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THE CLASSROOM AS INQUIRY LEARNING COMMUNITY: A PRACTITIONER STUDY OF ADOLESCENTS' DEVELOPING CRITICAL LITERACIES

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Abstract

This dissertation presents findings from 10 months of practitioner inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, 2009) using qualitative data collection and analysis. Informed by communities of practice theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and critical literacy theory (Luke, 2000; Janks, 2010; Comber, 2016), the study asked the following research questions: 1) What characterizes a classroom learning community designed to support adolescents' experiences with inquiry learning? 2) In what ways do adolescents practice critical literacies when engaged with inquiry learning? and, 3) What roles do teachers navigate when working with adolescents developing critical literacies through inquiry learning? The study took place in an elective course co-designed by an English teacher and a librarian to support 12th grade students in developing their research skills. Data sources included semi-structured interviews, weekly memos, teaching artifacts and student work samples, emails, text messages, photos, and videos. Analysis and writing were informed by narrative inquiry (Schaafsma & Vinz, 2011). Findings demonstrated that students experienced various levels of confluence in developing their inquiry literacies and critical literacies when engaged in work designed to address both skill sets. Findings suggest implications for members of school communities working to develop opportunities in the curriculum for inquiry learning and critical literacy, for teacher researchers designing future practitioner inquiry research projects, and for teacher educators working with pre-service English teachers.

Keywords: inquiry learning, critical inquiry, critical literacy, critical constructivism, community of practice, teacher research, practitioner inquiry, narrative inquiry

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mom, Barbara J. Coffey, who inspired in me my endless curiosity, who from the earliest days of being asked for research help would say to my siblings and me, “are your fingers broken?” before ushering us on to look something up for ourselves.

Looks like they still aren't broken, Mom.

May your love of learning and your memories live on through our stories.

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Chapter One: Introduction

"We can't just jump into our projects, and learn whatever we want. First, we have to learn how to learn." - Aidan, 12th grade student

The study presented here is the story of nine students, two teachers, one class, one school, and a community serving as home to their shared experience. The story told through this study begins where it ended - a showcase of student projects, the culminating event after a year's worth of work, a chance for nine young people to share their scholarship with their friends, families, teachers and administrators. This was the day when the students would really be assessed, when they would really show what they had learned, what skills they had developed, and how they put their learning to good use. This would also be the day when they and their two teachers would be able to say whether or not the Senior Scholar Research Seminar could be counted as a success. What did these nine young people think and feel about such a differently designed educational experience? Would they assess their work presented today as having successfully met their goals, and would they feel proud? Had they, in the year-long pursuit of their independent inquiry projects and, as Aidan suggested in the quotation above, "*learned how to learn*?"

Around 6:45 am on Saturday, May 21st, I arrived on the university campus and carefully backed my car up in the parking lot adjacent to the student center so I could unload supplies for the day's event. Climbing out of the driver's seat I looked like I was exiting a clown car, as the helium balloons tried to escape from behind my seat. I thought to myself that in many ways, I was certainly showing up to a would-be circus and getting ready for the main event in the bigtop. Today was the Senior Scholars Symposium, the big day when all our hard work from the past school year would come together.

Jane (pseudonym), my librarian colleague and co-teacher in the seminar, and I spent weeks preparing for the event, the feeling of pride we shared as our scholars showed up, ready to present. One by one, all dressed up, nervous and anxiously looking to us for guidance, the Scholars appeared. In the weeks prior we had several conversations about what would be the most appropriate attire for this event, and they all looked very serious and academic. One outfit, however, stood out among the others; there was Aidan, tall in the leather jacket he made as part of his inquiry, beaming with pride. I thought about the many, many times Aidan spent rehearsing his presentation in the library clubhouse, how he painstakingly spent hours constructing that jacket, adding patches and final details to the fashion centerpiece of his project. That jacket became synonymous with the text construction representing the new learning and meaning these kids made out of their projects. While students in previous years had spent their time and effort in constructing the perfectly sound and organized research paper that checked all the right boxes and included all the correct details, these students spent their time in pursuit of knowledge according to their own desires and design, and for their own reasons rather than for a grade.

This dissertation presents a qualitative study using a practitioner inquiry methodology (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, 2009). In brief, the study was designed to take place in a 12th-grade research seminar course piloted at East Valley High (pseudonym) during the 2015-2016 school year. This course was designed to give students opportunities to conduct research assignments using an inquiry learning approach. As is the nature of practitioner inquiry, I was both the researcher and teacher in the context under study. At the start of the school year, I had been teaching 11th- and 12th-grade English for fifteen years, and in that time I had many experiences in working with students conducting research assignments. This pilot course resulted from that experience and the work I have done with my co-teacher and collaborator, Mrs. Jane

Miller (pseudonym), the East Valley High School library media specialist. Together we proposed, designed, and implemented this experimental course to address the implementation of instructional methods designed to promote inquiry learning in student research (Maniotes & Kuhlthau, 2014).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the connections between inquiry learning, classrooms that function as communities of practice, and the development of students' critical literacies. The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. What characterizes a classroom learning community designed to support adolescents' experiences with inquiry learning?
2. In what ways do adolescents practice critical literacies when engaged with inquiry learning?
3. What roles do teachers navigate when working with adolescents developing critical literacies through inquiry learning?

Rationale

In the current culture of education reform, high-stakes testing and teacher evaluation in the United States, teachers have been under increasing pressure to improve their students' academic performance, as influenced by the Common Core State Standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). As indicated in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing, in both English Language Arts and for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects sections, students are expected to engage in research projects using evidence from multiple sources (print and digital) to support their analysis and argument. At first glance, these seem like standard expectations for students learning to conduct and complete research assignments. However, in the larger context of the new standards, the more

challenging assessments being adopted, and the increasing demands of high school and college-level research assignments (in terms of length, frequency, collaborative design, number of sources referenced, and expectations for formal presentation), it becomes clear to literacy researchers that practicing teachers and their students can no longer afford to approach research in the traditional, perfunctory ways still found in many ELA and content-area classrooms (Maniotes & Kuhlthau, 2014). Adolescents are expected to develop proficiency in multiple literacies in order to meet these standards. They are to engage in various literacies, such as informational literacy, the ability to identify, effectively search for, locate and evaluate information. They need media literacy, the ability to engage with and understand multiple forms of communication through written texts (e.g., books, journal articles, or newspapers), visual texts (e.g., photos, videos, or film), and audio texts (e.g., audiobooks, music, or podcasts). In so doing, students must also engage their digital literacies in order to access such a variety of texts by knowing how to effectively search using websites and databases, and they must use their critical literacies in order to understand and evaluate the selected texts' purpose. This must happen all while students account for disciplinary literacies, defined as "the use of reading, reasoning, investigating, speaking, and writing required to learn and form complex content knowledge appropriate to a particular discipline: (McConachie & Petrosky, 2010, p. 16). Students need to engage with multiple texts of multiple types to synthesize information and produce new knowledge; however, most students are unable to do so independently and are more likely to approach a set of texts as unrelated and "rarely [develop] the kind of nuanced understanding… that experts see as beneficial" (Shanahan, 2014, p. 147).

One way schools in the local context where the study took place have sought to meet these shifting expectations is to adopt professional development training in project-based

learning (PBL), as presented by the local branch of the state-directed consortium of county school districts tasked with collective management of special programming and training for member districts' faculty and staff. Project-based learning is an inquiry learning model that begins with a driving question most typically posed by the instructor, engages students in active learning to answer that question, and ultimately prompts students to produce a product, or project, that communicates their learning to an outside audience (Buck Institute for Education, 2015). Since 2011, the local BOCES has collaborated with the Buck Institute for Education (2015), a non-profit educational organization that "creates, gathers, and shares high-quality PBL instructional practices and products and provides highly effective services to teachers, schools, and districts," to bring training in project-based learning to its member districts. Instruction in PBL has included such key elements as being driven by an essential question, responding to an authentic problem, allowing for student voice and choice, preparing a product for a public audience, and engaging in multiple stages of feedback, revision and reflection. As such, teachers are instructed to use a scaffolded structure and resources designed to provide careful guidance and to employ a gradual release of responsibility to the student learners. According to the Buck Institute, research-based evidence exists to support claims of the instructional model's effectiveness as seen on several research reports assembled on the organization's website. For example, a 2014 report from SRI Education found that students who participated in project-based curriculum "outperformed students in the comparison curriculum on outcome measures aligned to core ideas" (p. 14).

Instructional models that privilege inquiry learning as a method for conducting research closely align with Common Core expectations (Maniotes, 2014; Spires, Kerkhoff & Graham, 2016). However, despite this attention to research skills more characteristic of inquiry learning,

in many circumstances such as in content-driven courses, students' proficiency is being measured by high-stakes standardized exams that may not easily or accurately assess these skills. Such exams cannot evaluate the messy and lengthy process of student research, and instead they privilege the assembly of research-based essays that can be completed in one sitting. Consequently, student research in many classrooms more often resembles the traditional, didactic models of learning through transmission, what Freire (2000) called the "banking-method," rather than more constructivist models of learning through immersion, exploration, collaboration, and meaning-making (Beach & Myers, 2001; Fosnot, 1996). Kuhlthau (2013) reminds us when students are engaged with inquiry, they are able to discover their own "process" that will "[lead] to deep understanding and production of media to share their learning" (p. 7). This study focuses on a class designed specifically with this intention, to invite students into such inquiry experiences.

Definition of Key Terms

In this section, I provide an introductory explanation for the key terms as used for the purposes of this study: community of practice, inquiry learning, critical literacy, critical constructivism, practitioner inquiry and narrative inquiry. I revisit each term more specifically in chapters 2 and 3, the review of literature and methodology, respectively.

Community of practice. The theoretical lens of communities of practice comes from Lave and Wenger's (1991) application in business, as an understanding that the workplace should be seen as a social and collaborative engagement in which individuals learn with and from each other, rather than learning in isolation and as individuals. Organizations that act as social learning systems are places in which all participants benefit from social interaction and subsequent relationships between expert and novice members. The schooling context of this

study, as well as the student participants, librarian and teacher researcher, are examined through this particular lens as a means for understanding the various ways in which such a community reflects or affects the critical nature of student inquiry learning.

Inquiry learning. For the purposes of this study, "inquiry learning" is defined as instructional practice and subsequent student experiences, namely research assignments, driven by problems or questions (Harvey & Daniels, 2009), ones that "[espouse] investigation, exploration, search, quest, research, pursuit, and study" (Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari, 2007). This differs from what will be referred to as a "traditional" approach to student research, in which students are directed to study a given topic, use a specified process, and produce a standardized product; typically, the research paper (Maniotes & Kuhlthau, 2014). The context for this study was a 12th grade class that sought to introduce students to doing research for their assignments using an inquiry approach rather than the more traditional approach, and consequently the students' learning experiences and produced texts differed from those associated with the standardized research paper.

Critical literacy. "Critical literacy" refers to the ability to read and engage with texts as representations of the dynamics of power and inequalities between and among people (Christensen, 2000; Luke, 2012; Bishop, 2015; Vasquez, Janks & Comber, 2019). Elizabeth Bishop (2015) explains that

> critical literacy uses texts and print skills in ways that enable students to examine the politics of daily life within contemporary society with a view to understanding what it means to locate and actively seek out contradictions within modes of life, theories, and substantive intellectual positions. (p. 52)

Drawing on Janks's (2000) and Luke's (2000) theoretical positions on critical literacy, Behrman (2006) explains that "a critical literacy agenda should therefore encourage teachers and students to collaborate to understand how texts work, what texts intend to do to the world, and how social relations can be critiqued and constructed" (p. 491). His review of research in critical literacy includes studies that outline six classroom practices: reading supplementary texts, reading multiple texts, reading from a resistance perspective, producing countertexts, conducting student-choice projects, and taking social action. Such practices can and will be used to discuss the curriculum design and pedagogical intention of the course under study, the pilot class called the Senior Scholar Research seminar.

Critical constructivism. Critical constructivism is a theory evolved from critical theory (Horkheimer, 1937), constructivist theory (Piaget, 1950; Vygotsky, 1979) and critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970, 2000; Kincheloe, 2005). Critical constructivists argue that "a central role of school involves engaging students in the knowledge production process. A central dimension of teaching in this context involves engaging students in analyzing, interpreting, and constructing a wide variety of knowledges emerging from diverse locations" (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 3). Critical constructivism informs this study as it related to the intersections of inquiry learning, in which students engage in self-designed and directed research on topics of their personal choice, and critical literacy theory, in which the research students do when presented with opportunities to disrupt the traditional student research paradigm and involve topics, methods and purposes of a critical nature, and engage in the construction of new knowledge with explicit intention to share with and further democratize their learning community.

Practitioner inquiry. The methodology for this study is driven primarily by practitioner inquiry, encompassing various types of research conducted by practicing teachers (Cochran-

Smith & Lytle, 2009). Such research empowers teachers by privileging their voices and valuing their contributions to existing scholarship. This study is reflective of a body of research by practicing teachers who engage in epistemological studies of their classroom instruction, for the purposes of learning from and improving their teaching, as well as contributing to the existing scholarship about teaching and learning.

Narrative inquiry. Narrative is an effective form of inquiry because we tell stories to learn (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Fleming, 2016). Schaafsma and Vinz (2011) explain that "narrative has the potential to present complexities and ways of acknowledging the influence of experience and culture on human learning and knowledge construction" (p. 2). We learn by telling our stories to others, and others learn by hearing, relating to and acting upon our stories. Clandinin and Rosiek (2006) explained that narrative inquiry "privileges individual lived experience as a source of insights useful not only to the person himself or herself but to the wider field of social science scholarship" (p. 49). The means by which I relate the details of this study, from its design and the theory that informs it to its implementation, analysis and subsequent conclusions, all reflect the ways in which I learn as a storyteller. Just like Joan Didion (1976) said, "I write entirely to find out what I am thinking, what I'm looking at, what I see and what it means" (p. 570).

Significance

This study is significant in that it contributes to existing scholarship and pedagogy about inquiry learning and subsequent instructional strategies (Beach & Myers, 2001; Harvey & Daniels, 2009; Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari, 2012). As schools redesign curricula and implement new instructional practice to meet the Common Core State Standards and new state assessments, it is important to document participants' experiences and perspectives, in order to

share them with the research community and to further inform the work being done to improve student achievement in this changing context. This study can privilege the perspectives of teachers who are in classrooms and experiencing these shifts, and it can highlight the stories of those students engaging with such curricular changes.

This study also speaks to the continued importance of teachers conducting research in their own classrooms and of the need to further legitimize practitioner inquiry methods as both ethical and rigorous. Moreover, this study invites educational researchers to consider the value of practitioner inquiry as it relates specifically to the inclusion of guided inquiry instruction and for the purposes of developing students' critical literacy. As a teacher researcher, my work can add to the discourse with additional experiences around issues related to teacher research, such as challenges in collecting and managing data while teaching full time, or the ethical demands of researching on and with one's own students.

Finally, this study is significant in that it allows for greater attention to the perspectives of students engaging in inquiry learning, including those who are simultaneously developing their critical literacies. It documents opportunities students had to engage as critical theorists, which might empower them to push back against educational reforms implemented by individuals or institutions in power seeking to further repress them or to maintain socially unjust practices. In so doing, I hope to encourage other teacher researchers to see the value of engaging students in critical constructivist work by inviting students to engage in critical inquiry with us.

Overview of the Chapters

I organized this dissertation into four additional chapters. In Chapter 2, Review of Related Literature, I review three bodies of literature that relate to my research. I begin the chapter with a discussion of the theoretical framework of communities of practice that informs

the context and instructional design of the study. Next, I discuss the literature that pertains to the evolution of inquiry learning and subsequent instructional models, such as Guided Inquiry Design, that were fundamental to the context of the study. Finally, I engage in an exploration of adolescent and critical literacies, as well as their relationship to critical literacy theory and critical constructivism.

In Chapter 3, Methodology, I explain the design for my study, including a description of the context, the participants, and my own positionality as instructor of the course and as teacher-researcher. I include a section about a unique aspect of this study, which involves the collaborative nature of practitioner inquiry and specifically a focus on the role of the teacher librarian, as it pertained to both course design and instruction, as well as implementation of the study itself. I provide a summary of the data types and forms of collection, as well as a discussion of the methods used for data analysis.

Chapter 4, Findings, is organized into three parts, each aligned with one of the research questions. The first part is called *The Senior Scholars Learning Community*, and it presents findings according to the chronological sequence of the course as influenced by the Guided Inquiry Design instructional model (Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari, 2012). The second part is called *Developing Adolescents' Critical Literacies*, and these findings are organized around students' assignments that engaged their critical literacies and invited them to consider lines of inquiry for their individual research projects that would be critical in nature. The third part is called *The Senior Scholars Symposium as a Confluence of Inquiry Learning and Critical Literacies*, and these findings examine the ways in which the students' individual inquiry projects represented various manifestations within a matrix of criticality, of the potential confluence of inquiry learning and critical literacies. In accordance with narrative inquiry, each

part is introduced with a narrative vignette detailing an example and aspects of the themes discussed therein.

In Chapter 5, Discussion and Implications, I synthesize the findings in the previous chapter and establish assertions based upon emergent themes. I also address the limitations of the study, describe how the study contributes to existing scholarship, and propose implications for further research.

As outlined above, this dissertation is organized in accordance with the traditional research study design. However, in relating this experience to you, it is more than just a study, a year in the life of a doctoral candidate and the years of desperately dissertating work that followed. It is, instead, a story that I hope can be added to the existing collection of narratives about teachers and students as researchers and the important work they contribute to the academy.

And so, dear reader, I now invite you to the story.

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

The purpose of this chapter is to present a review of literature that addresses the establishment of classroom opportunities for inquiry learning, specifically those operating as a means by which students develop and refine their critical literacy skills. This study is intended to contribute to the existing scholarship. In so doing, I address the need for teachers and their students to create a classroom that operates as a community of practice, in order to foster such critical work.

The first section of this chapter is called Research on Critical Literacy and reviews the body of literature relating multiple adolescent literacies to critical literacy theory (Vasquez, Janks & Comber, 2019) and its roots in critical pedagogy and critical constructivism. In the second section, Research on Inquiry Learning, I discuss the evolution of the inquiry learning movement and its key aspects, focusing specifically on the relevance of guidance as an essential element to inquiry learning models. I also present an overview of Kuhlthau, Maniotes and Caspari's (2012) Guided Inquiry Design model, which was used as the instructional framework for the pilot course under examination for this particular study. The third section, Research on Classrooms as Communities of Practice, addresses the Lave and Wenger (1991) theory that informs this study and reviews research making similar use of the Community of Practice in educational contexts. In the final section of this chapter, I summarize and synthesize the literature reviewed in the three preceding sections and explain how these studies led to the specific design of my project.

Research on Critical Literacy

Inquiry learning models align with movements in education reform that seek to develop adolescent students' literacy practices. According to the International Literacy Association

(2012), a scholarly organization whose mission is to support the development of literacy educators, adolescent literacy "is understood as the ability to read, write, understand and interpret, and discuss multiple texts across multiple contexts." From this view, young people in the 21st century need to be able to do the following:

- Read a variety of texts including, but not limited to, traditional print text and digital (multimodal) text.
- Author words and images in fixed domains as well as multimodal settings.
- Talk about a variety of texts with others, including teachers, peers, members of their own communities, and the larger world population.
- Interact with text in discipline-specific ways within and across all subjects inclusive of, but not limited to, electives, career and technical education, and visual and performing arts. (p. 2)

The ILA position statement explains that there is a "greater focus globally on how literacy is used within the multiple disciplines students engage in within school and, ultimately, to successfully operate as informed and active citizens," and that "educators and adolescents need support to ensure appropriate literacy instruction is implemented throughout the school day and subject areas to provide continued learning within and across the disciplines and continued and appropriate literacy development in adolescence" (p. 5). The literature reviewed here demonstrates the relationship between critical literacy, defined as the ability to read and engage with texts as representations of the dynamics of power and inequalities between and among people (Christensen, 2000; Luke, 2012; Bishop, 2015; Vasquez, Janks & Comber, 2019), and inquiry learning, instructional practice and subsequent student experiences driven by problems or questions (Harvey & Daniels, 2009; Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari, 2012). This literature also

addresses the significance of classrooms established as communities of practice as the means by which such critical literacy and inquiry learning can happen (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Critical literacy theory. Scholar Barbara Comber (2016) defines critical literacy as an "evolving repertoire of practices of analysis and interrogation which move between the micro features of texts and the macro conditions of institutions, focusing upon how relations of power work through these practices" (p. 9). Students engage in critical literacy when they recognize a text as a reflection of power dynamics and inequalities between people (Christensen, 2000; Janks, 2010; Comber, 2015). They learn to consider the socio-political positioning of the author, as well as that of the reader, in relation to the context in which the text is written or is being read. For students employing critical literacies, the text represents a mode of communication that may reflect a potential imbalance of power between the communicator and the audience, regardless of the medium- visual, print, multimodal, artistic, etc. Students also engage in critical literacies when they produce critical texts that enable them to share their voices and to value their ideas and experiences as legitimate knowledge (Christensen, 2000; Morrell, 2008). Comber (2016) explains that "critical approaches to pedagogy position students as active agents in their own learning and the social and political life of their schools and communities" (p. 10). This is the case when student-produced texts are of a critical nature and in response to issues of social justice--the just distribution of wealth, opportunity and privilege in society. Discussing Australian sociologist R. W. Connell's work on poverty and education, Comber (2016) explains that Connell

> argued the need to consider how curriculum privileges the knowledges and practices of advantaged groups within society and to think about ways in which it might be changed

> to consider knowledge from the standpoint of the poor and working-class, women, and culturally marginalized people. (p. 4)

Patel Stevens and Bean (2007) define critical literacy as "being able to tease out various agendas, purposes, and interests represented in texts," and they suggest that such skills are "necessary for all of our students, not simply defined as higher-order thinking skills and reserved for those students whom we deem proficient at decoding, and only then if time allows" (p. 4). Further, the authors explain that when readers take this stance:

> they develop a critical consciousness, fostering a search for justice and equity by reading the meanings behind the text. Questions about whose version of history is sanctioned, whose energy policy is supported by a text, or how the reader or characters in a novel are positioned by an author all fall within the realm of critical literacy. (pp. 6-7)

This concept is reinforced in Allan Luke's explanation of critical literacy as "an overtly political orientation to teaching and learning and to the cultural, ideological, and sociolinguistic content of the curriculum… [it] has an explicit aim of the critique and transformation of dominant ideologies, cultures and economies, and institutions and political systems" (2012, p. 5). Allan Luke and Peter Freebody's Four Resources model advocated that readers and writers engage in literacy practices that included 1) learning to be codebreakers, 2) learning to be text participants, 3) understanding how to use different text forms, and 4) becoming critical consumers of those forms (Vasquez, Janks & Comber, 2019, p. 305).

Similarly, Hilary Janks advocated for an approach to critical literacy in her Interdependence Model that included the four dimensions of power, diversity, access and design/redesign in a range of related areas: "anti-racism, Whiteness, feminism, post-colonialism,

sexual orientation, critical linguistics, critical pedagogy, sociocultural and critical approaches to literacy, and critical discourse analysis" (Vasquez, Janks & Comber, 2019, p. 305).

Noting these similar theoretical traditions, Vasquez, Janks and Comber argue for critical literacy as a way of being and doing, and they identify a set of key aspects of critical literacy common to the literature:

> 1) critical literacy should be viewed as a lens, frame or perspective for teaching rather than a topic to be covered
>
> 2) diverse students' cultural knowledge, funds of knowledge, and multimodal and multilingual practices should be used to build curriculum
>
> 3) students learn best when what they are learning has importance in their lives
>
> 4) texts are socially constructed from particular perspectives; they are never neutral
>
> 5) the ways we read texts are never neutral; we therefore should also analyze our own readings of text and unpack the positions(s) from which we engage in literacy work
>
> 6) the world is seen as a socially constructed text that can be read
>
> 7) critical literacy involves making sense of the sociopolitical systems through which we live our lives and questioning these systems
>
> 8) critical literacy practices can be transformative; they can contribute to changing inequitable ways of being and problematic social practices
>
> 9) text design and production can provide opportunities for transformation
>
> 10) critical literacy is about imagining thoughtful ways of thinking about reconstructing and redesigning texts, images, and practices to convey different and more socially just and equitable messages and ways of being that have real-life effects and real-world impact. (pp. 306-307)

As Comber (2016) suggests, critical literacy defies definition, but in schools, "it is usually concerned with young people learning about how texts work for and against interests of different people" (p. 10). This understanding of how to critically read a text aligns with the goals of information and new literacies, in that students are taught to question the validity, credibility, and agenda of the sources they consult during the research process. In so doing, students learn to challenge the authors they previously trusted without question, seeking to corroborate and synthesize multiple conclusions or perspectives.

Critical constructivism. In addition to critical literacy theory, as defined above, this study is informed by critical constructivism. Critical constructivism is a theory born from the concepts inherent in critical theory (Horkheimer, 1937), constructivist theory (Piaget, 1950; Vgotsky, 1979) and critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970, 2000; Kincheloe, 2005). Gordon (2008) explains that Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the zone of proximal development "enables us to realize that human learning, development, and knowledge are all embedded in a particular social and cultural context in which people exist and grow" (p. 324). Understanding constructivism as being critical is a further extension of understanding its socio-cultural foundations. While knowledge construction is informed by one's socio-cultural context and perspective, the critical constructivist challenges socio-cultural authority in said knowledge construction. Kincheloe (2005) identifies this work as being critical in nature when constructivists "are concerned with the exaggerated role power plays in these construction and validation processes. Critical constructivists are particularly interested in the ways these processes help privilege some people and marginalize others" (p. 3). And, according to Kincheloe, critical constructivists:

> more clearly discern how education operates to reproduce or challenge dominant

> socio-political and economic structures. Such theoretical understandings are profoundly important in learning to think, teach and live democratically. Educational purpose cannot be separated from social justice, human liberation, self-direction, resistance to regulation, community building, deeper forms of human interconnection and the fight for freedom. (p. 11)

Theorizing constructivism as being critical demands that the knowledge produced by students must be done in response to an understanding of and refusal to accept social, political and educational inequities (Giroux, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014). Paolo Freire is credited with theorizing education that demands teaching for social justice and for the empowerment of the marginalized (Freire, 2000). To do otherwise, Freire explains, is to actively engage in the oppression of marginalized peoples: "any situation in which some individuals prevent others from engaging in the process of inquiry is one of violence. The means used are not important; to alienate human beings from their own decision-making is to change them into objects" (p. 85). In the case of young people who are prevented from taking a more active and powerful role in the construction of their own knowledge, Freire suggests that "problem-posing education does not and cannot serve the interests of the oppressor. No oppressive order could permit the oppressed to begin to question: Why?" (p. 86). In other words, Freire argues that the manner in which teachers teach is a direct reflection of the ways in which they view young people's agency, and that teachers' pedagogy moves along a continuum from actively seeking to repress them through highly controlled and deliberately scripted instruction, to bolstering them through empowering and inquiry-driven experiences. Consequently, inquiry learning experiences, even those not inherently critical in topic, theme, or purpose, can be part of a larger, pedagogically critical stance, as is the case in this particular study.

Gallagher and Goodman (2007) explain that classrooms characterized by critical constructivism are therefore inherently defined by "principles of mutual enhancement, a spirit of shared social responsibilities allows for inclusion and equality," and that "these classrooms develop dispositions of openness to diversity and explorations of other identities… [which is] especially meaningful when the "other" is comprised of those who have been marginalized because of minority identifications and economic disparities. Mutual enhancement dovetails with critical constructivist philosophy and practice as a further application of social justice initiatives" (pp. 156-57).

Hynds (1997) explains that social constructivism relies upon the apprenticeship model of expert-novice relationships, but that educators and theorists often attempt to understand these relationships as if they existed in a politically-neutral zone. She claims that often teachers,

> ignore important issues, such as the resistance that disempowered learners must exert, the right of marginalized learners to refuse enculturation into a realm of knowledge that excused or attempts to eradicate their culture, and the responsibilities of teachers to bring larger political concerns into the public arena of the classroom. In a sense, both portrayals of constructivism seem to rest on the notion that what counts as knowledge is a politically neutral issue. (p. 253)

Teachers who work from a stance of critical pedagogy, who employ critical constructivism in their literacy instruction and curriculum, see their role as prompting students to think about their learning, knowledge production, and subsequent communication and action as being potentially restricted by those with greater political power and social control; Hynds explains that teaching from this position "call[s] into question why all voices are not given equal respect, and recognize[s] that teaching and learning are always political acts" (p. 255).

In a case study of science lesson series with grade 6 students from disadvantaged backgrounds in a South African town, Stears (2009) speaks to the emancipatory nature of critical constructivism, explaining that "learners determined which type of knowledge they engaged with and the fact that this knowledge had immediate value in their day-to-day lives," and that this fits with Kincheloe's purpose for critical constructivism because "learners should build their own knowledge from the interaction between their everyday experiences and the science knowledge of the school" (p. 406). Stears identifies critical constructivism as being "concerned also with educational purposes and the nature of the classroom community… requir[ing] that educators and their learners take cognisance of social, political and historical issues in the practice of education in the context of the community in which they practice" (p. 400). In other words, students in a classroom community defined by critical constructivist practice are invited to question, critique and push back against the curriculum's content knowledge and purpose. For Stears, the application of a critical constructivist approach to science teaching empowers students to own their learning and calls on teachers to value the significance of students' knowledge and experiences. While Stears' study speaks to a critical constructivist approach as implemented in a science classroom, such implications can be applied to other courses of various content, such as the course in question for this study.

Hynds (1997) also demands that:

> It is time for literature and literacy teachers to start stepping in the way of bigotry, inequality, and the other residues of our individualistic, "me-first" society. We must create a space for those uncomfortable conversations that lead us to a new critical consciousness. In the process, we might help our students to understand - through literature, writing, and talk - that individual achievement is not the primary purpose of

> schooling, and that each of us bears a responsibility for the world that all of us will inherit. As teachers, we need to become even more active than before, helping students to see literacy not as a window on experience, but as a form of social action. (p. 269).

This study is informed by Hynds' rallying cry for critical constructivism in classroom instruction. When teachers approach their instruction as critical constructivists, they question the social and political purposes systemically inherent in schools. However, it can't be just the teachers who engage in critical constructivist theory - so must the students. When teachers create classrooms that engage students in inquiry learning experiences, designed specifically to be critical nature, they are inviting students into the critical constructivist process and empowering them to use their literacies for larger, socially just and democratic purposes. Combined with an understanding of the communities of practice theory (outlined below), this study demonstrates the conditions necessary for establishing a classroom that uses inquiry learning to engage in critical constructivist work.

It may be that critical literacy requires, and fosters, critical constructivism. The class under examination invites students to engage in inquiry work that is critical in nature, primarily social justice-oriented through focused reading, discussions, and written analyses and evaluations of text. Such learning activities provided students with practice engaging their critical literacies so they can apply them to their independent inquiry projects, therefore encouraging them to conduct projects addressing social justice issues. Students cannot be expected to engage in research projects characterized by inquiry learning of a critical nature if they aren't practiced in critical literacy as regular classroom practice. Conducting research using an inquiry model requires a critical perspective in that it demands students be able to - and perhaps more significantly, feel compelled to - question the authority of those who are in positions of power

and authority, as it relates to what, how and why they learn (Freire, 2000). Just as teachers must develop a sense of inquiry as stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009), so must students - and when students are invited to think critically and to inquire as to what they know, what they should know, and who gets to decide, inevitably they will ask more questions and disrupt the pre-established norms of power through their inquiries.

Consequently, this study sought to investigate a classroom in which students engaged in critical literacy and critical constructivist learning as defined and exemplified above. However, it was necessary to consider the role such pedagogy had when combined with classrooms engaged in inquiry learning experiences, specifically when students completed assignments involving research, either for the explicit purpose of practicing research skills, or to apply those skills to the search for information and application in answering content-based questions. This study examined a course in which students have such learning experiences and therefore allowed me to analyze and evaluate connections between critical literacy and inquiry learning.

Research on Inquiry Learning

Kuhlthau, Maniotes and Caspari (2007, 2012), a collaborative team of researchers multiply positioned as teacher leaders, classroom teachers, literacy specialists and information media specialists, explain that inquiry is:

> an approach to learning whereby students find and use a variety of sources of information and ideas to increase their understanding of a problem, topic, or issue. It requires more of them than simply answering questions or getting a right answer. It espouses investigation, exploration, search, quest, research, pursuit, and study. Inquiry does not stand alone; it engages, interests, and challenges students to connect their world with the curriculum.

> Although it is often thought of as an individual pursuit, it is enhanced by involvement with a community of learners, each learning from the other in social interaction. (p. 2)

The authors present this definition as the basis for the Guided Inquiry Design model outlined below. Such an understanding of learning recognizes inquiry as being both individual and communal work, and as being the means by which multiple curricula are made purposeful to the student learner. As an approach to learning, inquiry refers to both what teachers and students are doing and, more likely than not, to what they are doing together. What follows is a discussion of the evolution of inquiry learning models in order to better understand their distinctions as well as the rationale for selecting the Guided Inquiry Design model for this particular course.

Evolution of inquiry learning. Inquiry learning traces its roots back to John Dewey (1916, 2012) and his work with experiential learning, in which learners are invited to learn through active experience with the knowledge rather than through more passive activity, such as listening to and memorizing information about that same knowledge. Since Dewey's claims that we learn best through doing, there have been several manifestations and reinterpretations of his experiential learning theory. The differences are often subtle and place emphasis on different aspects of the learner's experience, but a current understanding of inquiry acknowledges the overlapping connections to early constructivist theory. For example, "discovery learning" stems from the work of constructivists such as Piaget (1950) and Bruner (1962), in which students are "encouraged to actively explore and figure out concepts, solutions or strategies at hand," and that "a widely accepted idea is that discovery learning is the most appropriate and effective approach to facilitating deep and lasting understanding" (Chen & Honomichl, 2008, p. 255). Others characterize discovery learning as occurring "whenever the learner is not provided with the target information or conceptual understanding and must find it independently and with only the

provided materials" (Alfieri et al, 2011). In these cases, students are engaging in inquiry because they are searching for meaning through active processes, although the amount of structure, pre-selected resources and guidance may vary.

Other iterations of Dewey's experiential learning that resemble learning through an inquiry approach are "problem-based learning" and "project-based learning." Problem-based learning (Wood, 2003) stems from the medical field; students are given scenarios to which they must respond by collaborating with small groups in search of a solution. Problem-based learning fosters deep and active learning while allowing for the development of generic competencies, and it motivates student engagement during the process (Wood, 2003). Such design is most commonly found in science curriculum and instruction, particularly in the laboratory component of class, where students engage in the replication of problem-solving by conducting scientific experiments. For example, Levitt, McKeage and Rangachari (2013) studied the use of problem-based learning in an undergraduate health sciences course in which students learned to diagnose, prevent and treat disease (in this case, tuberculosis), then engaged in independent inquiry about medical technologies and their historical use in responding to disease. Students being presented a problem and then having to work collaboratively to conduct research and pose potential solutions resembles the constructivist framework. But this model isn't reserved for scientific inquiry; rather, it can be found in other disciplines and often makes use of a cross-disciplinary approach.

