LIFELONG IMPACT: ADULT PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR HIGH SCHOOL SPEECH AND/OR THEATRE PARTICIPATION

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ABSTRACT [Executive Summary]

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the "Lifelong Impact" study was to determine in what ways participation in high school theatre/speech classes and/or related extracurricular activities (e.g., play productions, speech tournaments) may have positively influenced and affected adults after graduation. Several published studies exist that describe high schoolers' perceptions of their experiences *as* they're enrolled in secondary school, but virtually no systematic research exists that explores how adults from ages 18 to 70+ remember and reflect on those same events.

Data Collection Methods

Co-researchers Laura A. McCammon of the University of Arizona and Johnny Saldaña of Arizona State University initiated the project in fall 2009 and collected data through e-mail surveys sent directly to potential participants and forwarded to contacts (e.g., speech/theatre teachers) for purposive and referral sampling. Two hundred and thirty-four respondents returned completed surveys; approximately two-thirds of the participants are female; one-third are male.

Participants were asked to provide basic demographic information such as: their location and years of high school attendance, the types of drama/theatre classes they took during high school, the types of subject-related activities they participated in, their current occupation, and contact information (if they volunteered it) for possible follow-up. Participants represented graduation years as early as 1953 to as recent as 2009 and attended high schools representing 36 American states and two Canadian provinces. Approximately 52% are currently in theatre-

related occupations or studying theatre in higher education, while the other 48% range in occupation from administrative assistants to biology teachers to attorneys.

Participants responded to survey prompts that asked them to quantitatively rate and qualitatively reflect on: their high school theatre/speech teachers, their theatre/speech participation, challenges they faced, favorite memories, major learnings/outcomes, and speculation on how participation in high school speech and/or theatre may have influenced and affected the adults they became. Respondents also provided advice for future teachers and advocacy statements for school administrators or school boards about the necessity of speech and theatre programming in the schools.

About 10% of the respondents replied to a follow up e-mail asking them to review the Analytic Synthesis (Chapter 4) as a form of methodological "member checking." Additional information was also requested at that time (e.g., "How and/or why did you get involved in high school theatre and/or speech in the first place?")

Major Findings

The key assertion of this study is: *Quality high school theatre and speech experiences can not only significantly influence but even accelerate adolescent development and provide residual, positive, lifelong impacts throughout adulthood*.

Speech and theatre teachers who maintained high standards for and expectations of quality work, and who nurtured their students personally and artistically with an ethic of care and encouragement in safe environments, were regarded by survey respondents as those who made a lifelong impact on their adulthoods.

Data analysis suggests that quality high school speech and theatre programming develops in most young people during adolescence and through adulthood, regardless of future occupation:

- increased self-confidence;
- collaborative teamwork, problem-solving, and leadership skills;
- public speaking/communication skills and presentations of self;
- pragmatic work ethics such as goal setting, time management, and meeting deadlines;
- heightened historic, cultural, and social awareness;
- empathy and emotional intelligence;
- identity, values systems, and a sense of personal significance;
- lifelong friendships; and
- artistic living and patronage.

According to survey respondent testimony, theatre and speech experiences: empower one to *think and function improvisationally* in dynamic and ever-changing contexts; deepen and accelerate development of an individual's *emotional and social intelligences*; and expand one's verbal and nonverbal *communicative dexterity* in various presentational modes.

CHAPTER 1: STUDY DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

> My high school speech coach/drama teacher is one of the main influences in my life. She taught me much and helped me grow in ways that I am profoundly grateful for. Were it not for her guidance, I think my life would probably be much different today. (Male, Internet Strategy Consultant, High School Graduating Class of 1999)

> Most of my job responsibilities have involved speaking and working verbally with others. I have also been involved in local politics for the past 17 years which has involved writing letters, interaction with members of the community and local leaders, council meetings that are televised, and varied public appearances. I suspect that my life would have been very different without speech and drama, and I definitely would not be involved in local politics. (Female, Mayor Pro Tem, High School Graduating Class of 1965)

Purposes of the Study

The primary purpose of the "Lifelong Impact" study was to determine in what ways participation in high school theatre/speech classes and/or related extracurricular activities (e.g., play productions, speech tournaments) may have positively influenced and affected adults after graduation. Several published studies exist that describe high schoolers' perceptions of their experiences *as* they're enrolled in secondary school, but virtually no systematic research exists that explores how adults from ages 18 to 70+ remember and reflect on those same events.

The second purpose of this project was to identify, describe, and advocate the potentially beneficial and "lifelong impacts" speech/theatre participation during adolescence can contribute to adulthood. There is much anecdotal testimony from teachers based on their personal-practical knowledge presented at professional gatherings, but (to our knowledge) there has been virtually no systematic collection and analysis of such effects--e.g., how voice training in high school speech/theatre classes may have contributed to adult public speaking or presentation skills; how high school character analysis for play productions may have benefitted adult person perception skills. We particularly wanted to explore and document how adults who chose *not* to study or pursue careers in theatre may have found residual benefits in non-arts university degrees and careers since the field rarely hears from these constituents.

Creativity scholar Sir Ken Robinson is attributed with offering this cautionary advice about making a convincing argument: "Without data, you're just another person with an opinion." Therefore, the co-researchers wish to contribute to the field a body of testimonial evidence--that is, everyday citizens' perspectives, collected, analyzed, and presented through systematic research methods--that supports the merit and worth of speech and theatre programs in the secondary schools. Some might feel we contaminated the data or biased our reportage by assuming these conditions from the outset. On the contrary, we did not enter this study with an artificially imposed "objective" mind-set that somehow automatically guaranteed openness to what the data "may" have suggested. We approached this study with a conceptual framework based on a folk theory within the profession--a theory (or, a shared understanding) held by literally millions of teachers and students for decades: The culture of educational arts programming enriches the lives of those who participate in them. The co-researchers valued what

234 human beings collectively recalled about their lived experiences more than any one academic aesthetician.

Literature Review and Rationale for the Study

Briefly, we define theatre classes as those that focus on introductory and advanced studies of all aspects of actor training and theatre production (verbal improvisation, movement, scene study, design, theatre technology, history, directing, etc.), while speech classes focus on introductory and advanced topics in human communication and rhetoric (voice, oral interpretation of literature, extemporaneous and persuasive speaking, etc.). Individual teacher preferences and school/district curricula may prescribe particular subject area standards and content. Extracurricular activities for both disciplines vary from site to site but most often consist of an annual series of play productions, participation in regional and statewide play production festivals or competitions, participation in regional and national speech and forensic tournaments, and periodic attendance at workshops and conferences sponsored by educational organizations and associations.

Qualitative, ethnographic, and mixed methods studies and literature reviews have been conducted to determine what current high school theatre students perceive as outcomes of participation, or what researchers interpret from participant observation of educational theatre programming (e.g., Daykin et al., 2008; Fredricks et al., 2002; Gallagher, 2007; Gutiérrez & Spencer, 2008; Hughes & Wilson, 2004; Innes, Moss, & Smigiel, 2001; Israel, 2009; Larson & Brown, 2007; Loschert, 2004; McCammon, 2009; McLauchlan, 2010; Saldaña, 1998; Seidel, 1996; Wagner, 1998; Zdriluk, 2009, 2010). Several common findings and themes emerged from

metasummarizing these reports, including how exemplary theatre programs can promote and/or accelerate the adolescent's:

- theatrical artistry as a performer;
- literacy and comprehension of dramatic texts;
- oral communication skills;
- personal motivation, initiative, and commitment;
- body awareness, physical health and wellness;
- development of self-confidence;
- enhancement of self-esteem;
- identity, including the formation of one's personal value, attitude, and belief systems;
- emotional intelligence, including coping skills and empathy;
- awareness of group and collaboration dynamics, including conflict resolution and interpersonal intelligence; and
- leadership skills (broadly construed, which include attributes ranging from critical thinking to problem solving to personal agency).

Theatre programming also provides sites where adolescents:

- learn more about the art form, particularly one's skills and talent in it;
- find outlets for personal expression;
- socialize with peers in unique communities and develop/strengthen friendships; and
- broaden their social perspectives about other people and "worlds" (e.g., historic, cultural, global).

Most of the above themes occurred in this particular study's findings.

The anecdotal (e.g., teacher talk at conferences), propositional (e.g., print materials such as textbooks and advocacy documents), and documentary (e.g., theatre education DVDs such as *Places, Please!* and *Class Act*) most often purport personal-practical knowledge and individual case testimony rather than findings from traditionally systematic data collection and analysis. But the perspectives of textbook authors should not be discounted, for their observations from years of teaching adolescents the arts of theatre and speech have given them attuned awareness of the consistent patterns and outcomes from participation (e.g., Ames, 2005; Bennett, 2001; Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 2005; Gonzalez, 2006; Heathcotte, 2003; Lazarus, 2004; Mandell & Wolf, 2003; Nelson & Finneran, 2006; Norris, McCammon, & Miller, 2000; Patterson, McKenna-Cook, & Swick, 2006; Poisson, 1994; Swados, 2006). Assertions by most writers of pre-professional theatre education texts harmonize with empirical research findings:

> Through hard work, students can sometimes discover within themselves levels of excellence they never imagined existed. And that is the *true* source of self-esteem. (Bennett, *Secondary Stages: Revitalizing High School Theatre*, 2001, p. xv)

> Speech training is one of the most tangible gifts a teacher can give a student. Over the years, it has been the speech students who have returned to tell me that their training has had a major impact on their career achievements and their personal self-confidence. (Heathcotte, *Program Building: A Practical Guide for High School Speech and Drama Teachers*, 2003, p. 50)

> Adolescence is a contradictory time featuring a great centering on the self while emphasizing an extreme regard for the peer group. Teaching productive ensemble membership builds off this paradox. . . . Rather than seek a utopian ensemble in which all

> conflicts are squelched or avoided, students learn to be ensemble members who accept conflict as a natural part of working together. (Mandell & Wolf, *Acting, Learning & Change: Creating Original Plays with Adolescents*, 2003, pp. 33-34)

Again, the above themes occurred in this particular study's findings.

