have the right facilities for the types of arts that are being employed, as well as multipurpose spaces to work individually and collectively. Materials might take several weeks to be assembled, necessitating the need for spaces that are dedicated to the project and secure from possible damage. Compared to ideological obstacles, this seems manner of obstacle benign and easily overcome; however without arts spaces, storage, and staging areas, none of the work can come together for an audience to share the learning with the students.

The obstacles listed above, though numerous, do not outweigh the benefits of interdisciplinary arts endeavors. These types of projects are essential for every community. Twenty-five years of teaching experience, combined with the evidence embedded in this research, clarifies to me that students need these opportunities, not just to create a positive community in which to go to school, but also to grow as individuals.

As I struggled to find the proper conclusion to this enormous research project, I just happened to be at the culmination of yet another interdisciplinary arts project to
provide me guidance. I was not reflecting on the obstacles to the work, which were many. I did not think at all about the money or social capital spent or built. I did not dwell on the missed opportunities of my colleagues to get involved with the project and get to know the students in the way I had. Instead, I was awestruck that community was once again built, and, more importantly, why it is so important for schools to continue to create these types of opportunities for students. It comes down to social justice; not just breaking down barriers and creating safety nets – though that definitely is important to the plan - but social justice as the commitment to developing human potential.

Adults can delude themselves into thinking that teenagers have lives full of trivial concerns and aspirations only as important as what they will wear to prom or whether they can turn in their college applications by deadline. Many of us who spend long hours with teens quickly come to different conclusions. Their stories are full of neglect, with some students behaving as parent for their siblings, or having no expectation of a parent making time to sit in the audience to celebrate their work. Many students suffer from a variety of types of trauma: physical abuse, mental abuse, food and housing insecurity. A shocking number of students describe their cycles of depression and their hopelessness that their futures hold something better. Many students described family conflict and moving or living temporarily with other families as a regular occurrence. On occasion, a student might be navigating the untimely death of a parent, or reeling from the consistent absence of a mother or father during the majority of her childhood.
For these students, the arts are a safe place to be themselves and express themselves, sometimes with the cover of the character they are portraying, using his or her words to articulate their own feelings. Sometimes the embodiment of a different character is a hopeful act. It allows students to live lives on stage that are more satisfying than their own, no matter how fleetingly. This experience allows them to try out different outcomes that may help them shape the rest of their lives. It also might help them to find people who are sharing their same experiences.

The arts are full of diversity. Through large interdisciplinary arts projects, people who are different in every imaginable way come together. Such projects create spaces in which the talented and popular are on equal footing with the awkward and marginalized. These projects provide one of the few places in a school where deficiencies can become strengths. Having a unique voice or attribute is considered an asset in the arts community. If you are brave enough to lead with that trait, you can be a hero. Our unique, judgement-free workspace is an incubator for developing social skills or other life skills like communication, organization and problem solving. The scale of these large, interdisciplinary projects requires long workdays of everyone. The concentration of contact between the most unlikely of peers builds bonds or respect which are not easily broken thereafter. This, ot me, as stated earlier, is the essence of multicultural education, the essence of building a framework for social justice.
As a veteran teacher, I have experienced many such projects. With each project, I stand in awe of what happened by its conclusion. The exhausting and emotional work required ultimately leads to a beautiful and optimistic place. Adult facilitators plant the seed of a student’s potential without knowing what might result. A team of caring adults commit to tending and nourishing that potential with guidance, feedback, challenges and encouragement. We then stand in admiration of the colorful field of budding or blooming young wildflowers as they reach and stretch toward the light. As Lenny learned, (quoted earlier in the chapter) each student’s part is not only enormous - it is essential. Indeed had he left the production, Lenny surely would have been missed, as would every single one of the participants have been missed. Our charges have struggled and persevered, but we are equally overwhelmed with where these seeds will spread from here.
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Interdisciplinary Arts as an Agent for Community Building in a U.S. High School


Dissertation in partial fulfillment of the PhD in Education, Lesley University, Ida M. Pappas


Appendices

Appendix A: Invitation

The stage production, Once on This Island, will be the vehicle for a research project in fulfillment of doctoral dissertation requirements through Lesley University, Individually Designed Specialization Department. The expectation is to gain an understanding of the relationship between students experiencing design-focused, interdisciplinary arts modules with teachers, hired experts and interested community members, and the establishment of a community culture in a mainstream public school in the U.S.

Questions of interest include:

- Do interdisciplinary arts performance projects build a sense of community, and if so why and how?
- How does the collaboration of diverse participants from a community influence a person’s broader idea of what community means?
- How do elements of democratic learning, creative design opportunities and moments of flow contribute to the feeling of being an essential member of a community?
- How does immersion into an unfamiliar culture through interdisciplinary learning impact a participant’s perception of being a member of a global community?