Project-based learning is very similar to problem-based learning (English & Kitsantas, 2013), in that it, like other inquiry approaches, "engage[s] students as researchers, prompting students to learn how to ask important questions, design and conduct investigations, collect, analyze, and interpret data, and apply what they have learned to new problems or situations" (p. 130). When applied in K-12 classrooms, the project-based learning unit begins with a driving

question most typically posed by the instructor (some presentations of this model move toward student-designed questions; see discussion below about levels of inquiry), engages students in active learning to answer that question, and ultimately prompts students to produce a product, or project, that communicates their learning to an outside audience (Buck Institute for Education, 2015). In working toward that end, students engage in active learning that grants them deeper and more meaningful understanding of the knowledge or skills in question. Despite its name, in project-based learning the emphasis is placed on the process, not the final product. In fact, the student-produced project that results provides an additional opportunity for learning as students are required (according to this model) to engage in thorough self-assessment and reflection about their learning.

Key aspects of inquiry learning. Inquiry learning, as manifested in the models outlined above, is more complex than a one-time, collaborative project, and it is more than a specific set of instructional practices to be learned and enacted. Instead, creating an inquiry-driven classroom is a more cultural and philosophical pursuit, one that seeks to shift the entire discourse of learning toward inquiry and away from more didactic practices. Jennings and Mills (2009) conducted a longitudinal study at a public elementary magnet school in South Carolina, called the Center for Inquiry (CFI), looking at the place of dialogic inquiry in supporting both academic and social learning "as students and teachers negotiate, share ideas, collaborate, and problem-solve together" (p. 1585). The authors explain that their study is grounded in a sociocultural perspective, "which posits that inquiry practices are constructed in classrooms as teachers and learners interact" (p. 1586). These authors claim that as discourse is largely utilized in language arts and social science disciplines, their work focused on dialogic inquiry as it occurred in the study of life science. Because the study was longitudinal, the researchers had a tremendous

amount of data from which to draw their findings, collecting two data sets simultaneously over five years through classroom participant observations, field notes, student artifacts, and hundreds of hours of videotaped and audiotaped recordings of instruction. Through coding and multi-tiered analysis grounded in interactional ethnography, Jennings and Mills identified 18 coded processes such as observing, interpreting, collaborating, and reflecting then synthesized these data into a "taxonomy of practices of inquiry," They found that

> class members consistently constructed practices of inquiry that were dynamic and dialogic (personal and interpersonal); attentive, probing, and thoughtful; agentive and socially responsible; relational / compassionate; reflective and reflexive; and valuing of multiple perspectives including multi-and interdisciplinary perspectives. (pp. 1590-92)

This characterization of inquiry as a sociocultural process reinforces its Vygotskian connections to constructivist theory. Iin this study, inquiry learning provided the means and practice by which students engaged in collaborative discovery. Unlike instructional designs that are more teacher-directed in nature, inquiry learning is entirely dependent upon the social discourse at work in shared, investigative experiences.

Another identifying aspect of learning through inquiry is that it is not necessarily confined to the individual classroom; rather, it can seep into the larger school culture and neighborhood community. Lin and Bruce (2013) present a study engaging with community inquiry: an approach that "attends to growth from real-life issues within the community" and "provides a theoretical and action framework for considering how arts practice and digital participation among youth can be realized in a more integrated way" (p. 338). They explain that "community is not just a place to enact curriculum; it is the curriculum itself – a practice in which community life, learning activities, and educational aims intersect" (p. 339). Their 4-year

interdisciplinary research project, Youth Community Informatics (YCI), used case study and participatory action research methods and drew on various forms of data, including field notes for site visits, student-produced digital artifacts, surveys, interviews and participants' written reflections.

Lin and Bruce address two implications in their study of inquiry-based learning through community art projects: first, the reconceptualization of the relationship between 'artist' and 'audience'; and second, the significance of "moving from a needs-based to a strengths-based approach in working with youth in underserved communities" (p. 343). They conclude by reiterating that the YCI project examples "attending to community inquiry are characterized by collaboration in defining, articulating, and solving shared problems among community members" and calling arts educators to action through an explanation of socially engaged art, that "the boundaries between fine art and cultural practices are blurred, as well as the roles of artists, community workers, and urban planners" (p. 344). This case doesn't exist within the confines of a single classroom space nor is it organized within a formal school curriculum (much like the design and specific context for this study). Instead, this research demonstrates the same inquisitive work being done in a more organic fashion and for a shared purpose among diverse participants in an urban, out of school setting. Lin and Bruce's work demonstrates the significance of inquiry-based learning as a method by which learning traditionally confined to the classroom can benefit from, and be beneficial to, a larger community outside the classroom. Students are confronted with problems and questions that are personally meaningful as well as relevant to their communities; therefore, students' inquiries demand they take their learning outside to involve others.

Guidance in inquiry learning. One of the most significant criticisms of inquiry learning models can be found in Kirschner, Sweller and Clark's (2006) work that suggests students are left to their own devices to learn for themselves, and therefore not likely learning the material at all. The authors claim that what they refer to as "unguided instruction" began in the cold-war era after Sputnik, when science educators:

> shifted away from teaching a discipline as a body of knowledge toward the assumption that knowledge can best or only be learned through experience that is based only on the procedures of the discipline. This point of view appears to have led to unguided practical or project work and the rejection of instruction based on the facts, laws, principles, and theories that make up a discipline's content. (p. 84)

The authors reference studies defending their claim that "students learn so little from a constructivist approach" that "most teachers who attempt to implement classroom-based constructivist instruction end up providing students with considerable guidance" (p. 79). Advocates for problem-based learning design responded vehemently to Kirschner et al's claims, refuting their characterization of problem- or project-based learning as instruction with minimal guidance (Hmelo-Silver, Duncan & Chinn, 2007; Schmidt, Loyens, van Gog & Paas, 2007). In response, Duhn (2007) argued that

> nowhere in the article do [Kirschner, Sweller and Clark] make any reference to what it is that a teacher might be seeking to teach and students undertaking to learn. Implicit in their presentation is the assumption that their claims about how best to teach and learn are universally applicable, irrespective of what is being taught to whom or why. (p. 109)

However, critical pedagogues might argue that such assumptions are just as much a reflection of an epistemology that favors continued possession of knowledge as truth known only to the most

senior and most expert member of the learning community - the teacher. Such an epistemology does not make space for the collaborative nature of inquiry learning, in which students construct knowledge alongside their teacher-mentor, with the appropriately scaffolded (and not minimal) guidance.

Inquiry learning models stress the importance of providing an appropriate amount of guidance, which is dependent upon many factors, such as the content in question, or the learners' aptitude and prior knowledge. For example, when considered alongside the research literature addressed above, the work being done to support inquiry learning by organizations such as these indicates substantial understanding of and support for inquiry learning models as effective instruction. What follows next is a discussion of one particular model for inquiry learning and a rationale for its connection to the theories and literature discussed thus far.

Guided Inquiry Design Framework. Guided inquiry, the instructional model used in this particular study, is a specific approach that seeks to equip students with the tools to engage in deep, sustained learning experiences driven by their own questions, interests and pursuits for greater knowledge. Kuhlthau, Maniotes and Caspari (2007, 2012) developed their specific model of Guided Inquiry Design as a framework for teachers and librarians who want to implement inquiry-based learning in their curriculum, specifically within pre-existing research assignments. The authors explain that in order for teachers to implement guided inquiry, the classroom must "be transformed into a collaborative culture around learning" (2012, p. 1).

The Guided Inquiry Design (Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari, 2012) process has eight phases, moving the student from an "open" position that is meant to stimulate their curiosity, through phases to "explore" and "identify" their inquiries, and to the ultimate phases in which

they “share” and “evaluate” their own learning and purposefully communicating of that learning to a relevant audience (see Table 1).

Table 1: Guided Inquiry Design, Phase Descriptions

GID Phase	**Description** (*adapted from Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari, 2007, 2012*)
1. Open	invitation to inquiry, open minds, stimulate curiosity
2. Immerse	build background knowledge, connect to content, discover interesting ideas
3. Explore	explore interesting ideas, look around, dip in
4. Identify	pause and ponder, identify inquiry question, decide direction
5. Gather	gather important information, go broad, go deep
6. Create	reflect on learning, go beyond facts to make meaning, create to communicate
7. Share	learn from each other, share learning, tell your story
8. Evaluate	evaluate achievement of learning goals, reflect on content, reflect on process

While there is much more to consider in implementing a Guided Inquiry approach to student learning and research, one of the most significant elements in considering the process as outlined above is that the students are not expected to truly know their selected topic until halfway through the process. They only make decisions about their project's direction in response to their inquiry question in Phase 4 after having spent a great deal of time reading, searching and exploring about the potential topic first. This contrasts with what is still common practice in high school classrooms when it comes to research papers and projects. Maniotes and Kuhltahu (2014) refer to this as TRS, or Traditional Research Syndrome, as the “traditional research assignment” for teachers who are “unaware of the inquiry process” (p. 9). In this practice, students are given the topic, the question, the specific resources to use in constructing the research-based report, and the standard format in which to present it (Donham, 2014; Maniotes & Kuhlthau, 2014).

Unlike the Buck Institute of Education's project-based learning model described above, where the teachers construct the driving question that student inquiry seeks to answer, students in the Guided Inquiry Design model are encouraged to develop their own question for inquiry, provided with appropriate, scaffolded assistance by the classroom teacher and librarian team. The distinction may seem subtle, but it is really quite significant. When learners are given the time to explore their interests and to read deeply about their subject, they learn how to construct an inquiry question and a subsequent research plan that aligns much more faithfully with constructivists' understanding of experiential and discovery learning. And, when learners are given the support they need to research the topics most interesting and personally relevant to themselves and their communities, I contend they are more likely to engage in work that speaks to a critical constructivist approach to learning. Why? Because when given the opportunities to engage in learning that demands they critically interrogate the words and the world around them (Freire, 2000), when given the critical literacy skills and critical constructivist thinking with which to do so, and when given the space, autonomy, and voice to do it, students exercise their power with inquiry addressing the inequities they witness and experience (Hynds, 1997; Kincheloe, 2005).

Given such distinctions, Jane (the librarian, co-instructor) and I selected Guided Inquiry Design as the model for use in the course under investigation, even though the framework doesn't explicitly require students' inquiries be grounded in critical perspectives. In addition to examining the broader concept of inquiry learning, this study seeks to examine the implementation of this particular model as it relates to, and perhaps encourages, students' critical literacy development in this specific classroom community whose work is primarily focused on critical issues.

Research on Classrooms as Communities of Practice

The communal aspect of inquiry learning and Guided Inquiry Design demands an investigation of the course in which this type of teaching and learning is being conducted. For the purposes of this study, I selected the theory of communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) as the lens through which I examine the classroom culture and interactions specific to this course. Communities of practice came from an application in business, as an understanding that working environments would benefit from establishing the workplace as a social and collaborative engagement in which individuals learned with and from each other, rather than learn in isolation and as individuals. Omidvar and Kislov (2013) describe communities of practice as being "the primary loci of learning, which is seen as a collective, relational, and social process," and they explain that:

> it is the relational network, rather than 'before' and 'after' states of individual minds, that is key to understanding learning; people learn through co-participation in the shared practices of the "lived-in" world; knowledge production is inseparable from the situated, contextual, social engagement with these practices; and learning is a process of identity formation, that is, becoming a different person, rather than primarily the acquisition of knowledge products. (pp. 266-267)

The construct of communities of practice tends to be most associated with Lave and Wenger's *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (1991). This text presents organizations as social learning systems that are characterized by three elements: joint enterprise, mutuality, and shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998, 2000). Wenger explains that "communities of practice grow out of a convergent interplay of competence and experience that involves mutual engagement. They offer an opportunity to negotiate competence through an

experience of direct participation" (2000, p. 229). In other words, communities of practice are spaces in which all participants benefit from social interaction and subsequent relationships between expert and novice members. This relates to the earlier discussion of the sociocultural nature of constructivism, as Vygotsky's ZPD theory also recognizes the significance of the novice learner's proximity to the expert learner, the scaffolded interaction between the two, and then the gradual release of responsibility to the novice learner as being mutually beneficial to all community members. This expert-novice dynamic speaks to Kirschner et al's (2006) critique of inquiry learning as offering only minimal guidance, demonstrating the need to progress along a continuum toward autonomous inquiry instead.

There is precedent to suggest Lave and Wenger's communities of practice theory can be applied to student learning communities, and therefore will be applied to the classroom context for this study. For example, in a study of high school music programs, Countryman (2009) applies the theory of communities of practice to the dynamic established in such performance-based courses (courses where learners worked together to produce a product for public consumption and evaluation, such as a band or chorus concert), as opposed to other academic courses in which student work remains an individual and private pursuit. She notes that the Lave and Wenger model can be used to understand why, in many cases, students experienced "opportunities to exercise personal musical agency in community and had a more personally transformative set of experiences" than they would find in their academic courses (p. 107). Countryman concludes her study with a list of implications for music education that look very much like the recommendations for implementing a critical pedagogy, one that seeks to empower students by sharing power, authority, decision-making and curricular control with them.

An example of using this sociocultural tradition of Vygotsky's ZPD and Lave and Wenger's communities of practice model can be found in Morcom and Cumming-Potvin (2010) case study of bullying enacted in one particular classroom. Upon implementing an intervention and by focusing on the social interactions happening between student and teacher members of the classroom community, the authors theorized that "students developed new shared understandings about the social responsibility to redress an imbalance of power and became proactive in preventing bullying because there was a focus on the social practices in the classroom" (p. 178). As legitimate, empowered members of the community, students engaged in social interactions that assisted their development of leadership, listening, communicating and problem-solving skills.

Levine's (2010) essay about social studies classrooms as communities of practice demonstrates the correlation between a collaborative learning community and critical constructivism, or critical literacy. He explains that in a classroom grounded in this particular model,

> teachers guide students into having experiences and gaining repeated practice to develop critical thinking skills, empathy, and the ability to consider and talk about controversial issues. Students experience their time in school as modeling the kinds of collaboration, compromise, and thoughtful decision-making about social engagement that get things done in the world. The aim of such communities is not to socialize students into any specific political beliefs, but to give citizens the tools with which to think for themselves about the social world, and to decide when and how they seek to change it. (p. 144)

Levine's work demonstrates both theoretical traditions of critical constructivism and communities of practice, the first being accomplished through the implementation of the second,

in order to accomplish what he explains as being the potential purpose of social studies classrooms: to "become the crucible within which students learn the power and joy of having a voice, having agency, and being able to change the world in which they find themselves" (p. 156). Such a purpose can be applied here, in this particular study. Students are invited to engage in critical literacy for a critical understanding of the means by which they do and do not learn. They are asked to question the methods by which they are delivered knowledge as truths held by experts, or by which they are invited to discover truths as developing peers.

Summary

The literature reviewed here speaks to the significance of adolescents' developing their critical literacy skills by engaging in inquiry learning experiences of a critical nature, thereby acting as critical constructivists. What remains unclear, at least, in respect to the particular context under examination, is the extent to which the classroom environment affects students' ability to develop and apply those literacies, especially when engaged with work of a social justice nature. As such, this study seeks to investigate when, where and how these concepts intersect and potentially enhance students' skill development. In other words, students who experience inquiry learning in a class designed specifically as a community of practice can potentially improve their critical literacy skills and engage with their learning as critical constructivists.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, I outline this study's methodology, practitioner inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, 2009). Next, I discuss the context for this study and the participants, paying specific attention to my position as a teacher-researcher and the methods by which I ethically account for my subjectivity (Zeni, 1998, 2001). I provide an overview of my data sources as they connect to the study's research questions and purpose; and an explanation of the qualitative process used for data analysis (Cresswell & Poth, 2018; Miles, Huberman & Saldańa, 2014).

Practitioner Inquiry

The methodology for this study was driven primarily by practitioner inquiry, encompassing various types of research conducted by practicing teachers. Cochran-Smith and Lytle frame practitioner inquiry as being theoretically critical (2009), in that it empowers teachers and gives them authority by privileging teachers' voices and valuing their contributions to existing scholarship. This disrupts the traditionally held authority by educational researchers, much like what happens when students engage in similar inquiry learning experiences - practitioner inquiry disrupts the norms of power, authority and establishment held by classroom teachers, school administrators, and the larger institutional school culture. In a review of literature on practitioner inquiry on literacy and social justice, Fecho and Allen (2003) conclude that

> many teachers who take inquiry stances on their practice embrace the concept of classroom as a place where language, literacy, and power intersect in ways that can be enabling or stunting. Accordingly, these teachers seek to understand what it means to teach and research language and literacy in ways that call attention to these political and power issues. (p. 234)

In other words, when teachers engage in practitioner inquiry, their classrooms may also operate as communities of critical inquiry. Their instruction, in addition to their research, provokes students' critical understanding of power, text, and social constructs.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993, 2009) address the need for teacher researchers to engage in "inquiry as stance" as Fecho and Allen do. In their influential work, *Inside / Outside: Teacher Research and Knowledge* (1993), Cochran-Smith and Lytle call for "renegotiation of the boundaries of research and practice and reconfiguration of relationships inside and outside schools and universities, all in the interest of school and social change" (2009, p. vii). Then, in their sequel *Inquiry as Stance: Practitioner Research for the Next Generation* (2009), the authors speak to the critical tradition from which this theory and methodology derives, noting that practitioner inquiry and its various subsets (such as teacher research, participatory action research, and self-study), are all part of a larger design embracing classroom teachers as valued, authoritative knowledge producers alongside those in the academy. In these authors' view, "practitioner research legitimates practitioners' knowledge and emerging theoretical frameworks by interrogating and in many cases helping to dismantle the easy oppositions of science and craft, formal and practical, and theory and practice" (p. 112). Practitioner inquiry complicates and pushes back against such dichotomous thinking.

As the instructor of record for the course in which this study is situated, I toggled between identifying as the teacher and the researcher. While some question the validity of research being done by practitioners and consider it as being unethical or lacking in rigor, other researchers embrace the inclusion of practicing teachers as valued contributors to the ongoing production of knowledge (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, 2009; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004; Shagoury & Power, 2012). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) address critiques of teacher research

as being epistemologically or methodologically unsound (Fenstermacher, 1994; Huberman, 1996), or flawed in its purpose or effectiveness (Kincheloe, 1991; Zeichner, 1994). Cochran-Smith and Lytle address this position as the "ends critique," a suggestion that teacher research is thought to "fit comfortably" within the school or university agenda. Critics view such "benign" teacher research as that which "misunderstands their historical roots and dilutes their necessarily political edge" (1999, p. 20). In other words, teacher researchers cannot problematize or push back against the paradigm in which the study is set, by virtue of their professional roles within the institution under scrutiny. Cochran-Smith and Lytle refute this position and, instead, advocate for a "notion of teacher research as 'risky business,' as part of learning to teach 'against the grain'" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, pp. 20-21). Understanding practitioner inquiry as a politically and pedagogically critical act, the authors maintain that

> the concept of teacher as researcher can interrupt traditional views about the relationships of knowledge and practice and the roles of teachers in educational change, blurring the boundaries between teachers and researchers, knowers and doers, and experts and novices. It can also provide ways to link teaching and curriculum to wider political and social issues. When this happens, teacher research creates dissonance, often calling attention to the constraints of the hierarchical arrangements of schools and universities as well as to the contradictions of imperatives for both excellence and equity. This kind of dissonance is not only inevitable, it is also healthy and necessary for change to occur. (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 22)

Teacher research seeking to "create dissonance" affects change in schools and invites reform, interrogating conditions and challenging practices, none of which can be called "benign." For example, Fecho's (2001) teacher research study questioned the role of threat in a classroom

defined by critical inquiry, meaning those feelings teachers and students often experience resulting from emotionally difficult conversations about power and oppression. While "educators can deny [threat's] existence, shrink from it while turning toward some relative position of safety, or inquire into it and thus transcend the feeling," Fecho explains what most likely happens instead:

> However, most public schools allow no structure for this kind of deliberate and sensitive inquiry to occur. Furthermore, in efforts to reify middle-class values, discourses, and attitudes, schools tend to tolerate some feelings of threat to the exclusion of others. For example, far too many schools prefer not to raise significant questions about race because they make many White stakeholders feel threatened. However, by not raising those questions, educators daily cause many children of color to feel threatened by the silence. Why is the latter tolerable although the former is not?" (p. 31)

Fecho's findings suggest that schools are reluctant to act in ways consistent with theoretical knowledge about critical pedagogy, despite available research. As in Fecho's study, and in the tradition of Cochran-Smith and Lytle's practitioner inquiry, teachers can act as provocateurs and seek to disrupt the rift between research and practice by engaging in their own critical inquiries, in their own classrooms.

Narrative Inquiry

For the data analysis and subsequent writing about the findings from this study, I have chosen to engage in narrative inquiry (Schaafsma & Vinz, 2011). Put simply, narrative is an effective form of inquiry because we tell stories to learn (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006; Fleming, 2016). Schaafsma and Vinz (2011) explain that "narrative has the potential to present complexities and ways of acknowledging the influence of experience and culture on human

learning and knowledge construction" (p. 2). We learn by telling our stories to others, and others learn by hearing, relating to, and acting upon our stories (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2006).

The conventions of narrative speak to the process, and resulting product, of analyzing data in order to answer specific research questions. Riessman (2008) explains that "narratives invite us as listeners, readers, and viewers to enter the perspective of the narrator" (p. 9). In other words, when researchers choose to tell about their studies in narrative ways and by using narrative conventions, they invite the readers of their work to enter into their perspective. In the case of practitioner inquiry, that means the teacher researcher is inviting her readers into seeing the study, the participants, and the ways in which the data is presented in the findings as she does, from her multiple positions. Given that teacher research is difficult to implement, pairing it with narrative inquiry may allow readers to gain a clearer understanding of what it means to toggle back and forth from the roles of instructor and researcher as well as provide some insight for readers to see the classroom and the student participants from the teacher's perspective and not only from that of the visiting researcher who most likely doesn't enjoy the same level of access to the space or intimacy with the participants.

Brock (2011) speaks to what can be challenges to writing about research in narrative ways. In terms of the "theory-story interplay," Brock suggests that "sometimes it doesn't even make sense to see theory and story as separate entities; rather, the text is born as a single creature, exhaling tales, while harboring steely concepts in its teeth or in the marrow of its bones" (p. 44). The traditional discourse of university-level research demands a more precise dictation of consequential understanding of one's data and emerging themes than what might be presented in the theory-story interplay described here. In other words, reporting the story as understood through a theoretical lens can be difficult to do, if not done with such artistic merit as

Brock does here in this very description. Brock also explains that, “like many narrative researchers, I grapple with the question of where I fit into someone else’s story, where I let myself become visible, and where I’d better let myself fade out” (p. 45). This may be another reason researchers are reluctant to engage in narrative inquiry. Given the unique position teacher researchers find themselves in when recording and then reporting their data, approaching their studies through a stance of narrative inquiry might be more effective as they try to understand and account for their positionality in their studies.

However, narrative inquiry can be a fitting tool when it comes to the researcher’s need to consider one’s own positionality as it relates to the study. In discussing her narrative treatment of her research participants, Dickson (2011) claims that “making space for these stories is a way to explore my own subjectivity and make sense of my process of constructing knowledge about these women for myself and my readers” (p. 85). Regardless of the methodology, all researchers must contend with their own subjectivity as it could affect the study, and in Dickson’s case she acknowledges that storying her participants' and her own perspectives and experiences allows her to carefully consider the ways in which she may be understanding, and perhaps even interfering with, her research.

Another issue to contend with when approaching data analysis and writing from a narrative perspective is to represent the data in just and honest ways that consider the ramification of memory and identity, both during the events being storied and when they are retold in a different context and for potentially different purposes. Riessman (2008) explains that:

> There is, of course, a complicated relationship between narrative, time and memory for we revise and edit the remembered past to square with our identities in the present. In a dynamic way then, narrative constitutes past experience at the same time as it provides

> ways for individuals to make sense of the past. And stories must always be considered in context, for storytelling occurs at a historical moment with its circulating discourses and power relations. (p. 8)

The teacher researcher must be careful to honor the context in which the stories she tells are set, as well as speak openly and honestly about how her representations of the study and its participants are affected by the ways she understood them in real time and understands them now during analysis.

In this study, I use vignettes to engage in narrative inquiry and to do just that: to make sense of my understanding of the Scholars' perspectives and experiences as I seek to understand them through theory and analysis. I distinguish a data-driven vignette from the more everyday use of anecdote. According to Ely, Vinz, Downing and Anzul (2006), vignettes are

> narrative investigations that carry within them an interpretation of the person, experience,
>
> or situation that the writer describes…. [W]hile anecdotes tend to be written representations of a meaningful event, a vignette restructures the complex dimension of its subject for the purposes of capturing, in a brief portrayal, what has been learned over a period of time (p. 70).

The inclusion of these brief portrayals to open each main section of the findings chapter allows me to invite the reader into representations of the data that parallel my understanding of themes as both the instructor and as the teacher. The deliberate construction of these narratives also allows me to speak to patterns emerging from multiple and intersecting data points, in ways that ideally make the participants feel more real to the reader.

Context of the Study

East Valley High was a school context that valued (or purported to value) students' experiences with inquiry learning in the curriculum and classroom instruction. I chose critical literacies and classroom spaces designed to support such experiences as the focus of this study in light of that commitment. East Valley was a small, suburban school in upstate New York with a K-12 population of less than 2,000. The K-12 district's student population was predominantly white (approximately 90%); fewer than 10% of students identified as black or African-American, as Hispanic or Latino, as Asian or native Hawaiian, as multiracial, or as American Indian or native Alaskan. Fewer than 15% of students were considered to be economically disadvantaged, identified as having disabilities, or as being limited English proficient.

Investigating a high-achieving school. East Valley High enjoyed a prestigious reputation in the area, and according to several national surveys, it was consistently ranked as one of the best, or highest-performing, schools in the county and state ("US News," 2016). The community demonstrated loyalty to the neighborhoods and schools; many students were third-generation residents of the district, and faculty spoke of having the children and grandchildren of those they taught in their early career. When I was asked where I taught, my response immediately would elicit "Oh, that's a great school!" However, my understanding of this school context is much more complicated, and I typically felt uncomfortable with such a generalizing statement. For example, as a critical pedagogue I often questioned what such a statement suggested about the knowledge, attitude or experience of the questioner. I wondered if such an evaluation was based upon having lived or gone to school there, from having attended school sporting events or from their knowledge of the school's award-winning music program. Or, rather, I suspected the label "great school" merely worked as code for "White," "middle-class"

and “suburban.” Given my own experience as an insider to the school community, I would find it difficult to reconcile what I knew about the school with what those on the outside assumed.

While the school’s reputation in the local community should be considered critically, another explanation of the district’s culture could be understood through the Board of Education’s goals for the 2015-2016 school year, which spoke to fostering a culture in which teaching and learning were to be defined by innovative, inquiry-based experiences. For example, the goals stated that students of the East Valley Central School District would learn in schools that develop self-motivated learners, that they would engage in work that was designed to stimulate students’ curiosity, and most significantly, that they would be engaged in inquiry-based learning that encourages “collaboration, risk-taking, and critical thinking” (“Board Goals,” 2016).

These goals reflected a change in leadership in the district's new superintendent and in new members of the Board of Education, and they spoke in direct opposition to the longstanding district culture (as represented in prior Board of Education’s district goal statements) that routinely embraced a testing- and score-driven measurement of excellence, as defined by district-wide performance on standardized assessments. The school’s ranking, reputation, and history of achievement, especially as presented in goals representing a district-wide pedagogical shift, are worth noting given that this particular study sought to interrogate the teaching and learning within a course specifically designed according to an inquiry-based learning approach. As indicated in the new goals, such instructional strategy would be a reflection of the shift toward inquiry learning and away from previous, more traditional instructional models. Such a change in the school culture made East Valley an appropriate context for this particular study.

The course under study: the Senior Scholar Research Seminar. The study centered around a new course for the 2015-2016 school year for 12th-grade students, entitled Senior Seminar. This course was proposed, designed and implemented by our library-media specialist, Ms. Jane Miller, and myself, a mid-career high school English teacher. At this point of the context description, I will switch pronoun use and refer to what "we" instructors were doing in "our" class to reflect the collaborative nature of this course and our dual.

The course design and structure were different from traditional classes in our school that meet for 41-minute periods, five days a week, face to face. Instead, this course was designed to meet in a hybrid classroom space, using both online and face-to-face interaction to facilitate learning. We used Google Classroom for multiple purposes: to deliver content, facilitate student conversation, assign and assess student work, and engage students with media. We also met with the students in a real-time seminar once a week, before school from about 6:45am until 7:35am. Additionally, students were expected to spend time in the library as their schedules allowed, such as during study hall or lunch periods, engaging with each other informally and collaborating to complete their work. The course appeared on students' schedules as a 12th period class, meaning that it met outside the regular 11-period school day. Student performance was assessed using a Pass/Fail grade designation rather than the standard A-F, and upon successful completion of the course, the students earned 1 credit hour.

There already existed some courses identified by this 12th period designation, such as the music department's percussion ensemble class that met once a week during the after-school instructional period or the select choirs that met one evening a week. Senior Seminar's hybrid design, however, was unique in the school. This course also represented an addition to my teaching load; typically, teachers in this school teach 5 sections of 2-3 "preps" (type of courses).

In addition to this pilot course, I taught three sections of English 11, one section of AP English, and Journalism. As my collaborator, Jane assisted in managing the class in addition to her regular duties as the library-media specialist. We did not receive any extra-curricular stipend for instructing this course.

The course was designed as a hybrid course upon the suggestion of the school's superintendent, when we first proposed the idea to our building and district administration. Given the small size of our student body and teaching staff, the intention was to make the class available to students regardless of their already full schedules. Students are frequently closed out of classes because of scheduling conflicts, as the school can offer only one section of most advanced or elective courses. The primary intention was to offer a class that students could take around and despite their already full schedule.

The course was organized into two segments corresponding with the first and second semester (as outlined in Appendix A). During the first semester, the Scholars (as we instructors dubbed them, to reflect the work they did as being an honor and a challenge distinct from their other coursework) were engaged in work similar to an introductory education course, studying theories of learning and motivation. They reflected upon their own identities as learners, and they looked critically at their past experiences in doing research for school assignments, namely their role in making decisions about research topics, process, final products and evaluation. The students completed assignments that asked them to practice different methods of finding and engaging with resources of various forms, exercising multiple literacies (information literacy, new literacy, multimodal literacy, critical literacy). Students engaged with texts that provoked them to think about themselves, their school community, and their world with a critical eye, noting convergence between their personal interests and critical issues of social justice. For

example, students read and analyzed written texts and video (such as student-written spoken word poems and TEDtalks) about the inclusion or exclusion of gay activists in high school curriculum, about civil rights, and about race, representation and the media. They read and responded to writings by activist scholars Paolo Freire, bell hooks, and James Baldwin, among others. Students collaborated to produce multimodal texts for the school audience, ones that asked their peers to consider these issues. In so doing, the Scholars collectively engaged in the first phases of Guided Inquiry Design, the instructional framework used to design the coursework (specifically "Open," "Immerse" and "Explore"), fostering in themselves, and each other, an inquiry stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009).

In the second semester of the course, Scholars proposed and pursued an independent inquiry project (IIP) of their own design. In accordance with the next phases of Guided Inquiry ("Identify," "Gather," "Create" and "Share"), this process was modeled from the discourse of university academic conferences. Students responded to a call and prepared proposals for their study. After conferencing and engaging in revision with Jane and me, Scholars conducted their research. They prepared an annotated bibliography, drafted a paper, and then planned and rehearsed a multimedia presentation. Ultimately, they published and presented their work at a class-constructed symposium open to faculty, students, family and community members, called the Senior Scholar Symposium, held at a nearby university at the end of May, 2016.

Participants

As this was a pilot course, I recruited students to the class by making presentations to junior-year social studies classes during the spring of 2015. I needed to be sure all junior-year students learned about and were invited to register for the course, as the course was a pilot and therefore not included in the course catalog during the initial registration period. Administrators

suggested I make brief presentations in social studies rather than my own English department colleagues' classes, as the bulk of scheduling visits had already interrupted their instruction in previous weeks. During the presentations, I outlined the format and purpose of the class, and I reviewed sample topics of study and types of assignments. Additional students might have been recruited by different means; it is worth noting that several of the students in the class are also involved in the school's book club and therefore had established, working relationships with Jane, the book club's advisor.

Nine students enrolled in the Senior Seminar course for the 2015-2016 year (initially ten registered, but one could not complete the course past the first 15 weeks). In my experience at East Valley High, students identify themselves - and are identified by others - according to their academic position in the school (e.g., Are they in the honors courses or not? Or, in their words, are they "smart" or "dumb"?). Consequently, it was important to Jane and me that we created a class open to students of varying academic abilities and experiences. The students who enrolled did have varied academic backgrounds; while one student was ranked 3rd in the senior class, several of them ranked somewhere in the middle, and at least three of them had failed a class at some point in their high school career.

I had hoped for a group numbering between 10-15, one that would represent the larger socioeconomic and ethnic makeup of the student body, thereby potentially recreating similar social conditions to those found in the school at large. However, it did not work out that way. Two of the nine enrolled students were male, several identified as homosexual, bisexual or asexual, two identified as being from ethnic minority groups, and two students identified as having disabilities. It was initially unclear to me how the students identified in terms of socio-economic status, but by the end of the study I ascertained they represented a variety of income-

levels and housing. I had hoped that the students would come from different academic experiences, that they wouldn't all be only academically high-achieving. In that respect, the class make-up did meet my expectations. Recruiting students to enroll in the class proved challenging despite being given these opportunities to promote it to students, as I was on leave during this time (to complete my year of residency for this degree) and not a regular teaching presence in the building, nor had I any pre-established relationships with students from the junior class. I suspect that if I had been a more visible member of the faculty during the previous year, more students might have signed up to take the course.

Research participants for this study were recruited from the nine students in this class. This occurred in the 2016 spring semester as they developed their independent inquiry projects. Students were invited to learn about the study, and recruited to participate, in a presentation during class, and Mrs. Miller sought initial consent from the students and their parents / legal guardians by sending the consent forms home. Because Mrs. Miller was responsible for seeking consent and for conducting interviews with those who agreed to participate, I remained unaware as to which students consented until after the school year was over and grades had been recorded. The recruitment was planned for this time of year so they could schedule interviews near the end of the spring semester. By that time, student participants had completed the majority of the course and were finishing their independent inquiry projects. This positioned the students at a point when they could be more reflective about their experiences in the course. Given the small number of enrolled students and in recognition that not all students might participate, the study was designed to include additional sources and types of data for triangulation in order to fully address the research questions and corroborate findings to ensure the analysis would be

trustworthy (Miles, Huberman & Saldańa, 2014). As such, the majority of the data came from artifacts from regularly occurring teaching and learning activities.

Researcher's Background and Role

I have been teaching secondary English for nineteen years, the past twelve at East Valley High School. Before that I taught for seven years at a partially suburban / partially rural school district about forty-five minutes away from here, similar in size to East Valley High. I am a White, 44-year old woman, thereby identifying as middle-aged and simultaneously cast in the largest demographic for K-12 teachers. I am also a graduate of East Valley High, a member of the class of 1993, giving me a unique position as both a teacher and a researcher in this context, as I am continuously reminded of my experiences as a student and my subsequent thoughts and feelings. Being so positioned allows me to relate to, and perhaps empathize with, my students in ways researchers from outside the context might not, thereby potentially granting me more access to and insight into their experiences. However, this same position may also act as a constraint in that it may mislead me to make assumptions about my participants' perspectives and experiences, mistaking my own for theirs.