Documents and internet sites of national and state arts advocacy organizations (e.g., Arts Education Partnership, Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education, Getty Education Institute for the Arts, Canadian Commission for UNESCO, California Educational Theatre Association) also propose the values of theatre and arts education for students--sometimes in glowing yet suspicious prose, including the now legendary high SAT score/arts connection (which some still suggest is inferentially causal rather than descriptively correlational):

> Multiple independent studies have shown increased years of enrollment in arts courses are positively correlated with higher SAT verbal and math scores. High school students who take arts classes have higher math and verbal SAT scores than students who take no arts classes. (Ruppert, 2006, p. 9)

Various arts agencies and nonaffiliated organizations such as the RAND Corporation have carefully examined potential "gifts of the muse" from arts education research in such areas as cognitive growth, social capital, and attitudinal and behavioral outcomes. The excerpt below is based on a substantive literature review and aligns with the empirical research in theatre education:

> Three types of benefits are discussed in this literature: development of attitudes (e.g., self-discipline, self-efficacy) and behaviors (e.g., more frequent school attendance, reduced dropout rates) that improve school performance; development of more general life skills (e.g., understanding the consequences of one's behavior, working in teams); and

> development of prosocial attitudes and behaviors among "at risk" youth (e.g., building social bonds, improving self-image). (McCarthy, Ondaatje, Zakaras, & Brooks, 2004, p. xiii)

With so much testimony, empirical or otherwise, why conduct yet another study especially for theatre education?

First, no study to our knowledge has surveyed *former* high school theatre and speech students *of various ages/generations* to determine whether any residual effects remained from that participation. We anticipated richer, reflective observations from the memories of older (e.g., 20s through 70s) survey respondents as they recalled, revisited, and reconstructed their experiences and perceived learnings (McLeod & Thomson, 2009). Retrospective comments by older adults on their life course trajectories generally include more "psychological depth and emotional poignancy" (p. 77) than adolescents, since several theatre education studies conducted with teenagers suggest that the age cohort may be able to reflect on but not necessarily articulate their perceptions and feelings fluently in interviews and written responses (e.g., Freed, 2009; Maier, 2003; Omasta, 2009; Ryan-Whitehead, 2005). Plus, e-mail surveying is a form of electronic "interviewing" that permits "a greater depth of response when the [participant] has the ability to think through a substantive response" (Gaiser & Schreiner, 2009, p. 48).

Second, the field of theatre education, particularly secondary school-level research, is deficit in its amount of work compared to other arts fields such as music, or with other grade levels in theatre such as preschool and elementary level children. This study hopes to address and fill a gap in the extant data base.

Third, research exists in either theatre education *or* speech education, but virtually no studies exist that combine the two subjects. Theatre and speech are disciplinary distant cousins,

for they originally shared departmental space in many colleges and universities in the early through mid-twentieth century. Both subjects also share presentational and performative elements and may even be taught by the same instructor in a high school setting. Since both our younger and older survey participants may have been actively involved in theatre *and* speech programming during their high school years, we included each subject area in this research project. (Selected findings discussed later in this report will reveal a significant outcome for those who participated in both rather than just one of the art forms.) Admittedly, we will focus on theatre more than speech in this report since theatre is the primary discipline of the co-researchers and most survey respondents wrote extensively about their theatre experiences.

Fourth, *survey* research in arts education is quite common, but most of these descriptive and quantitatively-driven studies solicit teachers and administrators as respondents. The "Lifelong Impact" study targeted, from our perspective, the most important constituents and beneficiaries of educational theatre and speech programming: the former high school students themselves. Recent trends in qualitative inquiry have emphasized the participant's voice and her memories not just as data but as *testimony* to lived experience. Therefore, we incorporated our survey respondents' testimonies frequently throughout this report as an evidentiary warrant of the lifelong impact of high school speech and theatre classes and programming on individuals and their life course trajectories.

We presented this cursory literature review to assure readers that the co-authors know the primary literature of the field (and have contributed to it ourselves), that we have "done our homework" for this particular project, and that we both possess the research credentials for this endeavor. But we also entered this study bracketing as much as possible any previous knowledge about the impacts of speech and theatre programming on its participants. Both McCammon and

Saldaña are pre-service theatre teacher educators at their respective universities and have also taught theatre and speech in the public schools—McCammon as an award-winning veteran in a Tennessee high school, and Saldaña as a high school student teacher and elementary school drama specialist in Texas. We attempted to "make the familiar strange," as the famous ethnographic saying goes, by making few assumptions about *what* we would find, but openly acknowledged the majority of respondents would more than likely contribute mostly positive memories of and reflections about their high school experiences. Such is the nature of purposive survey sampling.

Origins of the Study

At the 2008 American Alliance for Theatre & Education (AATE) conference, Helen Zdriluk, then a graduate student at Brock University, presented a report about interviews she conducted with four of her former high school students a decade after their graduation. Rick Sperling, Executive Director of Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit, and Johnny Saldaña of Arizona State University, were the only ones who attended Zdriluk's presentation. But through our discussion we learned all three of us had conducted comparable studies based on the long-term effects of theatre participation on current and former students. Saldaña volunteered to coordinate a session for the three at next year's AATE conference, and Laura A. McCammon of the University of Arizona was invited to take part in the panel since she also had vested interest in the topic of theatre education at the secondary school level.

The four of us shared our individual research projects with an audience of approximately twenty at the 2009 AATE conference session, "Lifelong Impact: Longitudinal Research on Adolescent and Adult Development through Theatre" (Rick Sperling is credited with

contributing the phrase, "Lifelong Impact"). Response was very favorable from those in attendance; audience members suggested a compiled study of such findings would be very beneficial for the field. Saldaña and McCammon realized an extended study of this nature could be implemented as a collaborative project.

Development of the Survey

McCammon had been surveying high school students since 2003 as part of an Arizona Theatre in Our Schools (TIOS) project. She developed a questionnaire administered to selected schools that asked students questions such as:

- Why did you decide to take a theatre class?
- Describe briefly some of the things you have participated in.
- What is the most challenging thing about taking theatre?
- Describe your most memorable theatre experience (as a participant or as an audience member).

In 2008 a question was added to the survey:

- Can you think of times when you were inspired by a character you portrayed and/or learned something new about people whose lives and times are different than yours?

For her presentation as part of the 2009 AATE conference session, McCammon surveyed her own former high school students from Tennessee to collect data for her presentation titled, "'Whenever my high school classmates and I start reminiscing, you inevitably come up in our conversation': Adults Look Back on Their High School Theatre Experiences." The open-ended survey used in the TIOS project was adapted and e-mailed to her former students. McCammon

received 21 responses, providing sound baseline data for this particular project and, essentially, a pilot testing of the data gathering instrument.

When the co-researchers ventured into a nationwide project and survey, the questionnaire was again adapted and fine-tuned by McCammon and Saldaña, and we added five Likert-scale agreement prompts to gather both quantitative and qualitative data for analysis. A few new prompts and questions were included based on "hunches" and the potential for gathering testimonial and advocacy statements (e.g., "I had a good high school speech and/or theatre teacher(s)"; "What would you tell school administrators or school boards about the importance of having a high school speech and/or theatre program in their schools?"). The final survey instrument (see Appendix A) e-mailed to participants included introductory text stating the purpose of the study and all necessary statements required by ASU's Office of Research Integrity and Assurance (i.e., human subjects requirements), and approved through the University of Arizona's Institutional Review Board as a reciprocal agreement (see Appendix B).

Survey Distribution and Data Collection

Current and former high school theatre teachers in Arizona and graduate students in theatre for youth at ASU were initially contacted to take and/or forward an e-mail survey to peers and former students of theirs who had graduated from high school and participated in speech/theatre activities during those years. We also anticipated the survey would most likely be forwarded to others through chain or *referral* sampling--that is, routed from one survey respondent to a friend, who then responds and forwards it to another friend, etc.

Originally, we wanted to keep an accurate count of who received a survey so we could tabulate a response rate statistic. But maintaining this control did not permit us to reach a broad

pool of potential respondents. We then turned to referral sampling and received much more response. Periodic calls for survey respondents were made throughout the data gathering period, and key contacts such as state theatre organization officers, national theatre organization board members, and college/university theatre educators also forwarded the survey to their memberships, current students, and/or alumni. We discovered high school theatre teachers maintained contact with former students through such social networking sites as Facebook. These contacts greatly facilitated broader distribution of the survey. We deliberately did not employ online survey data collection sites such as SurveyMonkey due to a zero budget and the open-ended nature of our inquiries. In retrospect, maintaining or working toward a minimum response rate was moot since this study was not dependent on randomized participant selection but on *purposive* sampling--i.e., the collection of data from a specific population that meets particular criteria for participation. A respondent's willingness to complete the survey and return it to the co-researchers constituted his/her willingness to participate in the study.