The project will collect data through the use of surveys delivered through smart phones and hand-held devices or computers, voice recorded one-to-one interviews, field notes from observation, photo journaling, writings, and video/audio recordings of group work during the rehearsal process. The collected data will then be analyzed to provide an understanding of how students perceive interdisciplinary collaborative work and its impact on community relationships.

I hope my research might uncover what types of activities, whether collaborative, requiring physical challenge, personal choice, or the result of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997), enhances a student’s experience of connectedness to others, and a feeling of being an essential, contributing member of a project. Depending on the results, the research may support the inclusion of interdisciplinary arts into the fabric of a student’s school experience through both curricular connections and additional co-curricular experiences. But more importantly, I hope to add to the body of knowledge concerning the impact and role of the arts influencing secondary education.

I am very interested in your participation in the study.

Sincerely,

Ida Pappas
Appendix B: Guide to Participants

The Experience Sampling Method:

Through your smartphone app, laptop, or simple paper and pencil, data will be collected at the conclusion of each rehearsal/interdisciplinary learning module. The questions will only take a few minutes to answer, but time will be provided at the conclusion of each rehearsal/learning module before you leave. These records constitute the data, and need to be thoughtfully completed and regularly submitted. You will have opportunities to respond more in-depth through one to one interviews and creative expression.

The following are the types of questions you will be asked:

What was the focus of this rehearsal?

Who did you work with?

What were you doing?

How are you feeling?

Did you have a particular moment during today’s session when your feelings about the people you worked with shifted significantly? If so, please explain.

Were you asked to do a task today that made feel closer or more isolated from the people you were working with? What were the circumstances and why? Please describe.

Did you have a moment during the work session today when when you were allowed to make a choice in the direction of things, or influence how an activity was completed? If so, did it impact your thinking and mood? How so?

Do you feel your personal contributions to the work you achieved today were essential to the entire production or easily replaced? Why or Why not?

Were you given an opportunity today to work with people you do not know well, either student, adult, or expert? If so, does the experience inform your idea of what makes a community? Please explain.
Appendix C: Consent Form  Age 14 – 17

Required of any persons 17 and under, who is participating in research project

Name of participant (please print):

1. I consent to participate in the project named above, the particulars of which — include details of voice recordings, diary entries and focus groups — have been explained to me. A written copy of the information has been given to me to keep.

2. I authorize the researcher to use the ESM data collected through my smartphone or other handheld device of computer, one-to-one interviews, audio and video recordings and diary entries/blog posts created by me, and audio or video recordings of group work and filed observation for the purposes of doctoral research.

3. I acknowledge that:
   • I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied or recorded;
   • It is my responsibility to ensure that my participation in this research project is not detrimental to my work;
   • The project is for the purpose of research;
   • I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements;
   • I consent to any focus groups that I participate in as part of this research being video and audio-taped;
   • I will be referred to by pseudonym in any publications arising from the research;
   • Video and audio recordings made for purposes of this project will not be publicly broadcasted or made available on the Internet.

Signature ___________________________ Date ____________
(Participant)

You are making a decision about allowing your child to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow him/her to participate in the study. If you later decide that you wish to withdraw your permission for your child to participate in the study, you may do so at any time. You will be given a copy of this document.

Signature ___________________________ Date ____________
Signature ___________________________ Date ____________
Parent(s) or Legal Guardian(s)
Informed Consent Form – Age 18 or older

Required of any persons 18 and older, who is participating in research project

Name of participant (please print):

1. I consent to participate in the project named above, the particulars of which — include details of voice recordings, diary entries and focus groups — have been explained to me. A written copy of the information has been given to me to keep.

2. I authorize the researcher to use the ESM data collected through my smartphone or other handheld device of computer, one-to-one interviews, audio and video recordings and diary entries/blog posts created by me, and audio or video recordings of group work and filed observation for the purposes of doctoral research.

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   - It is my responsibility to ensure that my participation in this research project is not detrimental to my work;
   - The project is for the purpose of research;
   - I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements;
   - I consent to any focus groups that I participate in as part of this research being video and audio-taped;
   - I will be referred to by pseudonym in any publications arising from the research.
   - Video and audio recordings made for purposes of this project will not be publicly broadcasted or made available on the Internet.

_________________________ Date ____________
Signature (Participant)
Appendix E: Participant Survey

**Once On This Island**

**Once On This Island - Participant Survey**

By filling out this survey, you are confirming that you completed an Informed Consent Form indicating that you understand that the data collected will be used in a dissertation research project, and that you are aware of your rights to privacy and identity protection. Your participation is appreciated, as it furthers the collective knowledge in areas of education, arts and community building, but you are in no way obligated to continue your participation against your will.