As both the instructor of record for the Senior Seminar course and the primary investigator, I was positioned in a way that demanded particular attention to my personal history and subjectivity in all aspects of the study. Practitioner inquiry as a methodology acknowledges the affordances and constraints of being both the university researcher and the classroom teacher (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, 2009: Shagoury & Power, 2012). As the teacher of this pilot course, I was intimately involved with the class, its purpose, its greater relationship to the school culture, faculty and student body, and the students themselves. Even though the class was offered in a primarily digital space, I was able to see and interact with my students almost daily in the

library and in other common spaces in the high school. I interacted with them more frequently about issues outside of class, in ways that worked to further establish our teacher-student relationships. My membership in our classroom and school community provided me with rich data sources and greater opportunities to engage with participants and build trust, as compared with researchers from outside the school context whose visits may be sparsely scheduled and may be more limited in the nurturing of researcher-participant relationships.

However, this also meant I needed to account for my subjectivity and manage my biases. First and foremost, the recruitment of student participants was designed as ethically as possible, foregrounding concerns about potential coercion of student participation in the study. Jane was responsible for securing the participation of student volunteers, specifically so that their participation status would remain undisclosed to me until after I had submitted their grades for the course. Doing so allowed students' status as participants to remain anonymous and give them the assurance that their grades would not be affected in any way by their willingness or reluctance to participate. Also, both of us were very clear with students that, had they elected to participate in the study, the perspectives they expressed in interviews would not be shared with me until after the school year was over and grades are submitted, again to assure them that their perspectives would in no way affect their grades for the course. This also meant that students could change their mind at any time and withdraw their participation.

Most significantly, I had to account for the potential drawbacks of being “too close” to my student and colleague participants, which presented a risk to the validity of the data I collected and analyzed. In addition to the inclusion of multiple forms of data for triangulation, the nature of such data sources allowed me to regularly document my own perspectives and interrogate my position. For example, as I audio recorded my thoughts and responses to

typically-occurring teaching events in class, or when I synthesized my notes in weekly memos, I had to carefully consider my observations in relation to my position of power and authority in the class and to my own values and personal or professional beliefs (Zeni, 1998). I wrote regular memos to review with Jane, another insider, and I met regularly to discuss my project and data collection with my dissertation advisor, an outsider, which enabled me to manage this study as ethically as possible. As stated before, practitioner inquiry demands that the teacher-research engage in such introspection and analysis of one's own teaching, but the reality of doing so can be quite complicated. In the next section, I discuss the significance of having a teacher and research collaborator to assist me in such introspection during data collection.

Librarian's Background and Role

As the librarian, Jane acted as a second instructor for the Scholars course. She designated space in the library for the Scholars community to use and she was present in that space throughout the day to help them manage their time and work. Jane assisted me in the planning of the course and in managing online activities when necessary, and she was there to assist the Scholars when I could not (primarily because I was upstairs in my classroom, teaching my regular courses). While I did the assignment design, management and assessment, I collaborated with Jane on all aspects of implementing the course as we envisioned it.

At the time of the study Jane had been the librarian at East Valley High for seventeen years, having worked in another small high school library for two years and a local college library for seven before that. Jane's official title was "librarian / media specialist," and while she preferred being known as the school's librarian, her role in the building was multifaceted. In addition to her librarian duties, Jane assisted students and staff with their needs regarding technology. She acted as the department leader for the district's librarians across four buildings,

and she routinely worked with the director of technology concerning the means by which students and staff engaged with media and technology, whether that be through traditional print texts, websites, databases, school computers or or personal devices.

Jane played another role as well, collaborating with me for this study. Given the complexity of my overlapping roles, as well as the need for someone other than myself to conduct the student interviews, I named Jane as a co-investigator in my application for IRB approval (approved May, 2015). She completed her CITI training and conducted student interviews using the protocol I designed, and she kept those data secure and did not share them with me until after the school year was complete. However, Jane's role did not end at interview implementation. I have implicated Jane as a co-researcher in this study, despite its status as partial fulfillment for my doctoral (and thereby quite individual) degree requirements. While the degree as a whole and the dissertation in part represent my individual ability to engage in the academy and produce scholarship worthy of contributing to existing discourse, I have chosen to acknowledge that, in the tradition of teacher research, my study's design and my subjectivity depended upon the assistance of others, and therefore I named Jane as my co-researcher. In other words, my stance as a practitioner inquirer allowed me to recognize the necessity of collaborating with colleagues to implement the study, as well as to identify and manage my biases. Talking with Jane on a regular basis about my thoughts, feelings, and observations gave me the opportunity to interrogate my subjectivity and thereby account for it in my weekly memos (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). Such conversation allowed me to also compare my observations about the course to her own. Of course, Jane had a personal stake in the course as well, in that she too wished for it to succeed - but as professionals who respect and advocate for sound research methods (such was, after all, the content of the focus course

itself), it was our responsibility to address, describe and push back upon our responses to what unfolded in this study's story. Adopting inquiry as a stance demanded that we do so (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). As a methodology, practitioner inquiry allows us to examine our practice critically and share the significance of those results with other teachers and teacher educators. In her *Guide to Ethical Issues in Action Research*, Zeni's (1998) ethical questions specific to "insider" research ask:

- Will this study evaluate your own effectiveness or a method to which you are committed?
- Will your findings be confirmed by observers who do not share your assumptions?
- How will you protect yourself from the temptation to see what you hope to see?

I was committed to exploring guided inquiry as an instructional model, but this study was about more than just my perspective on a particular method of teaching. In order to understand the complexities of implementing a model, I had to be willing to look at, and include, data that spoke to occurrences that were unsuccessful or inaccurate, that demonstrated the messiness of trying something new – just as practitioner inquiry demands. While I could not entirely shed my privilege and perspective concerning the course under study (and would not want to), I could acknowledge and manage it through the inclusion of multiple types of data in order to compare and corroborate the perspectives of those students and faculty involved in, or witness to, the program.

Data Sources

This study was designed to elicit the most suitable data in answering questions concerning the use of inquiry learning in this particular context: the Senior Seminar course and

the East Valley High School learning community. In this section, I outline the data sources as they informed each of my research questions.

RQ1: What characterizes a classroom learning community designed to support adolescents' experiences with inquiry learning? In order to answer this question, I needed to collect data that spoke to what I observed students experiencing in the classroom community spaces, both online and in real time. While I engaged in the classroom as the instructor, I also needed to engage simultaneously in what DeWalt and DeWalt (2011) call a moderate level of participant observation, in which the researcher both observes activities and participates almost fully in them. Since I could not record traditional field notes while I was teaching, I had to resort to other means to capture my observations of student interaction and response during class. For example, I took notes as best I could during class time and when working in the Scholars' designated library workspace, and I audio recorded notes to myself immediately afterward or in quick conversations with Jane. As the year progressed, I found that the most useful and efficient way for me to keep audio memos for myself was to reflect on my commute home at the end of each day, speaking those reflections into my voice recorder. From these observations, I was able to generate field notes in the form of typed, weekly memos, which then became part of the data set. Given the challenges facing practitioner researchers in managing data while engaged in the responsibilities of full-time teaching, I used audio recording to capture my thoughts in between weekly memo writing. I also used photography and video recording to document and assist my memory recall of and recreation of such typically-occurring teaching events. These recordings and photographs were certainly more manageable while juggling the demands of teaching than the traditionally written forms of data collection borrowed from anthropology, such as traditional field notes. Taking photos and video of what the students did in this class served additional

instructional purposes, in that they could be used by students as methods of self-assessment, and as models for future iterations of the course itself.

RQ2: In what ways do adolescents practice critical literacies when engaged with inquiry learning? In order to answer this question, I needed data that spoke to what students were doing in the classroom context under investigation. A primary source of data were artifacts related to typically-occurring teaching and learning activities, the materials I would routinely save from one year to the next to inform my planning and instruction. These included my lesson plans and anecdotal records (scribbled notes), course materials and handouts, students' discussion board postings, course assignments and, perhaps most significantly, samples or copies of student work from both semesters. For example, students' response posts and discussion threads after having read bell hooks' article "Representing the Poor," or an article about the Disney Princess effect on children's gender norms, were intended to yield data likely to speak to the employment of critical literacies. Follow-up assignments and related inquiry learning experiences, as well as the collaborative and inquisitive nature of the classroom space, in both its physical and digital manifestations, also address the first research question as well.

Until I was aware of which students had consented to participate in the study and which had not, I carefully maintained copies of all students' work. Once I knew who was participating, I could then sift out those data from non-consenting students and keep them separate; however, given that all nine enrolled students chose to participate in the study, this was not a concern. An additional source of data were the semi-structured interviews with student participants concerning individual perspectives about, and experiences with, inquiry learning and critical literacy. Interview protocols for students are included in Appendices A and B.

RQ3: What multiple roles do teachers navigate when working with adolescents developing critical literacies through inquiry learning? To answer this question, I needed data that documented the moves both Jane and I made throughout the year, in terms of planning, instruction, assessment, and self-reflection. This was documented in data that again reflected the daily instructional moves Jane and I made during regular teaching and learning activities. The quick voice recordings, notes written in lesson plans and instructional materials, and the weekly memos became a place to document data that spoke to this third question. In addition to these sources, the most useful data came from the communication exchanged I shared with Jane as we engaged with this question during our planning, instruction and assessment for the course. Our conversations, emails, and text messages became the spaces we mined for reflection when reviewing the Scholars' progress and for discussing our own moves and intentions. These data sources helped me to construct the weekly memos, where I engaged in the reflective writing necessary to document the ways we both navigated our roles in this project.

Data Analysis

The study was designed to allow a range of data to be captured for reflection and analysis and to encourage me as a practitioner inquirer to engage in a mix of inductive coding and deductive, theory-driven coding concurrent with data collection, because insights from the process would guide the Senior Scholar program implementation and ongoing revision (Kolb, 2012; Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). My concurrent analysis began with reviewing my field notes as the primary source for initial coding. As the spring semester continued, I was able to watch for connections across other data sources, such as teaching materials and photographed or videotaped teaching and learning events from seminar. Student work was another rich data source from which I constructed initial codes.

It was difficult to predict what such inductive coding would look like at this stage, however, given the nature of the tasks students were assigned, I suspected I would derive codes having to do with students' varied responses to the work. For example, I expected the interview data and online discussion forms to yield codes related to students' comfort levels with the assigned research tasks, as they explained in their written assignments and in our seminar discussions. In other words, I initially coded data according to descriptive terms such as "stress," "independence," "freedom," and "responsibility," as the students used such language in their work. I also expected to derive coding that reflected students' emotional responses to the assignments and the readings they encounter, again based upon the words used from their perspectives, such as "frustration," "anger," "despair," or "excitement." Some coding reflected more literal, descriptive identification of the class elements, such as "online discussion," "seminar talk," "workspace conduct," "assignment revision" or "time management."

Given the theoretical perspectives with which this study is framed, I used language related to critical literacy, critical constructivism and communities of practice to establish deductive codes that reflect these perspectives (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013). For example, in an effort to answer the second research question regarding students' developing critical literacies, and in reflection of the terms being used instructionally, I used descriptive codes such as "privilege," "power," "marginalization," "oppression," and "social justice." Deductive coding as determined by the first research question and the communities of practice theoretical framework suggested I used codes (or student language related to) such as "apprenticeship," "collaboration," "expert-novice relationships," "legitimate peripheral participation," and "principles of mutual enhancement." Given that I expected to see language related to these terms, as they are defined by the theories framing this study and as they are

presented in instructional materials, I also needed to continually acknowledge and manage my biases throughout the analysis process. I accounted for this by producing and reviewing memos with my advisor as I engaged in the analytical process.

After all the data had been collected and samples of the data had been reviewed for initial coding, I reread the data to generate pattern codes; I chunked together groups of codes according to categories or themes, causes and explanations, relationships among people, and theoretical constructs (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013). I created code lists and mapped coding patterns by using qualitative analysis software, but I also engaged in physically sorting the data codes using more traditional teaching tools and methods such as highlighters, sticky notes, and whiteboards. I found that my pattern codes reflected the main concepts of "critical literacy," "inquiry learning" and "community" found in my research questions. For example, I found that the initial coding based upon participants' emotional responses and research experiences yielded a conceptual pattern code such as "critical awakening" or "critical literacy development." Also, I found that students' responses in interviews and in assignments helped to establish patterns concerning "collaboration" or "safe spaces." And, while I worked hard to be wary of setting codes officially before data collection was finished, being aware of patterns in the data as I collected them did assist me in focusing my scope and further refining the student interview protocol that was used at the very end of the study. This process for coding data also informed, and was informed by, the narrative inquiry approach. Such recursiveness in the analysis identified those themes I selected for representation in the vignettes, and in writing those narratives I was better able to categorize and then organize the data in the three findings sections.

Summary

In this chapter, I reviewed the methodology for this qualitative study, practitioner inquiry, and I explained the connection between practitioner inquiry and narrative inquiry as it informed my choices for the study's design. I presented an overview of the study's context and the participants, and I then addressed the role both Jane and I played as co-instructors and as co-researchers. I provided a review of the data sources as they were used in connection with each research question, and I discussed the qualitative methods I used for data coding and analysis. In the next chapter I report the findings from that process, organized into three sections according to the major themes that emerged from this process, and each of these three sections is introduced with a vignette that demonstrates understanding the findings through a narrative approach.

Chapter Four: Findings

This chapter presents findings from this practitioner inquiry study investigating the confluence of a guided inquiry instructional design and the development of adolescents' critical literacies in a year-long pilot course for 12th graders. Given the additional theoretical framework informing the study, narrative inquiry, these findings are deliberately organized in two ways: first, in accordance with the chronological design of the pilot course and the intentional sequencing of learning activities and participants' experiences, so as to produce a narrative structure that aligned with the events as they occurred; and second, in reflection of major themes that emerged from the analytical process when reviewing the data, arranged around a selection of narrative vignettes that most clearly represent those themes and the research questions they address. Each vignette is constructed from data collected and documented in my weekly memos, my email and text communications with Jane, the Scholars' talk in seminar and their written reflections, and my photos of the Scholars at work. The purpose of introducing each part of the findings chapter with these narratives is to reinforce the theoretical understanding that, as a teacher researcher engaged in practitioner inquiry, my practice is informed by an understanding of my experiences as being storied. I engaged in an analysis of the data that, as Shaafsma and Vinz explain, examines "the day-to-day work of teaching and learning and in gaining multiple perspectives on the way we and others experience education" (2011, p. 12). An additional purpose to beginning each section of the findings with these vignettes is to illustrate key themes identified in the analysis process. This process was entirely recursive; as I examined and then selected data to inform the construction of these vignettes, I would further engage in the analysis and synthesis of these data to identify and organize the resulting findings.

Part 1, *The Senior Scholars Learning Community*, begins with a story of the student participants' social use of the classroom space under study, as constructed from data capturing my observations of their behavior, language and feelings in this space and documented in my weekly memos, and as understood through the Community of Practice lens. This narrative and the findings that follow assist in answering the first research question: What characterizes a classroom learning community designed to support adolescents' experiences with inquiry learning? The findings are presented in sequence according to the chronological design of the course, as influenced by the Guided Inquiry Design instructional model, and the students' subsequent experiences and assignments. Part 2, *Developing Adolescents' Critical Literacies*, addresses the second research question: In what ways do adolescents practice critical literacies when engaged with inquiry learning? This section is introduced with a story about the weekly seminar component of the course drawing on data that reflects students' understanding of their research experiences as responses to critical issues and the ways in which they read, respond to and construct texts accordingly. These findings are organized around students' assignments that engaged their critical literacies and that invited them to consider lines of inquiry for their individual research projects that would be critical in nature. Part 3, *The Senior Scholar Symposium As A Confluence of Inquiry Learning and Critical Literacies*, beings with a narrative that recreates both the Scholars' and my feelings on the day of formal research presentations at the symposium, the culmination of several months' worth of their individual inquiry work and our collective work as a community in the Senior Seminar Course. These findings examine the ways in which the Scholars' individual inquiry projects represent various manifestations within a critical matrix of the potential confluence of inquiry learning and critical literacies, and therefore address both the first and second research question. As such these findings are organized

according to themes derived from the Scholars' individual inquiry projects, and they conclude by focusing on three Scholars and their projects in particular to highlight examples of when this confluence occurred most consistently. The third research question, What multiple roles do teachers navigate when working with adolescents developing critical literacies through inquiry learning?, is addressed across all three parts of this chapter as the findings implicate the roles Jane and I played throughout the year and in the work we did that helped answer the first and second research questions.

The Senior Scholars Learning Community

On a mid-October day, the bell rings to signal the end of third period and the passing time before 4th period begins. Moments later, I arrive at the library and make my way past Jane's front circulation counter to the glass-enclosed room behind it called "the clubhouse." This is my scheduled planning period, and a handful of the Scholars have study halls during this time, so it's an ideal time to check in with at least part of the group. As I push through the door, Joanna squeezes by me in a hurry, a quick "Hey Ms. Fleming, I'll be right back!" before she rushes out of the library to sign out from study hall so she can spend her time in the clubhouse.

I drop my stuff on one of the tables and then move back out to the circulation counter to wait for Jane so we can briefly check with each other before sitting down with the Scholars. While I wait, Aidan glides in, waves hi, moves over to the white board and moves the magnet to indicate a "SHUSH LEVEL" request of green, indicating that "talking, music, and moderate collaboration is allowed." He silently peruses a stack of books on the side counter and makes his choice, sits down, and begins to spread out all his other materials. As he does so, Emily comes bounding through the door and starts talking animatedly before stopping herself and looking up

at the noise marker on the whiteboard. Aidan shakes his head and motions for her to continue, saying "no, no, it's fine," and then leans back to settle in and listen to her story.

Emily just finishes her quick recap of the drama which ensued in her last class, when Joanna comes racing back in with her coffee, a bagel, and Sam in tow. Sam flops down on the floor and props herself up against the wall with her backpack, her feet up against the back of a chair nearby. Joanna shouts out, "start over!" and moves aside for John to push into the now quickly over-crowding space. Emily says, "ok fine, but quickly because I know John wants to get some work done this period."

Aidan says, "Yeah, me too, and I could use some help if anyone wants to work together."

John looks around the rooms and says, "Thanks, guys." Emily, ever the enthusiast, strikes a wide stance, sports her big smile and throws her trademark double-thumbs up. The gossip continues, but ten minutes later the noise is at a minimum. Scholars are reading, writing whispering, and listening to music through their earbuds. Someone has magically produced a bag of goldfish (Sam has already spilled some on the floor next to her, I notice) and the teapot is gurgling. At some point the SHUSH LEVEL has been moved to indicate level yellow: "quiet talking and partner collaboration but no music unless in headphones."

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The narrative above represents a typical scenario found in the Scholars' classroom over the course of the school year. In this narrative I recreate, as informed by my data, the look and feeling of that space during an average school day when the Scholars were visiting the space during their free time. I constructed this vignette to establish a sense of context for the study as well as describe the sense of community experienced by all of us - the Scholars, Jane and myself - in this space.

Designing Scholarly Spaces: The Physical and Digital Classroom. In this section, I review findings in accordance with the deliberate design of the spaces in which the pilot course took place, namely the physical classroom space located in the high school library, the online digital space of the class housed in a Google Classroom platform, and the less tangible but distinctly discernible social space existing in between and throughout these contexts. In this section I describe the nature of these spaces and the conditions by which they were constructed and mediated by student participants as well as by Jane and myself, and I examine them through a community of practice lens (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

When we first designed the course, Jane and I imagined that the class would have to take place in the library as opposed to a regular classroom, or more specifically, my classroom. This decision was informed by our understanding of the guided inquiry design framework as specifically calling for students to have extended amounts of time for immersion and exploration of their sources. Proximity to the spaces where Scholars could find those sources, then, was a priority. The course was also designed to emulate the experience of a college-level seminar, and in order to create that feeling of sophistication we made deliberate decisions to place the course in the library so that the space would reinforce the concepts we focused on - to present students with a visual reminder of what it means to be constantly engaged with one's learning from an inquiry stance. What better way to do that than to be in a space surrounded by books and tools for inquiry?

The library at East Valley High school is on the first floor, not necessarily in the center of the building but it does sit at the juncture of the two major wings. One wing is the location of the main offices, the auditorium and gymnasium, and the classrooms for music, art, and technology. The other wing is a more traditionally designed academic wing: three floors of standard

classrooms. It should be noted that, at the time of this study, the academic wing had not had any renovations since the school first opened in 1961. Consequently the classrooms were looking pretty old and dated. The library got a redesign sixteen years ago, but Jane will tell you that it did not do much to encourage the library to become the "hub" of learning culture for the school, despite a more modern color scheme.

When users enter the library through the main doors, the room opens up into a large space with 12 work tables to the right, and a large, long curved counter and desk to the left. This counter is where students and staff would come to sign out books or request help. The design of this help station, however, given its size and its position between the student work space and Jane's office, served more typically as a divider, a barrier between the students Karen was there to help and her own professional space. Directly behind this long counter sits an office, and the wall to this room was mostly windows - so someone at the desk could see into that space. This is pretty common in school libraries, in which the design actively separates the librarian and staff from the students or patrons in the library main room. one which Jane is looking to disrupt in the near future as our district prepares for the next capital project (to be discussed at greater length in the implications of this study in chapter 5).

Jane assigned this space to the Scholars for their work. She moved her office furniture and her instructional materials and resources to the long closet behind the office - thereby physically removing herself from the front of the library and the traditional resource "help" station. That might seem as if she was figuratively extracting herself from the space and by extension from her role as library media specialist / mla helper, but in reality Jane spends very little time in this space, except for when she's eating lunch. By moving her office, Jane allowed the Scholars to take ownership of this room and make it their own. In the room were two work

tables (one terribly wobbly), a soft chair pulled in from the outer main library room, half a dozen uncomfortable metal chairs on wheels from the computer lab connected to the main library room, one desk chair and small filing cabinet. The room was standard and plain in color and shape, but as the year progressed all available wall space was claimed by the Scholars and bore evidence of their community: their to-do lists, pictures from early assignments, and a noteboard for communicating with each other.

In this room was a long counter and a sink, with cabinets above. Jane typically used this space to keep her own tea kettle, and we quickly gave over space in the cabinets for the Scholars to bring in and store their own snacks - lots of tea, boxes of ramen, and various crackers. In other words, as the course got going in the fall semester, the Scholars quickly claimed this space as their own, using it as makeshift lockers and communal space for snacking between classes, checking in about homework for courses and connecting socially. This space was open to Scholars at any time during the school day, and eventually as the year progressed toward the culminating showcase, for significant amounts of time after the regular school day as well. Over time, they used the space at all times of day, including - during times they had "free periods," or unstructured time in their class schedules. This space became known as the "Clubhouse," named so by the Scholars themselves a few weeks into the school year as they worked to make this space feel like a place where they could belong, or something welcoming "like home" as I expressed to Jane (weekly memo, 10/2/2015). A handful of the Scholars who spent the most time in the Clubhouse and the library in general would come in before 1st period and often left their things there for long portions of the day. Then they would come back and use materials such as textbooks and stacks of resources they had been collecting during their self-assigned "Scholars time." While the room itself is generous in size for an individual's office, it quickly became

cramped and cluttered with nine teenagers coming and going and treating all surfaces as their locker (Memo, 10/2/2015).

In order for the Scholars to learn through apprenticeship, a key construct in the communities of practice literature (Lave & Wenger, 1991), they would need to function and grow into their roles as budding researchers, or inquirers, in a space that valued them as contributing members of that community. In other words, the design and use of the space had to disrupt the traditional hierarchy found in typical classrooms, where attention is directed at the front of the room to the teacher, the holder of all knowledge. Instead, the space had to offer physical opportunities for its community members to shift along a continuum of roles, ones where they could sit alongside one another as collaborators, or pair with Jane or me when conferencing as mentor and apprentice. As such, managing this space became more than just hosting a room in which the Scholars could keep their materials. This became a physical location they entered multiple times a day, where they sought each other out to connect and converse in between classes, where they met for lunch, where they went instead of their study halls, where they worked together to complete their assigned tasks at tables and sitting on counters, and where they socialized. The Scholars would use available wall and whiteboard space to leave notes for one another: messages of encouragement, questions for reflection and inside jokes.

Another component of the the class space that contributed to the formation of a learning community was how the class functioned as a hybrid course and was housed partially in an online, asynchronous format. The 12th period model was adopted upon recommendation of the district superintendent, who was concerned that trying to fit a course like this into the regular bell schedule would prevent students from taking it should they already have full classes. Since the class would not meet daily in the same space as traditional classes do, we relied upon Google

Classroom to house the digital component of the class, giving students a space in which to engage in online conversation, reading, and writing asynchronously.

Managing this digital space on the Google Classroom platform was especially challenging for multiple reasons. First, instructing this course, even in collaboration with Jane as a co-instructor, meant an additional assignment to my teaching load, which meant it was akin to adding a 6th class and 4th prep to my schedule. This aspect, above all other conditions in facilitating this course and research project, was the most challenging to manage, and I discuss this at greater length in the limitations section in chapter 5. It is worth mentioning here, however, because the added instructional load coupled with the unique design of the course across these multiple spaces was challenging to the management of the course. However, despite the challenges it presented to me in my ability to attend to both my regular teaching assignment and this project, it was beneficial to the establishment of community amongst the Scholars. Engaging in the digital space did allow for the collation of teaching materials, student assignments, and discussion in a way that would naturally allow for the collation and archiving of student work and teaching artifacts as part of the data set later on.

Designing this course to meet in this hybrid, online space allowed for greater flexibility in some regards when it came to fitting the class into the Scholars' and our schedules, but it also meant that there wasn't as much consistency in seeing students in a face-to-face setting. This often became an impediment to establishing and maintaining effective lines of communication with the entire group. For example, directions for tasks were given using the Google Classroom stream feature for announcements and assignments. However, not seeing the students daily inhibited us from engaging in follow-up discussion concerning those directions, causing what Jane called "a major frustration when they don't have the chance to ask us questions for

clarification" (Email, 10/18/15). Given the need to create a space in which we, as mentors, could work alongside and assist the student Scholars, as mentees, or more aptly as apprentices (Lave & Wenger, 1991), in the development of their knowledge and skills as budding researchers, such lack of consistency and interruptions to timely communication was challenging, and it hindered our work with some Scholars more than others. For example, Karin had less flexibility in her daily schedule and was less likely to be in the clubhouse's physical spaces at times when I could also be there, which meant I had to rely more on digital modes of communication to connect and conference with her. However, while our schedules did not align well, Karin was able to see Jane at other points during their day and so she came to rely more upon Jane for face-to-face interaction and support. On the other hand, I was more likely to see Joanna, Aidan, and Emily around 4th-5th period each day, given the similarities in our schedules, and so I would run point with them during this time while Jane was otherwise occupied.

We still met face to face as a full group at least once a week, as best we could around the school's bell schedule. At first we tried to rotate a weekly meeting into the preexisting activity period reserved for after-school help, extra-curricular meetings, and detention. However, we quickly found that it was near impossible to get all the Scholars together on the same day because they were so varied in their commitments to other activities. Instead, about a month into the school year we settled on hosting breakfast seminars on Thursday morning. No one was particularly happy about having to get to school at 6:45am, as evidenced by Sam's exclamation, "Wait, you said 6:45 am IN THE MORNING?" (Memo, 10/16/2015), but the promise of food provided by Jane and me placated the more reluctant Scholars. These morning seminars were when we would have the luxury of face-to-face conversations used to follow up on discussion

threads happening in the digital space or to address interactions happening in the physical and subsequent social spaces of the clubhouse.

In addition to establishing the physical and digital spaces of the pilot class, Jane and I found ourselves needing to at least account for, if not consciously manage, what I refer to as the "social space" of the class. The nine Scholars came to this experience already knowing each other, having been part of the same small graduating class for, in some cases, nearly twelve years. Some of them were part of the same social networks, while others floated on the periphery of such pre-established friendships. Some Scholars, like Emily, moved into the district more recently and therefore didn't have the same history with the other students or the East Valley culture at large. And in at least one case that we know of, Scholars dated (and then broke up with) each other over the course of the year under study. Jane and I were aware of some of these factors at the beginning of the year, while others became known to us as the year developed. We found ourselves having to keep track of these factors (primarily through our shared written record in emails and text messages), as they affected the ways in which Scholars interacted with one another in the physical and digital spaces for the course. For example, during the spring semester Jane and I needed to manage the fact that Sam and Emily were dating and that their relationship was affecting the ways in which they interacted with each other and with the other Scholars in the clubhouse. For example, in addition to them using the space to support each other in their project work and to attend to their usual assignments for other classes, there often existed a tension, awkwardness or sudden silencing of conversation when members entered or exited the room (email, April 3, 2016). Jane and I communicated about this regularly from our different positions in the building throughout the day so that we could attend to the Scholars' individually as needed, especially if it meant helping to mediate an emotional exchange in the clubhouse. And

while these experiences weren't represented in their final presentations at the end-of-year symposium, the Scholars' project completion and progress were as much a reflection of these social exchanges and growth as their learning in the more formalized, digital and physical classroom spaces.

Another aspect critical to managing the digital space was establishing norms for online discourse amongst the Scholars and instructors. In our first few face-to-face, full-group seminars, Jane and I led a discussion about expectations for engaging in the online discussions and requirements for posting. We welcomed students' input at this point so that we could establish an understanding that this space was also theirs to manage, and that they would need to be part of the decision-making about setting and meeting those expectations. Jane and I had to establish norms concerning the Scholars' participation in discussion threads, concerning their frequency of responding, expectations for the types of language and tone they and we would find appropriate for a more formalized, academic conversation, and the ways in which the Scholars would craft responses directed at other individuals. The Scholars took to the setting of these expectations well; they engaged in conversations about what would be appropriate forms of talk, questioning, disagreeing and pushing back against each others' responses in person and in writing in the digital space. Jane and I found that when the Scholars interacted in the Google Classroom space, they took great care to manage their language in ways that were sensitive to each other, knowing that they often came to their perspectives from different experiences, backgrounds and opinions. For example, in many instances John would respond to another Scholar's observation by indicating that he respectfully disagreed, but that he appreciated being able to hear more about someone else's position. Or before Joanna would pose a question in response to Aidan's statement, she would first compliment him on his ability to clearly articulate his position.

Jane and I found these interactions both affirming of the Scholars' desire to be sensitive to one another's' needs, but we also wondered about how these written discourses might differ from how we heard them speak to one another when in person, in our face-to-face seminars, or in small groups in the clubhouse space. Were they just as attentive to each other's feelings and experiences when Jane and I weren't around, or were these careful linguistic moves for our benefit? In their videos and interviews, several Scholars addressed this point and reinforced their own belief that they had established a respectful rapport among themselves. For example, Emily explains that she felt that "it was a great experience, actually, to see what other people thought, to say what you think, but then not be attacked for it. And a lot of classrooms aren't going to have that respect, and that safe feeling that you feel" (Interview, 6/9/16). Jane and I would probe in our conversations with individual Scholars and with small groups to see if others felt similarly able to speak freely and to ask uncomfortable questions in both the physical and digital spaces. With some few exceptions, Scholars generally reported feeling welcomed into the course dialog even during moments of disagreement and/or confusion.

Managing Learning Experiences: Lessons in Autoethnography, Information Literacy and the Guided Inquiry Process. In this section of the chapter, I review findings related to the deliberately constructed learning experiences student participants had as members of this learning community. These findings are organized primarily according to a set of assignments as they occurred chronologically over the course of the school year, and in a deliberate sequence meant to scaffold skill development using the Guided Inquiry Design framework as indicated in Table 1 (Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari, 2012). For example, the first learning experiences designed to introduce Scholars to learning theories and autoethnography were intended to help them engage in the first phases of the GID framework: 1) Open and 2)

Immerse. The second set of learning experiences, facilitated by Jane as what she referred to as biblioquests, were exercises in the development of Scholars' information literacies, aligned with the GID phases of 3) Explore, 4) Identify, and 5) Gather. The third set of learning experiences addressed in this section reflect the final three phases: 6) Create, 7) Share, and 8) Evaluate.

The first major assignment of the course was for students to complete the construction of an autoethnographic text that depicted their understanding of their own learner identities (Course document, 10/19/15). Jane and I felt that in order for them to be able to approach a research project from an inquiry stance (as would be necessary in the second semester), they must first reflect upon their personal experiences in school and as a learner. We began the course with a series of shorter reading and writing assignments that asked students to reconsider their understanding of teaching and learning in our school. For example, the first set of readings, videos, and writing prompts focused on the concept of "play" and "playfulness" as being an important part of the school learning environment. Scholars watched the RSA animate video of Sir Ken Robinson's TED Talk "Changing Education Paradigms," KQED's link to Tony Wagner's TED Talk about "Play, Passion and Purpose," and an NPR story about the Adventure Playground, a unique outdoor play space designed to encourage children's exploration and risk-taking. In addition to several weeks of work around concepts related to learning theories of motivation and play, Scholars also engaged in an activity designed to provoke their thinking about personality typing (for example, we used an online Myers-Briggs-like test, called 16Personalities.com, to help determine their personality type and discussed how that might be related to their learner identity). This assignment's intention was to help Scholars consider the language they might use in describing their own personalities as they understood them, when considering the influence of their school environment and personal academic histories.