For the written survey, participants were asked to provide basic demographic information such as: their location and years of high school attendance, the types of drama/theatre classes they took during high school, the types of subject-related activities they participated in, their current occupation, and contact information (if they volunteered it) for possible follow-up. Participants also responded to survey prompts that asked them to quantitatively rate and qualitatively reflect on: their high school theatre/speech teachers, their theatre/speech participation, challenges they faced, favorite memories, major learnings/outcomes, and speculation on how participation in high school speech and/or theatre may have influenced and affected the adults they became. Respondents also provided advice for future teachers and

advocacy statements for school administrators or school boards about the necessity of speech and theatre programming in the schools. (A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A.)

According to Churton and Brown (2010), survey research with a minimum sample of 200 responses enables generalization to a broader population (p. 225). Thus, with our 234 participant responses, we felt confident with the transferability of our assertions and the evidentiary warrant to North American school programs. Only two surveys received were rejected because both respondents did not meet one of the central criteria (i.e., high school theatre/speech participation); a third survey was rejected because it was received too late for inclusion in the data base and analysis.

We did not ask survey respondents to identify their racial/ethnic backgrounds or other personal attributes such as sexual orientation since these were deemed too invasive for a survey of this nature. Three participants voluntarily noted their ethnicity as non-White, and a handful of men openly noted their gay identity since it seemed to have played a major role in their adolescent development and theatre participation. Additional respondents known personally by the co-researchers are people of color and/or gay/lesbian, but their survey contents did not acknowledge these attributes. We assumed the majority of our survey respondents are middle-class Whites, yet related theatre education research that focused on students of color from lower-income families (e.g., Gallagher, 2007; Gutiérrez & Spencer, 2008) reported several findings that were also observed in this study's sample.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Completed surveys were e-mailed or forwarded to Saldaña who cut-and-pasted and maintained the data in Excel spread sheets for qualitative coding and quantitative calculations

(Hahn, 2008; Meyer & Avery, 2009). Descriptive information (e.g., date received, e-mail address of respondent, assumed gender of respondent), quantitative ratings, and open-ended comments each received their own cells in a matrix, enabling comparison and analytic induction as rows and columns were scanned and later rearranged for queries. An eclectic combination of attribute, structural, descriptive, in vivo, process, initial, emotion, values, pattern, and elaborative coding were applied to the qualitative data (Saldaña, 2009). Cells were color-coded and narratives were given rich text features to enhance analysis "at-a-glance" (e.g., data rows of respondents not involved in theatre-related professions were highlighted in yellow; significant passages were bolded or assigned a red font for later citation).

Descriptive statistics were calculated by Excel's AVERAGE function (see Table 5 for mean ratings); inferential statistic gathering employed the TTEST application. Qualitative codes were manually assigned, organized, categorized, and assembled into hierarchical landscapes and formats for content analysis and pattern detection (Krippendorff & Bock, 2009) for the first 101 cases as a preliminary analysis, then later merged with Excel's CONCATENATE function for codes from cases 102-234 (see Tables 6-12 for qualitative categories). Microsoft Word's functions such as SORT and FONT SIZE enhanced coding organization and management. Erickson's (1986) interpretive heuristics were employed to compose assertions and to search for confirming and disconfirming evidence in the data corpus. Quotes from respondents that supported the assertions were extracted from the data base for the evidentiary warrant.

Responses for each survey question and prompt were explored separately to keep the initial analysis coherent, though as analysis proceeded it became obvious that several categories (e.g., *Confidence*, *Public Speaking Skills*, *Friendships*) spanned across several items. Many respondents also combined and intricately wove several categories of outcomes into one

sentence, making it difficult to construct discrete categories. Nevertheless, the findings below are organized and presented in a descriptive manner first, followed by a synthesis of their intricate interrelationships. Initial data analyses were conducted by Saldaña, then corroborated by McCammon. In January 2010, ASU Ph.D. education student Angela Hines assisted the co-researchers in qualitative data analysis as part of an independent study project. In June 2010, Matt Omasta volunteered his services as an analytic auditor for the team. Both Hines and Omasta also conducted literature reviews in non-theatrical arts education research and provided valuable revision feedback as report drafts were composed.

During September 2010, all survey respondents had the opportunity to review the Analytic Synthesis of this report as a methodological "member check" to confirm or disconfirm any of the study's key findings (see Appendix C). We received 24 responses (approximately 10% of the total number of participants) affirming our assertions to varying degrees--e.g., "very thorough," "very accurate," "largely seems on target," "I agree with all of the comments." Selected respondents also attested to the transferability of these findings to other settings and contexts:

- "It is amazing to see how we all seem to have similar experiences."
- "This is a great report that validates what so many of us that work in this field find out, but haven't summarized."
- "I am thrilled that others across the nation came to the same conclusion as me: that theatre truly can build confidence where other academic disciplines often fall short."

One extended response from an arts sociologist provided us with meticulous and constructively critical feedback which helped us confirm or modify a few of our assertions throughout this report. During the member check we also asked respondents, "How and/or why did you get

involved in high school theatre and/or speech in the first place?" This question was driven by a gap in the data base when we initially plotted the process of program entry.

Descriptive statistics in the form of counts and percentages will be selectively presented throughout this report on an as-needed or as-salient basis. This is not intended to convey magnitude or to promote this project as a mixed-methods study, but to provide occasional and interesting quantitative texture to the qualitative observations. Verbatim respondent narratives have been slightly edited only if necessary to correct misspellings and grammatical errors and to present more readable testimony. A few respondents will be quoted more often than others simply because these particular individuals' contributions were extended passages that eloquently addressed a topic. To protect participants' identities in this report, we deleted any references to actual people's names and schools. We noted the respondent's gender and, when known, his/her current occupation or higher education field of study and the year he/she graduated from high school. These attributes played key roles in the data analyses and will hopefully enrich readers' interpretations of this report.

The majority of what we present as findings may be nothing new to seasoned theatre or speech educators ("We know this already"), but their work-experience affirmations of our empirically-based findings will add credibility and trustworthiness to the report. Conferences are events where these professionals have given anecdotal or case testimony about the lifelong impacts of speech and theatre on their former students. In this report, we hope to affirm those observations with more credibility through documented testimonial data. In fact, respondent quotes play a prominent role in this report--not just as supportive evidence or illustrative examples but as active narratives that contextualize the findings. From our constructivist

perspectives, the co-researcher's assertions support the respondents' perceptions, not the other way around.

CHAPTER 2: SURVEY RESULTS

Part 1 - About You

Demographics

Two hundred and thirty-four e-mailed survey responses were received over the course of eight months from September 2009 through April 2010. One hundred and fifty-six females (67%), 77 males (33%), and one unknown responded (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic Data

Demographic Data	*n=234*
Female	156 (67%)
Male	77 (33%)
Unknown	1

Of these 234 respondents, we inferred that 121 (52%) were currently involved in theatre in some capacity, either as an occupation for a part- or full-time wage or as a field of study in higher education. Theatre-related occupations included and ranged from education directors for professional theatre companies to high school theatre teachers to a Hollywood sound effects and dialogue editor to a former *Saturday Night Live* performer. Fifteen percent directly stated they were currently in colleges or universities majoring in theatre, while 4% noted they were attending college but did not specify their major. One hundred and thirteen respondents (48%) suggested they were not involved in theatre and their occupations ranged from biology teachers to administrative assistants to local politicians to entrepreneurial CEOs. Nine percent were majoring in other subject areas in college such as law, music, and computing sciences (Table 2).

Table 2. Current Occupation

Current Occupation	*n=234*
Theatre Related (including part- or full-time and university study)	121 (52%)
Non-Theatre Related occupations	113 (48%)

Respondents represented attendance at high schools across a broad spectrum of states and two Canadian provinces (Table 3).

Table 3. High School Attendance

High School Attendance	*n*
U.S. States	36
Canadian Provinces	2
U.S. Military Schools	2
Unknown	10

Since the survey originated in Arizona and the hubs of the co-researchers' teacher contacts resided in two major metropolitan areas (Phoenix and Tucson), it was understandable that a sizeable number of respondents attended schools in Arizona. Some students attended high schools in more than one state. Geographic areas represented in this study included:

Alabama = 1

Alaska = 1

Arizona = 58

British Colombia = 1

California = 11

Colorado = 2

Connecticut = 2

Florida = 1

Georgia = 2

Hawaii = 1

Illinois = 12

Indiana = 8

Iowa = 5

Iran = 2 (U.S. military families stationed overseas)

Kansas = 2

Louisiana = 1

Massachusetts = 5

Michigan = 1

Minnesota = 1

Mississippi = 1

Missouri = 6

Nebraska = 3

New Hampshire = 2

New Jersey = 10

New Mexico = 4

New York = 14

North Carolina = 3

Ohio = 5

Ontario = 11

Oregon = 8

Pennsylvania = 2

Tennessee = 21

Texas = 9

Utah = 1

Virginia = 6

Washington State = 7

Wisconsin = 5

Wyoming = 1

No Response = 10

Table 4 displays the decades that respondents graduated from high school.

Table 4. Years of High School Attendance by Decade

Years of High School Attendance by Decade	*n*
1950s	3
1960s	9
1970s	29
1980s	50
1990s	64
2000s	69
No Response	10

What speech and/or theatre classes did you take in high school?