Thank you for your time and participation in this research project!

**Once On This Island**

**Details**

These questions will help to pinpoint who you are and what you did during this session.

First and Last Name:  

Who did you work with (alone, students, teacher/directors, community adults, experts, etc.)?  

What was the focus of this work session? (select all that apply)  

- Singing  
- Dancing  
- Blocking  
- Costume/Sewing  
- Other (please specify)  

- Make Up  
- Stage Managing  
- Technical Support (lighting and sound)  
- Set Construction and Moving  
- Artistic Support (sculpture, photo, video, program/poster/shirt design, etc.)  
- Directing, Music Directing, Pit Directing, Choreographing, Teaching, Guest Speaker  

What specific tasks did you work on (specific songs or scenes, painting the stage, lobby display, etc.)?  

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Once On This Island

Feelings

The following questions all relate to your feelings at the conclusion of the work session and are based on an eight-point scale ranging from two opposite viewpoints. Please select what best describes your feelings right now.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On a scale from 1 to 8</th>
<th>Alert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drowsy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On a scale from 1 to 8</th>
<th>Happy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On a scale from 1 to 8</th>
<th>Friendly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angry</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On a scale from 1 to 8</th>
<th>Excited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bored</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On a scale from 1 to 8</th>
<th>Relaxed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxious</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On a scale from 1 to 8</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frustrated</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Did you have a particular moment during today's session when your feelings about the people you worked with shifted significantly? If so, please explain.

---

**Once On This Island**

**Interdisciplinary**

All of the following questions relate to working in the variety of different disciplines (music, dance, acting, fine art, history, culture, religion, etc.) with a variety of different people. They are based on an eight-point scale ranging from two opposite viewpoints. Please select what best describes your opinions right now.

**On a scale form 1 to 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No Collaboration Opportunities</th>
<th>Collaboration Required Throughout Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**On a scale form 1 to 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No Personal Choices Allowed</th>
<th>Personal Choices Required Throughout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**On a scale form 1 to 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No Risk-Taking Necessary</th>
<th>Risk-Taking Regularly Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On a scale from 1 to 8

Were you asked to do a task today that made you feel closer or more isolated from the people you were working with? What were the circumstances and why? Please describe.

Were there elements of learning Haitian culture in this session that influenced your thinking about what community means? If so, please explain.

Once On This Island

Flow

The following questions relate to how invested you were in the activity you were engaged in at this workshop session and are based on an eight-point scale ranging from two opposite viewpoints. Please select what best describes your opinions right now.

On a scale from 1 to 8

Task Was Not Challenging

Task Was Very Challenging

On a scale from 1 to 8

No Skill Was Required

Great Skill Was Required
### On a scale from 1 to 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals Were Made Clear to Me</th>
<th>Goals Were Made Very Clear to Me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### On a scale from 1 to 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did Not Feel Personally Involved</th>
<th>Felt Deeply Involved in Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### On a scale from 1 to 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimal Concentration Required</th>
<th>Required Deep Concentration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### On a scale from 1 to 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader Directed</th>
<th>Self-Directed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### On a scale from 1 to 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No Idea How Others View Me or My Work</th>
<th>Very Aware of How Others View Me and My Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### On a scale from 1 to 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Given No Feedback</th>
<th>Given Instant Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### On a scale from 1 to 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Flew By</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quick</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Slowly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Did you have a moment during the work session today when you were allowed to make a choice in the direction of things, or influence how an activity was completed? If so, did it impact your thinking and mood? How so?

### Once On This Island

**Community**

This last section relates to how you feel about the people you have been working with today and is based on an eight-point scale ranging from two opposite viewpoints. Please select what best describes your feelings right now.

### On a scale from 1 to 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I Do Not Feel A Member of The Group</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Feel I Am An Important Member of the Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### On a scale from 1 to 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I Do Not Trust the People I Have Worked With Today</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Completely Trust the People I Have Worked With Today</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interdisciplinary Arts as an Agent for Community Building in a U.S. High School

On a scale from 1 to 8
I Do Not Feel People Were Sensitive to My Feelings and Needs
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

On a scale from 1 to 8
I Do Not Feel Emotionally Connected to the Group I Worked With Today
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

On a scale from 1 to 8
I Feel the Routines and Traditions During This Session Were Painless
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

On a scale from 1 to 8
I Do Not Feel I Have Shared Similar Experiences/History With This Group
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Do you feel your personal contributions to the work you achieved today were essential to the entire production or easily replaced? Why or Why not?

Were you given an opportunity today to work with people you do not know well, either student, adult, or expert? If so, does the experience inform your idea of what makes a community? Please explain.