Table 2: Introductory Discussions

Topic	**Discussion question, prompt**	**Related readings, texts, videos**
Concept of Play	"What place does PLAY have in the high school classroom?"	RSA Animate video, "Changing Education Paradigms" by Sir Ken Robinson "When Educators Make Space for Play and Passion, Students Develop Purpose" Mindshift, KQED "Play Hard, Live Free: Where Wild Play Still Rules" Westervelt, NPR-Ed
Motivation	"What inspires you to learn? What motivates you to get started and to keep going?"	"Introduction: The Puzzling Puzzle of Harry Harlow and Edward Deci" from *Drive* by Daniel Pink RSA Animate / Whiteboard Magic video, "Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us" by Daniel Pink "How to Motivate Students to Work Harder" by Toch and Headen, *The Atlantic*
Personalities	"How does your personality type (from the test results) reflect your learning experiences?"	Tagxedo Word Cloud "Free Personality Test, Type" - 16Personalities.com
Autoethnography	"What is autoethnography? Use the space here to co-construct your understanding of this term, drawing from your research and the readings linked here."	"What is Ethnography?" by Brian Hoey "Autoethnography: An Overview" by Carolyn Ellis, Tony Adams & Arthur Bochner, at Forum: Qualitative Social Research "What Is Autoethnography? Making Sense of Individual Experience" by Tessa Muncey "Starting with Self: Teaching Autoethnograpny to Foster Critically Caring Literacies" by Patrick Camangian

Learning Theories	"How do these resources help you theorize about your project, to frame your experiences?"	Learning-theories.com "Learning Theory and Instructional Design / Technology" by Gayla Keesee, wiki "Bandura - Social Learning Theory" by Saul McLeod "Learning Theories / Constructivist Theories" wikibook "But Do They Care?: Pintrich on Motivation and Learning" Michael Fosmire

These first conversations seemed to be quite cathartic for the Scholars. The question I posed to the group was, "*What place does play have in the high school classroom?*" In the first online discussion forum, they discussed the lack of room in high school for activity or learning that could be described as playful, or something they personally enjoyed and wanted to do. There was a lot of frustration in their responses, and they alluded to or sometimes specifically addressed their own circumstances with selecting and scheduling classes. Several spoke of how much they disliked school and the ways it works: Joanna explained that "the drive to achieve perfection through standardized testing has driven many students, myself and my friends, to hate school." She then cited Freire's critique of banking methods and pushes back:

> we are forced to take tedious notes and learn to accept what we are given and not question the world - or in this case, the teacher… I have been forced to quiet myself and accept what the teacher's interpretation of a book is or a certain idea about history because I have to write that answer down on paper when tested so the teachers can receive suburb (*sic*) remarks about how much they brainwashed students to accept what the teachers need them to - even if we do not agree on the opinion. [English] and this class, senior scholars, are finally classes I am taking in high school that force me to question the world- something that is not taught in regular classes. They are teaching me

> to think independently and do work on my own. They are teaching me to turn in work with my own ideas expressed on it instead of feeding back what the teacher wants to hear. They are teaching me to have fun, play, and be creative. They are teaching me to have a voice. (Discussion post, 9/16/15)

Joanna's peers responded mostly in agreement and shared similar perspectives in their own posts, commiserating about how unpleasant they felt school to be . Emily, John, Karin, and Aidan discussed the pressure students face to maintain grades . Karin spoke with such sadness about how disappointed she was to have to choose between taking the arts and creative writing classes she wanted and classes she needed to fulfill graduation requirements. I knew that she had to give up taking the her desired, college-level English course in order to fit a graduation-required course, and she was very upset about it. Liz explained her thoughts that play was in itself a form of learning, allowing us to learn how to work with, and listen to, other people. And Aidan put it quite clearly:

> Play encourages education through enjoyment… when children play they make mistakes,
>
> get hurt, and learn from it. With a curriculum so centered around grades, students are not willing to make a bold move or pursue what they enjoy and so they do not truly learn. (Discussion post, 9/17/15)

John's post was also thoughtful and provoked responses from others. He too pushed back on the idea of school conditioning students to find "one answer to issues and that [they] as people have to abide by it," that school "as a whole has driven [them] to one solution, not to the problem or specific question." He discussed the amount of "strong supervision" in place in the high school

classroom, which I would interpret as meaning oversight or control, and he critiqued how little opportunity he had to engage with work that was self-motivated:

> very rarely are we able to do work for our core classes that is about us rather than what we study. I can recall very few times where I was able to write a paper on how the book affected me or changed me or gave me some idea or thought… we are told exactly what to study for the majority of our classes, sometimes being punished with lower grades for thinking outside the box. (Discussion post, 9/15/15)

John explained to Jane and me at a later point in the year that the reason he took this class was because he was really excited about being able to decide for himself what he would study, and he looked forward to completing a research project of his own choosing (Memo, 1/29/16). The excerpt from his online reflection demonstrates the frustration John felt at not having any control over his learning or being forced to learn in only one way, and other Scholars echoes this sentiment in their responses online.

The next online discussion asked students to consider their understanding of "motivation." I asked them: "*What motivates you to work, to play, to learn, to create? When have you been highly motivated in school, and when haven't you? What control do you have over motivation? And finally, how does this relate to your decision and commitment to taking this class?*" Jane and I scripted these questions together with the purpose of asking the Scholars to reflect upon the differences between being intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to achieve or perform. We wanted them to consider how their previous experiences might have affected their decision to take this particular class with us.

In responding to these questions, the Scholars overwhelmingly complained about not having interest in the content of their study, or not finding significance in the work they were

asked to complete. They spoke about resenting how much time needed to be spent on "busy work" (Sam, Karin) and how that really hurt their motivation to learn or achieve in those classes. Several conceded to knowing that sometimes there was work they just had to do, whether or not they personally enjoyed it (Joanna, John). Some Scholars spoke about having issues with procrastination and self-direction (Karin, Sam), and expressed seeing this class as a way to practice better self-management skills. Statements like Sam suggesting that "my commitment to taking this class is that I believe it will help me grow as a student, make me more independent, and make me more responsible," are probably more reflective of it being the beginning of the school year. Sam was likely experiencing that honeymoon time period for school, in which many of us (myself included) set lofty goals and declare, "this is the year I'm going to _____!" Sam's response was general and vague on detail, which most likely speaks to quick completion, lack of careful thought or application to specific and personal experiences, and/or lack of thorough reading of the texts. In comparison, Joanna, John, Karin, Aidan and Emily were more introspective, and Kristen wrote a very personal, confessional post speaking to her troubled history with success in school. Rose and Liz never responded (Liz joined the class late, and Rose fell behind and chose to leave this task incomplete).

In general, the Scholars didn't seem to resent doing work for their classes, although they spoke of resenting certain kinds of work (which is certainly not a new perspective to me - I hear it from students all the time). None of them suggested they shouldn't have homework, or that they shouldn't have to do big assignments. But the ideas of "interest" and "meaning" are clear, and they correlate with the Scholars' level of motivation and their desire to have more control over how they complete that work. In reference to the work assigned for his English class, John explained he was never motivated to read *The Crucible* because he really hated the experience of

reading it for class, and it "led to Sparknotes and a 68 on the test at the end of the quarter for it. Motivation is hard when you don't have interest." Such feelings about their personal experiences became more than just the stories Scholars would trade in when discussing their past classes, assignments and teachers. Instead, the Scholars began to do what Jane and I had hoped - to view and consider these experiences through a more analytical lens, as a result of the tasks set before them in this class.

The 16Personalities assignments gave Scholars a chance to assess their personality traits, and our questioning asked them to think about those traits as they manifested in learning situations. After completing her 16Personalities quiz assignment, Joanna spoke to her experiences in her written reflection. She explained that the quiz indicated that she is "extremely sensitive to stress and worry," and that

> I am constantly experiencing mood swings and wide ranges of emotions depending on my day. I am extremely driven by perfectionism and the need for success- which all describes and drives a turbulent person. I also tend to experience the issues with fluctuating self-esteem. I have issues with confidence and faith in myself and I am often surprised by my own potential. "EDFJ's will often underestimate themselves" and will surprise themselves often by what they can do- according to the personality test results. (Written assignment, 11/19/15)

We all - the Scholars, Jane and I - were struck at how accurate the personality test seemed to be, and this response from Joanna is a clear example. Joanna was indeed a perfectionist and driven to succeed; she routinely earned the award for the highest average in her class, and our colleagues regarded her as one of our most ambitious and talented students. To hear her speak to her own issues with lacking confidence and self-esteem, and to do so frankly in this setting and

in these discussions, spoke to the significance of the assignment and the Scholars' need to engage in careful introspection and analysis.

John's reflection yielded self-awareness that would also be reflected in his later work for the class. John shared that,

> Believe it or not, the big bad football player is sensitive. I have always been sensitive and can get angry very easily at times. When I try to help someone and they are not completely accepting I usually feel disappointed. It also says that I may be too involved in people's lives and push them too hard to try new things or to change it. I had a conversation a while back with a friend and she made me aware of this idea called the Savior Complex. (Written assignment, 10/1/15)

John's willingness to speak to these aspects of his personality demonstrated his willingness to be vulnerable among his peers in the Scholars class, as well as his willingness to divulge such examples with Jane and me. We knew John as a kind, thoughtful and meditative young person, a hard working student, and a spirited member of the student body. John's own analysis of his personality test reinforced our initial understanding of him. As the year progressed and we got to know more about John and his professional ambitions - that he wanted to enter into the seminary - such reflections seemed almost prophetic, and they certainly spoke to the manner in which he progressed in his inquiry (as discussed in the third part of this chapter).

After Scholars had engaged in what we hoped was sufficient thought and conversation about learning theories and educational spaces, Jane and I presented the group with their first major assignment: the construction of an autoethnographic text that addressed their understanding of themselves and specifically their identity as a learner. The purpose of this assignment, as Jane and I intended, was to ask the Scholars to practice applying a learning theory as an analytical

lens to their understanding of their own past experiences and perspectives as they related to their understanding of school, teaching and learning. What follows is the initial prompt for the assignment:

> "The AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHY is a text you produce that represents an analysis of your "self" (AUTO) as understood through the lense of your "culture" (ETHNO). Since you are capable of being many different selves and you exist in many different cultural spaces, we are going to limit this project to one specific version of you: ***your identity as a learner.*** In other words, how are you the learner that you are, as a direct or indirect result of the cultural (learning) experiences you've had? Or, think of it another way: how have your experiences - in school, as part of a family, in other organizations - given you the personality you have and made you the kind of learner you are?" (Course document, posted 10/19/15)

By the time students encountered this prompt, they had already read a few texts about the genre of autoethnography, and they had constructed a group document online ("What is Autoethnography") in which they sought to define the term for themselves. John defined autoethnography as "creating theories through personal ideas supported by experience, observation and beliefs. Through these observations, experiences and beliefs, the writer is able to establish an idea through their testimony and create validity with support from their personal ideas and similar ideas of others." Aidan's explanation of autoethnography was, perhaps, more creative:

> An autobiography allows the author to bleed onto paper and say "Look at my life! Look at my pain!" An ethnography allows the researcher to declare "Society is holding a blade." But an autoethnography allows the artist to bleed onto parchment and scream

> "Look at what Society has done to me! Look at my suffering! This is why Society turned its knife on me!" An autoethnography is personal justification. It allows the artist to bare their soul to the reader and explain, using science, why they felt/feel the way they feel. Emotions are the reason that they are so powerful, because emotions motivate. If the artist is passionate about the research then they will be able to have more intense research and an overall more moving piece (Online document post, 10/8/15)

When presented with the prompt, students were given additional readings about autoethnography and learning theories (as presented in Table 2), as well as samples of student writing excerpted from Camangian's (2010) article about using autoethnographies with his students. We discussed these articles and models in seminar, and the scholars had a few weeks to brainstorm, confer, and construct. Then they produced a text in accordance with the guidelines, included an accompanying rationale when necessary, and completed a self-evaluation.

Students' responses to the readings about learning theories, especially those related to student motivation, were varied. John explained that "students, especially in high school, will have a better motivation if they are treated like adults, with adult responsibility," and that "students will be motivated when teachers act on an adult level with students." He clarified this by referring to his own experiences in school:

> any teachers that I have had that have treated me in a child-like way fall in my ineffective category. Teachers should never put themselves above their students because it often comes across as tyranny for the class. People may think that this would give students too much power and would create a loss of control within the class. What I have personally seen is the opposite happen in a classroom where the teacher treats their students like adults. Students often gain tremendous respect for the teacher and are more

> willing to work for that teacher. This also comes with challenging students in a way other than difficult assignments. Students need to be made aware of the general challenge that they have control of their life and the direction they want to take it. Treating a student like an adult also means showing them that there are benefits to working hard and consequences to not working hard. Incorporating life lessons into the curriculum of high school is very crucial and when students can truly see that habits, good and bad, apply to the outside world, there is a gain of motivation. (Discussion post, 10/7/15)

Joanna's response reflected her experience and frustration with learning in forms resembling a behaviorist approach. She explained that while she understood

> for some, conditioning is a wonderful form of learning that provides reward for their hard work, for others such as me, it removes creativity and interest in learning. Learning simply becomes a battle to get a good grade and the effect in the end is limited. I am one of those people. Although to some degree I am conditioned (meaning I do work for a good grade, to some degree, an unfortunate side effect of taking honors classes), this is not the most accurate way to depict my learning and who I truly am. I do not want things to go in one ear and out the other, I want to use what I learn and remember it. I want to learn for more than just a 100 average. I enjoy learning, but conditioning, the form of teaching that is in most classes, has ruined some parts of learning for me. It makes school uninteresting and, simply, a hassle. (Written assignment, 11/19/15)

After this work in unpacking what learning theories could offer and what an autoethnography was, the students were invited to begin the process of constructing their own. Jane and I presented them with the formal prompt (Appendix B) and then spent time discussing the project

with the students in our weekly seminar and in informal clubhouse conversations. The driving question for the assignment was, “How have I become the learner that I am now?” In the prompt document, Jane and I outlined the purpose of the project as being the need “to communicate to ourselves and to one another what we understand about ourselves as learners - who we are, and how we’ve become the learners we are now. In creating such a project, we ask ourselves the difficult questions and take the opportunity to better understand ourselves through serious reflection and analysis, thereby giving us greater ability to grow as learners throughout the rest of the Senior Scholar course.” It is important to mention here that, in this document and in other assignment prompts, Jane and I used the collective personal pronoun “we” in order to communicate to the Scholars that we too are implicated in the work they are doing, and that we would be joining them in completing the work. Jane and I both constructed our own autoethnography that we shared with the group in the same manner as they did. This was intentional, so that we could position ourselves as more than the experts who dictated what to do from a position of authority, but instead as peers working alongside the students and engaged in the same challenging tasks.

We asked that the Scholars’ autoethnographies attend to the following:

It should be “about” the collective experiences that have made you the you/learner you are now. Therefore it should highlight:

- aspects of your personality
- traits and behaviors typical of your learner identity
- details from experiences that have affected you, shaped you
- analysis and careful reflection about this relationship between who you are and what you’ve experienced / where and how you’ve developed

- connection to your future self and spaces as a learner (Course document, 10/19/15)

Table 3: Scholar Autoethnographies

Scholar	Autoethnography text type (photo?)
Joanna	Paper and visual aid "W" A narrative reflection outlining her personal experiences and a constructed, decorated three-dimensional letter "W" that represented an award she consistently received and collaged with other icons and symbols for her intellectual achievements
Aidan	Self-portrait collage & written analysis The colors in his portrait corresponded with the Victorian language of flowers; for each shade he wrote an explanation of that color and corresponding face of his personality and relevant learning experiences
John	Written project, "program of study" John created a course outline, complete with topics, readings and assignments to work as a metaphor for his learning journey
Emily	Poster: word collage & map, and written narrative A diagram of Emily's moves from various schools and states, illustrated using words and symbolic images
Karin	Character bios A series of written sketches outlining characters for a novel that all reflect various aspects of Karin's own personal and school-based experiences, as well as facets of her identity
Rose	Graphic animation via slides A creative overlay of parts of a graphic to make a whole, representing different aspects of her personality making up her larger identity
Liz	Video Liz created a mini auto-documentary that included reflective voice overs and shots of places, events that affected her learner identity, explained her intentional use of production values
Kristen	Cupcakes As a culinary arts student, Kristen baked and fancifully decorated a set of cupcakes with unique designs representing her personal experiences
Sam	(Assignment left incomplete)

Jane	Card catalog A physical model of a card catalog box filled with cards that narrative personal experiences, organized according to Jane's categorization of the vents into topics and themes
Sarah	Research article (Fleming, 2017) My own autoethnography that details my evolution as a teacher of student research assignments, written and published during my graduate experience and study of narrative inquiry

Upon completion and the sharing out of this assignment with us teachers and their peers, the Scholars were asked to do a self-assessment of their work (Appendix C). They were asked a series of questions, posed to them in a Google Classroom assignment. The questions students were asked to respond to are as follows:

1. During this process, did you come to an understanding (or a better understanding, perhaps) of something about yourself that you didn't quite fully know before? If so, what was that? If not, why not?
2. Concerning the personal aspect of many of your presentations, how does this make you feel about us as a community of learners? How, if at all, did this challenge you, and how does this inform your understanding of how community relates to learning?
3. If you could do the project again, what would you do differently?
4. What are you most proud of? (Course document, 11/20/15)

Students spoke generally to a better understanding of themselves as learners in relationship to learning theories or discussions about various learner traits or behaviors. For example, Liz explained that whole she knew she was a "very observant person," she now had a great sense of how her "observant characteristic affect[ed her] learning styles and abilities," and John also spoke about knowing himself as an observer of others and the world around him (cite student assignment). However, the Scholars reserved their enthusiasm for their response to the second

question, where they discussed how this assignment related to their building of a community with each other. They spoke to the personal nature of the project and how having to consider their past experiences in relation to the present identity meant they had to be willing to share personal details with the group. Some Scholars felt more comfortable doing this than others; while Aidan expressed that he thought the presentations "show[ed] how comfortable [they were] sharing and learning from each other," Liz explained that it was challenging for [her] to discuss personal issues," and that she "probably could've made it more personal than it originally was" (written assignment, 12/16/15).

That sense of community could also be seen in the feedback they gave to each other, in a document we posted in the Google Classroom for the Scholars to record their responses to each other's autoethnography projects after viewing each other's video presentations. For example, Joanna told Emily, in reference to the poster diagram she constructed and stories she narrated, "I really enjoyed the interactiveness of your project, it really went over the top in engaging the learning and showing the many different things that have shaped who you are and how you learn." John showed Emily equal appreciation; "I love your analysis of many different things and where your joy of learning truly came from. I think it is really cool about how you can remember so much about your younger life. Your home school experience seems really cool even though it was so long ago."

Near the end of the first semester, after students completed their autoethnographies and as they engaged with readings and in discussion for critical literacies (to be discussed at length in chapter 5), Jane and I introduced the first set of assignments meant to acquaint the Scholars with the research process as they would engage with for the purposes of this course. The first step here was to ask students to engage in a series of tasks that would help both them and us to

understand their previous experiences with conducting research, as well as to identify any gaps that existed in their knowledge. This was the point of instruction in which Jane took the lead, as she created a set of assignments for the Scholars we referred to as "biblioquests," that asked the students to practice their research skills in using the library's resources available to them. There were five biblioquest assignments the Scholars completed and submitted written responses to in the Google Classroom.

Table 4: Biblioquest Assignments

Biblioquest	**Title**	**Topics / Driving Question**
1	Using the Online Catalog	Searching using the online catalog, manipulating Google searches How will this activity change how you approach Internet searching?
2	Wikipedia	Using the Wikipedia reference list found in entries, evaluating its reliability What are footnotes in the entry for, and how can you make use of them to further your inquiry?
3	Google Like an Expert	How does the Deep Web function and affect your internet searching? Effective and efficient ways to use databases (go beyond the first three entries, sort by text/source type)
4	Website Evaluation	Spotting "evaluating checkpoints" How do you know if these sites are reputable and offering credible, verifiable information?
5	Critical Thinking Evaluation Sheet	Bias, point of view, accuracy Is this article an "Echo Chamber" for you (meaning it reinforces what you already believe) or does it have new information that helps you think critically? What is the overriding message communicated by this source?

The first biblioquest included tasks that asked the Scholars to experiment with different ways to search the library online catalog and to manipulate searches using Google. Jane's last question was as follows: "Write a brief reflection of your own experience with research based on this activity. i.e. Are any of these resources new to you? Do you already use these search tools? Did

anything surprise you? Will doing this activity change how you approach Internet searching?" It elicited some reflective responses from the Scholars. Emily explained that she had done this very assignment before in Forensics, so she felt very comfortable with the search features. But the other students suggested they were surprised by how manipulating the search could result in such different numbers and types of sources retrieved. Joanna explained, "I always knew you could use limiters but not to the extent that could limit 71,000,000 results to 6 by only adding a few qualifiers to get exactly what I want. I definitely plan to use this more in the future during my research" (Written assignment, 11/13/15). And Liz said, "A lot of these resources are new to me and I've never used these tools before. I feel like I've been in the dark about researching methods so yes these new tools and resources did surprise me" (Written assignment, 12/16/15).

The second biblioquest asked students to focus on the ways Wikipedia can be a great tool for finding additional sources about a topic using the reference features, hyperlinked text and synonyms, and the footnotes. In general, the Scholars seemed aware of the presence and reliability of the reference list at the bottom of a Wikipedia page, but Jane had to repeatedly indicate the purpose of the footnotes in the text itself, explaining that the link would also pop up when hovering over the footnote number. When asked how students would find other sources outside of Wikipedia, Aidan explained "Wikipedia cites its information and you can then read the information that is put on Wiki straight from the source." Jane's feedback was praiseful here; she responded, "Right - that is the best way to use Wikipedia - they do so much of the compiling work for you! They also provide "External Links" at the bottom of the page. Nice job!" (Written assignment, 12/3/15). So many of our conversations with the kids about effective research had to do with going to the original source, and Aidan was able to articulate this pretty clearly, and early on in the year before he was fully in the throws of reading through his sources. The other

Scholars were all able to answer this question without any trouble (except for Kristen, who didn't complete these assignments), and they didn't seem at all surprised at the idea of following links outside of Wikipedia to get to the "original sources." I took that to mean they had used such a strategy before, perhaps for papers in other classes.

The third biblioquest directed students to first watch a video about "the Deep Web," or those websites unaccessible to search engines. Then, the task asked students to navigate the databases our library subscribes to, directing them to refine their search within different sections of various databases to get to the "portal page" for specific topics. This is something I work with my students on when we are researching a particular topic, and I generally find that just like when they go to Google and do not go past the first page of results, the students don't click beyond the first three examples listed for any type of reference section (on the portal page, each "type" lists the first 3 examples: the use would have to click in the heading to open up the full list, which could have hundreds more). Next Jane's directions asked them to practice opening and then downloading a file to their Google Drive, and then retrieve it again.

After these tasks, Jane asked them to "Write a brief reflection of anything new you learned doing this Biblioquest." Rose explained that she hadn't used the databases in over a year, since the last time she was "required to." Joanna provided her usual textbook response: "I learned that databases do not show up in Google searches and that they are quite easy to access and find very good articles to support your research because they are all verified and educational and from good sources" (written assignment, 12/8/15). Aidan figured out that by downloading an article into his Google chrome/drive, it would provide the citation, which thrilled him: "that is so great! I love it!" (Written assignment, 12/14/15). The others spoke briefly to knowing or

realizing that the databases could give them more specific results than just a general Google search, and they didn't seem too surprised.

Liz's answer, however, was quite surprising:

> Basically I just discovered an entirely new and much easier way to research certain topics and gather information along with citations. Now I know that I can go to the libraries database, find a specific topic, find and download articles related to the topic along with the citations needed. This is a lot easier to do than scroll through google search results and I feel it is also much more reliable. Definitely wish I had used this database a lot more during my high school career. (Written assignment, 12/16/15)

Both Jane and I agreed with Liz; we found it very concerning that Liz had not made successful use of databases at other points in her academic history, until this assignment directed her to do so.

In the fourth biblioquest**,** Jane gave students 3 URL addresses and asked them to evaluate the websites using a chart of "evaluation checkpoints." These checkpoints asked for students to identify and evaluate various characteristics of a given website: the url domain, the website style, sponsorship, purpose, authorship, currency, and references. Despite the websites not having named authors or linked sources, or in some cases having an author whose credentials didn't match the topic written about, that didn't prevent the students from thinking that these sources were acceptable to cite from for academic research. Karen's feedback says repeatedly to consider the purpose of the website, to be wary of being marketed to (such as the blog about mitochondria DNA on the buzzle.com, or the beef industry's conflict of interest in passing out nutrition guidance). Liz picked up on the credential issue: "It's like an English teacher writing an article with biology for its topic. It is important to find articles with up to date information written by

authors with relevant credentials." And John's response about the beef industry website was great:

> This is not an acceptable tool for research. There are positive qualities to the website but it is also a promotion for the beef. This website does not provide "the beef" on beef. It tells of very good things about it, which are probably mostly true, but its lack of resources may throw up a flag for the quality of information. The articles also seem to indicate positives, but give little explanation to the" Why?" for those areas. (Written assignment, 12/11/15)

Joanna was taken in by the beef website. But then, John was fooled by the forensic blog. He explained that "This would be a good source for information, even though references are not provided and it is a .com website, the author is qualified to write on the subject and the information is not out-dated in comparison to the technology being discussed" (Written assignment, 12/8/15). This is concerning too (and several other scholars were duped by this site), and it reinforces my suspicion that many students may assume that as long as there EXISTS an author, and there is science-looking information, that it must be reliable. Students need more practice in general, I think, at evaluating the writer/speaker's credentials and experience, before assuming what they say is legitimate or coming from an expert. In general, the Scholars' responses to this assignment suggested a fairly confused understanding of the multiple ways in which website research can be problematic.

The fifth biblioquest asked the Scholars to read the article, "The SAT is not biased," published in *College Admissions*, 2015. Jane's directions stated:

> All sources, web based or not, should be approached with close reading skills that require you to identify point of view, tone, and bias. So, Biblioquest #5 asks you to read the

> article below and complete a close reading form to help you hone your evaluation skills and to adopt a critical stance when seeking information. (Course document, 12/8/15)

This was followed by a chart organized into three sections: Bias, Point of View, and Accuracy. For each section there were several criteria, and students were asked to provide evidence for each based upon their close reading. In this case, the students were all pretty quick to catch the biased tone of the text. They caught that the author's position could be conflicted given her position in a public affairs firm, and they all found language that was emotional and/or persuasive and potentially biased. Jane praised all of the Scholars' work, but her feedback to Aidan spoke to his already developed critical literacy more than any other: "Great job Aidan - you are very skilled at this type of work - you read with a critical stance and a good understanding of the power of language to manipulate" (Written assignment, 12/15/15)

When the Scholars returned from their December break, Jane and I presented them with the official "call for proposals" - the invitation to engage in the formal, independent inquiry project for the sake of participation and presentation at the Senior Scholar Symposium, to be held in May (Appendix D). This document was modeled after the conference calls I routinely receive from professional academic associations, which I explained to the Scholars in our weekly seminar. The "call" was organized with a title, a description of the conference's theme, proposal guidelines and submission requirements. The conference call was titled "Critical Inquiries for Critical Communities" as a deliberate means to indicate the kind of critical work these Scholars were already doing and (we hoped) would continue. The description of the theme was as follows:

> In discussing Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's idea of critical dialogue, Linda Christensen (2000) explained that "beyond illumination, students must use the tools of critical literacy to dismantle the half-truths, inaccuracies, and lies that strangle their

> conceptions about themselves and others. They must use the tools of critical literacy to expose, to talk back to, to remedy any act of injustice or intolerance that they witness" (p. 55). In keeping with this understanding of what it means to be critical thinkers and researchers, the symposium invites proposals from Scholars using an inquiry stance to interrogate an issue of significance to their learning community, as defined by one's classroom, school, neighborhood and/or culture. Such critical inquiries work in conjunction to drive our education away from the banking system of teaching and learning (Freire, 2000), and instead toward the creation of schools as critical communities, spaces in which learners collaborate in questioning the existing paradigms of knowledge and power. Critical inquirers ask, whose truth matters? and how can we contribute? In so doing, critical inquirers seek to better their communities by engaging in a truly democratic dialog, one nurtured by purposeful and reflection.

The call was written this way to signal to students that these projects were meant to be a way in which they could engage in scholarly research specifically in response to an issue that was important to them, and that was an issue of importance to their school community. The intention was to encourage them to use this project as a means of speaking to, and perhaps even push back against, the paradigms of power as usual in our school community.

What followed was four weeks of nervous and frenzied conversations in the Clubhouse and in weekly seminar, as the Scholars tried to work their way around this particular assignment. As had become typical for the group, Joanna, Aidan and John followed through with the most complete work - in this case, a written response to the call - submitting drafts and revised versions of their proposals after sitting down to conference with both me and Jane, sometimes multiple times. Several other Scholars worked toward completing a finished written proposal, but

struggled with managing their time to do so as thoroughly as the first three did. Both Jane and I conferenced in person several times with Rose, Liz, and Emily, and we reviewed multiple sections of their written drafts. For example, Emily's proposal draft, housed in Google Docs, includes commentary from me in response to her initial assertions, and we discussed them in individual conferences several times in the Clubhouse space. One of my comments in response to Emily's proposal stated:

> Consider your claims, even in this preliminary proposal. Who says this is what a serial killer is? To be taken seriously in academic circle, you have to demonstrate that you already know what you're talking about (even before being accepted to do the research). So the protocol is to cite your references even for seemingly introductory information… (Written assignment, 3/3/16)

This prompted a conversation with Emily, as well as with the Scholars as a whole in that week's seminar, about the ways in which the inquiry process worked as researchers build knowledge and add to a larger, pre-existing conversation. While Emily did not submit a final, polished version of this document, her final project indicated that she took suggestions like this one made in these written online comments, from our individual conferences, and from her Clubhouse conversations with other Scholars quite seriously - as can be evidenced in looking at the evolution from her earliest iteration of her driving question to her final product presented at the symposium.

Once proposals were submitted and reviewed by Jane and/or me, the Scholar in question, the difficult process began - making progress in their actual research. This was the most challenging part for students, and for us as their teachers / mentors / guides, because it was so amorphous in design and intention. Jane and I had to adopt a sit-and-wait approach for the

majority of this part, trusting that the Scholars were doing their part and hoping that they were managing their workload appropriately (note: in most cases, they weren't). Much of our time was spent in informal conversation with the Scholars and with each other, in which we would talk about the challenges facing students who had to suddenly do for themselves what their teachers had always done for them: establish a system and routine for research, manage the materials and process, and devote specific time and space to their work.

One of the ways in which we worked to help students organize their inquiry was to require that they complete an annotated bibliography as they progressed through their research. Based upon prior conversations with my English department colleagues and a working knowledge of the curriculum in earlier grade levels, I was under the impression that the students had been asked to do such an assignment for classes in the past. However, I was mistaken; Jane and I discovered more than halfway through the process that they had not completed such a document before, and we scrambled to provide them with appropriate models.

While some Scholars struggled with this particular task, some made great use of the assignment as a way to organize and sort through all the resources they were finding, like Joanna and Aidan. Joanna produced a 12-page document of over 30 sources, organized in sections according to source type (which she labeled as periodicals, non-periodicals, audio/visual, or websites/e-sources). Joanna's citations were nearly flawless and showed a dedication to learning and adapting to APA style (students up until this point were using MLA format exclusively across the school, even in content areas that were more likely to use a different style at the college level). Her annotations were well-written, produced in first person, and made clear the significance of a source to the trajectory of her inquiry and her overall project. For example, when reviewing her read of a section from a reference text, Joanna explained that "this source

was useful, as it helped me be able to define addiction in a different manner, in the terms of habits and reinforcement, which I can use to explain how the internet and community are reinforcing addictive behaviors" (Written assignment, 3/28/16). In another instance, Joanna used the annotation to reference not only how she would use the information, but as a means to credit the manner in which she found the source in the first place:

> This book was cool to find (thanks Mrs. Miller) because it includes first-hand accounts of an individual's struggle with addiction and the insight of a doctor who spoke about his condition. It spoke about comorbidity of disorders which is something I am referencing in my own claim and it was nice to have an additional different source talking about comorbidity while also discussing the problem in the format of a primary account.

Joanna's acknowledgement of Jane's part in finding this source indicated that she is a thoughtful and polite young person, but it also speaks to the nature of the Scholars' community of practice and its collaborative spirit. The Scholars routinely spoke to seeing each other as their support network, and they were especially fond of calling Jane out as their greatest resource. Aidan would go as far as calling her his "book dealer," in reference to her helping him learn how to search for books using interlibrary loan and then securing texts for his project from college libraries. He was always ecstatic when a large padded envelope arrived in Jane's mail, because chances were that it held a few research texts from nearby universities that he had specifically ordered.

The real mentoring at work could be found in those captured moments in the physical and social spaces, occurring inside the clubhouse and in small informal conversations with just one or two Scholars at a time. It was in these moments that Jane and I were acting as peer support

rather than as experts overseeing novices; we were not hovering, but encouraging (even when this didn't work as well, as with Liz, Rose, and Kristen). Our ability to navigate these difficult roles and responsibilities in order to assist the Scholars in developing autonomy in their research and information literacy skills, became the central focus of this part of the course as they worked to complete their proposals and move into their inquiries.

Facilitating Purposeful Inquiries: Conducting Research for Authentic Audiences and Purposes. In this section, I discuss findings that relate to the Scholars' independent inquiry projects as having purposes they found to be personally meaningful and critically relevant, as well as the significance of creating final projects they would share with real, authentic audiences. As noted in the literature reviewed in chapter 2, the evolution of inquiry learning through multiple forms and theoretical frameworks places an emphasis on the ultimate purpose of the students' inquiries, one that goes beyond the acquisition, retention and regurgitation of knowledge on a one-time written assessment. Rather, models of inquiry learning place importance on students engaging in their inquiries for the express purpose of sharing their newly constructed knowledge with someone else. In other words, students benefit from having a real reason to conduct research and to share that newly constructed knowledge with student peers, members of the school staff and faculty, and the community at large. The "Create" and "Share" phases of the Guided Inquiry Design model depend entirely upon this concept, in that they demand the student consider how to best present their new learning to an authentic audience. Students have to employ their various literacies to plan and create a product or set of texts that will assist them in communicating their learning to an audience that could widely vary in shared knowledge, interest, or experience.

Scholars expressed the greatest amount of pride and excitement about their work for this class in the PSA video interviews they completed for the professional development day (PDD) in January. Jane and I had planned to deliver a workshop about teaching student research assignments using the Guided Inquiry Design framework, and we wanted to share the Scholars' work thus far with our colleagues as examples. Since we didn't expect Scholars to come to school for our PDD when they had the day off, Jane and I asked them to record short videos that asked them to respond to the following questions:

1. Describe your past and present experiences with doing research for school assignments.
2. What have you learned thus far in the Scholars class about learning and thinking critically?
3. What are you considering as potential topics for your spring semester project?
4. What have you enjoyed the most about this experience? What has been a struggle for you?
5. How does this work align with what you think / hope college will be like? (Course document, 1/20/16)

The purpose of the videos and these questions in particular was to share the students' experiences and perspectives about their research assignments with our colleagues. The Scholars' video responses elicited some of the most significant data that spoke to their experiences in the course thus far, and to their shifting understanding of what research looks and feels like when done from a stance of inquiry.

Scholars' sense of pride in their work as it related to understanding their audience and having a purpose to fit that audience could be seen in the written reflections they composed at

the end of the year as well. Karin explained that "I thought I was careful about how understandable my information was when presenting to an audience that knows nothing about the material. I made sure it was in an order that led up to and built up on previous information covered, and was paced to be understandable" (Written assignment, 6/17/16).

One recurring concept in the data documenting exchanges between Jane and myself was this idea of creating a culture of inquiry in the school at large. The Board of Education had recently revised its goals for learning and instruction in the district, stating that students of the East Valley Central School District would learn in schools that develop self-motivated learners, that they would engage in work that was designed to stimulate students' curiosity, and most significantly, that they would be engaged in inquiry-based learning that encourages "collaboration, risk-taking, and critical thinking" ("Board Goals," 2016). Jane and I noted regularly in our text and email communication that the Scholars course, the students' response to the assignments, and the topics they were considering for their Independent Inquiry Projects were all demonstrative of this idea and these goals.

Originally, the design of the course included some aspects that didn't come to fruition, but that spoke to our desire to make our experimentation with inquiry learning more public in the school building. For example, the document outlining the Course Design (Appendix A) indicates that we instructors intended for Scholars to engage in an assignment called Collaborative Critical Inquiry, which was meant to be a group inquiry designed to practice the information literacies addressed in the Biblioquest assignments as well as to collaboratively practice the inquiry process the Scholars would independently replicate for their own projects in the second semester. This would be akin to a graduate student engaging in some sort of a research apprenticeship before taking on the giant that is the individual dissertation project; the purpose would be to gain

some initial exposure to the process and to practice some of the methods necessary to conduct a full study. Jane and I intended to challenge the Scholars to first complete a shared inquiry before proposing their own, however, we had to concede to not having enough time to do that work properly and still be able to guide them Scholars through the work planned for the second semester.