High school level classes ranged from those who took drama or play production coursework each semester for four years, to those who had no coursework in drama or speech but participated in extracurricular activities such as debate, speech tournaments, drama clubs, and musical theatre productions at their high schools and in community theatre programs. Seventy-four percent of respondents noted they took drama classes; a few mentioned an array of special topics courses such as Scene Study, Improvisation, Technical Theatre, Advanced Acting and Directing, and Advanced Musical Theatre. Twenty-six percent took speech or debate classes; a few of these noted a speech class was "required" at their schools. Of particular note was the 9% of respondents who also took choir classes; a few mentioned it was through choir that they became involved in musical theatre production at their schools.

Most participants who chose *not* to follow a theatre-related occupation as an adult still took several years of high school theatre and/or speech classes and were heavily involved in

extracurricular play productions and/or speech programming. Thus, immersion in high school theatre and/or speech classes and activities did not seem to foreshadow future entrée into theatre-related occupations. The majority of those who *did* choose theatre-related fields as adults, though, generally took a large number of theatre and related courses during high school when they were offered. A few participants were fiercely devoted to their classes:

> My senior year, there was a scheduling conflict between my 4th year of AP math and my 4th year of drama. I chose drama, losing my chance at being valedictorian (Female, Arts Education Coordinator, Class of 1996).

Briefly describe some of the speech and/or theatre activities you participated in during high school (plays, musicals, speech tournaments, theatre festivals, etc.).

Participants' responses ranged from general descriptors such as "musical theatre" to a few who appeared to cut-and-paste their acting resume credits into the survey response field. Respondents also mentioned technical theatre work such as stage management, set construction, light board operation, and costume crew on selected shows plus front-of-house support such as box office sales. A few noted plays they directed themselves as students at their schools. Involvement with community theatre productions served as supplemental activities for 9% of participants.

Thirty-three percent of survey respondents noted involvement with speech, debate, and forensic competitions. Other activities included such extracurricular programming as summer theatre camps; drama and/or speech and debate clubs; state, national, and international festivals; and state and national theatre conferences for secondary school youth.

A sample of specific play production titles mentioned by respondents included such oft-produced Shakespearean works as:

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Much Ado About Nothing

Romeo and Juliet

The Taming of the Shrew

Twelfth Night

Some of the more well-known full-length plays noted by respondents included:

The Crucible

The Diary of Anne Frank

Flowers for Algernon

Fools

Harvey

The Importance of Being Earnest

Inherit the Wind

The Laramie Project

The Miracle Worker

The Odd Couple (Female Version)

Our Town

The Skin of Our Teeth

Steel Magnolias

To Kill a Mockingbird

You Can't Take It With You

Fifty-three percent of survey respondents noted involvement in musical theatre productions. Specific titles frequently mentioned included such works as:

Annie

Anything Goes

The Apple Tree

Bye Bye Birdie

Fame

Fiddler on the Roof

Grease

Guys and Dolls

Hair

Into the Woods

Kiss Me Kate

Little Shop of Horrors

Man of La Mancha

The Music Man

My Fair Lady

The Mystery of Edwin Drood

Oklahoma!

The Pajama Game

The Sound of Music

West Side Story

The Wiz

You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown

There is a conventional tone to most of the frequently-mentioned titles listed above. Like the Educational Theatre Association's annual survey of the most-produced plays at the secondary school level, there is a "safe" feel to them. Several respondents addressed this perception (and even criticized it) in their survey profiles.

The co-researchers were admittedly divided in our own perceptions of whether these plays are "issues-oriented" dramatic works. McCammon perceived that some plays, like Miller's *The Crucible*, do indeed contain rich social issues for today's students that can be addressed by producing or studying the play under an expert teacher's guidance. Saldaña, however, felt *The Crucible* has been canonized within the secondary school play production repertoire for decades and no longer holds as much impact for adolescents as more contemporary works such as Kaufman's *The Laramie Project*. We will address this point further in our Policy Recommendations, yet we focus on survey respondents' perceptions rather than the co-researchers' opinions for the Analytic Synthesis.

Survey Results: Part 2 - About Your Participation

Questions in this section asked respondents to choose one of four options relating to a statement: Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree (see Appendix A). The mean ratings are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5. Overview of Quantitative Responses

Survey Prompt	*Mean 4.00*
I had a good high school speech and/or theatre teacher(s).	3.55
I overcame challenges through my high school speech and/or theatre participation.	3.38
I have good memories from my speech and/or drama participation.	3.88
My participation in high school speech and/or theatre has affected the adult I am now.	3.82
There were times, when I was a high school student in speech and/or theatre, when I learned something new about people whose lives and times were different from mine by a character I portrayed or a play we worked on, and/or the other people I worked with.	3.37

I had a good high school speech and/or theatre teacher(s). Describe briefly why you selected your response.

> [My teacher] was very active with us, even after he was no longer the coach of our speech team. He was supportive, was willing to spend time outside of school coaching us, and continues to be involved in our lives. He was not only interested in our development as actors and speakers, but also as people. (Female, University Leadership Education Specialist for Resident Life, Class of 1999)

The 234 respondents' mean rating of agreement to this prompt was 3.55 (out of 4.00); 90% agreed or strongly agreed their former instructors were "good." Qualitative responses ranged from admiration of and thankful praise for teachers' quality work, to frank admonishment of former dysfunctional and inexperienced instructors. The diversity of these recollections supported the credibility and trustworthiness of responses and provided both positive and negative characteristics to analyze.

When participants' survey responses were pooled, three major categories of "good" teaching were constructed by the co-researchers: *Lifelong Professionalism, Lifelong Nurturance,*

and *Lifelong Passion*. For the 10% of respondents who wrote negatively of former instructors, the category was labeled *Lifelong Dysfunction* (Table 6).

Table 6. Speech and/or Theatre Teacher

I had a good high school speech and/or theatre teacher(s). Describe briefly why you selected your response: 3.55/4.00
Lifelong Professionalism—teachers were artistically qualified, creative, knowledgeable; they maintained high expectations and inspired quality work
Lifelong Nurturance—teachers cared about students; brought out the best in them; created a "safe haven"; a community or family; some teachers "saved their lives
Lifelong Passion—teachers were dynamic, energetic and loved their jobs and theatre
Lifelong Dysfunction—some teachers were inexperienced, unorganized, played favorites, displayed anger and other personal issues

Lifelong Professionalism.

> My theatre teacher was highly qualified and had been teaching theatre arts for over twenty years. She taught us from many disciplines and held high expectations for us as students. (Male, University Theatre Major, Class of 2009)

Former theatre and speech students praised their teachers for their professionalism, artistic qualifications, experience, creativity, and "wealth of information" gained from interesting classes and play production experiences:

> She was knowledgeable in every area of the theatre and ignited a passion for the art in her students through work in the classroom and through the extracurricular activities she arranged. She held all her students to a high standard and expected nothing less than excellence from us--she was extremely and personally committed to our success; I know I worked very hard to surpass her expectations. (Male, University Associate Professor of Costume Design, Class of 1984)

One important subcategory that reappeared as a theme in other survey response items was the teachers' *demand* for quality work, which interrelated with students' *desire* for it. Selected

respondents appreciated a positive yet disciplined personality who challenged them and held students accountable to such work ethics as meeting goals and deadlines. These teachers gave "appropriately critical" feedback as well as emotional inspiration to motivate:

> Her professionalism and ability to create a positive working environment encouraged students to work hard in her program. (Female, High School Theatre Teacher and University Graduate Major in Business and Administration, Class of 2002)

The quotes above suggest that professionalism breeds professionalism. While many current high school students say theatre is "fun" (e.g., McCammon, 2009), this word/perception was minimal in this portion of survey responses. In retrospect, former students appreciated teachers not because they were fun but because they *maintained high expectations* and *inspired quality work*. Survey respondents testified when teachers strategically selected play scripts of merit to produce, and "pushed" for excellence and demonstrated excellence themselves, better work emerged from students:

> The theatre teacher at the high school was a mixture of technical brilliance, personal encouragement, and no-nonsense accountability. He got great work out of us and helped us take ourselves and our abilities seriously. (Male, University Service and Vocation Center Director, Class of 1988)

Several survey respondents also made particular note of the public speaking and communication skills developed through these experiences during their adolescent years (themes that reappeared in other survey responses):

> My teacher immersed the class in different activities that enhanced our speaking/acting abilities. Such activities dealt with inflection, tone, volume, rate, and subtext. These

> helped improve our performances and audibility. (Female, University Journalism Major, Class of 2008)

Lifelong Nurturance.

> [My teacher] was a dynamic and caring instructor who taught her students a lot about theatre, but more importantly, a lot about life. (Female, Chair of a University Theatre Department, Class of 1977)

One cannot separate the pedagogical from the personal. Survey respondents frequently wove the two domains together when they shared stories about their beloved former instructors. Equally important as *Professionalism* to survey respondents was a sense of *Nurturance* from their former novice and veteran teachers. These instructors simply "cared" about their students by being involved in their lives and emotional well-being by inspiring them, demonstrating encouraging and supportive actions, and providing opportunities for students to grow in multiple ways. The higher-rated teachers' commitment and dedication were not just to their art form and to teaching it, but to their students' personal as well as artistic development:

> [My teachers] were the absolute best teachers, directors, mentors, friends that any high school student could ever ask for. . . . They kept up the standards and practices of the school (what is expected of them as teachers academically) while speaking to us as people and artists. The encouragement was never-ending and so powerful. They became family. Because art is so personal, I feel that it allows for that kind of special teacher-student relationship that can really inspire students and stay with them far beyond the limits of the classroom walls. (Female, Prospective Actor, Class of 2003)

Caring teachers were perceived most often as "friends" who created welcoming and "safe haven" environments where students felt part of a "community" or "family":

> He helped us not only with our acting but he became our friend and gave us all advice about life and things, and for all of us he was a father figure. (Male, College Student [major unknown], No Graduation Year Specified)

Nurturance was cited as a significant contribution by those who chose careers in theatre-related fields. Students' eyes were "opened," acquainting them with the world of theatre, and for some their high school teachers prepared them well for vocations and relative success in the profession:

> Our theatre instructor gave me not only the tools to succeed as a student, but the tools to succeed in life. These tools included strong communication skills, strong creative perspective and thought, teamwork building, meeting deadlines (theatre has the best on-time delivery of any business), and social networking. (Male, Artistic Director of a Non-Profit Theatre Company, Class of 1985)

Whether through class work, productions, or speech/debate activities, students felt motivating teachers encouraged creativity, set them up to succeed, "brought out the best" in them, and genuinely cared about their accomplishments:

> My theatre teacher gave me many opportunities to grow. I had already been working extensively in regional and community theatre. With that level of theatrical background I was able to assist my teacher in many ways. She also gave me a tremendous amount of responsibility so I could learn more with any task I was given. That type of trust and respect allowed me to become extremely self motivated and self directed to become a life long learner. (Male, High School Theatre Teacher, Class of 1980)

Five respondents testified their theatre teachers *literally* "saved lives" through their ethic of care and through the expressive power of the art form. One female provided this extended, poignant story:

> I also want you to know that, through my drama experience, I found a voice to express the anger and hidden emotions that I was experiencing at that time. It was life-saving therapy for me to yell and scream and cry by becoming someone else. I had been sexually abused when I was 11 years old and never told anyone until I was 30 and went through years of counseling. . . . Thank you for giving me an outlet for my bottled up emotions.
>
> I think the biggest regret I have in my life was not majoring in theatre. It's more than the applause--it's the creation of a character or learning how to put yourself in someone else's head and experience life from their perspective. I guess I will always be a secret "drama queen" because I feel more at home on the stage than I do anywhere else in the world. Maybe it is because, as strange as it seems, when I became someone else, I found myself.
>
> In 1977, I won [my state's] Junior Miss pageant and a full tuition college scholarship, in a very large part due to my high school drama coach who worked long hours after school helping me to prepare for the talent competition. My parents divorced when I graduated from high school and there were no available funds set aside for my education. Thanks to the influence and hard work of my drama teacher, I have a college degree which obviously has had a lifelong impact on my life and career. (Female, University Director of Alumni Relations, School of Nursing, Class of 1977)

Lifelong Passion.

> He loved coaching us and was passionate about our work. I felt cared for and looked after on [the speech] team. I was on other teams in high school and never felt that way about any other group. (Male, University Theatre Professor, Class of 1985)

Tightly interwoven with *Professionalism* and *Nurturance* was a teacher's *Passion*. Former students felt they had been taught much and taught well by "passionate," "dynamic," and "energetic" teachers and directors in classes, productions, and for tournament competitions:

> My high school theatre teacher was among the most passionate and caring individuals I have met in my life to date. As a drama teacher, she encouraged her students to attempt roles they might have been scared of. She worked hard to cultivate an appreciation and understanding of all aspects of theatre, from dramaturgy to method acting. (Male, Wildlife Park Ranger, Class of 2003)

These teachers were perceived as those who "loved" their jobs as well as the art form, and created "enthusiastic" and "fun" learning environments that, in turn, generated passionate students:

> He was very passionate about theatre and made me passionate about it too. While most high schoolers seemed pretty apathetic about things, we theatre kids were lively and really invested in our work because of him. (Female, Substitute Teacher, Class of 2000).

Lifelong Dysfunction.

> I had a very apathetic and uninvolved theatre teacher/director in high school. Most of the productions were very student-driven. (Female, Part-Time Teaching Artist, Class of 1997)

Not every theatre and speech teacher was remembered as a stellar individual. Ten percent of survey respondents assigned lower ratings of 1 or 2 to this survey prompt. There were several cases in which teachers were perceived as inexperienced and unorganized with classes and who directed productions of lesser quality. Also noted were their dysfunctional personality traits that exhibited favoritism (particularly in casting decisions), anger, and "personal issues" that clouded judgment. Some respondents called their former instructors "uninspiring," "tired," "crazy," "pretty horrible," and "a complete terror." Both newcomers to teaching and older teachers were rebuked for their ineffectiveness and not keeping students' best interests first. A few respondents did acknowledge a combination of both good and bad qualities in their teachers such as those who were nurturing mentors yet merely average directors, or those whose classes were poorly run yet whose after-school rehearsals were dynamic.

Oddly enough, this 10% pool of respondents still participated in a large amount of play production work at their schools and maintained their involvement in these programs for the strong peer friendships and commitment to the art form's allure:

> My drama teacher had many personal issues and was a terrible leader and not very inspirational. Our choir teacher had a much greater influence on me and my die-hard theatre buddies. (Female, University Medical School Senior Program Assistant, Class of 2003)

Despite having dysfunctional teachers and directors, most of these survey respondents did retain some good memories about their experiences:

> When I think about my time in drama, I am always thankful that I can separate the negative emotions and memories relating to my teacher from the positive ones relating to

my actual performances and friendships with peers. (Male, University Law Student, Class of 2002)

I overcame challenges through my high school speech and/or theatre participation. Looking back, what do you think was the biggest challenge you overcame/faced in high school speech and theatre?

I had poorly developed social skills and no social network entering high school. Participation in the theatre program provided a comfortable structure in which to forge bonds with others and begin developing interpersonal skills. (Male, University Assistant Professor of Theatre, Class of 1975)

The mean of survey respondents' agreement to this prompt was 3.38 (out of 4.00), the second lowest of the five numeric inquiries. A few participants felt challenges they encountered in high school were not exclusive to theatre or speech participation, but rather general challenges of typical adolescent development. But when stories *were* shared, respondents both addressed the challenge and how they overcame it.

Five categories were constructed from this data pool, using labels of outcome: *Lifelong Confidence*, *Lifelong Expressiveness*, *Lifelong Belonging*, *Lifelong Resilience*, and *Lifelong Identity* (Table 7).

Table 7. Overcame Challenges

I overcame challenges through my high school speech and/or theatre participation. Looking back, what do you think was the biggest challenge you overcame/faced in high school speech and theatre? 3.38/4.00
Lifelong Confidence—in the beginning, many students were shy, introverted, socially withdrawn, lacked confidence, self-conscious, awkward, insecure
Lifelong Expressiveness—overcoming stage fright, rural accent; gained confidence, grew more outgoing
Lifelong Belonging—were lonely, did not fit in, little peer acceptance; found community
Lifelong Resilience—learned to commit to self and others and accept rejection; developed work ethics (organization, time management, balancing priorities, perseverance) and personal coping skills (handling stress, thinking quickly, dealing with home and family issues)
Lifelong Identity—helped with the search for self; overcame low self-esteem, personal insecurities, fear of judgment, limited world view

Lifelong Confidence.

I was very, very shy, and never could have imagined performing in front of an audience. In high school I became comfortable on stage. (Female, Attorney, Class of 1992)

Thirty-six percent of respondents noted shyness, introversion, social withdrawal, and an overall lack of confidence were their biggest challenges. These students were self-conscious, "awkward," and insecure before and during the initial stages of theatre/speech participation:

> I had always been shy and unsure of myself; being in theatre gave me the opportunity to come out of my shell and interact with others who had the same interests. This also helped me pursue other things I might not have if I didn't have the confidence I gained in theatre. (Female, Former Elementary Educator, Class of 1980)

Challenges such as those profiled above are common preconditions before theatre and speech participation. But survey results also suggested afterthoughts--conditions students may not have realized they faced until the art forms made specific and particular demands on them, as noted below.

Lifelong Expressiveness.

> My biggest challenge? Getting over the fear of standing up in front of people and looking/sounding like a fool. (Male, Corporation Consultant, Class of 1976)

Nineteen percent of respondents noted a "fear" of speaking (i.e., communication anxiety or stage fright) was a personal challenge to them as they began their programs. A few students in rural southern schools commented on self-consciousness with their "accents." Respondents testified the vocal requirements of theatre and speech made them more outgoing and gave them confidence, themes that figured prominently throughout this prompt and in other survey results:

> As a child I stayed away from anything that made me nervous, which was mostly speaking in front of others. I was able to overcome this fear and develop presentation skills, which have become vital during graduate school in order to present my research in seminars. Theatre class also provided self-confidence, a quality which I was lacking before high school. (Female, University Chemistry Doctoral Student, Class of 2001)

Lifelong Belonging.