Had the Scholars been able to complete this initial project together before advancing into their own individually selected inquiries, then perhaps our pilot course would have had more presence in the building and would have enjoyed more recognition amongst the other faculty and student body. Had we been able to create a product to showcase their collaborative inquiry and shared it with the intended school audience, then this may have both helped them in their own project work as well as helped to draw greater attention to the kind of work they were doing, and the reasons for which they were doing it. While the Scholars didn't have a formal project to showcase in this manner, they did have an opportunity to present their experiences thus far to the faculty. At a staff development day scheduled in January, Jane and I informally presented a workshop to share with our colleagues about the Scholars Seminar thus far. We shared some of the Scholars' assignments from the first semester and invited colleagues to look at their work in progress as they were in the midst of writing their inquiry proposals. The Scholars had created informal posters on the library windows to give them space to engage in idea mapping, and we were able to share these with colleagues to show them the innate messiness in the inquiry process. We created and delivered a presentation that included snippets of video interviews the Scholars completed as one of their mid-point assessments (Video assignment,1/22/16), and this gave workshop attendees an opportunity to hear about what the Scholars thought about the process thus far.

Jane and I were both delighted to welcome the Scholars to give this presentation with us, and despite it being a day off from school for them, five of the Scholars joined us that early winter morning so they could speak in person to their experiences: Joanna, John, Aidan, Karin and Emily. We were clear with the students that it was not mandatory they attend, but they were more than happy to make the effort; they wanted to be there in person, to share their enthusiasm for the course itself and for their individual inquiry projects. We looked on with pride as our colleagues interacted with the Scholars and listened to them explain their progress thus far in their proposals and inquiries.

Another part of the initial design that didn't happen the way we had intended was our desire for the Scholars to consult on their individual Inquiry Projects with an additional faculty mentor, someone with knowledge or experience in the subject matter whom they would approach for feedback as they progressed through their inquiry. For example, we imagined that if a Scholar wanted to do a project related to social issues or a particular event or time period in history, then perhaps they would enlist a social studies teacher to act as an additional reader of their work, or if they were researching issues related to gender and sexuality, then perhaps they would consult with their health teacher. Just as with the collaborative critical inquiry assignment, this too became a casualty of time management and course organization. For some of the Scholars, it did happen on a less formal scale; Aidan worked closely with one of his soial studies teachers and had multiple conversations about the lack of inclusion of gay men in his US History text book, and Karin asked her health teacher for assistance in conducting a survey of students about their knowledge related to asexuality. This work, however, was a result of the moves they made as individuals in the midst of their inquiries, and not in response to a mandate set by Jane

and myself (despite its inclusion on the course materials, such as the call for proposals, and in our Google Classroom assignment prompts and weekly seminar discussions).

The other Scholars were unable, or perhaps less willing, to consider approaching another faculty member to assist them with the project. After careful reflection upon our intentions and this aspect of the Scholars' work, Jane and I conceded to the idea that most of the Scholars were uncomfortable with asking other adults for assistance, perhaps because it meant signaling a vulnerability they weren't comfortable with. Given the emphasis on establishing and sustaining relationships between members of the Scholars community, and given the subject matter of some Scholars' inquiries, it may be that the students did not feel as ready to bring in another adult in this consulting capacity/ Perhaps they didn't feel ready to trust another adult with the messiness and incompleteness of their work, their developing skills and their evolving thinking. This could also be a reflection of what Jane and I did not do to fully support them in this process, to help them practice and feel able to approach other adults and to invite them into our community.

Another issue Jane and I had to contend with regularly in our conversations and written exchanges was our sense that the work we were doing with the Scholars in this course, despite its aligning with the board goals, did not feel recognized or respected as being valued. This is another example of when the teacher-researcher part of my identity had to be checked consistently in my talk with Jane and with my dissertation advisor, because it was often difficult to assess whether or not my feelings in response to colleagues' and administrators' feedback, or lack thereof, was a result of my personal attachment to the Scholars and the project, or to my own sense of pride (Email, 2/3/16; Memo, 2/5/16). For example, Jane shared with me that one colleague who attended our professional development session seemed impressed with the Scholars' work, but that she "questioned the need for such an experience - that she didn't know

when they would need to do research in this way" (Email, 2/3/16). This response suggested what Jane and I feared was a common perspective among our colleagues and administrators - that this work was nice and well-intentioned, but unrealistic or unnecessary when compared with other aspects of the curriculum or skills students needed to develop. However, we also thought that such statements supported our reasoning for showcasing the work our Scholars did and the instructional methods we were experimenting with, in order to push back against what we felt was a traditional and complacent view of student research assignments.

These findings, as presented in the Scholars' work and as representing their engagement and interaction in the Clubhouse space as they completed this work, demonstrates the moves Scholars, Jane, and I made in establishing our community of practice and the ways in which navigated our multiple, shared roles as novice and expert learners. In the next part, I present a narrative that showcases the morning seminar aspect of the classroom community, one that highlights the ways in which Scholars engaged their critical literacies while again working as a community of practice.

Developing Adolescents' Critical Literacies

It's not even 7am, and the Scholars are making their way into the library. Aidan tries to apologize for being late, but he's followed by Sam, whose entrance steals Aidan's thunder as there erupts a group yell from the rest: "Well look who's here today!"

Sam puffs up her chest and offers the group her open arms as she elects to sit on a table top next to the group rather than sit down in a chair. "That's because I've got LOTS to say about this!" Jane and I join the group and settle ourselves in as the group chatters, some talking about the week's readings, others talking about school-related issues. Jane sets out her legal pad and her tea, while I open a fresh GoogleDocs page for notes in my Chromebook. This week we're

continuing our conversations about the readings related to gender and sexuality, and as I anticipated, the mood among the group is intense.

"So," I say. "Before I begin with a question I have in mind, would anyone else like to go first?"

Four people speak at once, and amid the din I hear Joanna demand that we talk about pink witches and blue wizards first. Karin exclaims that she wants a wife too, and Sam blurts out, "Can I just say, FINALLY!" John clasps his hands on the table in front of him, and he smiles as quietly surveys the group. Emily jumps up out of her chair, and I gesture for her to have the floor.

About ten minutes into our conversation, Liz arrives and quietly takes a seat off to the side, waving off Aidan's gesture to clear the seat next to him but smiling while she does so. There's no sign of Kristen or Rose this morning, and I make a note in my calendar.

Almost a half hour later, other students start to drift into the library, their faces confused as they take in the sight of our boisterous group in the middle of the room. Jane jumps up to help a freshman loitering over at the check-out counter, and a few Scholars start fiddling with their bags and getting up out of their seats, all the while still talking. The first warning bell rings, and Emily exclaims, "No! I've got something else!"

I try to talk over their noise. I remind them that we can continue the conversation online in our Google Classroom post. And, that I expect to see their written reflections asap, from those who haven't submitted them yet - "you know who you are!" I crow.

"Don't worry, I got it!" Sam, grinning from ear to ear and full of charm. I roll my eyes at her and sigh, and I look around to see Liz looking at me sheepishly, guilt washing over her face.

I smile gently at her, and Jane says from across the counter, "come on in later and I'll help you Liz, if you need it." Liz nods yes and rushes out.

I move to pack up my own things, so I can race off to first period. I sigh as I look down at my Google Doc; it appears I stopped taking notes about fifteen minutes ago, aside from writing and underling YES! in purple pen in my calendar. I'll have to get back here 4th period and compare notes with Jane before I lose it all.

The narrative above represents a typical experience for the Scholars, Jane, and me in our weekly face-to-face seminar. It was during exchanges such as this one that the Scholars did the important work of learning to deconstruct texts in critical ways: to understand language as conveying messages about power, authority, and oppression; to identify voices of those who are privileged or marginalized, or to recognize whose perspectives and experiences are included and whose are silenced. During these weekly whole-group conversations, and then in follow-up discussions both in their Google Classroom posts and in informal talk in the Clubhouse, the Scholars practiced questioning texts about critical issues of difference, such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, language, and ability. In the case of the conversation documented in the narrative above, the Scholars were wrestling with a series of texts that asked them to reconsider their own understanding of gendered perspectives.

This second part of the findings presents data that relate to the development of the Scholars' critical literacies and therefore addresses the second research question: In what ways do adolescents practice critical literacies when engaged with inquiry learning? In this section, I review specific assignments and students' learning experiences designed specifically to engage their critical literacies while furthering their practice in guided inquiry design. I start with an overview of the texts Scholars were invited to read, respond to, and discuss, those which became

the focus of our conversations around ways in which the critical reading of texts encourages us to interrogate our understanding of power, privilege, difference and bias. Then I present findings that demonstrate the ways in which the Scholars employed their critical literacies when engaged with deliberately constructed learning tasks in accordance with the Guided Inquiry Design model, as they worked to disrupt their pre-existing notions about student research, power, and knowledge construction.

Reading Critically, Disrupting Assumptions, and Recognizing Bias. The coursework during the latter part of the first semester and into the second semester (from approximately late November through January), included a series of reading assignments, written reflections, and seminar discussions focused around texts meant to prompt students' exercising their critical literacies. In her synthesis of critical literacy theorists' work, Kathleen Riley (2015) recognized classroom practices that support critical literacy, such as "reading supplemental texts, raising questions about language and power, acting for social change, questioning everyday life in schools, and positioning students as knowledge-holders" (p. 418).

Texts were selected in part based upon my previous experiences having used them in classes with high school students or in graduate classes with pre-service English teacher candidates, because they were available in one of our English department textbook course readers , and in some cases if they were circulating in the media and related to trending events (such as the Amandla Stenberg video and the article about Beyonce). Table 5 presents a list of texts formally assigned (as opposed to those which came up in clubhouse conversation organically without a plan for formal instruction tied to them), and a brief summary of their contents.

Table 5: Assigned Readings

Form of Difference	Author / Title	summary
Race, ethnicity & language	James Baldwin, "A Talk to Teachers"	Baldwin's speech to a group of educators in 1963, in which he addresses the social context in which students, and specifically black children, are being miseducated concerning their history.
	Rudine Sims Bishop, "Surviving the Hopescape"	Bishop's acceptance speech from the NCTE 2007 Outstanding Educator award, where she discusses developments in African American children's literature.
	Amandla Stenberg, "Don't Cash Crop my Cornrows: A Crash Discourse on Black Culture" (video)	In this video assignment for her history class posted on Youtube, Stenberg explains the issues behind white people appropriating symbols of black culture, namely hairstyles and hip-hop fashion. Using examples from pop culture she addresses the line between cultural appropriation and cultural exchange.
	"The Unequal Opportunity Race" (video)	This viral video was published on YouTube in 2010 by Erica Pinto for the African American Policy Forum, using graphics to metaphorically illustrate the obstacles of structural discrimination that people of color face when racing against white competitors.
	Antero Garcia / Marcelle Haddix: "Reading YA with "Dark Brown Skin"	This 2015 article from the ALAN Review presents Garcia & Haddix's work in which they examine the fandom spaces surrounding young adult literature, racialized responses to characters of color, and educators' need to address this discourse in teaching.
	Richard Rodriguez, "Mixed Blood: Columbus's Legacy, a World Made Mestiso"	From Harper's Magazine in November 1991, Rodriguez narrates personal examples of
	Amy Tan, "Mother Tongue"	Originally published in the Threepenny Review in 1990, Tan discusses growing up using different "Englishes" in her multilingual household as the child of Chinese immigrants.
Class, privilege and power	Paulo Freire, chap 2 of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*	This excerpt from Freire's classic text introduces his famous "banking concept of education" and the need for revolutionary, problem-posing education.

	bell hooks, "Representing the Poor"	One of hooks' famous essays first published in her volume *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations*, this reading challenges readers' understanding of class as it intersects with race and the ways being poor is represented in popular culture.
	Jamaica Kincaid, "From *A Small Place*"	An excerpt from Kincaid's 1988 essay that critically describes a tourist's privileged experience of vacationing at a resort in Antigua as juxtaposed with a description of native Antiguans' lives.
	David Anderson, "The Crime Funnel"	Published in *The New York Times* in 1994, this article discusses alternative responses to spending $15 billion per year building prisons for the "three-strikes" tough sentencing practice.
	Alana Semuels, "How to Decimate a City"	2015 article from *The Atlantic* outlining the connection between a city's highway installation in the 1950s, the destruction of a city's neighborhood, and its subsequent poverty and segregation.
Gender, sexuality	Antero Garcia, "Gender and Sexuality and YA: Constructions of Identity and Gender"	This chapter is excerpted from Garcia's text *Critical Foundations in Young Adult Literature* (2013), in which he argues for the application of a more inclusive feminist lens to YA literature.
	Deborah Tannen, "Gender in the Classroom"	Tannen's essay appeared in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* in 1991 and presents an analysis of classroom discourses and gender-related forms of talking, specifically between men and women.
	John Katz, "How Boys Become Men"	Media critic Katz published this essay in *Glamour* in 1993; he shares examples of how boys learn to understand expectations of masculinity from how they treat one another growing up.
	Stephanie Haynes, "Little Girls or Little Women? The Disney Princess Effect"	Originally published in the *Christian Science Monitor*, this article was included in *Everything's An Argument* text and discusses the ways various media objectify the female form and presents conflicting images and ideas to girls and young women.
	Judy Brady, "Why I Want a Wife"	Originally published in *Ms.* magazine under her married name Syfers in 1972, this article is a satirical look at what the role of "wife" is in a marriage.
	Sonia Shah, "Tight Jeans and Chania Chorris"	In this essay Shah discusses her need to incorporate an Indian American feminism in order to challenge both AMerican and Indian patriarchies, and she does so using personal examples of her sister's choices between Western and Indian-styled dress.
	Nicholas Kristof, "Saudis in Bikinis"	An editorial from Kristoff's column in 2002 in which he argues that Saudi women should have a choice when it comes to their wardrobe and appearance, and he questions their understanding of repression.

	Elizabeth Heilmann, "Blue Wizards and Pink Witches: Representations of Gender Identity and Power"	From a collection of critical essays in *Harry Potter's World: Multidisciplinary Critical Perspectives*, Heilman questions the ways male and female characters are often represented in the series in stereotypical ways.

These texts were selected in order to give the students access to multiple and varying voices, perspectives, and experiences in our conversations about difference, and students were invited to read and consider these texts carefully. It is important to note that while I was responsible for the majority of the text selection, based upon my own experience with teaching these particular texts, Jane played an important role in this process as well. Our conversations around planning for the course focused upon our intentions to provoke the Scholars into establishing critical driving questions as the basis for their own inquiries (Memo, 12/11/15). As an example, Jane's response to the Scholars' talk in seminar around issues of race and privilege led to a candid conversation she had with Aidan and her subsequent posting in the Google Classroom of a viral video called "Structural Discrimination: The Unequal Opportunity Race." In this four-minute animation created for the African American Policy Forum (Pinto, 2010), some runners participating in a track race encounter various obstacles that serve as metaphors for the very real ways people of color are kept institutionally oppressed, hrough segregation, housing discrimination, and the school-to-prison pipeline.

In the first online assignment post related to these texts, students were informed that "we will read critical texts meant to push our understanding of challenging issues, specifically those having to do with society and 'difference.' We will consider what we have learned - and not learned - about race, gender, class, religion, ability and other forms of difference" (Discussion post, 11/20/15). Students were directed to:

> submit (here in this assignment portal) an annotative critique for each of the texts, so I can see how you are responding to each of them. You DO NOT need to write full essays for each, but you do need to focus your response to specific details and perhaps posing questions you'd like to address. You should not provide an overly general summary: demonstrate some depth of thinking in your annotations.

It should be noted that these texts were assigned in thematic groups (as reflected in Table 5) and over the course of approximately eight weeks, so that students could better focus their time and attention to both online and seminar discussion. Neither Jane nor I expected that the Scholars would read all the texts with equal attention, but rather that they would be exposed to a broad selection of authors and text types, and that their shared written and spoken responses to the texts would prompt each other to read and talk more deeply about the ways in which those authors, the texts, and the ideas therein functioned as representations of power or oppression. Our intention was that the Scholars' responses to the varied texts could then prompt each other to respond to the texts and to apply their new understanding to a reading of their larger school and social contexts.

Not all Scholars responded formally in written reflection, or for all texts; some students participated more in spoken conversation during Thursday morning seminar meetings or less formally in Clubhouse conversations. For example, there is little written record in Google Classroom discussions or individual posts of Liz, Kristen, or Sam's responses to the texts, despite Sam often being the most vocal in real time discussions. However, other Scholars participated regularly with thoroughly written responses and in real-time conversation during weekly seminar; Aidan, Joanna, John, and Karin responded most frequently, with the most

specific detail and with reflections that sought to connect the reading to their own experiences and school context.

> One of the key aspects of critical literacy is to make sense of the sociopolitical systems through which we live our lives and [question] these systems. This means critical literacy work needs to focus on social issues, including inequities of race, class, gender or disability and the ways in which we use language and other semiotic resources to shape our understanding of these issues. (Vasquez, Janks & Comber, 2019, p. 307)

Given the context of this study, a small suburban school with a predominantly white, middle-class student body, and given the participants' own backgrounds, it was important to take the time to read texts that talked about forms of difference, so we could then analyze how those texts used language to produce meaning about those differences. Many of the Scholars' responses to the assigned texts, as well as their conversation in seminar and in the Clubhouse, indicate that the they, while aware of difference, were desirous of disrupting the assumptions they and their school community held in relationship to such identity markers.

An example of this kind of work can be found in one of Joanna's early written posts. In response to bell hooks' essay "Representing the Poor," Joanna explained her struggle with thinking about and speaking to social issues related to class, wealth and poverty:

> This gave me a new perspective on how to view "poor" people. The idea of describing people based on how much money they have to spend versus calling them by class takes away that taboo that is associated with being poor. Sure it still is not a good thing but, as the author pointed out, being poor was not something they were ashamed about because they still had their integrity. Many people assume things about poor people that may not be true and honestly, it changed my view of how poor people live. Just because someone

> is poor, does not mean they are lazy or unintelligent. Some people are a victim of the situation and that the only way to fight poverty is fighting labels and fighting the preconceived notion that poor people should not be helped because they are doing anything to help themselves, which is usually hardly true. (Discussion post, 11/29/15)

Joanna's response here reflects what is, in my experience as a teacher in this particular school context, a common misconception among some of the Scholars and the larger student body; that people living in poverty deserve it as a consequence of their own, supposedly irresponsible, choices. Joanna's statement expresses her struggle with trying to redefine her understanding of what it means to be poor, as well as potentially recognizing her complicity in maintaining those misconceptions by engaging in unjust labeling.

Aidan's response to bell hooks' writing reinforces some of the same sentiments found in Joanna's reflection. He stated that,

> hooks nails it on the head when they declare that to the impoverished, poverty is not shameful. But to those that have, poverty is shameful, and that those who have tend to depict those in poverty as being there through their own fault. I believe that this is a method of coping with the guilt of 'having.'" (Discussion post, 12/10/15).

This topic, and the Scholars' responses to it, was a very sensitive one for us all to navigate, given that we represented varied socio-economic backgrounds. My own experience as a former student in this school context, one who came from a family who struggled financially to keep up with our many affluent neighbors and my classmates, made me very sensitive to acknowledging that the Scholars' responses to the topics and the authors' language were potentially informed by their own similar experiences, and I shared as much with them during a seminar discussion (Memo, 12/11/15). Aidain's comment about the "haves" and the "have-nots" indicated a very

careful understanding of hooks' commentary about poverty and shame; his recognition of the guilt of "having' speaks to his own perspective and experience, and other Scholars expressed sharing this tension.

After being assigned a set of readings related to "a very complex set of issues concerning gender, sexuality, identity and representation," Scholars were asked to prepare a response to the following question: "What role does gender play in how we learn, teach and manage school?" (Discussion post, 1/4/16). Participants' statements initially focused around the binary of male-female identities and qualified what they identified as common characteristics. Participants recognized patterns of behavior with women and female students in school spaces; Meghan explained that "females often . . . take education much more seriously (more than males tend to, especially now" and that "women are taught to be quiet, obedient, and sympathetic" (Discussion post, 1/14/16). Sam responded to the same post and indicated that "ladies must be quiet, polite, and intelligent, but they cannot reveal the fact that they are smart. They must have high grades, but not too high and also cannot speak up over her male classmate" (Discussion post, 2/1/16). John spoke to the same distinction between male and female students when he wrote about his own experience as a young man in class: "as a guy, I hate sitting in silence in the classroom; I personally think it is a waste of time. It is awkward and ultimately boring. So if I know the answer I am going to say something to avoid sitting in silence longer. If I am quiet it is a brilliant indicator that I did not do my work" (Discussion post, 1/6/16). And yet John also said, in response to his read of "How Boys Become Men," that "being a man is more than the toughness that is not always necessary; a man who admits his faults is far more of a man than one who will not" (Written assignment, 1/6/16). Emily, in response to the same article, explained in the shared doc "FINALLY AN ARTICLE ON MAN (all-caps original). I am so sick and tired of

society focusing on women. Yes women have been at an uphill battle for many, many years. But no one talks about how men have to deal with this constant pressure of being tough, being strong and not showing weakness." This potentially conflicted with Emily's later claim that "no matter what you identify as everyone should be taught the same way and be given the same opportunity to learn, because to me if you start to teach boys a certain way or girls a certain way then that will cause more problems and widen that gap of gender discrimination" (Discussion post, 1/25/16). These varied statements made in response to a set of thematically linked readings are indicative of how the Scholars worked to make sense of the varied perspectives the authors spoke from, as well as their attempts to synthesize that understanding with their own experiences as learners in the East Valley context.

Participants also focused on the relationship between physical appearance and gender when responding to the articles, as many of them discussed assumptions about being female as being related to one's level of beauty and attractiveness. Karin felt the Disney Princess Effect article was, "in one word, frightening," and acknowledged that she personally "[had] become almost numb to the sheer amount of sexual propaganda." Liz stated that as young kids, girls are "playful and curious" but then went on to explain that:

> the older they get they become more and more conserved (sic), less curious, less confident and more self-conscious. Girls are given an idea of ¨how¨ a girl is supposed to act. But not all girls like the color pink, getting their nails done, wearing feminine clothing or want to wait for their Prince Charming. However there's nothing wrong with this, the problem is not Prince Charming, the problem is that we've let girls believe that all they could do is wait for their Prince Charming. We have single handedly as a society shut-down almost every girl's unique form of self-expression. (Discussion post, 2/9/16)

Kristen's understanding of the texts we read and discussed was processed through her awareness of how different media represent gender and specifically portrayals of body image, which connected back to her own experiences as she related them in her autoethnography and then what would become the focus of her inquiry project. "We need to be taught not to dislike difference but to embrace the difference that is around us every day" (Discussion post, 2/3/16). Other Scholars indicated that this was a shared experience, struggling with the expectations of gender norms and body image.

While the Scholars did not openly express personal conflict related to their gender identity or performance during the study, many of them did speak quite frankly in terms of their sexual identities as they related to their understanding of the assigned texts and their experiences as students at East Valley High School. At least four of the Scholars identified as homosexual, bisexual or asexual, and it was quite possible that at least two others may have been struggling with how to identify. Karin's identity as asexual was a centrally defining aspect of her experience as a Senior Scholar, and her willingness to speak to her own experiences gave other Scholars a chance to benefit from her perspective. In a discussion post about the inclusion of diverse stories and voices in our reading and in school curricula, Karin explained that:

> As a person within the LGBT+ community, I know that even if an artist/author/director/etc., is not my sexuality, I would like them to try and ***include characters that represent me*** (bold italics underline in original). And it can be hard, because I know it's hard for me to write characters that aren't my sexuality. But, with some research, and talking to people that are, it can be done. Without any representation (and mine is nearly invisible) one can be left feeling *broken*, misplaced, disconnected, confused, and alien. With 1% of the population being my sexuality, it is hard to find

> someone to vouch for us. But, with just a little visibility, we'd know we aren't alone, we are *not* missing something, we are *not* broken. (Discussion post, 12/19/15)

Karin's post was part of a very lively digital conversation that was a follow-up from that described in the narrative at the beginning of this section, the one in which Scholars were excited to talk about their responses to some of the readings around gender and sexuality. Karin's statement generated a lot of response from the other Scholars. Rose's post demonstrates an understanding of the value in reading stories by and about other people. In discussion of representation around race and gender, Rose stated:

> I have to agree, representation is important. I'd say it's probably one of the best ways to combat some of the lingering racism in society. A well researched and well-written character will cause the reader to relate to the character, even if their culture, race, or gender is different. Reading, as well as any form of media has always been an exercise in empathy (what would be the point in reading a story that's not different from yours at all?) so when an author (regardless of race) writes a diverse set of characters, they're putting their readers (regardless of race) in a situation where they're relating to people who aren't like them, they're being forced to acknowledge that being different doesn't mean they aren't still similar in some ways. (Discussion post, 12/21/15)

Karin's reference to wanting her own sexuality made visible in the texts she reads and Rose's claim that reading has always been "an exercise in empathy" demonstrate one of the key components of critical literacy, according to Riley (2015): "Literacy actively leverages multiple perspectives for meaning-making. Critical literacy includes becoming aware of various ways that a situation might be viewed and actively interrogating whose voices are missing" (p. 418).

Another prominent theme that emerged from the the Scholars' responses to the readings and our subsequent conversations was an understanding that one of the functions of the Senior Scholars class had to do with disrupting previous assumptions around bias. Seminar discussions and online posts generated lots of conversation about the Scholars' need to be able to recognize bias when it happened as well as their intention to help develop a school community that could be critical in nature and push back against such incidences of bias. As such, the Scholars saw a direct connection between the texts and the ways in which their responses to the texts, and to each other, were reflective of their experiences as members of the larger student body. They also expressed a serious desire to act upon their developing critical understanding of social issues. When Jane and I designed the course, selected these readings, and facilitated these conversations, this was our hope and intention - that these texts and the Scholars' resulting critical literacies would inspire them to consider topics of a critical nature for their inquiry projects, and that their work would embark upon advocating for issues of social justice.

In response to the readings, Emily was very clear on her position: "When I read all of these articles, no matter what the topic, race, education or anything. I think of one word: change. We need change in our education, in the way we see races and how we showcase different cultures." Emily also suggested that the work she and her peers did for the Scholar's course could be a way in which they enacted that change. She explained that, "in Senior Seminar I think we can make small changes. Maybe we can create projects showcasing how we think certain things should've run… I think we can have a voice. We need to reach out to our community" (Discussion post, 12/16/15)

Aidan voiced a similar position, but he went a step further in being able to identify why such projects could be the means by which students could contribute as agents of change. In response to the readings, Aidan synthesized that:

> All of these words really boil down to a sense of community. Whether it be between minority members, concerning representation, or the flaws in the classroom all of these works invoke a feeling of unity. I feel like that is what Senior Scholars offers us. A community of like-minded learners who are willing to put in time and effort into their education and an environment that fosters creative innovation. This means that we have the chance to really do something big for our community. I am positive that if we all come together and work on a project we can do great deeds of community service, or perhaps raise awareness of a certain issue. That would be an idea for us because it will be a visual representation of our learning that reaches out to our classmates and can have the ability to draw them in and cause intrigue about senior scholars as a course. (Discussion post, 12/16/15)

Aidan's comment about the Scholars coming together as a community to work on a project was in response to our initial intention that the Scholars first engage in a collaborative inquiry project before venturing into their own independent work during the second semester. However, Jane and I had to admit that we had lost time in our schedule, and so we decided to move on past this task and invite the Scholars to move immediately in their own Independent Inquiry Projects. However, Aidan's call to the other Scholars speaks to what we had hoped would develop - a communal sense of responsibility, to each other and to their larger school context. Aidan recognized that the learning they were experiencing as a group could and should be shared out

publicly with their classmates in the larger student body, that the research they would do for their independent projects should have a purpose related to the needs of their school community.

At this point, the first semester's assignments had been completed and the Scholars had done a lot of work: they had engaged with multiple learning theories, produced autoethnographies, practiced research methods in their biblioquests, and applied their critical literacies in reading and responding to texts. Scholars were assigned the Call for Proposals that asked they consider the critical purpose of their research and for their intended independent inquiry project. By this point students had read the excerpt of Freire referenced in the call (see Appendix D) and had engaged in multiple face-to-face and on-line conversations about issues related to race, gender, class, difference and critical literacy, all for the sake of prompting the Scholars to identify topics for their inquiries. Jane and I intended that, upon completion of the course and their projects, students would understand that research could be critical in topic, method, and in purpose - as part of a larger attempt to invite students into a collective stance of inquiry. Students were asked to consider "whose truth matters" in reflection of their thinking about voices whose stories are heard and, as Arundhati Roy said, those who are "deliberately silenced" (2004, para. 4). They were asked "how can we contribute?" to conduct their research with the full intention of sharing their learning in a public format as a means to honor their work as important and valued, to acknowledge their understanding and insight of the information they learned as being meaningful to the larger community.

Disrupting Pre-existing Notions about Research. As mentioned in the first part of this chapter about their previous experiences with academic research projects, for many of the Scholars this was the first time they had played such a large role in the decision-making and design of their project, from start to finish. While earlier findings focused upon the experiences and perspectives

Scholars had as they aligned with inquiry learning, the discussion that follows seeks to re-examine those experiences in relation to the criticality of both the process and the projects students produced as a result.

To a point, conducting research using an inquiry model requires a critical perspective in that it demands students be able to - and perhaps more significantly, feel compelled to - question the authority of those who are in positions of power and authority, as it relates to what, how and why they learn (Freire, 2000). Just as teachers must develop a sense of inquiry as stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009), so must students. When students are invited to think critically and to inquire as to what they know, what they should know, and who gets to decide, they will likely ask more questions and disrupt the pre-established norms of power through their inquiries and in the texts they create.

In the specific case of this study, when Jane and I as teachers relied upon the Guided Inquiry Design (GID) instructional model to support students' development of their inquiry stance, we chose to do so knowing how much the GID process aligned with the ways in which we wanted the Scholars to apply their critical literacies as they developed into student researchers acting as critical inquirers. It may not seem very groundbreaking given that university scholars have been writing about this for decades, but given the local and national contexts in which this study occurred, Jane and I as instructors were still pushing the envelope by deliberately designing instruction that put power and control in the hands of students, rather than keeping it in our own. Vasquez, Janks and Comber (2019) explain that a component of critical literacy involves "understand[ing] the position(s) from which we design and produce texts" and that it "also demonstrates to students why critical reading is so important. In other words, students learn as much about critical analysis from being actively involved in the design and

production process as they do from their questioning of texts produced by others" (pp. 302-303). Scholars shifted their understanding of research as critical inquiry from asking what we (Jane and I as the experts) wanted their finished work to look like, to what they needed their work to look like in order to effectively answer their question and relay that learning to their authentic audience. In doing so, they took up the mantle, became the experts in their topics, and made the necessary decisions in their methods and in constructing their projects. As Joanna said in an offhand remark in the Clubhouse when the Scholars were discussing how long their annotated bibliographies should be, "don't bother - she's not going to tell you anyway" (Memo, 3/11/16). Joanna's teasing remark here indicated her awareness, and the other Scholars' understanding, that asking me to rule upon criteria such as length and number of sources would be seen as arbitrary and must be determined for themselves, based upon their own intentions for their projects.

Another way in which the traditional paradigm of student research assignments was disrupted in this course could be found in the various methods the Scholars employed to seek out information, analyze those resources, and synthesize meaning from them to construct their own new knowledge. Having experimented with these strategies in the first semester to complete assignments such as their autoethnographies and the biblioquests, the Scholars were now more willing and able to conduct research that went beyond simply collating print and digital sources that already existed in our library's collection. Instead, they were able to consider what additional sources of information could better help them understand their topic and answer their driving question, and Jane explained an an email to me, the Scholars expressed excitement at being able to do more than "just cut and paste from written texts" (Email, 2/12/16). Scholars began to consider the use of other methods for collecting information, such as selecting qualitative data sources that could speak to the ideas and information garnered through the

traditional collation of print resources and outside experts' texts. Given the varied nature of their IIP topics and questions, this meant that in some cases the Scholars were considering the use of interviews and surveys, and they were investigating how to conduct that work. Scholars also discussed the significance of consulting and citing what they deemed to be non-traditional sources of information, sources that might have been discounted in earlier research experiences, such as referencing personal blogs or social media. This led to multiple discussions in seminar and in group or individual conferences in the Clubhouse about how and why to do this. Several Scholars indicated that they couldn't imagine doing their projects without interviewing anyone, because, as Karin suggested, "how could I not include that person's perspective if that's the whole point of my project?" (Blog, 3/22/16). Aidan was adamant that he couldn't possibly talk about the inclusion or deliberate erasure of gay men in social studies curriculum without first talking to all the members of the social studies department to better understand their experience and perspectives (Blog, 3/18/16). Emily acknowledged that if she was going to discuss the cultural fascination with serial killers, she would need to consult the social media spaces where fans met and discussed their obsession with specific criminals and cases, despite her own discomfort at doing so (Blog, 3/31/16). These Scholars' willingness to include perspectives in their inquiries that challenged their own positions or developing arguments, or that other authorities such as teachers may have discounted as being less formal and therefore less credible because of their positioning, speaks to a component of critical literacy, acknowledging that the ways we read and construct texts are never neutral, are socially constructed, and must be continuously interrogated (Vasquez, Janks & Comber, 2019).

Jane and I tried to model for the Scholars what it meant to approach our teaching and learning from a stance of inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009), to demonstrate for the students

how inquiry learning could be done in a critical way and for critical purposes. In his definition of critical pedagogy, Allan Luke (2012) explains that when teachers work with students to question class, race and gender relations through dialogical exchange, "in such a setting, traditional authority and epistemic knowledge relations of teachers and student shift: Learners become teachers of their understandings and experiences, and teachers become learners in these same contexts," and that it "might entail establishing democratic conditions in classrooms where authentic exchange can occur around social and cultural issues" (p. 7). Consequently, part of what Jane and I did was to model and then invite students into critical literacy as a way of being and doing (Vasquez, Janks & Comber, 2019). One of the ways in which Jane and I invited the Scholars into a larger community of critical inquiry was to take them to a student research conference at a nearby university in April, during that time when they were finishing their independent inquiry projects and trying to project ahead to what their own symposium event would be like. None of our students had ever given a formal presentation outside a traditional 10-minute Powerpoint talk in their regular classes, so they were having a difficult time visualizing how the symposium event would work. Our intention was that the Scholars would get a chance to see how an academic conference is designed and implemented, and that they would be able to act as audience for undergraduate students presenting their own research projects. We imagined that this experience would inform them as to what their own presentations needed to look and feel like, as well as help them anticipate what their own audience might need to see, hear and learn. Fortunately, we were right, and the Scholars expressed gratitude and excitement on the hour-long bus trip home, exclaiming that they now had a much better sense of what their presentations should look like.

The entire day contributed to what we thought was a coming-together of our community, in the weeks leading up to the symposium. From the bus ride back and forth, to the sitting in formal presentations in college classrooms, the huge poster session held in the college arena (used for concerts, hockey games and graduation), and our lunch in the student union, the Scholars experienced a day where academic work felt distinguished and special.

It is important to recall that when critical literacy is enacted, it is often done so in spaces outside of school, or at least outside of the traditional English Language Arts classroom, because there are so many limitations for doing so within the confines of that space and curriculum. Bishop speaks to this when she explains that "for some educators and youth, the lack of support to enact 'social action' projects out of classroom-based curricula results in either a reticence to engage in such work, or a fear of the implications for doing so extra-institutionally" (2014, p. 58). Having to take the Scholars out of the school in order to see student research projects done from a stance of inquiry and in response to critical issues of social justice exemplifies this tension.