> I moved to the school from a school where I suffered a lot of bullying. And from that environment I transitioned into the drama club. While the drama club may have been seen as a bit of a "nerd herd" to some, . . . I was readily accepted by most of the members of the group. (Male, Elementary School Resource Manager, Class of 1975)

Selected respondents perceived themselves as lonely individuals who "did not belong" and had few or no friends or little peer acceptance. Their social and interpersonal skills were lacking, yet theatre communities were places to cultivate them:

> In high school I went through a period of time where I stopped hanging out with friends from junior high and did not have any new friends to speak of. I was very lonely at

> school. At my parent's encouragement, I tried out for the school play--mostly just to have something to do. When I got a part in the play, it was a huge boost to my confidence. I made new friends, learned a new way to express myself, and rather than growing more withdrawn, I became more outgoing. (Female, Youth Services Coordinator for a Public Library, Class of 1997)

Lifelong Resilience.

> The ability to handle rejection. Theatre, speech and debate taught me how to cope with rejection, have confidence in myself, and keep pushing forward to my goals. (Female, Corporate Securities Partner, Class of 1990)

Several challenges faced by survey participants during their high school years related to resilience and the cultivation of commitment to self and others. Work ethics such as organization, time management, balancing priorities, and perseverance were developed, along with intrapersonal coping skills such as handling stress, thinking quickly, and dealing with difficult home and family issues. Since competition is a facet of speech tournaments and one-act play contests, students also learned the importance of accepting rejection and its effects on one's ego:

> I got kicked off the debate team my junior year for not doing my fair share of the research. Came home crying to parents; Dad said, "You can spend the rest of your life whining about how you were done wrong, or you can own up to your contribution and do something about it." Went to see my demanding Debate Coach, worked out a reinstatement plan, did research every spare minute--and took 2nd place in Lincoln-Douglas Debate at the State NFL [National Forensic League] tournament that very

spring. (Female, Global Leader for Distribution and Sales Force Effectiveness [for a major corporation], Class of 1984)

A final subcategory was learning how to get along with others, an openness to and consideration of collaborators' feelings, and dealing diplomatically with various personalities, especially for those who held student leadership roles:

To be perfectly honest, the biggest challenge I had to overcome was myself. During my senior year, I became somewhat arrogant and I hadn't realized it. I was treating people like they weren't as good as myself, and walking around the theatre with an air of superiority I was NOT big enough to fill. Luckily, [my theatre teacher] pulled me aside (multiple times, I might add) and set me right. It took some yelling, quite a few tears, and some sleepless nights, but I finally got back to the "old me," the me everyone liked to work with. I think this was not only my biggest challenge but the best lesson I have taken away from high school. (Female, University Technical Theatre Major, Class of 2009)

Lifelong Identity.

I didn't know who I was or what I was doing in this world (hello, teenage angst), but through drama, formed an identity and skills I still honor. (Male, Graduate Educational Theatre Student, Class of 1980)

A final category in overcoming challenges was a search for self. Some respondents reported reflexive challenges due to low self-esteem and self-worth, personal insecurities, and a fear of judgment. A limited worldview clouded the development of their evolving values systems:

I believe that speech, debate, and theatre combined to help me overcome some really confused understandings I had of the world. I think that my participation in these

> activities, and my interactions with people from all different backgrounds and belief systems, re-aligned my perception of what was right and wrong, and opened my eyes and my mind. (Male, Internet Strategy Consultant, Class of 1999)

A woman in her forties, now in a leadership role of a theatre program she originated in New York, alluded to the individual therapeutic benefits of the art form during her adolescent development:

> I came from a very difficult family situation as an only child. Through theatre in high school I learned to process this experience. I found a forum and vocabulary to express the epic scale of emotion I felt inside in an environment and structure that was safe to do so, supported by peers and faculty. I heard others' stories and played roles very different from myself, thus broadening my point of view. (Female, Playwright and Director, Class of 1980)

Though only a handful of respondents suggested "difficult" home situations were eased through participation in high school theatre, these statements attest to the art form's potential as positive therapeutic intervention programming for adolescents with extraordinary emotional needs.

I have good memories from my speech and/or drama participation. What are a few of your fondest memories of your speech and/or theatre participation? Why did you select those moments?

> The best memories I have from theatre are memories of the drama community in our school. I became extremely close friends with many people through drama and had lots of fun putting on productions. I found performing exhilarating, and working with others

toward a common goal bonds people together like nothing else. (Female, College Theatre Major, Class of 2008)

The 234 respondents' mean rating of agreement to this prompt was 3.88 (out of 4.00), the highest-rated of the five numeric inquiries. The open-ended block generated relatively extensive narratives from respondents that included specific key emotional moments, particular productions and roles, and general reveries. The overall tone of these experiences was fondly nostalgic.

Qualitative responses clustered into five distinct categories of memories: *Lifelong Friendships*, *Lifelong Bonding*, *Lifelong Epiphanies*, *Lifelong Accomplishments*, and *Lifelong Validation* (Table 8).

Table 8. Good Memories

I have good memories from my speech and/or drama participation. What are a few of your fondest memories of your speech and/ore theatre participation? Why did you select those moments? 3.88/4.00
Lifelong Friendships—enduring friendships made during theatre and speech participation
Lifelong Bonding—memories of community, connection, camaraderie, and solidarity; some felt excluded, found collaborating with different personalities hard but learned they were part of something bigger
Lifelong Epiphanies—"magic feeling" from quality work, ritual like "rush" or "flow experience" from opening night and beyond, connections with audiences
Lifelong Accomplishments—memorable achievements either alone or as part of a team; achieved through perseverance, determination, dedication; realization that art form is larger than oneself
Lifelong Validation—recognition and validation through individual accomplishments and team efforts—an award, honorary title, competition ranking, special performance project; recognition from peers, teachers, parents

Lifelong Friendships.

My fondest memories are of the backstage camaraderie that I developed with old friends and new during rehearsals and preparation for a performance. I met and spent time with

> people that I never would have otherwise. (Female, Postdoctoral Researcher in Digital Technology Policy, Class of 1999)

The most prominent category of memories from 43% of respondents was friendships they developed through theatre and speech participation:

> Some of the best memories are just simply the bus rides to competition or rehearsals for shows. You make lasting friendships with people who you creatively collaborate with, and most of the people I participated in theatre with in high school are still some of my closest friends 10 years later. (Female, Actor, Class of 1998)

Many testimonies such as the above were included throughout the data base--several testifying that peers supported each other and "sustainable relationships" were created. But the thing to note here was the interrelationship between this category and the next. Friendships with peers seemed to result from the collaborative acts of speech and theatre production participation, but the larger outcome was what participants perceived as like-minded, passionate individuals connecting and bonding together like a "family."

Lifelong Bonding.

> There is a feeling of being a part of something--a feeling of belonging, and belonging to something positive. (Female, Adjunct Professor of Theatre, Class of 1998)

Theatre and speech participation produced memories of community, connection, camaraderie, and solidarity that occurred in spaces and through activities that, by default, required social and artistic interaction to operate concurrently and reverberatively:

> The memories I treasure are the quiet conversations with my fellow theatre tribe, the laid back cast parties where we'd watch old videos of past plays and laugh, where we'd sing songs and feel for the first time like we had friends who cared. I choose these moments

> because it is now, ten years later, that I realize how precious and rare they were. There are SO many of those people I would not have known at all, so many of them I wouldn't have bothered to talk to, much less become dear friends with. The theatre and speech community connected me with those people, and it's when I think about the quiet conversation I had backstage with a friend of mine where I felt like we connected in a real and poignant way, or the vigorous political debate I would participate in with other speech and debate competitors during lunch, these are all due to the theatre and speech departments merely being around and providing a space for us to meet and connect. (Male, Hollywood Sound Effects and Dialogue Editor, Class of 1999)

Only a handful of respondents recalled feelings of exclusion from their "tribes," due primarily to cliquish student personalities. Other survey results noted how respondents felt collaborating with different and sometimes difficult personalities and setting aside those differences was a beneficial outcome for a common purpose:

> One of my strongest memories from my participation of theatre is how individuals from a variety of backgrounds and personal interests came together as a group and worked effectively for the good of the ensemble. Personal thoughts or beliefs were put aside and the group worked together, accepted one another, laughed with one another, and helped one another when things were not going well. (Female, Elementary School Drama Specialist, Class of 1997)

One of the primary reasons for this setting aside of individual interests was respondents acknowledging they were part of something bigger than themselves.

Lifelong Epiphanies.

> The ultimate thrill of performing in front of an audience and hearing that applause, well, that is just about one the biggest highs a person can get and it's completely drug free! (Female, Stay-at-Home Mother, Class of 1987)

The majority of responses in this category stemmed from memorable and significant play production and speech tournament performances. Participants described experiencing an elusive "magic feeling" through individual and collective high quality work, a ritual-like "rush" that went beyond self on opening night:

> I remember crying uncontrollably during the encore of my first musical, *Oklahoma!*. I played Andrew Carnes, and with the house giving us a standing ovation I couldn't hold back the emotions. For me, the most important thing about theatre is the magic that happens between the performer and audience. This was my first real taste of that drug! (Male, Fundraising Consultant, Class of 1980)

These students experienced what has been labeled by creativity scholars as Csiksczentmihalyi's "flow experience" and Wolcott's "getting it right" artistically. Respondents referred to these epiphanic performances as cognitive or emotional "immersion" in a "new world":

> My fondest and most clear memory involves exiting the stage with cast mates during the Friday evening performance of *Fiddler on the Roof*. It was the second night of the show's three night run. I remember very vividly a feeling of returning to consciousness. That might sound ridiculous, but I was so lost in my character and so deep in concentration, that it really felt like I had to re-enter the world from another dimension as we came off stage. . . . An imagined reality had momentarily replaced everyday existence; I had been transported. I experienced firsthand the transformative power of art and recognized the

> moment as it happened, which is something pretty special, I think. (Female, Private School English and Drama Teacher, Class of 1995)

Respondents also acknowledged the wonderment they felt when playing specific roles in specific productions that "connected" with audiences and stirred their emotions--akin to what psychology labels as the human quest for "personal significance":

> I have fond memories of standing ovations, of making audience members laugh so hard they fell from their seats, of touching them with my performance to the point of tears. I remember those things because they are the moments that I know that what I did really had some impact for somebody else. Performance is a powerful thing, and I love nothing so much as using that power to relate to others in a way that helps them connect emotionally. (Male, Internet Strategy Consultant, Class of 1999)

Lifelong Accomplishments.