The first part of the findings chapter began with a narrative informed by the first research question, demonstrating a classroom learning community designed to support adolescents' experiences with inquiry learning. This second part of the findings chapter began with a narrative that demonstrated what it was like to be in the morning seminar space when Scholar's engaged in dynamic and challenging conversations around critical issues. The third part is introduced with a narrative constructed from the events on that day of the Scholar's inquiry presentations at their symposium. While this narrative does not correlate as cleanly with one of the research questions, it was important to organize findings in this way so as to give attention to the important work the Scholars did as the culmination of both their inquiry learning and their critical literacies.

The Senior Scholar Symposium as A Confluence of Inquiry Learning and Critical Literacies

We finish putting out the decorations, and the caterers are back with the coffee decanters (ohthankgoodness), juice, and fresh water pitchers. As the Scholars arrive, their eyes grow wide at the site of all the food. Only afterward do they stop to look up and around at the huge room, a lounge in the college's student center, with chairs set up for a keynote speaker at one end and a set of three conference rooms for break-out sessions at the other. "Which room am I presenting in?" they repeat, grabbing for and clutching nervously the paper programs Jane and I were laying out on the registration table. No sooner had they found their names, Aidan and Joanna are off and running to scope out the spaces, while John follows closely behind at a more leisurely pace. Rose and Liz stand by nervously, fidgeting as they look around the room and at the people filing in. Kristen comes up the stairs with her family in tow and proudly introduces me to her mother, while Jane helps Emily put on her nametag, gently reprimanding her to stand still or warning she'd get pricked. Emily just giggles nervously, then gives Jane her signature thumbs up.

An hour later, the symposium is in full swing. Guests have moved from the lecture space for introductory remarks into the three conference rooms so they can watch one of the Scholars' presentations. Joanna, Karin and John are up first, and Jane and I flicker from room to room to check one last time that everything is ready. In each space, the Scholars welcome their guests, introduce themselves, and begin their presentations. They command the floor for almost thirty minutes; then they look to their audience for questions and stay in the spotlight for fifteen minutes more. I move from room to room, sneaking in the back and hoping to both avoid

interrupting their presentations but also wanting to make eye contact to send them an enthusiastic smile and burst of confidence. In all three spaces my support is unnecessary - once they get going, the Scholars find their rhythm and speak like the experts they have become. In Joanna's presentation, I look around the room and watch as audience members nod their heads in agreement, and I see a colleague take down notes at a furious pace. Later he asks Joanna a challenging question about her inquiry process, and she provides a sophisticated answer without missing a beat. Karin and John both manage their presentations just as smoothly as Joanna did, evidence of how much they rehearsed before today.

Sitting in Joanna's audience were two other Scholars, Emily and Sam. Emily will be presenting in the same space during the next session, so her attention is divided between listening to Joanna's presentation (which she has already seen at least three times in as many days), and running through her own notecards in her lap as she looks on. Emily is incredibly nervous, but she is determined to stay confident, her face beaming with enthusiasm as she bounces her leg up and down to dispel all her nervous energy. Sam balances on her chair, half standing up and ready to cheer on her friend. Sam probably should be reviewing her notecards too, but that is not her style, and as she'd told me multiple times, she's "got it."

I leave Joanna's presentation and move in between watching Karin's and John's from just outside the doors. I can't hear Karin very well from where I stand, but Jane hovers near the video camera and I smile at seeing how much pride she wears on her face at watching Karin present. When I sneak into John's room, Liz meets me at the door and tells me that they were having problems with the projector, but that John was handling it like a champ and moving along through his slides without a problem. My stomach drops at the thought of John having to

troubleshoot that crisis on his own, but I find reassurance in knowing that even if Jane or I hadn't been there, that he had at least two of the other Scholars there to help him.

In between the second and third breakout session, guests gather in the lounge for a break, for more snacks, or to attend the poster session (a group of invited underclassmen were presenting posters based upon projects they had completed for their social studies classes; Jane and I hope we were looking at the future cohort of Scholars). A handful of Scholars who had already given their individual presentations were now holding court in the lecture space, hosting a Q&A panel to talk about their experiences in the class and leading up to today's event. I quietly take a seat in the back, and I listen as the Scholars tell their family, friends and teachers all about the work they've been doing. Someone in the audience asks, why did you do this (take this class)?

Sam mentions how much she played video games, and that there isn't a place in the rest of her school day to talk or learn about what she loved so much. Emily grabs the mic, and after mentioning her own excitement at taking such a unique class that would let them learn what they wanted, she explains that, "Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Fleming didn't really tell us what to do, they led us through it, and we drove. They gave us the roadmap, and we drove to our destination."

Sam breaks in, her voice loud and her hands pounding first on the table for empahsis, "No, they gave us a piece of paper, said draw the map, and go."

"Yeah, They gave us the guidelines on how to do it," Emily agrees. Aidan, Joanna, Karin and John nodded their heads in agreement and smile.

I blush, and I hope Jane is somewhere in the room to hear that too.

The preceding narrative represents crucial moments for all of us participating in the Senior Scholars course. It depicts the culminating event at which the Scholars showcased their

independent inquiry projects. On this day, the Scholars were no longer high school seniors working to finish a research assignment for class; they were true researchers presenting their work at an academic conference. They were sharing their knowledge and expertise with a real audience in hopes they could affect change.

The third part of this chapter is devoted to data representing the Scholars' individual inquiry projects, the work they did to complete them, and the culminating event at which they showcased their work: The Senior Scholar Symposium. The analysis of this data presents an understanding of how inquiry learning and critical literacy worked together to inform our learning and instruction, as well as how the Scholar's final projects demonstrates various representations of this confluence. Table 6 presents a brief overview of all nine Scholars' projects, according to the abstracts they wrote for inclusion in the symposium's program. This part begins with a presentation of the multiple ways in which these projects demonstrate the Scholars' development of inquiry learning skills and their critical literacies, using a comparative matrix to represent these characteristics. Then I review the Scholars' projects in groups categorized by their commonalities: the extent to which their projects demonstrated levels of autonomy and levels of criticality. I conclude this part of the chapter by showcasing three Scholars' projects as representative of the greatest degree of both autonomy in their inquiry and criticality in their research topics, methods and purposes, as well as a discussion of the thematic connection between these three topics and the school context in which these Scholars did this work.

Table 6: Senior Scholar Independent Inquiry Projects, Titles & Abstracts

Aidan	**Elizabeth (Liz)**	**Emily**
The Gay Gift: How Gay Men and the Gay Sensibility Have Contributed to Mainstream American Society In this presentation, I answer two questions. The first being, "How do we conquer the social injustice of the classroom?" and the second, "How have Gay men and the Gay sensibility as a whole contributed to mainstream American society and culture?" My project uses versatile presentation methods that will leave the audience shivering with antici….. pation.	***The Good and the Bad*** This presentation explores the idea of there being (or not) a truly good or truly bad person. Along with this, the idea of being able to tell if someone is truly good or bad (or at least slightly good or slightly bad) is explored. This project revolves around topics such as (and also not limited to) psychology, biology, sociology & neurology.	***In The Minds of You, Me and a Killer*** Serial killers...you can´t turn off the TV or change the channel. Your eyes are glued to the horrific and gruesome deeds that are displaying on your TV right now. But why can you not look away? Why do Hollywood and the American people cling to the topic of serial killers and glorify these people to levels of actors, professional athletes and musicians? Maybe we cling to them because we hope they are different.
Joanna	**John**	**Karin**
Fiction Addiction: A Psychological Inquiry This inquiry questioned whether the behaviors of readers and book fandoms have addictive properties. In order to answer this question, it required comparing the behaviors and symptoms of drug addicts to readers. Finally, this inquiry involved research on the Internet's influence on addiction, fandoms, and readers as a whole.	***Statsball: An Analysis of Statistics in Baseball*** America's Pastime and math. A perfect combination. Although this is true, the question is if numbers tell the whole story. Can baseball be based wholly on numbers or is there more to it? Can anything be based completely on numbers? The drive of this inquiry is to explore the methods of statistical analysis and how these statistics can and cannot be applied. Baseball, business, education, and politics: America and its numbers all evaluated through its pastime.	***Asexuality and Attraction*** This presentation will challenge the conventional beliefs regarding relationships and the nature of attraction. With a focus on the Asexual community, we see how it is possible to detangle sexuality from the other aspects of relationships. We will also discuss the Asexual community itself, and why awareness and teaching about the community can aid society as a whole.

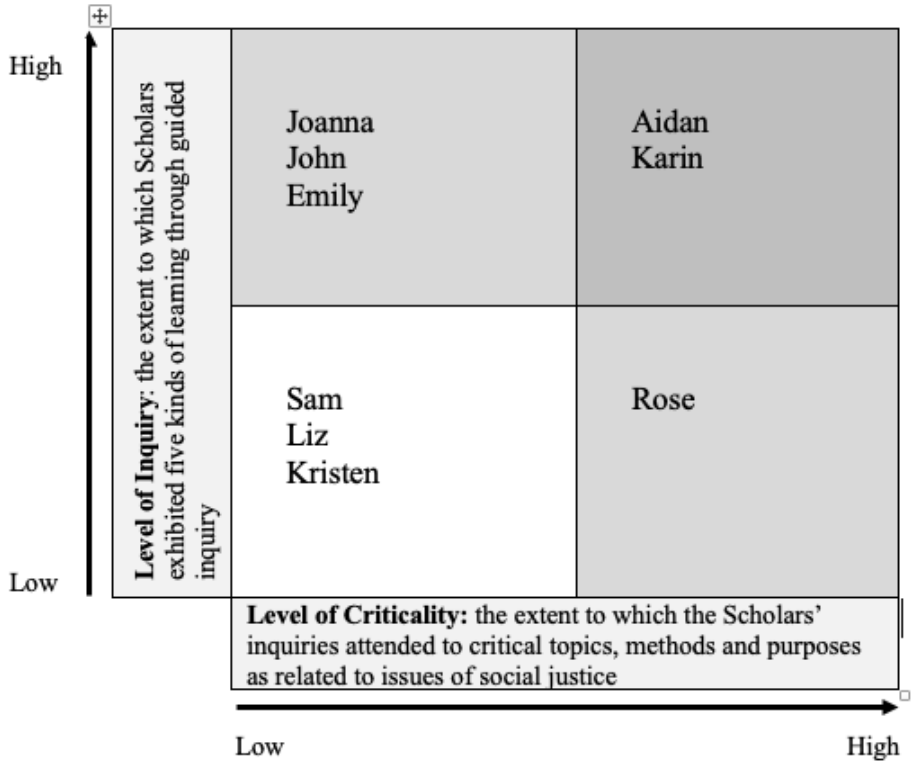
Kristen ***Hunger Games Redux*** How does media and culture influence high school students' body image? This presentation will examine the connection between media in many forms and self image including how students deal with the issue.	**Rose** ***Gender: Through the Eyes of Media*** In this presentation, I will explore American gender norms as portrayed through popular media, how they developed through history, and the contrasting gender norms of India and Sweden. In addition, I will also explore the gender roles in a popular American subculture; Superhero fans, and how they both contrast and conform to traditional American gender norms.	**Samantha (Sam)** ***The Dragon Age of Sexism: Inequality in Gaming*** As a woman, it's always frustrated me that video games are made by men, for men, even though many women play the exact games that convey women poorly. This presentation will explore sexism in video games with an emphasis on the lack of female "heroes."

Working Within a Matrix of Inquiry and Criticality. Given that this study sought to investigate the work students were doing in relationship to two key constructs, their developing inquiry learning skills and their developing critical literacies, I found it useful to represent the Scholars' inquiry projects using a matrix that would indicate the ways in which their independent inquiry projects demonstrated these two variables (see Figure 2). I plotted each Scholar's project into one of the four quadrants in accordance with the two constructs indicated along the two axis: 1) the level of inquiry, defined as the extent to which the Scholars' project demonstrated sophistication in their research in accordance with the GID phases; and 2) the level of criticality, defined as the extent to which the Scholars' projects attended to critical issues of social justice. In the Guided Inquiry Design framework, Kuhlthau, Maniotes and Caspari (2012) explain that students engaged in inquiry learning are working to address five different kinds of learning simultaneously: curriculum content, information literacy, learning how to learn, literacy competence, and social skills (pp. 142-143). It was tempting to assume that just because a student's performance on one construct was high that it would automatically follow they would perform high on the second construct as well. However, that wasn't always the case; there was

not always a direct correlation between the students' growth and development of their inquiry literacies and their critical literacies. For example, it was easy for Jane and me to assess the work Aidan and Karin did as being both sophisticated in inquiry and in critical literacy. The topics and intentions of their projects were critical in nature, as they both sought to interrogate the lack of representation of a particular sexual identity in the school curricula, and they both worked to advocate for change as a result of their inquiry. Additionally, both Aidan and Karin's projects demonstrated sophistication in their research process, as indicated throughout the phases of Guided Inquiry Design.

Not all Scholars performed equally as well on both measures. Rose's project, while attending to a critical issue - the representation of gender in the media - did not demonstrate the same level of sophistication when it came to conducting the research and in developing her inquiry literacies. And while a handful of the Scholars completed incredibly sophisticated projects that spoke to a true mastery of the research process and developing one's inquiry literacies, John, Emily and Joanna's projects were not as critical in nature as those done by Aidan, Karin, and Rose. Three of the scholars, Sam, Liz, and Kristen, completed projects that demonstrated what I will refer to as emerging literacies; that is, their work shows attention to and interest in working at a higher level of inquiry and criticality, but for various reasons they weren't able to do so at this time.

Figure 2: Matrix of Inquiry and Criticality



The first three inquiry projects reviewed here all contain some of the characteristics discussed above, in that they represent the student's work toward greater proficiency in research skill and development of one's critical literacy. In these cases of emerging inquiry, each Scholar demonstrated a more limited development of the five kinds of learning, such as the information literacy applied to finding, evaluating and then using that information in their inquiries, or the social skills needed for interacting, cooperating, and collaborating throughout the inquiry process (Kuhlthau, Maniotes, & Caspari, 2012, p. 143). This may correlate with other aspects of their performance in the course; for example, these three Scholars attended fewer Thursday morning seminars and submitted fewer written responses to online discussions. That does not necessarily mean their contributions to spoken conversations in the Clubhouse or in the seminars they did

attend were not valuable. However, there is simply less data that speaks to their experiences, their work, and their perspectives; therefore, it becomes more difficult to trace the trajectory of their skill development, or lack thereof. In this section, I discuss similarities among the students Sam, Liz and Kristen, their inquiry and critical literacies, and their independent inquiry projects.

Sam is the Scholar who exclaimed she "had a lot to say" in the second vignette when it came time to talk about the readers around issues of gender. She created a project titled, "The Dragon Age of Sexism: Inequality in Gaming," and her research was concerned with the inaccurate or lack of female representation in video games. At the beginning of her presentation, Sam exclaimed that she was not "trying to say, don't play video games! They're sexist! Literally, these are all mine, I brought them from home;" she then gestured to a line of eight game boxes lined up on the table at the front of the room where she stood to present (Video, 5/21/16). In her slides Sam reviewed a set of cover art, indicating that in all of them a man was on the cover but that gamers had the option to play the protagonist character as a woman. Sam commented that such an option was really only an example of "limited-time equality." Then she defined and differentiated between the stereotypical, hardcore gamer, the casual gamer and the "gamer girl." As she addressed this third category, Sam explained that the image she selected to model the "gamer girl" was blocked by the school's web server filter, identifying the image as porn. Sam felt this characterization exemplified the ways in which women were treated and represented in the video game industry.

While Sam's topic seemed to be of a critical nature, her approach to her inquiry was less so. For the bulk of Sam's presentation, explanations were based primarily upon her own experience, and less on research that corroborated with critical sources other than statements from some superficial websites that provided game overviews and player reviews. Sam did cite a

2007 study indicating that more than 50% of female gamers identify as lesbian or bisexual , but she spent little time on evaluating the source itself or the details she culled from it back to any of the other work we did or to more scholarly, critical articles concerning gender and gender representation in media.

Liz's project was called "The Good and the Bad: Understanding Morality," and the abstract stated that her presentation

> explores the idea of there being (or not) a truly good or truly bad person. Along with this, the idea of being able to tell if someone is truly good or bad (or at least slightly good or slightly bad) is explored. This project revolves around topics such as (and also not limited to) psychology, biology, sociology & neurology" (Symposium Program, 5/21/16)

Liz's work was incredibly ambitious, and she spent a great deal of time in the weeks leading up to the symposium trying to narrow the scope of her project. Her initial driving question was "How has/does the human thought process evolve and why has/does it evolve the way it has/does?" (IIP proposal, 2/19/16). Liz's intention for research represents what it means to approach her learning with an inquiry stance, in that she was ready and desirous to interrogate everything. She explained that she had

> always been interested in the way people alone and in groups think. Seeing how people make decisions and react to certain things have made me notice the subtle similarities between everyone's thought process. Everyone is a unique and different person including the way they think. But there are very subtle similarities connecting the way we all think. Similarities that aren't just specific to one gender, race, or generation, but that are the underlying factors making all of us human. (IIP proposal, 2/19/16)

While the intention of her project may not have been entirely critical in the sense of it being informed by topics and themes of social justice, it did speak to an awareness of a sociocultural perspective and the ways in which cognition is influenced by social and cultural factors.

Given her previous work for the class, namely her autoethnography where she created a remarkably sophisticated, biographical video that explored her own learner identity as affected by her experiences growing up, I knew that Liz was entirely committed to the idea of her independent inquiry project. Jane and I spent many conversations and emails talking about how much we all struggled to help Liz in bringing her project to fruition, wrestling with the factors that seemed to impede her progress. But Liz was a very proud young person, and she found it difficult to ask for help or to acknowledge where she needed assistance in focusing her research. Liz struggled with managing her time and with setting and working toward deadlines given the autonomous structure of the course. This was consistent with what Jane and I saw in Liz over the course of the school year. Liz was frequently missing from morning seminars, slow to post in online class discussions, and engaged in avoidance during the months leading up to the symposium. This made it difficult for Jane and me to have an accurate sense of where Liz was in her inquiry work, or to determine how we could work to intervene on her behalf and support her in her work.

This aspect of Liz's experience with her inquiry project demonstrates how students can be found at different and seemingly contradictory points on the matrix when it comes to the development of their inquiry literacies and their critical literacies. It also meant that Liz had a difficult time when it came to participating in the actual symposium. In the days leading up to the event, Jane and I suspected that Liz's project needed more revision in order to be ready for presentation; we even wondered whether we would have to restrict her from participating in the

event, which we discussed with her. However, Liz was adamant, and she insisted that she was ready and could handle it. Jane and I saw her prezi, and we watched as she did some informal runs through her presentation for the other Scholars. We chose to trust Liz's own self-assessment of her readiness, and we all agreed that she could present her inquiry project at the symposium.

By many counts, Liz's presentation at the symposium was indeed demonstrative of having been successful in her inquiry. Her prezi slides were full of evidence of her learning, ranging from information about Franz DeWaal's research on chimpanzees, psychologist Robin Dunbar's research on morality, Darwin's work on natural and group selection, and Michael Shermer's work on the science of good and evil, religion and moral determinism (Presentation, 5/21/16). In fact, review of the video of her presentation after the symposium suggests that our assessment of Liz's readiness to present her work as being questionable may have had more to do with our own nervousness or guilt at not sufficiently helping her than her actual readiness. There were moments when Liz lost her focus and needed to regroup using her notecards and the information on her prezi slides, but those moments of insecurity were more likely apparent to us as instructors and to her Scholar peers, not to other members of the audience, who seemed impressed at the amount and depth of her information.

This was also an example where having Jane work with me as both the co-instructor and co-researcher was both helpful and necessary in my attempts to maintain some objectivity when it came to collecting and then analyzing the data. I had to contend with whether or not I was reading Liz's inquiry work as being less than sophisticated because I was allowing my own emotional response to cloud my judgement of her skill development. For example, Liz was noticeably shaken by the moments in which she lost focus during her presentation, and the other

Scholars shared their concern with us later that she was upset and embarrassed by her performance. In her written self-assessment of her independent inquiry project, Liz expressed that the "one major thing I have learned from all of this is that procrastination is not the wisest path to take when doing a major project" (Self-assessment, 6/20/16). I spent a great deal of time, energy and emotion feeling as if I should have done more to help her feel better prepared, and wondering if I should have prevented her from giving her presentation and sparing her those feelings of embarrassment (Memo, 5/27/16). However, Liz was still happy with her involvement in the course overall; in her reflection she noted her wishes for future Scholars and that she

> hope[d] this class is as great of an experience for you as it was for me. This class gave me an outlet for my thoughts and also helped to give me academic structure… No one tells you how to do your project and it's really nice because you can work the way you want but at the same time you have to maintain a schedule. This class taught me a lot of things in an academic and personal sense. I hope it does for you too! (Self-assessment, 6/20/16)

In positioning Liz's final project on the matrix in relation to other Scholars' work, I have to acknowledge that my assessment of her inquiry literacies is as much in reflection of how Jane and I observed and interacted with her in the weeks leading up to the symposium.

Kristen's position on the matrix is another example of how a student's inquiry project and presentation performance may not speak to the entire story of the work leading up to its final form. Kristen is another Scholar for whom we have less written work to represent her experiences throughout the year, but in most cases that had much to do with issues related to what she was going through outside the class. Throughout the year Kristen had some personal health issues that were affecting her regular school attendance. She was already at school for less time than the other Scholars, as she spent half of her school day at another institution in pursuit

of her culinary arts certification program. This meant that she was not as available during the school day as the other Scholars were to spend time in the Clubhouse or to find opportunities to collaborate with them or to rehearse in preparation for the symposium.

Because of Kristen's chronic health and absence issues, she was having difficulty in keeping her grades up in other classes. Jane and I found ourselves spending a great deal of time with her, not to assist her in her work for the Senior Seminar class, but in counseling her in ways to get caught up with work for other teachers so that she could remain eligible to participate in our class and so that she could still graduate on time with her peers. As such, any time she had to spend on her inquiry project, Jane and I were quick to encourage her to complete back work for her other teachers instead. We considered whether or not we should prevent Kristen from participating in the symposium, much like we did with Liz. In Kristen's case, we were much more concerned with whether or not she could produce a final product that would match the depth of those being presented by her Scholar peers, and we worried that her focus on her project was inappropriately placed if she was failing her other classes. In the weeks preceding the symposium, Jane and I spoke or emailed with Kristen's other teachers and we had some very frank conversations with her. Ultimately, we decided that her need to explore her topic, having to do with body image and mental health, and her need to be an active member of the Scholars community, were more important to her than whether or not her final project met our standards for inquiry and criticality. She proudly delivered her presentation at the symposium, and Jane and I found success in her own satisfaction with her work and with the overall course. In her final self-assessment, Kristen explained in her note to future Scholars that "the experiences that you participate in are not only going to become helpful tools for later in life, but an opportunity to learn new things in a way that is so much different than your average classroom. With friends

and interesting articles to read and to discuss about, Scholars definitely won't be boring" (Self-assessment, 6/20/16).

Kristen titled her project "Hunger Games Redux." In her project she asked, "How does media and culture influence high school students' body image? This presentation will examine the connection between media in many forms and self-image including how students deal with the issue." In many ways, Kristen's project is another one that potentially falls into the larger category of critical issues related to gender and therefore could be categorized alongside the work that Aidan, Karin, Rose, and Sam did. But much like Sam, Kristen's work is hard to assess as being truly critical in topic, method and intention simply because the final product of her work showed less development in both her inquiry and critical literacies. Kristen's slides showed a fairly sophisticated understanding of the role media plays in affecting young women's sense of body image. She incorporated a lot of photography and video from fashion magazines and advertisements to demonstrate what dangerous ways the media can affect girls' perceptions of beauty, attractiveness, body size and their own self-worth. While her presentation referred to issues that are part of a larger, scholarly conversation around issues of gender, gender performance, and sexuality, Kristen's inability to engage in more thorough research left her final product in want of more nuanced ways of discussing these issues. Her information and quoted statistics were not clearly linked to accurately referenced, or credibly evaluated sources, and her works cited was a list of videos from Youtube she consulted, but without proper documentation. Despite these concerns, Jane and I felt great pride in watching Kristen assemble her project and deliver it at the symposium. While it may not have indicated as much growth as the work done by other Scholars, we felt it was certainly a successful, if not entirely cathartic and therefore necessary, experience for Kristen to have (Memo, 5/27/16).

Some of the Scholars' projects were more demonstrative of inquiry learning as presented in the Guided Inquiry Design instructional model, in that they showed a greater development in their information literacy, content, and their learning how to learn, but they were less critical in terms of their topic and thematic purpose. What follows next is a brief description of three Scholars' projects, from John, Joanna and Emily, that explore their experiences operating in the various stages of inquiry but that engage in work less theoretically critical.

John's project was called "Statsball: An Analysis of Statistics in Baseball." In his abstract, John asked, "Can baseball be based wholly on numbers or is there more to it? Can anything be based completely on numbers? The drive of this inquiry is to explore the methods of statistical analysis and how these statistics can and cannot be applied. Baseball, business, education, and politics: America and its numbers all evaluated through its pastime." At the beginning of his presentation John explained to his audience that he wanted to ask, is the stats revolution the most beneficial way of understanding baseball or is the traditional view of using people to evaluate players a more effective way? John connected his research about Billy Beane, the focus of the popular movie *Moneyball* who used Sabermetrics to create a team with the greatest chance of having a winning season, to his understanding of and interest in mathematics, statistics and probability, sports management, and assessment practices in education.

John was a methodical worker, the kind of student who planned his time well and exercised great self-discipline when it came to producing work and meeting deadlines. He was a linear thinker and he tackled tasks related to his independent inquiry in a decidedly sequential manner. His advice to future scholars reflected this approach (and possibly his frustration with peers who didn't approach learning in the same fashion): "Think about your final project early and get a head start on reading some sources before you have to get to it in the spring

semester. Depending on the project, it can be very hard to find sources and knowledge of this before can help save you time later" (Self-assessment, 6/20/16). John came to this work with a well-developed understanding of the content of his project, and his high placement on the matrix for the inquiry measure is a reflection of his strengths in information literacy and his ability to read and comprehend challenging texts. John came to us with these skills already well developed, and he worked independently at applying them to his selection of topic, his sorting and categorizing of information, his evaluation of resources, and his thoughtful presentation design that accounted for an audience who would not necessarily be as familiar with his project's topic (just as Jane and I were not and had to learn from him every step of the way).

While John did not tackle a project topic informed by the reading and analysis we did of texts about critical issues of social justice, such as race, gender and poverty, John was very interested in finding a way to connect his love for baseball and his love for learning with the theme of the symposium as found in the call for proposals. The call (Appendix D) invited "proposals from Scholars using an inquiry stance to interrogate an issue of significance to their learning community, as defined by one's classroom, school, neighborhood and/or culture.". What was important to John was the design of the Scholars course and the methods by which he and his peers would engage in research, as a means of challenging those existing paradigms of knowledge and power. It was John who spoke so often in the early online conversations about being frustrated with not being able to question the curriculum, assignments, or assessments in other classes in school.

John was determined to speak to his inquiry as a part of a larger critical community because of the way in which he was able to pursue an inquiry of his own choice and design, and he drew parallels between his ability to do so with his own criticism of the larger school system

and trends in instruction and assessment. John connected the use of statistical analysis in baseball to education, curriculum and standardized testing. He explained that

> what is learned from numbers from baseball is that performance cannot be measured simply by numbers. As always, numbers can provide very significant information about trends that occur and for performance and mastery of material covered in class. On the other hand, there are students who do not test well, which can affect their statistics greatly. A student may more effectively be able to write a paper or create projects to better express their learning, still covering their knowledge that is learned throughout their experience. Students who may better effectively do these assignments better than a test have little opportunity to perform these activities as "something that will matter." So the modern fallacy of education is that students who are brilliant appear as average, or even poor students, solely based on the ideas from a test score. Numbers always have to be analyzed deeper than what they tell. An average, the most commonly used way to give "worth" to a student has its own fallacies. The average reflects the middle of a large set while hiding a student's best, and worst work. Knowledge of this other work, where a student struggles, or excels, can provide greater information about a student and their abilities. This information is usually available from teachers to be greater analyzed but is often overlooked. (IIP, 6/9/16)

In considering John's inquiry and final product along a continuum of criticality, his work would not be as critical in the sense of exposing or advocating for issues of social justice as some of his peers did. However, despite a more informative approach to his inquiry, John was still able to connect the work he felt most passionate about the larger theme of the symposium's call. John also advised future Scholars, when considering what they'd like to spend their time and energy

pursuing, “When choosing a project ask yourself the question, ‘What do I want to tell the world?’ I believe this is a great way to think about the work that we have done and will do in the future.” (Self-evaluation, 6/20/16).

In her project “Fiction Addiction: A Psychological Inquiry,” Joanna questioned “whether the behaviors of readers and book fandoms have addictive properties. In order to answer this question, it required comparing the behaviors and symptoms of drug addicts to readers. Finally, this inquiry involved research on the Internet's influence on addiction, fandoms, and readers as a whole.”

In many ways, Joanna came in this course poised to be the most successful Scholar. She was the strongest when it came to her previous academic performance, as indicated by her transcript and GPA, and she had the most experience in exercising her autonomy when it came to writing assignments from some of her advanced level courses. By some measures she certainly was the most successful: Joanna left no assignment incomplete, was typically the first to complete a task, and was always the most thorough in its completion. Other Scholars often remarked upon these habits. Joanna used her time well. She didn’t procrastinate, rather she started her questioning and reading early enough in the process to be able to make an informed decision about her topic and her project’s purpose. Joanna made effective use of her time in the Clubhouse - she could be routinely found there during her free periods making a dent in her work, progressing through her to-do list of items. Joanna had immense self-discipline, even if she didn’t feel that way; in her interview, Joanna laughed at herself and suggested that did “have some issues with [her] own procrastination” (Interview, 6/8/16). Joanna might have doubted her discipline, but Jane and I always found she was able to get herself to buckle down and focus on

the task in front of her. We often hoped other Scholars would follow her example when it came to managing their own issues with procrastination and time management.

Joanna came very close to pursuing an entirely different project topic. She was so moved by some of the course readings, especially the Atlantic article about Syracuse and bell hooks' work "Representing the Poor," that she spent a great deal of time trying to consider how she could do critical work related to local issues of race and poverty. However she was very concerned about her own identity as a middle class white female and how that might impede her from being able to pursue the inquiry authentically. We spoke multiple times in individual conferences about her decision-making . Joanna worried that by choosing to focus on her love of reading fiction that she was "taking the easy way out," but that she was nervous about going in a different direction she didn't feel as knowledgeable or confident about.

Joanna's experience in making this decision may be reflective of her position as a privileged, white, upper-middle class teenager in a high-achieving district, but it also reflects a certain self-awareness that may be lacking in her peers in the larger school context. Jane and I discussed several times that Joanna's difficulty in making this decision may have also been in part a reflection of her own need to engage in teacher-pleasing - that she may have felt she had to pick a topic that was more justice-oriented because she perceived that's what the two of us would have preferred. In fact, we discussed this with Joanna in conferences in the Clubhouse, and we specifically told her that it was more important to us that she pick something she was most passionate about for herself, and not for us - to which she replied "I wish I could do them both!" Joanna's frustration also reflected her understanding that the work they were doing would be for a larger audience and as such she wanted it to have a greater purpose, and she knew that doing research about issues of race and poverty was important to share with her peers. Ultimately her

own personal passions won out and she focused her research on reading, but she was still determined to take as critical a perspective as possible. This is what led her to look comparatively at the social behaviors of avid readers and compare them to drug and alcohol addictions, so that she could ask her audience to consider the social and psychological ramifications of those individuals who seek escape in books the way others do in drugs.

Emily's project was focused around her passion for forensic science and her desire to pursue a career in criminal justice. Titled "In The Minds of You, Me and a Killer," Emily's project investigated serial killers and asked, "why can you not look away? Why do Hollywood and the American people cling to the topic of serial killers and glorify these people to levels of actors, professional athletes and musicians? Maybe we cling to them because we hope they are different." In her presentation Emily asked her audience to consider the types of crime television shows they are familiar with or watch regularly, such as *Law & Order, CSI* and *Criminal Minds.*

Engaging in Inquiry for Critical Purposes and Authentic Audiences. This section highlights examples from three of the Scholars' final independent inquiry projects, the work they spent several months completing and then presenting at the Scholar symposium in May. In each of these three cases, the project represents the end product of student work done through the guided inquiry design instructional method, as well as work that represents the development of those students' critical literacies.

It is noteworthy that all three of these projects, identified as the most critical of the nine completed, focus around issues of gender, sexuality and identity. As a reminder, the participants' identities as presented in the methodology section of this study revealed a relatively large representation of students who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or asexual, and possibly as transgendered men or women, at a ratio Jane and I suspected was much larger than that of the

overall student body. While our school cannot track such demographics, in our experience it was unlikely that 45-55% of the student body identified as LGBTQ+.

In her project, "Gender: Through the Eyes of the Media," Rose worked to "explore American gender norms as portrayed through popular media, how they developed through history, and the contrasting gender norms of India and Sweden. In addition, she stated in her abstract that she would explore the gender roles in a popular American subculture--Superhero fans--and how they both contrast and conform to traditional American gender norms" (Symposium Program, 5/21/16).

Rose began her presentation by explaining that her inquiry was grounded in a theoretical understanding of social constructivism and of gender as a social construction. Rose explained what the original purpose of her inquiry was, to "explore differences in the media of different countries to try to understand American media and its relation to what we value more completely," to instead focusing on the "exploring of different depictions of gender in media to contrast with what we already know of gender in these cultures" (Presentation, 5/21/16). She explained her process for selecting countries for her analysis, as well as the criteria for how she collected and analyzed her quantitative and qualitative data (as she explained in her presentation and on her slides). For example, Rose explained that she selected media from countries that differed from the United States and form each other in notable ways, such as the extent to which the country's primary language was gendered, and then chose to focus on media specific to a subculture within those selected countries and their representation of gender - in this case, superhero fandoms. Rose evaluated the media she selected using the Annenberg "Inequality in 700 Popular Films" and the Bechdel-Wallace Test. Before sharing any examples of media from these sources, Rose explained that she wanted to first share some information about the historical

presentation of gender in the three countries in question, the US, India, and Sweden. She began by explaining that India historically has recognized a third gender, called the Hijra, and that Sweden is using a non-gendered pronoun "Hen," then she reviewed the Gender Inequality Index.