> I most remember those moments, big and small, when I accomplished something that I didn't think I was capable of accomplishing. (Female, Professor of Communication Studies, Class of 1973)

Twenty-six percent of respondents also noted high quality accomplishment, either as an individual or with a team, in play productions or speech tournament events. These accomplishments were achieved through perseverance, determination, and dedication, particularly with a collective common goal:

> I also remember performing at a Thespian Festival one year. There were about 1,200 people in the audience and we were pumped! The performance was one of the best we'd ever done, and the crowd loved our show. It had a great way of bringing us all together, even though our cast had been somewhat fractious up until then. It was a great

> demonstration of how theatre can bring people together. (Male, Education Director for a Theatre Company, Class of 1999)

Memorable epiphanies as a collective were not just limited to performance experiences. Personal realizations were made that the art form is larger than oneself. A young man poignantly told this story of learning humility:

> In my senior year we put on a production of *Cyrano de Bergerac*. I had wanted the lead, and though it went to a friend of mine, I felt I could have done as well a job, if not better, for most of the production. Then on the last night of the performance I happened to remain in the wings while the finale of the play occurred. I had never watched it before, and in seeing it, I saw the connection that my friend had to the play, and realized that he was better than I would have been. It was great, because I no longer felt the weight of this perceived injustice upon me, but a sense that everything was in its place. (Male, Moving Company Claims Manager, Class of 1999)

Lifelong Validation.

> Winning the national competition in public speaking was an incredible moment, . . . and I will never forget hearing my name called in front of hundreds of people. All my hard work had paid off. (Female, Graduate Student in Educational Theatre and English, Class of 1999)

Twenty-one percent of respondents' memories also acknowledged the recognition and validation they felt from their individual accomplishments--an award, honorary title, competition ranking, or special performance project. Validation and its consequent boost to self-confidence came not just from peers but also from teachers or parents. Interesting to note was how the sole student was not the major factor in this category, but the individual who was part of the whole:

> I remember being recognized at the statewide theatre festival for the work we had done over the past 6-9 months. I remember feeling a part of an ensemble so strong that I thought nothing could ever come between us. (Female, High School Theatre Teacher, Class of 2003)

Validation was also acknowledged when a student was given significant responsibility for leading a project, such as independently directing a production:

> Getting to direct *Marty*. It was my first real shot at being a leader and making creative/artistic choices on my own. It gave me great confidence. (Female, Education Director of a Professional Theatre, Class of 1983)

A man in his fifties who co-won first place in a state speech tournament's duet acting competition in the 1970s still remembered that moment to this day and affirmed:

> I was able to be successful and my participation brought many friends. It was the joy of those friends and those shared successes that I still carry with me. I no longer have the awards (some were given to [my high school] years later), and I rarely see or speak to those friends, but they are still in my heart. (Male, High School English Teacher and Administrator, Class of 1973)

My participation in high school speech and/or theatre has affected the adult I am now. In what ways do you think your participation in speech and/or theatre as a high school student has affected the adult you have become?

> If the experiences of life make you the person that you are, then I am positive that my experiences in drama have helped to influence the person that I am, and I have to say that

I am pretty darn great! And I have drama to thank for the self-confidence to say that! (Female, Stay-at-Home Mother, Class of 1987)

Survey respondents provided a mean rating of 3.82 (out of 4.00) agreement to this prompt, suggesting perception and consensus that affects were high. The prompt deliberately did not suggest or even request "positive" affects only, but respondents overwhelmingly focused on the benefits they felt were personally gained.

Four categories of outcome were constructed from survey data: *Lifelong Self-Confidence*, *Lifelong Thinking and Working*, *Lifelong Living and Loving*, and *Lifelong Legacy* (Table 9).

Table 9. Affected Me as an Adult

My participation in high school speech and/or theatre has affected the adult I am now. In what ways do you think your participation in speech and/or theatre as a high school student has affected the adult you have become? 3.82/4.00
Lifelong Self-Confidence—physically and vocally transcended comfort zones, open up to performance and presentations; developed expressive, outgoing, and independent personas
Lifelong Thinking and Working—public speaking skills (articulate, persuasion, presentation of self and sense of performance); cognitive processing skills (thinking quickly, intellectually, critically, creatively); working under pressure; problem solving skills; cultivated work habits (team work, time management, organization, goal setting), and ethics (self-motivation, perseverance, responsibility to self and team)
Lifelong Living and Loving—personal identity formed (discover talents, strengths, find focus and purpose); emotional growth and discovery of what matters
Lifelong Legacy—found career in theatre or way of life; sense of paying it forward, leaving a legacy as patron or teacher

Lifelong Self-Confidence.

Theatre gave me confidence that continues with me through today. (Female, Graduate Student in Counseling Psychology, Class of 2000)

Thirty-six percent of respondents testified a sense of *self-confidence* was a significant outcome of their participation in high school theatre and/or speech programming. (The percentage is much higher if comparable confidence comments from other survey questions were

pooled here.) The nature of the subjects demanded that students physically and vocally transcend their "comfort zones" and made themselves open to performance and presentation experiences with poise and composure that, across time, developed expressive, outgoing, and independent personas:

> I have a great deal of self-confidence and self-esteem now. If I can get up in front of an audience and act as part of a cast, I can do anything. (Female, Part-Time Work and Part-Time College Student [no major specified], Class of 1997)

Though the interrelationship will be discussed later, self-confidence comments were linked to public speaking/communication, self-esteem, leadership, and cognitive/thinking affects:

> [Theatre] gave me confidence, experience in public speaking, and the ability to react quickly with a "show must go on" attitude when things go wrong. (Male, Technology Company CEO, Class of 1988)

Lifelong Thinking and Working.

> Developmentally, I became the person I am today because of the experiences in the arts I had in high school. I learned about responsibility, teamwork, dedication, commitment, self expression, communication, and much more through the arts. (Female, Assistant Education Director for a Non-Profit Theatre for Youth, Class of 2001)

A second prominent category has been labeled by the co-researchers as *thinking and working*. The salient subcategory is the development of public speaking skills from 30% of respondents (again, the percentage is much higher if comparable comments from other survey questions were pooled here). Participants felt they gained communication skills that enabled them to speak articulately and persuasively with heightened "presentations of self" and "a sense of performance," most notably in non-theatrical contexts such as classes and employee seminars:

> In my career I've had to do a lot of public speaking. I do training and my participation in speech and drama has made me a successful speaker. Other departments request my services for their training seminars. (Female, Administrative Services Officer, Class of 1971)

Various cognitive processing skills were other subcategories of outcome. The term refers to the capacity for thinking quickly, intellectually, critically, and creatively, particularly in "high pressure" and risk-taking situations. Selected respondents testified the improvisational and instantaneous problem-solving demands of theatre and selected speech events simulated real-world dilemmas:

> It definitely affected who I am today in many ways. I have completely overcome any fears I had of speaking in public or in speaking my mind when necessary, despite . . . pressure or opposition. I have had the opportunity to speak and advocate for clients in many state and federal courts, something I never could have done without the experiences I had in high school and what they taught me. Prior to becoming an attorney, I was able to use those same skills while making technical presentations to others, including presentations to the chief engineer of a billion-dollar space program (no exaggeration). Many other engineers were nervous and anxious in that role but I never had a problem doing it. Again, that was due to the skills and confidence I was taught in school. (Male, Attorney, Class of 1986)

Respondents testified their work habits and work ethics were cultivated through high school theatre and speech participation. Teamwork or working collaboratively with others was nurtured, as were time management, organization, and goal setting for meeting deadlines and

task completion, plus ethics of self-motivation, perseverance, and responsibility to oneself and to others:

> Participating in theatre as a high school student has not only given me a lifetime appreciation for theatre and the arts, but it has given me important life skills. The ability to lead a team, listen to others, and be responsible would be at the top of that list. (Male, Computing Science Major, Class of 2009)

Lifelong Living and Loving.

> Even though I'm not currently doing theatre, I still feel an element of the theatrical in my bones. It comes out in my personality from time to time. Working in theatre in high school actually helped me become alive as a human being as well as a student. (Male, Adjunct Professor of Art, Class of 1978)

This category is composed of the affective, intra-, and interpersonal domains of learning. Like earlier survey findings, some respondents noted the lifelong friendships that were initiated during their high school years. But most prominent here was the formation of one's personal identity. Theatre and speech were opportunities to discover one's talents and strengths, and thus to find one's focus or purpose:

> During my time in the theatre, I became the person I always wanted to be. Throughout my life I was struggling to find my niche as well as finding who I truly was. Theatre and all the people involved helped me find these two things. Theatre made me. (Female, University Theatre Design Major, Class of 2009)

Selected respondents testified they experienced emotional growth though such conceptual processes as self-esteem, self-worth, values clarification, maturity, and personal character

development. For some, speech and theatre were conduits for discovering "what mattered," particularly in domains of human awareness and social interaction:

> Theatre created me. It's almost impossible to think of who I might have been without it. I honestly don't know that I could have survived without the outlet. I learned how to express myself in the only environment I ever felt accepted into. With that, my confidence grew, my mind opened, and I was pushed to explore more of myself. (Female, Flight Attendant, Class of 1992)

Lifelong Legacy.