Rose's explanation of her research was not as sophisticated as Aidan's or Karin's. For example, when referring to the information she learned, such as statistics gleaned from her reading of the Gender Inequality Index, she did not elaborate on why or how she selected this particular resource as the source she consulted. She verbally cited the source and listed it in her slide citations, but she didn't include a critical evaluation of the source itself in her presentation. In accordance with the criteria she set for her study, Rose looked at the two most popular media texts produced that year (2015): the film *Star Wars Episode VII* and the novel *Go Set a Watchman* by Harper Lee. Then she selected a text representative of the superhero fandom subculture, *the Avengers*. Rose explained how the film could be read critically for its representation of gender; she indicated that "almost none of the female characters have any significant impact on the plot, and therefore were a reflection of a widespread hegemonic masculinity complex" (Presentation, 5/21/16). Then she discussed how her analysis of these texts compared to her analysis of texts selected to represent India and Sweden. After sharing observations about the two countries and their popular texts for the comparison, Rose confessed that at least for Sweden, she "expected great things from! They scored higher on the gender inequality index, they pay women to go on maternity leave for three years, you'd think you'd get more equal [representation in the texts], but What I got was kind of disappointing! In closing - sometimes what you expect to find is not what you find…" Rose's acknowledgement that her inquiry did not go the way she thought or intended spoke to her willingness to be open to the experience of adapting her thinking and learning:

> I wasn't expecting to find in India the book so dominated by female characters, and in Sweden I was expecting films to have more than two female characters! My point is sometimes we need to be careful about what we spend our money on, because what we spend our money on is what people are going to think our culture is based on. Not necessarily our laws, not necessarily with what we tell each other in secret, but what the media shares about us. (Presentation, 5/21/16)

It was more difficult to observe and assist Rose in her inquiry process, as she was less likely to spend time in the clubhouse, to reach out and ask for help or to share with us where she was with her research, planning and writing. However, our experience with Rose in the first half of the year and her autoethnography project indicated that, while she may be less accountable on paper and in accordance with our suggested checkpoints and deadlines, it did not necessarily mean that Rose was not completing her work or engaging her critical literacies. Rose's progress with her IIP was plagued with incomplete tasks; for example, Rose never formally submitted her project proposal in writing, but rather went through the proposal structure verbally with Karen and me in individual conferences. As in the fall, Rose's inquiry process reflected her struggle with time management, which meant we had less time to support her through effective conferencing and mentoring. Perhaps if we were able to assist her more consistently throughout her inquiry process, we would have been able to challenge her methods of identifying comparative texts for use in her analysis, or in her critical understanding of the data she collated for her study.

Rose's position on the matrix of inquiry and criticality (Figure 2) reflects this tension, indicating both the critical nature of her project and the struggles she faced with her inquiry process. While Rose's project may have been less thorough or developed than Aidan's or Karin's here, the work she did nevertheless is demonstrative of her developing critical literacies. Her

intent to identify and deconstruct media texts as they are representative of that country's culture is entirely reminiscent of an understanding of how texts are produced and read in accordance with constructs of power, and in this case specifically in reflection of gender roles and stereotypes. By selecting a few countries and texts from each, she hoped to gain insight into American culture through a comparative analysis and found that her work became more focused on the selected cultures' similar text consumption. Rose explained this in her final project self-evaluation:

> I was originally planning on pointing out the differences in how gender is experienced in order to understand gender in America a little better, in a more tangible way. My project ended up being more a critique on mindless consumption of media without thinking about what everything means. Additionally, what watching media without thinking can cause and how it can reflect on your values. So while the small amount of theory and the research itself stayed pretty much the same, the point changed when my findings were not what I expected. (Self-evaluation, 6/20/16)

Karin's project was titled "Asexuality and Attraction," and her symposium abstract explained that her work would

> challenge the conventional beliefs regarding relationships and the nature of attraction. With a focus on the Asexual community, we see how it is possible to detangle sexuality from the other aspects of relationships. We will also discuss the Asexual community itself, and why awareness and teaching about the community can aid society as a whole. (Symposium program, 5/21/16)

Karin's presentation began with a quick audience quiz to identify the terms within the LGBTQIA+ spectrum, and a brief discussion of how asexuality has been and currently is

defined. Next she laid out a series of commonly asked questions / misconceptions that she would address throughout her presentation, ultimately synthesizing these issues with her own question for the audience: why is it important to talk about? Her list of questions to be addressed included:

- Are they just repressed gay?
- Are they just unable to find a partner?
- What caused it / is it a choice?
- You just haven't met the right person yet / You'll like it when you're older / when you've tried it.
- So they're forever alone? Just emotionless robots? Plants? (Presentation, 5/21/16)

Karin went through each of these questions and responded to them using information she gathered from her research, as well as from her own personal experience. Next she shared a video with her audience, a speech from the founder of AVEN, whose work was central to her research. As she showed this speech, she interrupted the video in order to focus upon key facts for her audience, making sure, for instance, sure they clearly understood that the website he founded had over 60,000 subscribers. In his talk the founder spoke about the beginning of the community his network established and how people felt being able to find others like themselves. When Karin and I discussed the format of her presentation she indicated that she felt it important to give a lengthy amount of time to the inclusion of this video and his explanation of this particular issue because she wanted her audience to hear from another voice about the feelings of finding inclusion (Memo, 5/6/16). Next Karin reviewed a photo essay and defined different types of attraction: sensual, sexual, aesthetic, and romantic. She stopped to focus on these concepts, and specifically concepts that indicate "sexual and romantic attraction are not inherently linked" (Karin's presentation slides). Then Karin reviewed the results of her survey,

including self-reported Likert-scaled statements such as: “I believe a healthy marriage must involve sexual intercourse.” Karin first gave to an online forum within the LGBTQ community, then distributed 100 to teachers and students currently enrolled in health classes (she did this with her health teacher’s help). She also shared an excerpt of a comment from the survey: “this is why education in our schools and/or just in society in general can increase visibility.”

Karin concluded her presentation with a deliberate question and critical direction for her audience: “Why does it matter? People wish to understand themselves and the things around them. Knowledge about different sexualities and an increased sense of community spreads awareness and decreases the possibility of abuse.” She discussed her position that an over-sexualized society resulted in the effects of letting young people consider that sexual intercourse does not have to be a given expectation for romantic relationships, She ended with the question, “how can I learn more?: and encouraged her audience to go to the AVEN website, look at the books she brought with her, and at her survey results.

Karin’s research blog, her decision-making regarding using data from both East Valley health classes as well as using the same survey with online community audience in the know - showing the difference in responses to the presentation audience. Also the process she went through in writing and revising her survey questions (quote from blog about trying to write unbiased Qs and having her father check it over); data from emails with Karen about checking over Scholar’s research tools.

Discussing Karin’s work in small conferences and with the larger group of Scholars as a whole allowed for interesting insight as to how we (teachers, authority figures) value and gatekeep knowledge in the traditional research process. It was clear that Karin’s research had to extend beyond what she had access to in just our school library, from print and digital database

sources. In fact, Karin frequently ran into obstacles trying to access any information about asexuality while working on the school computers (cite her blog here, frustration about firewalls). In order for Karin to gather data she valued as significant to her inquiry, she needed to be able to cull perspectives from individuals speaking in social media groups outside of the school server. Karin also made the decision to poll and then interview people both inside the school community, specifically those students currently enrolled in health class where they would be exposed to information about sexuality and sexual identities. In choosing to poll individuals both in the local school context and from a social media platform outside the school, Karin was making such decisions is a reflection of her understanding

Much like Aidan, Karin's project demonstrated a level of criticality that surpassed her peers' inquiry projects, in that her driving question and her stated intentions for completing the project spoke directly to her work as moving beyond positioning her work as an informer but instead as an advocate and activist, and calling upon her audience to join her in this pursuit.

In his project titled "The Gay Gift: How Gay Men and the Gay Sensibility Have Contributed to Mainstream American Society," Aidan sought to answer two questions through his inquiry: "How do we conquer the social injustice of the classroom?" and "How have gay men and the gay sensibility as a whole contributed to mainstream American society and culture?" (Table 6). Aidan identified as a gay male, and he explained in the beginning of his paper that he knows

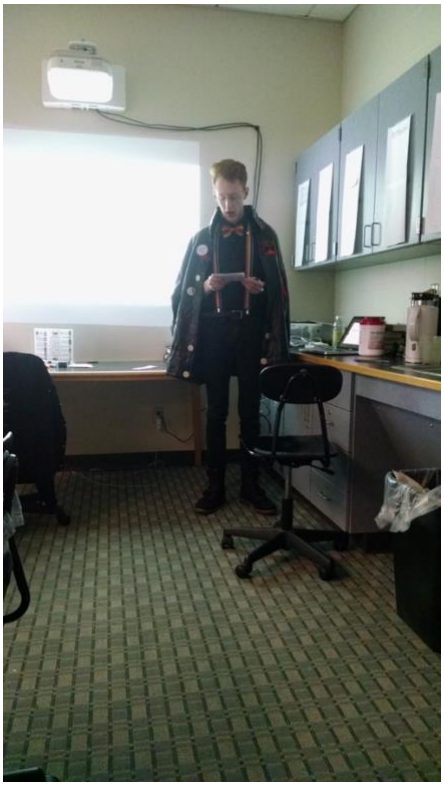
> what it is like growing up as a gay male. This fact makes my project more personal. I am able to speak from my experiences and use them to fuel my research. Arthur Lipkin says it best when he states '...claiming one's authenticity and autonomy is a powerful step toward gaining dignity and freedom for everyone' (Lipkin, 1999)" (IIP,).

Aidan explained that he came into the class knowing that he wanted

> to do something relating to the LGBT+ community. So when I got the call to proposal and found that the purpose of this assignment was to "dismantle the half-truths, inaccuracies, in lies that strangle their [our] concepts about themselves [ourselves] and others…" and to "use the tools of critical literacy to expose, to talk back to, to remedy any act of injustice or intolerance they witness" (Fleming, 2016). I knew that I could kill two birds with one Stonewall. So... the goal of this project is to abolish ignorance" (IIP,).

Aidan began the work on his project much earlier than the other Scholars, since he had more of a grasp on a topic in which he could immerse himself and explore, as called for in the GID framework. Before the December break, he had already ordered 17 books via interlibrary loan with Karen's help, borrowing texts from college libraries (memo). When the group reviewed the "call" and expectations for the proposals, Aidan was way ahead of the game, ready to draft his driving questions. He spent the next three months reading voraciously, taking copious notes, and talking to his Scholar peers in the clubhouse, and to both Jane and me, about everything he was reading and thinking. About halfway through that process, Aidan began talking about the form which his final product and presentation would take, claiming that he wanted to "so something creative" so that the form of the project itself would match the "Gay sensibility" he was studying. It was at this time that Aidan began to talk about constructing the jacket.

Figure 3: Aidan's Independent Inquiry Project: the Jacket



Aidan took a black leather jacket and detailed it with decor that would represent various concepts from his research, explaining that they were meant to prompt discussion of the "Gay gifts" his research addressed, and stating that he had constructed a coat to aid in understanding, calling it "pink panther chic" (Aidan's final written report). The jacket and his matching attire included rainbows "for obvious reasons." But his explanation of this jacket, as a text he critically constructed to speak to his experiences, his inquiry and his project's intention, was "in remembrance for those who have fought for my rights. My rights to be here. My rights to be queer. And my right to be affirmed in a public sphere" (Presentation, 5/21/16). Aidan explained that

> We would not be here if it were not for the past generations who fought and sometimes died in protest, prison, or at the hands of the police for gay liberation. The black leather with sewn on patches is also an homage to the ones worn by those who in the Gay

> Liberation Movement in the 70's and 80's (Steele, 2013). I want to carry on the spirit of said fighters in my essay. These brave men, women, and others who do not identify themselves as part of the gender binary have given so much for this generation to have the rights and opportunities that they themselves never had. So, I want to remember the struggles that they faced and carry on their work in a meaningful way. (IIP, 6/13/19)

In his written Independent Inquiry Project, Aidan explained his process and rationale for constructing his jacket, clearly articulating his very deliberate reasons for each aspect of the fashion text. His inclusion of specific patches to represent individual Gay men and their contributions to American culture allowed him to weave their significance into his presentation and to push back against their exclusion in the regular social studies curriculum. Aidan argued that

> It is my hope that with the knowledge of how Gay people and the Gay sensibility have impacted the majority we will become more accepting. My justification for this logic is best reflected in the words of Arthur Lipkin, "Without genuine dialogue… people's attitudes are less likely to change" (Lipkin, 1999, p. 337). I thoroughly believe that this genuine dialogue is best suited to be in a controlled classroom environment. With this class discussion the walls between "us" and "them" will be broken down even more, leading to a sense of unity as opposed to division. (IIP, 6/13/16)

Aidan's final project demonstrated an enormous amount of attention given to its preparation for the formal symposium presentation. Whereas Jane and I were pulling our hair out to get some of the Scholars to produce and practice (Memo, 5/20/16), Aidan could be found in the clubhouse multiple times a day in the week leading up to the big event, reviewing his flashcards and slides, and rehearsing his lines. He ran through his full presentation several times for me, Jane and his

Scholar peers, in order to elicit feedback for last-minute revisions, and he made thoughtful changes as a result.

From the beginning of his work, Aidan had a self-identified sense of purpose. He knew that what he was researching was important and needed to be communicated to an audience outside the Scholars group, and that awareness focused his efforts and engaged his critical literacies. Aidan's construction of the jacket, as a symbolic representation of both his inquiry and the issues he studied, is indicative of his intention for his audience. Aidan explained that:

> It is my hope that with the knowledge of how Gay people and the Gay sensibility have impacted the majority we will become more accepting. My justification for this logic is best reflected in the words of Arthur Lipkin, "Without genuine dialogue… people's attitudes are less likely to change" (Lipkin, 1999, p. 337). I thoroughly believe that this genuine dialogue is best suited to be in a controlled classroom environment. With this class discussion the walls between "us" and "them" will be broken down even more, leading to a sense of unity as opposed to division (IIP, 6/13/16).

Aidan's recognition of the us-them paradigm speaks to the multiple intentions for the course and our earlier readings about difference. Aidan saw his work as an opportunity to invite meaningful dialog in an academic space that would foster the breakdown of barriers between people who are different from one another.

It is notable to consider that three of the Scholars' projects highlighted above, and at least one other (Sam's project on video games), focused on issues of identity, gender and sexuality. Given that the project topics were in all cases an extension of the Scholars' personal interests and experiences, it potentially says something about the students who chose to take this course. This might also say something about what students are, or are not, permitted to explore in other

contexts in the school. Scholars also discussed the similarities in their project topics as being related to their social positioning in the larger school community. Thinking again back to the their statements qualifying the Clubhouse as their "safe space" in the building (connect back to managing spaces section in chapter 4), it is possible that they came to this class and these projects looking for opportunities to explore and affirm their own experiences as they relate to their gender and sexual identities. For example, after the symposium Aidan said, "I feel like this was the largest scale of academic affirmation of queer identities and I was very happy about it" (Discussion post, 6/2/16). In response to Rose's presentation, Aidan also exclaimed: "You were amazing up there! Your rage against the gender binary and patriarchal structures was very professional and academic!" (Discussion post, 6/2/16).

Looking at the connections between these projects, and especially at those that demonstrate the greatest mastery of and growth in the Scholars' inquiry literacies and critical literacies, it is important to consider the role the school setting and the larger student body had in influencing the Scholars' selection of project topics and purposes. Since many of these students knew and befriended each other outside of the Scholars course, and who had pre-existing relationships with Jane in Book Club and in the library as a physically safer space in the building, is it possible that their interest in critical inquiry determined their success in the course? Did having this course give them a much-needed space and outlet for exploring critical topics, and specifically those related to gender and sexuality, when they couldn't do so in other spaces in the school? Given a different set of Scholars with different backgrounds and personal experiences, would the independent inquiry projects show more diverse attention to other issues around race, ethnicity, language, or ability?

Summary

The findings in these three parts of the chapter all began with a narrative to contextualize the ways in which the Scholars, Jane and I experienced the topics and themes that emerged during data analysis. The first narrative was indicative of the importance of having a reserved space in which the Scholars could meet and work alongside one another and with us as research peers. The second narrative presented a glimpse of the kinds of work the Scholars did with Jane and me when engaging in discourse around challenging texts and exercising critical literacies, The third narrative invited readers into the symposium at which the Scholars presented their independent inquiry projects. In all three narratives, I could only provide a small sense of what the larger picture looked like, but the intention was to introduce the setting and the characters of this story in the way I perceive them in both my teacher's memory and in my research data.

In the next chapter, I present a summary of these findings and establish assertions based upon those findings. Then I discuss the implications of this project for members of school communities (teachers, administrators, literacy leaders), teacher researchers, and teacher educators. I address the limitations of this study, and then I offer a conclusion and suggestions for further research.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Implications

The purpose of this study was to investigate the connections between inquiry learning, classrooms that function as communities of practice, and the development of students' critical literacies. The three research questions I asked in this study were: 1) What characterizes a classroom learning community designed to support adolescents' experiences with inquiry learning? 2) In what ways do adolescents practice critical literacies when engaged with inquiry learning? and 3) What multiple roles does a teacher navigate when working with adolescents developing critical literacies through inquiry learning? Drawing on practitioner inquiry and narrative inquiry, this 10-month study took place in an elective course co-designed by an English teacher and a librarian to support 12th grade students in developing their research skills.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings as presented in chapter 4, to synthesize their significance in answering these research questions, and to consider the implications of the study for practice and research. The first section of chapter 5 presents a summary of the findings for each of the three research questions. The next section discusses these findings and presents assertions that argue for the means by which these research questions have been answered. Then this chapter addresses limitations of this study and discusses the implications of this particular research project and what it means for members of school communities (teachers, administrators, literacy leaders), teacher researchers, and teacher educators. The chapter concludes with suggestions for further research.

Summary of Findings

The findings for this study were presented in three parts. The first part, The Senior Scholars Learning Community, addressed the characteristics of the multiple spaces in which the student participants, the Scholars, engaged in their inquiry and critical literacy work. This

included the ways that the Scholars, Jane, and I navigated the physical spaces of the Clubhouse and seminar meetings and the digital space of the Google Classroom. In this part I also addressed the multiple learning tasks, such as text reflections, autoethnography projects, and biblioquests, that were designed to develop the Scholars' research skills, or what I will now refer to as their inquiry literacies. This section concluded with findings that connected the Scholars' experience with developing their research skills through the phases of inquiry, as designated in the Guided Inquiry Design framework, to their establishment of individualized and purposeful intentions for their projects.

The second part, Developing Adolescents' Critical Literacies, presented findings related specifically to experiences that were intentionally designed to expand their understanding of critical issues and social justice through learning and instruction for critical literacy. This section began with an overview of the multiple texts the Scholars engaged with to introduce them to conversations around race, gender, sexuality, and other forms of difference, as well as invite them to practice their critical literacies in accessing, responding to and analyzing these texts. These findings also described how the Scholars negotiated these texts and their literacies in relationship to their larger school context and how they questioned their role in recognizing and disrupting forms of bias. Concerning the Scholars' Independent Inquiry Projects, this section also presented findings that recognized the potential connection between the criticality of what topics students wanted to research with how, or by which methods, they would engage in their research. This part also presented findings in which Jane and I engaged in similar work by modeling our own stance of inquiry in critical ways and for critical purposes.

The third part, The Senior Scholar Symposium as a Confluence of Inquiry Learning and Critical Literacies, presented findings drawn from the Scholars' Independent Inquiry Projects as

presented at the Symposium. In this section I shared findings displayed in a matrix that represented the potential confluence of the Scholars' work as it demonstrated their development in both their inquiry literacies and in their critical literacies. I considered the various manifestations of the Scholars' work, noting the extent to which each demonstrated emerging, proficient, or sophisticated development of their inquiry and critical literacies. In this section I highlighted the Scholars' work most demonstrative of this successful convergence, from Rose, Karin and Aidan, and I presented findings from similar inquiry topics and methods as related to the larger school context, their positionality in the student body and their academic and personal intentions for their research.

Discussion

This section of the chapter is organized according to the three research questions that drive the study. For each, I discuss the ways in which my analysis of the findings helped me to understand, respond to, and, in many ways, complicate those questions. The first research question asked, what characterizes a classroom learning community designed to support adolescents' experiences with inquiry learning? It would be easy to say, as the Scholars did several times, that the Senior Scholar Seminar class was, as several labeled it, a safe space that allowed the students to feel secure in voicing their perspectives, talking about their own personal and academic experiences, and asking difficult questions without fear of reprisal from their peers or instructors. In doing so, the Scholars were able to practice their inquiry literacies in ways that were welcomed by the group despite their frequent feelings of confusion, indecisiveness, and fear of taking risks. While that assertion may be true, it was more complicated than that. Viewing these findings through the Communities of Practice lens (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) allowed for a more nuanced understanding of how this work depends upon the establishment of

an accommodating classroom setting and community-based interaction between the teachers and students, and among the students themselves as supportive peers. In this study, the Scholars depended upon a classroom that invited them to move from being novices in their inquiry topics to becoming experts – or at least, experts among the group. They would develop the agency necessary for them to see themselves as knowledgeable and confident in their abilities to research and transact with texts in critical ways, they needed to have a space that was characterized by collaboration, flexibility, inclusivity, and perseverance.

While these characteristics may be what practicing teachers wish for their regular classroom instruction and student learning experiences, the reality, in my own experience and observations of my larger school context, is to the contrary. It takes a significant amount of time for a community characterized by these traits to develop; it cannot be done when the work is confined to one research-based writing unit once a school year, as exemplified in Maniotes and Kuhlthau's (2016) Traditional Research Syndrome still so prevalent in many ELA and disciplinary classrooms in the US. The same is true for the establishment of community through routine and continued collaboration. Whether students are working on independent or group-implemented projects, they need to function as a team that works together to brainstorm, problem-solve and construct new knowledge for purposes larger than just themselves and their grades. They must act as their own critical friends, which requires they have established working relationships with each other and their instructors. These relationships are necessarily characterized by trust and mutual intent; in this case: curiosity, passion, and, as seen in the discussion of the second research question, a desire to read and respond critically to the world around them.

The Scholars' ability to navigate their assignments throughout the year, and the growth in their own willingness to take risks in their research for the construction of their Independent Inquiry Projects, speaks to these characteristics of collaboration, flexibility, inclusivity, and perseverance, as well as their developing agency in being able to identify and reflect upon these characteristics. The Scholars' success depended upon their ability to consciously recognize their developing inquiry and critical literacies, and their willingness to support one another in this process. While Jane and I might have theorized as such before implementing this study, it was difficult to demonstrate this without having these data and subsequent findings. We had been operating on assumptions based upon our own past practice and familiarity with the literature, but we had not been able to enact those ideas in sustained ways to really test them.

Indeed, it is terribly challenging to advocate for learning experiences based in systemic, theoretical change without first having tried it, especially when working with practitioner colleagues who are searching for new means of instruction but who don't have the time to navigate the research on top of their already overwhelming teaching duties. What can support colleagues, however, is sharing with them the experiences of students through these narratives, anecdotal evidence, and student work as seen here in this study. If Jane and I can invite more colleagues into doing this work with us, to create more frequent opportunities for students to showcase their critical inquiry work, then they will have a greater chance to see how approaching research assignments from this critical stance, as both teachers and students, can better assist those students in developing their inquiry literacies and critical literacies.

The second research question asked, in what ways do adolescents practice critical literacies when engaged with inquiry learning? Answering this question proved to be the most challenging part of the study, in that I had to first consider my own positionality and its effect on

the study's design and intention. As a critical pedagogue, I had always looked at inquiry learning models as being critical. I had always aligned them in my own theory and practice with student work that was in response to reading texts about critical issues, responding to text in critical ways, and using critical literacies. Or, I relied upon inquiry learning models to assist students in the production of texts for critical and subsequently disruptive or activist purposes. However, that is not necessarily the case; historically speaking, inquiry learning models have not consistently been used for critical purposes, although they certainly can be. This kind of introspective analysis was one of the very important ways I worked with Jane throughout the study to check my own biases and understanding, and I relied heavily upon the writing of weekly memos to do this work.

Once I was able to consider the role my own perspective and experience played in wanting to do work that was critical, I was able to better understand the different ways in which my students' work represented that possible convergence between inquiry literacies and critical literacies. The matrix in Figure 1 displays the tension between these two literacies. Student inquiry can be done for informational purposes only, so that students can dive deep into a topic and strive to know more about it. Depending upon the content and objective of a particular course and learning unit, this may be a sufficient goal for the student inquiry, and they may engage in a delightfully satisfying passion project. But we want students to do more than learn about an issue; we want them to construct and share new knowledge that prompts students to engage in action. As critical, inclusive and antiracist pedagogues, we want students' research projects to be both inquisitive and critical. Inquiry can exist without criticality, but research about critical issues without sophisticated inquiry runs the risk of being only performative. That is, when students engage in inquiry projects about critical issues but are not able to engage in the

multiple and complex components of inquiry learning as presented in the various instructional models, those students run the risk of doing critical work in superficial and potentially damaging ways. For example, this was the very fear Joanna experienced when she considered a different topic for her Independent Inquiry Project; she was worried that her inability to clearly understand issues of race and class, as they compared to her own position of privilege, would result in work that was unjust or capitalizing from others' lived experiences. While Jane and I might have argued that her very understanding of that conflict spoke to her developing critical literacies, Joanna's concern demonstrated a clear understanding between practicing her process of inquiry and having a critical purpose for her inquiry.

Additionally student researchers must employ their information literacy to locate, evaluate, and use information carefully and thoroughly in the texts they create. If their information is poorly conceived, synthesized, or communicated, they run the risk of misinforming others or presenting arguments that are conceptually or rhetorically flawed. For example, Sam and Kristen took on projects of a critical nature, focusing respectively on gender in video games and the media's role in female body image. However, their potentially nuanced understanding of the issues they chose to study was most likely inhibited by the challenges they encountered when engaging in the research for their project, and in developing their inquiry literacies. In both cases, they had ideas and intentions for their projects that reflected their potentially developing critical literacies, but their less developed kinds of inquiry learning prevented their projects from being as comparably sophisticated as other Scholars. If Sam and Kristen had engaged in a greater amount or depth of locating and evaluating information, in practicing greater self-direction in their learning, in interpreting and synthesizing new information and in constructing their presentation texts, then perhaps they could have also

attained, and therefore communicated to their audience, a more nuanced understanding of the critical issues in their projects. If their research had involved a more critical understanding of the information they found and synthesized, then their arguments could have been more thoroughly constructed and would have been more inclusive of varying perspectives and experiences. Perhaps if Jane and I had been more confident in our intention or successful in our attempts to support them during their inquiries, then they could have further developed both their inquiry literacies and critical literacies, and ultimately their projects would have been positioned differently on the matrix.

If students cannot engage in reflective practices while conducting research for assignments, then they cannot approach their learning through a continual stance of inquiry that positions them as open to suggestions and constructive criticism, or that allows them to embrace their potentially flawed thinking and learn from their mistakes. The Scholars whose work was most representative of developing both their inquiry literacies and critical literacies, like Aidan and Karin, showed evidence of this. If students do not develop the literacy competencies to read and analyze challenging texts and to write or produce compelling work of their own, then they will not be able to create work that speaks passionately to those issues of social justice with which they resonate.

The third research question asked, what multiple roles does a teacher navigate when working with adolescents developing critical literacies through inquiry learning? The answer to this question is threaded across all three sections of the findings in chapter 4, and is not limited to one narrative, one emergent theme, or one category of data. In order to work with adolescents to develop their critical literacies explicitly using inquiry learning experiences, teachers must be able to navigate multiple and constantly shifting roles, as well as adopt an inquiry stance in their

instruction. In order for students to develop their inquiry literacies, they have to practice making the decisions we as teachers and researchers do every day: to choose which texts to read, to categorize information and look for patterns, to analyze the authors' or producers' use of language, to consider what arguments to make to a particular audience, and so on. As one Scholar said, they may still need a map to get where they want to go, but at some point we have to let them take the wheel and call the shots. And when they get lost, we have to support them in relying upon the literacies they have to identify their mistakes and correct their course. Students cannot learn to do that if they are not getting the guided practice it takes to learn how to respond in those instances.

When teachers use an inquiry learning instructional model, the students are not fending for themselves in some poorly implemented form of free learning as is sometimes suggested by its critics (Kirschner, Sweller & Clark, 2006). Rather, the teacher is inviting the student to share with her the role of inquirer and to approach one's learning with an inquiry stance. This was the case for both Jane and me: we consciously chose to invite the Scholars into approaching all of their learning, not just one research assignment, from a stance of inquiry. As a teacher researcher whose entire pedagogy is informed by practitioner inquiry, it was only natural that I would want my students to engage in the same reflective practice – to consistently and constantly question their interaction with and subsequent construction of new knowledge.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to this study that should be addressed here. The first limitation has to do with the context in which the study is set and the pilot course under examination. The study might have been different if I was able to have a greater number of student participants and possibly a greater variety of student experiences, behaviors, motivations,

and interests. Having this greater variety might have affected the study differently when it came time to understand the development of the students' critical literacies as well as their greater awareness and appreciation of critical issues for potential inquiry topics. It also would have been helpful to see if the demographic makeup of the participants could more closely mirror the student body in the school at large, given that the Scholars' discourse often involved interrogating their role within the school community and their inquiry projects were often designed in response to those dynamics. However, it is just as likely that Jane and I would not have been able to keep up with many more, given the course's pilot status and our already demanding teaching load.

Another limitation of the study was my own identity and positionality, as well as the working and personal relationship I had with my colleague and co-researcher, librarian Jane Miller. As we are both self-identified educators for social justice, I had to consider our position and perspectives when interacting with students, and especially those Scholars who do not approach text and the world around us with the same lenses that we do. For example, it took me quite a while to realize that I had been looking at inquiry instructional practice as being inherently critical in nature, when that wasn't necessarily the case.

Working with a colleague as a research partner in this study had both its affordances and constraints. While Jane was an absolutely conscientious collaborator, I sometimes took for granted that she would know or understand my intentions when making decisions about the study's design or the methods for collecting and maintaining data. For example, she graciously and willingly completed the training that allowed her to be named as a member of the research team on the IRB, so that she could be the one to conduct the Scholars' final semi-structured interviews. I designed the protocols, and while I thought I had done enough to assist Jane in her

knowledge about how to implement the interviews, I was later disappointed with the length of each and found many places where, had I been the one to conduct the interviews, I would have prodded the Scholar to speak more descriptively or to add clarification to their response so as to elicit more specific data. I suspect that the brevity of these interviews was due to the timing as much as to whether or not Jane had been effectively prepared by me to manage the protocol, given that they were completed in the last two weeks of the school year with 12th grade students looking ahead to graduation.

The study was designed to accompany a year-long pilot course in a high school setting, implemented by me, a full-time public-school teacher and part-time doctoral candidate. At the time, this seemed manageable and beneficial, as a strength of teacher research can be found in the researcher's close knowledge of and connection with the study's context and participants (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Goswami, Lewis, Rutherford & Waff, 2009). It also seemed as if the study would benefit from what is part of the very organic nature of successful planning, instruction and assessment - in that effective teaching involves routine and continual reflexive practice by practitioners who are constantly self-monitoring and checking their moves to make appropriate adjustments of methods and to meet students' needs. However, given the demands of both implementing the pilot course itself and acting as head researcher in collecting and managing all relevant data, in addition to the regular responsibilities of a full-time teaching load, the reality is that I was setting myself up for what, oftentimes, seemed to be insurmountable struggle. My intentions were sound, and like most habits of instructional planning, it started off well - but as the year progressed and the details to manage became more complex in number and scope, so did I struggle to keep all the metaphorical balls up in the air.

Keeping organized, typed weekly memos that spoke to the number of moves I encountered with Jane and my Scholars was troublesome, to say the least. Even though I made notes throughout my teaching days as best I could, creating the time to deliberately synthesize these observations into weekly organized narratives of the week's experience became more and more burdensome as the school year went on and as the project grew. Perhaps another teacher-researcher with different dispositions for managing details would have fared differently, but in my case it became an overwhelming and stressful condition that affected my confidence in being able to conduct the research project in and of itself. This meant that some weeks my memos were well-written, fully constructed narratives that spoke from my teacher-researcher voice, while other weeks my memos were a messy list of bulleted thoughts or to-dos, resembling text cut directly from the scores of emails Jane and I shared back and forth (and which consequently became part of the larger data set). These memos were still just as valuable when it came to what they could contribute to the full data set and to data analysis, but the inconsistency left me wanting and wishing I had structured the study's timeframe differently. A few months into the project I found that one of the best ways to create the time in my schedule to attend to research details was to engage in voice recordings of my observations at the end of the day using a handheld recorder and speaking my reflections as I drove the commute home. This was one of the only times during my day I was without interruption from other responsibilities that often took precedence over data management, such as intrusions from administrators or other teachers during my planning time, or requests for assistance from my students in my regular classes. Once I found this way of producing my memos, it became much easier to manage the data. I would use this method again in future practitioner inquiry studies, and I would encourage other teacher researchers to do the same.

In addition to the practicality of data collection and management, the study also had limitations in terms of its size and whether or not it could truly be accomplished by a practicing teacher under these conditions so different from the traditional teaching assignment. While I had hoped for between 15-20 student participants and a handful of faculty participants working with the project as Scholar mentors, there were only 9 students ultimately enrolled in the course and as participants in the study. While the Scholars' experiences were rich and the data illuminating, it is difficult to tell whether or not such findings could be attributed factors aside from those variables controlled by the design, without being able to replicate the entire design in subsequent school years. Jane and I tried to run a second cohort of the Senior Seminar course during the following school year in 2016-2017, but we encountered numerous obstacles to being able to implement and manage the experience to the same intensity as we did during the pilot, and we had to close the experience halfway through the year. We did replicate the Scholar group and the Symposium event on a much smaller scale this past spring, hosting a modified version of the Senior Scholar Showcase at our own high school in May 2019, redesigned so that current students could attend breakout sessions and be exposed to the inquiry work their peers had been doing (an important aspect we found lacking in the original project design). While these most recent students were thrilled with their work and in many cases engaged in projects even further along the spectra of inquiry and criticality, the event itself was without the same luster of achievement as the first one presented here.

I cannot overstate this significance: that Jane and I struggled to replicate the study ourselves, in the same context and with a similar set of student participants, given the number of variables and outside influences competing for our time, attention and resources. Perhaps we would have been more successful if I had been implementing this complicated study entirely

from the position of a visiting researcher, who was not also trying to teach a full course load while managing all the study's moving parts. If that were the case, then perhaps I could have designed and implemented the study from a formative and design experiment framework, one that would have included a deliberate structure to account for the analysis of data from a first phase of an instructional intervention that could then be applied to the implementation of a second phase (Reinking & Bradley, 2008). However, the reality is that teaching has to occur in this messy and indefinite process, and research-informed teaching requires a practitioner who is capable of approaching her work from multiple positions.

Implications

There was much to be gained from this study, and it holds many implications for further research. In this section, I discuss the ways in which this study contributes to the ongoing scholarship concerning inquiry learning, classrooms as communities of practice, and adolescents' critical literacies by addressing how this project could inform various stakeholders, including students, teachers and literacy leaders or administrators in school communities, teacher researchers, and teacher educators working in literacy and/or English education programs. I also address how this study has and continues to affect my own teaching. I conclude this section with recommendations for what each population can do to address these issues and to make both immediate and sustaining change.

For practitioners. The Scholars' greatest recommendation to each other and to future cohorts of the Senior Seminar class was to plan for more time to do all of the work involved in their assignments. While they might have been speaking more to their own sense of time management (or as they put it, their lack thereof), I would agree in recommending that schools interested in offering more creative opportunities for inquiry learning experiences like the Senior

Seminar class be very conscious of the significance time plays in scheduling such projects. In general, teachers find it very difficult to enact inquiry learning models in schools that maintain a 40-min, 8-period a day bell schedule. It takes time and space to do the kind of exploration of resources and materials to stimulate thinking that leads to a thoroughly-informed guided question. When there isn't enough literal time built into a class period or flexibility into the curriculum, that is when teachers resort to providing students with the resources to read, analyze, summarize and regurgitate in research papers. I know from my own experience that teachers are forced to take these shortcuts in managing the time necessary to practice and then assess the skills in short, performative ways, which robs students of the opportunity to slowly and deliberately practice making the decisions necessary leading up to those exercises, such as taking paraphrased notes and practicing in-text citations. Teachers need support in knowing how to redesign their curriculum and instruction to move their traditionally implemented, research-based writing units and subsequent papers into learning experiences that are driven by inquiry learning. To do so, they need thorough and sustaining professional development.

This redesign of curriculum needs to go further than just switching out lessons or units, and rewriting the research paper assignment so that all the steps align with the process found in an inquiry learning model. Instead, teachers need to adopt an approach to their teaching and their students' learning that is driven entirely by a stance of inquiry. As Maniotes and Kuhlthau (2014) explain, teachers can't just turn inquiry on for one unit and then back off again for the rest of the year, and expect their work to be done well. Just as Cochran-Smith and Lytle advocate for teacher research to be embedded in an approach that positions the practitioner researcher as having, or teaching from or existing in a stance of inquiry, so too does the act of inviting students

into that same process. How can we hope to approach our learning as teachers from this inquisitive position, and not allow our students the same dignity? Asking students to take a stance of inquiry means inviting them to question and challenge the very instructional design and purpose of their classes and assignments. In other words, once students have been able to question authority by engaging in a sustained inquiry project, it will (and should) be hard to expect them to go back to a docile acceptance of whatever the one teacher or authority presents as being the whole truth. And that's exactly what we want: students who are self-empowered to question the status quo, recognize inequities where they are present, and use their learning experiences as opportunities to speak out, share their experience and advocate for the change they see as necessary.

In addition to supporting teachers in their professional development as means for fostering growth in inquiry learning instructional practices, school administrators would do well to reconsider the ways in which they can affect the physical spaces of the school to make this kind of work easier for their teachers and students. Part of the success the Scholars experienced came from working together in the Clubhouse. They were able to manage themselves in this space much differently than they would have in a typical classroom setting. Our reality is that there were few, if any, academic spaces in the building where students could engage in multiple levels of flexible control over themselves. Jane and I are excited at the prospect of our district's capital project, which will include a major redesign of classroom spaces and the library for this very purpose. The classrooms are designed to include small breakout spaces for student groups to collaborate, both during class and on their own time as their schedules allow. The library is being designed so that the spaces can be used in multiple ways, from quiet study corrals to large student group work spaces with flexible seating, moveable panel walls and white boards,

multiple monitors and casting technology for collaborative project work. This design better reflects what college libraries, or learning commons, look and feel like. The plans even include spaces for student and teacher socializing, gallery spaces for student displays, and a snack bar. Members of the planning committee (on which both Jane and I serve) have discussed the significance of creating common learning spaces that foster collaboration and community, ones that make students feel welcomed and dignified, rather than policed and shushed. Such a design would be much closer to establishing the library space as a learning commons that operates more like a true community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Changes to the bell schedule, curriculum, and physical setting in which students learn are necessary, but if teachers cannot approach English language arts and disciplinary instruction with a critical pedagogy, then this work will continue to only look student-centered and research-informed. Teachers need support in reimagining their content and the subsequent curriculum exposure to critical topics and issues are included earlier and more consistently. This will give students more practice earlier at developing their critical literacies, rather than wait until students are significantly older, and then only gatekeeping such experiences for students in the advanced level classes. But this work must be done carefully as well, and needs deliberate, thoughtful and sustained professional development to do so effectively, that offers teachers an opportunity to examine their own positionality and the lenses through which they teach and read the world around them. Muhammad (2020) explains that "if teachers engage in the teaching of criticality, it is necessary that they assume an active and critical stance in their own lives. It is impossible to teach students to have a Critical lens if teachers don't have one themselves" (p. 131). Otherwise, the inclusion of learning activities for the sake of addressing critical literacy without doing so from an inclusive or antiracist pedagogy could reify positions of privilege and, in the

case of critical literacy being applied to learning specifically around issues of race, could smack of white saviorism.

For researchers. This study also holds several implications for potential teacher researchers and teacher educators. For practitioners engaged in additional graduate study, or who are considering their own action research project perhaps as connected to professional development, allow me to make a few statements and suggestions. First and foremost, the research community needs you, and your work can and will be a significant contribution to the academy. Your knowledge and experience is valid, and your voice and perspective is welcomed by many.

That acknowledged, this study demonstrates the difficulty of managing the methods necessary for simply collecting and organizing data, and especially in terms of the design. I would suggest starting out smaller and practicing the experience of engaging in formal teacher research in smaller doses. Perhaps rather than take on a year-long pilot study, the teacher researcher would be better served to design a smaller, tighter project around one specific learning experience or instructional unit. Doing so would allow the teacher researcher to practice managing the logistics of the study, such as collecting, organizing and reflecting upon data more consistently. Doing so might help the teacher researcher from becoming overwhelmed at the prospect, as I often felt during my study and while trying to manage demands of my regular teaching load. Had my advisor suggested I plan differently? Sure she did. Did I listen? No. But just as the purpose of this Scholars' seminar course was for them to learn through their own, personally-mediated experiences, so was this dissertation project an opportunity for me to learn through my own decision-making and consequences. As a result I would advocate that teacher researchers approach their stance of inquiry with a long term strategy; they should start with

small, more manageable projects in order to deliberately develop the necessary and most effective research methods. Then, as they become more adept at the logistical details of managing a study, they could take on something more ambitious and implement a study designed to investigate more sustained teaching and learning practices.

There are also implications for teacher educators to be found in this work. In all the work I did for this project, from my initial reviews of the pre-existing literature, to the data analysis and synthesis of my findings, I kept coming back to what I know had been my own experience. In my early years of teaching, I never felt adequately prepared to teach young people how to do research or to write research-based texts for assignments. I simply replicated what I had experienced and what I saw other teachers do before me and alongside me. This can no longer be siloed into one assignment, once a year; it needs to be adopted as a stance, a position to take and employ all year long.

This can and should be done as we consider where inquiry instructional models fit into English education and literacy education programs, and specifically where there are opportunities to develop pre-service teachers' understanding of assessment literacy practices. Assessment literacy lest we replicate the same processes we went through, and continue to teach using the research paper packet method.

Another way in which we can support pre-service teachers' development is to consider the convergence between inquiry learning, critical literacies, and antiracist pedagogy - or, instruction implemented from the position of an antiracist, defined as "one who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea" (Kendi, 2019, p. 22). Kendi further explains that individuals "can knowingly strive to be an antiracist. Like fighting an addiction, being an antiracist requires persistent self-awareness, constant self-criticism, and

regular self-examination" (p. 23). This definition aligns with the intended goals of developing students' critical literacies and this projects' investigation of using inquiry learning models to assist students in this work. Pandya (2019) explains that "at the moment, we critical literacy educators are on the outside looking critically and somewhat enviously into schools, unable to effect larger changes or to effect changes that are not instantly co-opted and appropriated into something easily assessed." (p. 199). Just as with in-service teachers, it is important for pre-service teachers to learn how to employ agitation literacies and antiracist pedagogy, and to model for and create / invite into this work future coconspirators (Love, 2019; Muhammad, 2019; Morrell, 2017). If we are to ask students to engage in critical inquiry, to apply their inquiry literacies and critical literacies to issues they value as important to their communities, then we must prepare future English teachers to see student research as being done as inquiry and for critical purposes. We cannot allow preservice teachers to understand engaging students in research as only preparing summative, expository reports that meet a pre-determined and static set of criteria. Or, that research-based papers are only for the sake of writing literary analyses, citing the experts. Our students must learn to see inquiry as a continuous process and means for responding to their world, wondering what if, and why, and how, and what next. Regardless of where their projects fell on the matrix in terms of their inquiry and criticality, the Scholars' work and personal development demonstrated a potential shift in conducting research for activist purposes. Students who approach their learning, their school community and their larger world from a stance of inquiry see themselves as agents of change, and it is our responsibility as English educators to prepare English teachers who can welcome young people into this work alongside us.

For me. The implications of this study for me and my practice are extensive. From the very beginning when Jane and I first conceived of the Senior Scholars Research Seminar course and my first attempts at writing the proposal for this study, to now as I finish this report, I have felt the influence of this work on my day to day teaching. In fact, the impact of this experience has been so pervasive that I have difficulty determining where specifically the boundaries lie between my classroom teaching as being grounded in a stance of inquiry, and the project-specific work I completed with Jane and the Scholars. My instruction has been undeniably affected by this study; for example, I speak differently about the intentions for conducting research with my students for class assignments, and I model differently for them as well. I have not told my students in a long time what exactly their inquiries should look like, nor have I set forth an arbitrary list of required elements; now, I no longer feel bad about it. I position myself as a peer and learner who is just as curious and excited to learn about a topic as they are, and I work to move the purpose of our inquiry away from task completion and acquisition of high grades. I allow myself to publicly struggle with setbacks and obstacles during research, and in those instances, I invite my students to troubleshoot with me.

This study has also helped me develop into the teacher and researcher I am now, one who identifies as a struggling-but-striving, inclusive, antiracist educator and one who teaches for social justice. My approach to my own teaching and my students' learning through a stance of inquiry has positioned me to be able to interrogate my own complicity in institutional forms of oppression, and it has allowed me to question my practice in ways that help me move from acting in performative allyship to doing the work as a coconspirator (Love, 2019). In their study of collaborative composition and the reification of oppressive values in a high school LGBTQ-themed literature course, Blackburn and Schey (2018) addressed the significance of vulnerability

in doing this kind of critical work. For the purposes of their study, they identified vulnerability as entailing the "individual experiences of emotions such as anxiety" but additionally as including the sociocultural characteristics of "social relationships where people are open to some sort of risk" (pp. 337-338). In reference to the study's experiences for collaborative composition, Blackburn and Schey explained that the course

> provided opportunities for interrogating oppressive values, such as cissexism and racism. Whether those opportunities were taken up, though, depended on whether vulnerability was shared by the group or imposed on an individual. When it was shared by the group, vulnerability was embraces, and oppressive values were effectives interrogated. When vulnerability was imposed on an individual in the group, oppressive values were reified, not only by the individual but by other people in the group. When vulnerability shifted from the group to an individual, there was ambivalence toward the work of interrogating and reifying oppressive values. (p. 354)

I recognize this shared vulnerability as being part of what made the Senior Scholars learning community effective during this study, and I see it as what I am trying to implement in my classroom teaching now as an inclusive and antiracist, critical pedagogue. The work my Scholars did then to simultaneously develop their inquiry literacies and critical literacies, as well as what my colleagues, current students and I are doing now to disrupt the ELA curriculum with the development of agitation literacies depends upon this shared vulnerability. If I have learned anything from this study that I can apply to my classroom teaching, it is that the kinds of inquiry learning addressed in inquiry instructional models like Guided Inquiry Design creates the conditions necessary for this critically activist work, and that we teachers should do this literacy work boldly, and without apology.

Conclusion

In detailing her experiences using narrative inquiry in her research, Sara Brock (2011) reflected upon her own journey with her family, memory, and the practice of telling stories. She narrates that:

> Lately I have also been witnessing the fragility of that part of the mind that lets us narrate, as I hear my father's storytelling strained by neurological disease and heavy medication. Sentences get interrupted, memories get scrambled, beginnings and endings get misplaced - scenes from one child's life get grafted onto another, so my daughter's infancy and my own get confused. On good days, visits with his granddaughter inspire him to tell stories I've never heard before, sometimes bringing back to life my own grandmother, whom I never got to know very well. (p. 48)

In this depiction of storytelling, Brock concedes to the challenges we face when struggling to remember the way things happened. Qualitative researchers take great pains to account for these challenges: collecting thousands of pages of data in the form of memos, field notes, interviews, documents, emails, photos, videos, etc. I did the same, and I spent hours trying to recreate the feeling and experience of being a teacher in this context, of being a colleague to my friend Jane, and to being a budding researcher in her first attempt to design and manage a study. I wrestled with writing about my students in ways that honored their experiences and told their truths. I hope to have done them all justice, and all I can do from this point forward is to feel confident in knowing that this experience is just one more chapter in my larger story, that I am telling it now as I am best positioned to do so, at this very moment.

In future chapters, perhaps I will be positioned differently, with greater experience as a researcher and with a more nuanced understanding of the theory and literature that informs my

work. Perhaps I will be better able to manage the logistics of running a study and of simultaneously teaching in my K-12 world. Perhaps I will feel like I have a better command over my own work-life balance, my mental health and my wellness so that I can negotiate all of these identities more effectively. Maybe. In the meantime, I will continue along and engage with my world as a practitioner inquirer, as a teacher researcher, as a critical pedagogue and an inclusive, antiracist educator, and I will continue to invite my students and my colleagues to join me in our community. Thank you for reading our story, and as the saying goes, to be continued.

Appendix A

Senior Scholar Research Seminar - Course Design

Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Guiding Question: What is my relationship with learning? **Topics / Themes:** Learning theories, critical literacy, information literacy, social inequities **Weekly Classwork:** Google Classroom group discussions, written reflections Biblioquests Weekly readings, related assignments **Assessments:** ***Autoethnography*** Multimodal representation of students' exploration into previous learning experiences and preferences ***Self-Assessment*** Written evaluation of the autoethnography product, guided by reflective questions and criteria-based rubric ***Collaborative Critical Inquiry*** A group inquiry designed to practice information literacy and inquiry design ***Group Assessment*** Group review and feedback in response to the collaborative project ***Research Proposal*** Formal call for project request, inc research question, research plan, data sources, and projected significance	**Guiding Question:** How do I take ownership of my inquiry? **Topics / Themes:** independently selected **Independent Classwork:** Google Classroom responses Research Blogs Source reading, notetaking, organizing Presentation preparation **Assessments**: ***Annotated Bibliography*** List of sources with brief descriptions and rationales for their inclusion / exclusion ***Project Map / Plan; Rough Draft*** Student-selected visual representation of the paper/presentation's structure, pre-writing, drafting of sections ***Visual Aids & Presentation Rehearsal*** Construction of presentation tools (slides, handouts, web-based platform, notecards); deliver presentation to Scholar audience for criticlafriends feedback ***Presentation*** 30-minute prepared presentation at conference ***Final Paper*** Research paper (requirements determined by the Scholars) suitable for submission to an undergraduate conference or as a journal article

APPENDIX B

Senior Scholar Seminar, Fall 2015
Project #1: Autoethnography

Context for the project:
In these first few weeks of our research seminar, we've discussed several concepts that get at our understanding of what we like to learn and how we like to learn it. We've considered the role of play in our learning spaces and experiences, as well as the significance of motivation in driving our learning. We've done some work with personality testing and looked for examples of how our personality traits speak to our preferences for learning inside and outside of the classroom.

Now it's time to dig a little deeper, to explore how and why we are the learners that we have become.

The AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHY is a text you produce that represents an analysis of your "self" (AUTO) as understood through the lense of your "culture" (ETHNO). Since you are capable of being many different selves and you exist in many different cultural spaces, we are going to limit this project to one specific version of you: ***your identity as a learner.*** In other words, how are you the learner that you are, as a direct or indirect result of the cultural (learning) experiences you've had? Or, think of it another way: how have your experiences - in school, as part of a family, in other organizations - given you the personality you have and made you the kind of learner you are?

And so, the **Driving Question** for this project is:

How have I become the learner I am now?

Project Goals:
The purpose of this project is to communicate to ourselves and to one another what we understand about ourselves as learners - who we are, and how we've become the learners we are now. In creating such a project, we ask ourselves the difficult questions and take the opportunity to better understand ourselves through serious reflection and analysis, thereby giving us greater ability to grow as learners throughout the rest of the Senior Scholar course.

Questions for focus:
WHAT should your project be about?
It should be "about" the collective experiences that have made you the you/learner you are now. Therefore it should highlight:

- aspects of your personality
- traits and behaviors typical of your learner identity
- details from experiences that have affected you, shaped you
- analysis and careful reflection about this relationship between who you are and what you've experienced / where and how you've developed
- connection to your future self and spaces as a learner

HOW should you communicate your ideas?
You've seen or read about a few examples of what could count as AUTO-ETHNOgraphy; most of them conform to narrative style, but there are certainly other ways of presenting your narrative

experiences. Consider expressing your content / ideas (see the WHAT above) in one, or a mix, of the following formats:

- personal narrative, memoir, poetic, dramatic dialogue, philosophical essay
- interpretive performance - spoken word, dance, monologue, etc.
- fine arts media - painting, songwriting, sculpting, digital storytelling, video essay
- graphic, quantitatively representational - charts, formulae, architectural rendering
- think metaphorically!

WHY are we doing these projects?

Remember, these are to help us better communicate about our learning to each other, and by extension, to our selves. Also, please keep in mind that, depending upon the medium you select, if may be necessary to provide an additional written text to explain your choices to your audience, so that they may better understand your thinking.

Evaluation:

As is the case for the entire class, your grade will be determined as having either Passed or Failed, meaning it still needs revision until it meets your / our classroom community's expectations. How will you know when it's finished? What will be acceptable to you?

PLEASE NOTE: I won't tell you how long it has to be, how big it has to be, or anything of the kind. If you want to talk out what you think it should be to fairly represent your experiences, come chat. Or chat with each other - even better.

A word about PROCESS:

Everyone has their own. That said, everyone could benefit from practicing and refining one's process, especially as the work you do gets more sophisticated. That is why you will be expected to report out about your PROCESS and PROGRESS at least twice between now and the project's due date, using discussion board posts and in-class discussions.

Important Dates:

_____	10/28, Wed -	Progress report #1, individual conference w/ Mrs/Ms F
_____	11/2, Mon -	Progress report #2
_____	11/6, Fri -	autoethnography draft, second conf. w/ Mrs/Ms F
_____	11/16-17, M/T	Final project
_____	11/19	reflection

APPENDIX C

Senior Scholars: Autoethnography: Self-evaluation and Reflection

DIRECTIONS:
Make a save a new copy of this document for yourself - don't forget to rename it w/ your last name. Then, **1.** answer the questions and score yourself using the rubric below. **2.** Give yourself a rating for each criterion by highlighting the background color of your selected panel. Lastly, **3.** we ask you to write a reflective memo - perhaps in the form of a **Dear M(r)s F letter**… addressing your thoughts, feelings and wishes concerning this project and the course so far. You may attach that to the end of this document. When you've finished, be sure to submit this to the Google Classroom assignment. Thanks!

1. During this process, did you come to an understanding (or a better understanding, perhaps) of something about yourself that you didn't quite fully know before? If so, what was that? If not, why not?

2. Concerning the personal aspect of many of your presentations, how does this make you feel about us as a community of learners? How, if at all, did this challenge you, and how does this inform your understanding of how community relates to learning?

3. If you could do the project again, what would you do differently?

4. What are you most proud of?

	1: something's missing	2: pretty good, needs some work	3: it's a job well done	4: goes above and beyond
Use of Personal Experiences	1	2	3	4
Referencing the Socio-cultural context	1	2	3	4
Analyzing w/ a Theoretical Lens	1	2	3	4
Mode of Presentation	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX D

East Valley* Senior Scholar Research Symposium
2016 Call for Proposals

CRITICAL INQUIRIES FOR CRITICAL COMMUNITIES

Saturday, May 21st, 2016

Theme Description

In discussing Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's idea of critical dialogue, Linda Christensen (2000) explained that, "beyond illumination, students must use the tools of critical literacy to dismantle the half-truths, inaccuracies, and lies that strangle their conceptions about themselves and others. They must use the tools of critical literacy to expose, to talk back to, to remedy any act of injustice or intolerance that they witness" (p. 55). In keeping with this understanding of what it means to be critical thinkers and researchers, the symposium invites proposals from Scholars using an inquiry stance to interrogate an issue of significance to their learning community, as defined by one's classroom, school, neighborhood and/or culture. Such critical inquiries work in conjunction to drive our education away from the banking system of teaching and learning (Freire, 2000), and instead toward the creation of schools as critical communities, spaces in which learners collaborate in questioning the existing paradigms of knowledge and power. Critical inquirers ask, whose truth matters? And, how can we contribute? In so doing, critical inquirers seek to better their communities by engaging in a truly democratic dialog, one nurtured by purposeful research and reflection.

Proposal Guidelines

Proposals for conference papers and presentations should address the following:

A. Your study's purpose or rationale
a. a description of the issue, context, circumstance, and/or problem
b. a driving question(s) that your research seeks to answer
B. Perspectives or theoretical framework
. this depends upon your topic and subject matter; for example, if you're studying something about literature, are you being informed by a certain critical theory - like poststructuralism or queer theory? If you're studying a social phenomenon, are you being influenced by a psychological or sociocultural theory?
a. this places your research into a larger context, or discussion, about your topic and research question(s) - what's going on in the existing conversation?
C. Methods or techniques
. this is the discussion of HOW you will conduct your research - how you intend to seek data/information to help you answer your research question
a. this should align with the academic expectations for your topic
b. this should also explain WHY you're choosing these methods
D. Data sources
. list the informational / secondary sources you will consult (texts, databases, journals, online resources
a. list the social sources you will use (participants) and the type of data you will collect (as outlined in methods above - interview, observation field notes, survey, etc); discuss access & permission
E. Preliminary implications of the research
. you're conjecturing here - based upon your preliminary reading in your OPEN, IMMERSE and EXPLORE inquiry phases, what do you expect to find?
a. why is this worth exploring?
F. Interest or connection to the audience
. why is your research of interest to other people - and especially to the East Valley audience?
a. how does your study fit with the overall conference theme?
G. Research plan & timeline
. explain what time in your school day / evening-weekend schedule you are committing to the completion of this project
a. provide a brief outline of your research plan that addresses: your collection of data, analysis of data, writing, revising, and producing your written text & presentation

Submission Requirements

All proposals should be submitted as a single PDF file. Excluding the reference list or additional tables or figures, the proposal should be no more than 750 words and should be formatted according to APA guidelines. Proposals must be submitted electronically no later than 11:59 PM EST, Thursday, February 11th, 2016, to the Google Classroom.

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APPENDIX E

Senior Scholar - Independent Inquiry Project
Self-Assessment

Directions: ***using the questions and criteria below, engage in a reflective self-assessment for your process, final product, and presentation of your inquiry project. Please be sure to answer the questions thoroughly.***

1. **Revisit your initial proposal**, and consider both what you intended doing and what you actually did. What worked as you imagined it would? What changed?

(*type answer here*)

2. View the video of your presentation. Then, for each criteria listed below, score your performance accordingly, and use the space below the chart to elaborate on **3 particular strengths and 2 goals for future presentations**.

Criteria	**1 - Needs Improvement**	**2 - Developing**	**3 - Satisfactory**	**4 - Exceeds Expectations**
Clarity of content, critical analysis of topic, driving question				
Credibility of cited research				
Organization of presented info				
Awareness of audience				
Effective speaking: pace, volume, annunciation				
Evidence of preparation				
Effective use of visual aids				

3 particular strengths:

(*type answer here*)

2 goals for future presentations:

(*type answer here*)

3. Review your final paper. Then, use the space below to **reflect upon your writing process** for this assignment. How does this paper reflect what you've learned in this class? Or, what does this paper tell you and us about how we can or should approach research and long-term assignments differently?

(*type answer here*)

4. Last question: use the space below to **write a letter to next year's Scholars**. What would you tell them about your experiences? I'll start:

Dear 2017 Scholars,

(*type answer here*)

Thank you very much! - Mrs. F. / Ms. F.

APPENDIX F

Student Participant Interview Protocol

Questions for semi-structured, individual student interviews:

____ 1.What do you think is the purpose of inquiry learning?

____ 2. How would you characterize your ability to conduct research independently?

____ 3. How would you describe your previous experiences conducting research for class assignments?

____ 4. Can you explain the process you use when conducting research?

____ 5. What role do you think research will play in your future in work and school?

____ 6. Critical literacy is defined as the ability to read and engage with texts as representations of the dynamics of power and inequalities between people (Christensen, 2000). From your perspective, what role does critical literacy, and critical thinking, play in inquiry learning?

____ 7. What role does the classroom community play in your experiences with critical literacy and inquiry learning?

____ 8. What other experiences did you have this year that you'd like to discuss?

Can we reach out again if we have more questions, to arrange another meeting this summer? E-Mail & cell phone #:

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Vita

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EDUCATION

Syracuse University Syracuse, NY

Ph.D. Literacy Education, expected May 2020. Dissertation: *The Classroom as Inquiry Learning Community: A Practitioner Study of Adolescents' Developing Critical Literacies.*

Le Moyne College Syracuse, NY

M.S.T. in Secondary English, with New York State 7-12 Secondary English certification, 2003.

Le Moyne College Syracuse, NY

B.A. International Studies and English, 1998.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

University

2014-2015 *Teaching Assistant, Field Supervisor***,** Syracuse University**,** 2014-2015

- Field Supervisor, Student Teaching in English Education
- Instructor of Record, Methods and Materials for Teaching English

2003-2010 *Adjunct Instructor***,** Le Moyne College, 2003-2010

- Instructional Strategies for Secondary English (Methods)
- Censorship and Controversy in Teaching (self-designed course)
- Young Adolescent Literature, grades 5-9
- Using Historical Literature in Cross-Curricular Teaching for English & Social Studies (self-designed course)

Secondary

2007 - *English Teacher*. Westhill High School**,** Syracuse, NY.

- AP English Language and Composition; AP English Literature and Composition; Onondaga Community College Dual Enrollment English 103 & English 104; English 12 Regents; English 11 Regents; Journalism; Senior Research Seminar
- In-Service Instructor, Project-Based Learning, In-District Trainer (as presented by The Buck Institute for Education); Professional Book Studies
- Building Renovation Committee Member; Diversity Committee Member; Professional Development Team Member

2000-2007 *English Teacher*, Cazenovia High School, Cazenovia, NY.

- English 7, English 10, English 11, English 12; AP English Language & Composition

2003-2013 *English Teacher.* OCM-BOCES Summer School, Fabius-Pompey High School, Fabius, NY & West Genesee High School, Syracuse, NY.

- English 11 Regents, English 12

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Articles

Chandler-Olcott, K. Fleming, S. M. (2017). edTPA: Multiple perspectives on the state-mandated implementation of a new performance assessment for pre-service English teachers. *Action in Teacher Education*, 39(1).

Fleming, S. M. (2016). Evolution of a learner-teacher-researcher: Or, how *not* to teach the research paper. *Ubiquity: The Journal of Literature, Literacy and the Arts, Research Strand*, 3(1), 45-77.

Chandler-Olcott, K., Fleming, S. M., & Nieroda, J. (2016). "Perhaps these are not poetic times at all": Using poetry to cope with and critique a high-stakes teacher performance assessment for pre-service English candidates. *English Education*, 48(3).

Book Chapters, Book Reviews & Conceptual Articles

Fleming, S. M. (2017). Seniors, scholars, researchers: Using an inquiry approach to writing the research paper. In E. Ortlieb, E. H. Cheek Jr. & W. Verlaan (Eds.), *Writing Instruction to Support Literacy Success*: *Literacy Research, Practice, and Evaluation, Vol. 7*, 281-302.

Fleming, S. M. (14 Sept 2015). *Teaching Arguments: Rhetorical Comprehension, Critique and Response* by Jennifer Fletcher (book review). *Teachers College Record*, published online at www.tcrecord.org

Fleming, S. M. (2015). *Service Learning in Literacy Education: Possibilities for Teaching and Learning*, P. Smagorinksi & V. Kinloch, Eds. (book review). *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 58(6), 525-527.

Fleming, S. M. (2015). "Thrown into the (PhD) deep end: How to tread water, move forward, and not panic." *Literacy Research Association Doctoral Student ICG Newsletter*, Summer 2015, 6-8.

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Fleming, S. M. (2020, February). *The Senior Scholars Learning Community: Using Guided Inquiry*

Design to Develop Critical Literacies. Annual meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English Assembly of Research (NCTEAR), Nashville, TN.

Crandall, B. R., Amato, J., Newvine, K. & Fleming, S. (2020, February). *It's LIT, A'ight! Writing in the Limelight and Building Communities with Humbled Togetherness.* Annual meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English Assembly of Research (NCTEAR), Nashville, TN.

Fleming, S. M. (2019, November). *Blurring the lines between research & storytelling with young adult nonfiction.* Annual meeting of the New York State Reading Association, Albany, NY.

Newvine, K., Fleming, S. M., Gaetano, S., Brier, M. & Hudak, A. (2019, November). *ProjectLit: Empowering students with young adult literature*. Annual meeting of the New York State Reading Association (NYSRA), Albany, NY.

Newvine, K. & Fleming, S. M. (2019, November). *White fragility for the fragiley White: Inquiring with students in secondary suburban English classrooms.* Annual meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), Baltimore, MD.

Fleming, S. M. (2019, October). *Abolitionist Teaching, Young Adult Literature, and Teaching for Black Lives.* Annual meeting of the New York State English Council (NYSEC), Albany, NY.

Amato, J., Fleming, S. M. & Newvine, K. (2019, October). *ProjectLit: Empowering students through choice & culturally sustaining literature.* Annual meeting of the New York State English Council (NYSEC), Albany, NY.

Fleming, S. M. (2019, February). *Developing adolescents' critical literacies through inquiry learning experiences.* Annual meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English Assembly on Research (NCTEAR), Birmingham, AL.

Fleming, S. M. & Newvine, K. (2019, February). *Reading race in White spaces: Using young adult literature to prompt conversations about racism, privilege and complicity*. Annual meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English Assembly on Research (NCTEAR), Birmingham, AL.

Fleming, S. M. (2018, November). *Reading race in White spaces: Using young adult literature to prompt conversations about racism, privilege and complicity*. Annual meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), Houston, TX.

Fleming, S. M. (2018, March). *The classroom as inquiry learning community: A practitioner study of adolescents' developing critical literacies.* Annual meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English Assembly for Research (NCTEAR), Towson, MD.

Fleming, S. M. (2017, November). *Let's build bridges, not walls: Advocating for empathy by using immigration narratives to develop adolescents' critical literacies.* Annual meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), St. Louis, MO.

Newvine, K. & Fleming, S. F. (2017, October). *Windows & mirrors: Diversifying the metaphors we read by*. Annual meeting of the New York State Reading Association (NYSRA), Saratoga Springs, NY.

Fleming, S. M. & Newvine, K. (2017, April). *Windows & mirrors: Diversifying the metaphors we read by*. Meeting of the Library and Informations Science Student Association, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

Fleming, S. M. (2017, March). *What's next after English and textual studies?* Invited panelist at the 2017 Undergraduate Career Workshop, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

Fleming, S. M. (2016, December). *Empowering students through inquiry: Using a guided inquiry approach in high school research.* Annual Meeting of the Literacy Research Association, Nashville, TN.

Fleming, S. M. (2015, December). *Teacher perspectives on inquiry learning in high school student research instruction*. Annual Meeting of the Literacy Research Association, Carlsbad, CA.

Fleming, S. M., Ledwith, S. & Newvine, K. (2015, October). *High Stakes Student Teaching: Mentoring Pre-service Teachers.* Annual Meeting of the New York State English Council, Albany, NY.

Chandler-Olcott, K. & Fleming, S. M. (2015, May). *Promoting partnerships between university faculty members and mentor teachers around the edTPA*. Meeting of the Commission for Independent Colleges and Universities, Liverpool, NY.

Fleming, S. M. (2015, April). *Research to practice show, Episode 16 – outstanding doctoral students and literacy research.* Invited panelist, Literacy Research Association, Doctoral Student Innovative Community Group, online Research to Practice series, archived at https://youtu.be/0Ecr6nIajh8.

Fleming, S. M. (2015, March). *A pragmatic approach to teacher education? Pre-service and in-service English teachers' perspectives on the inaugural implementation of the edTPA.* Annual Meeting of the New York State Foundations of Education Association, Hamilton, New York.

Fleming, S. M. (2015, March). *What High School Students Know*. Invited panelist, Reimagining Student Writers Series: The Writing Program at Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

Fleming, S. M. (2015, March). *Teaching research through guided inquiry: How to motivate and support students during the research process*. Central New York Reading Council Conference, Syracuse, NY.

Chandler-Olcott, K. & Fleming, S. M. (2014, December). *edTPA: Multiple perspectives on the state-mandated implementation of a new performance assessment for pre-service English*

teachers. Annual Meeting of the Literacy Research Association, Marco Island, Florida.

Fleming, S. M. (2013, November). *Playful practice: Creating a culture of inquiry in the English classroom using project-based learning*. Annual meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English, Boston, MA.

Fleming, S. M. (2103, February). *Literacies for social justice: Bridging global and local communities*. Annual Meeting of the Journal of Language and Literacy Education, Athens, GA.

Fleming, S. M. (2009, November). *Speaking up for change: Using literacy as social action*. Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English, Philadelphia, PA.

Fleming, S. M. (2008, October). *Past* Persepolis*: Using literature to teach about near east and southwest Asian cultures in English class*. Annual Meeting of the New York State English Council, Albany, NY.

HONORS AND AWARDS

2019	Book Love Foundation Classroom Library Grant Winner, $2,000.
2018	New York State Reading Association Literature Mini-Grant Winner, *Blurring the Lines between Research and Storytelling with Young Adult Literature.*
2018	New York State English Council Mini-Grant Award Winner, *Disrupting the Paradigm: Using Young Adult Literature to Teach about Racism and Justice.*
2016	Educator of Excellence, New York State English Council.
2015	William D. Sheldon Fellowship, Reading & Language Arts, School of Education, Syracuse University.
2015	Research & Creative Grant**,** School of Education, Syracuse University.
2015	Teaching Mentor for the 2015 Summer Teaching Assistant Orientation Program, The Graduate School, Syracuse University.
2009, 2012	School Library System Mini-Grant, OCM-BOCES, 2012-2013, 2009-2010; Student Writers for Student Readers: Creating Socially Conscious Learners through Global Literacy.
2012	National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute: Religious Worlds of New York: Teaching to Everyday Life of American Religious Diversity.
2012	Westhill Commencement Ceremony, Class-selected Keynote Speaker, 2012.
2012	Westhill Warrior Yearbook**,** Dedication Recipient, 2012.
2011	Summer Teachers Institute: The Soul of the State and the State of the Soul, Colgate University.
2009	National Consortium for Teaching about Asia Seminar.

2009	Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminar in Turkey.
2008-2012	Summer Curriculum Grant, Westhill High School.
2004, 2005	Summer Curriculum Grant, Cazenovia High School.
1998	The Washington Center Internship: The School of Foreign Service, The United States Department of State.
1997	W. B. Yeats International Summer School, 1997, Sligo, Ireland.

SERVICE

2018 -	Chapter Leader, #ProjectLITCuse, cross-district student book club
2017 -	*Co-Originator & Teach-in Facilitator*, CNY Social Justice League
2017 -	*Vice-President*, Central New York Reading Council (CNYRC)
2014 - 2016	*Co-President*, Student Organization of Literacy Educators and Researchers (SOLER), Syracuse University.
2014 - 2017	*Technology Committee*, *Newsletter Writer*, Doctoral Student Innovative Community Group, Literacy Research Association.
2009-2012	*Policy Board Member*, Central New York Teachers Center

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)

National Council of Teachers of ENglish Assembly of Research (NCTEAR)

New York State English Council (NYSEC)

English Language Arts Teacher Educators (ELATE, formerly CEE)

International Literacy Association (ILA)

Literacy Research Association (LRA)

New York State Reading Association (NYSRA)

The Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of the NCTE (ALAN)

REFERENCES

Syracuse University

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- Dr. Kelly Chandler-Olcott, Dissertation Chair and Program Advisor, Reading & Language Arts, Associate Dean for Research

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- Lee Roscoe, High School Principal
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- Karen Fenner, Library Media Specialist

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