> Theatre/speech has driven my adult career as an actor, director, producer, educator, and consultant. My creative capacity is one of my greatest assets. (Male, Artistic Director, Non-Profit Musical Theatre Company, Class of 1985)

For the 52% of respondents who chose and pursued theatre as a vocation or college/university major field of study, continued participation after high school was a "given." For some, theatre has become a living, and for others, a way of life:

> Even though I originally signed up in the military as an engineer, even completing my undergraduate degree as one, I'm now involved in public affairs, and this career wouldn't have been open to me were it not for a certain (limited) amount of dramatic skill. . . . I learned in high school that, even if the bulk of my talent lies in the math and science realm, I would always enjoy the artistic side more. (Male, U.S. Military Officer, Class of 2001)

A prominent theme from both theatre *and* non-theatre adults was a sense of "paying it forward" and leaving a "legacy" as an arts patron and advocate, particularly by those who chose to teach theatre to children and adolescents:

> I have always wanted to be as free and myself as I was onstage in that high school class. I am pursuing this [educational theatre] degree, in part, because I want to regain that freedom and let others feel it, too. (Male, Graduate Student in Educational Theatre, Class of 2000)

There were times, when I was a high school student in speech and/or theatre, when I learned something new about people whose lives and times were different from mine by a character I portrayed or a play we worked on, **and/or the other people I worked with**. **Please explain your answer.**

> My childhood in Kansas felt very sheltered to me. Theatre allowed me to explore places, times, and situations far removed from my own. (Female, Textbook Editor, Class of 1982)

The mean of survey respondents' agreement to this prompt was 3.37 (out of 4.00), the lowest of the five numeric inquiries. Though many attested their portrayals of characters and interactions with other students heightened their awareness of historic and contemporary domains, a good number remarked their programs' choices of benign play scripts did not challenge their worldviews. Some respondents noted they could not recall any experiences related to the prompt, while several provided a numeric rating but no comments in the survey field. A few noted their "suburban whitebread" school populations, and thus their play script choices for production, were fairly homogenous with little to no ethnic diversity.

There were three constructed categories of response to this section: *Lifelong Socio-Historic Awareness*, *Lifelong Human Awareness*, and *Lifelong Disconnect*, the latter referring to a desire for more social awareness and issues-oriented content in dramatic literature (Table 10).

Table 10. Learned about Others

There were times, when I was a high school student in speech and/or theatre, when I learned something new about people whose lives and times were different from mine by a character I portrayed or a play we worked on, and/or the other people I worked with. Please explain your answer. 3.37/4.00
Lifelong Socio-Historic Awareness—learned history; gained global, social, cultural awareness; expanded world view (political, social, religious); better with supplemental research
Lifelong Human Awareness—cultivated empathetic and sympathetic capacities; perspective taking skills; understanding human motivations; social interaction and emotional intelligence domains; some learning from play performance, but mostly through working with others (learned to accept differences, appreciation of others talents, deeper understanding of nature of friendships and supporting peers, getting along)
Lifelong Disconnect—not enough social challenge through "safe" play scripts; absence of responses for this question

Lifelong Socio-Historic Awareness.

I learned a lot about the world from debating international topics. (Male, Director of a University Intercollegiate Debate Program, Class of 1979)

Forty-one percent of respondents felt they derived historic, global, social, and/or cultural learnings through their participation in specific theatrical productions or debate activities. Examination of political, religious, and other social forces expanded their worldviews of the conditions in their communities and in the world. Plays like *The Crucible*, *Little Women*, plus selected Shakespearean titles such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, introduced students respectively to the Salem witch trials, women's roles in nineteenth century America, and ancient classical Greek life. Historic figures such as Sir Thomas More, Helen Keller, and the eclectic blend of famous figures (such as Amelia Earhart and Gertrude Stein) from *Chamber Music* acquainted them with biographical profiles. Plays like *To Kill a Mockingbird* were opportunities to explore racism; *Fiddler on the Roof*, an opportunity to learn facets of Jewish culture; and *The Yellow Boat*, an opportunity to examine the stigma of AIDS.

Play productions with historic content provided students deeper understandings of characters during various time periods:

> I learned a great deal about history when portraying Mrs. Lincoln. For me, the play humanized the great president. As a student in history class, I began to look at events in a new light as I reflected about the personal challenges that must have shaped the decisions of our leaders. Through my theatre experience, I believe I developed a great compassion and understanding of people. (Female, Director of Alumni Relations, University School of Nursing, Class of 1977)

Productions such as these were often supplemented with additional research and reading which especially enriched those producing the classics:

> I think I learned the most from playing Abigail in *The Crucible*. I learned about the Salem witch trials as well as how McCarthyism inspired Mr. Miller to write the play. Fascinating stuff for a 17-year-old. (Female, IT Management and Consultant Firm Employee, Class of 1983)

Lifelong Human Awareness.

> The stage was a nexus in which the worlds of human experience coalesced. (Male, Moving Company Claims Manager, Class of 1999)

Play production experiences also offered students opportunities to cultivate their empathic and sympathetic capacities, perspective-taking skills, understandings of human motives, and social interaction and emotional intelligence domains. Though some learned about the human condition through the portrayal of fictional characters, a majority of survey respondents felt they learned more about the dynamics of getting along with other personalities, different individuals from different social groups, and the nature of friendships and collaboration

in teamwork scenarios. These types of interactions--sometimes conflict-laden--also led to a greater understanding of one's self:

> I think characters shape your perceptions, but it was the real characters, the real people whose opinions and passions differed from mine--they were the ones who taught me. (Female, Global Leader for Distribution and Sales Force Effectiveness [for a major corporation], Class of 1984)

The portrayal of characters by some gave them a deeper understanding of the particular individual they depicted on stage. But some transferred the experiences from fictional to actual modern-day applications:

> I acted in *The Laramie Project*, portraying one of the killers of Matthew Shepard. It was hard to realize that people in this day and age can still have bigoted thoughts or feelings towards others in our society and completely persecute them. (Male, Professional Stage Manager, Class of 2000)

The cooperative dynamics of teamwork and collaboration were tested, according to some respondents' testimonies. These interpersonal relationships led to an acceptance of differences, an appreciation of others' talents, and a deeper understanding of the nature of friendships and one's role in supporting peers. A former student involved in the technical aspects of play production shared:

> Although I never acted, every single play I worked on gave me a new perspective or concept to think about. I also learned a lot about the people around me, who all brought different interests, skill sets, and long term goals. I did not always agree with or approve of the people around me, but I knew that what they were contributing was important and

> the show meant a lot to them. Since we shared this passion, other differences could be overlooked. (Male, University Computing Science Major, Class of 2009)

Individuals' value, attitude, and belief systems were both challenged and formed through these collaborative experiences and evolution of diverse groups into "blended cultures." Several respondents testified this led to the ability to simply "get along with others":

> I now work with people from all over the world, and from working with different people in school I am able to accept everyone no matter what their background is. I find myself to be very lucky to have this skill. Not a day goes by that I don't appreciate everything that I learned in my theatre classes. (Male, Entertainment Company Head of Audio/Rigging, Class of 2004)

Lifelong Disconnect.

> I never played any heavy, deep, and real characters. (Male, Elementary School Resource Manager, Class of 1975)

Fourteen percent of survey respondents noted that not only did their program directors' choices of "conservative" play scripts or an ethnically homogenous school population inhibit awareness of social issues, selected respondents wished there would have been more "socially charged" material produced at their schools:

> Looking back, I wish that my school/director had been more adventurous in his selection of plays. They were often very safe and uncontroversial and didn't really push any criticism of the status quo. *Bye Bye Birdie* and *Oklahoma!* aren't exactly revolutionary works. (Female, Part-Time Teaching Artist, Class of 1997)

Despite deficits in and disconnections with rich play production experiences, students found learnings in social reality in addition to theatrical realism:

> I would say that I learned more about the people I worked with, and about working as a team, and developed a more general sense of empathy. I did learn a fair amount about understanding what motivates people and how people behave. But I feel that the selection of plays that we produced was very safe and didn't really force us to grapple with major issues or to explore lives and cultures in the ways that it could have. (Male, Education Director of a Non-Profit Theatre for Youth, Class of 1999)

Of special note here is what was *missing* in the data. Selected respondents offered they did "not recall" any particular experiences that led to significant learnings about other people. A few noted an outcome such as this does not happen unless particular effort is made by teachers to make it happen. The relatively noticeable number of non-responses to this portion of the survey field also suggested that some simply had nothing to report because nothing of note happened during their high school years related to this survey prompt.

Survey Results: Part 3 - Looking Ahead

What advice would you give a university student about to become a high school speech or theatre teacher?

> Make sure that teaching teenagers is something you really have a passion for and want to do. Theatre and speech teachers work long hours. The job is about serving and teaching others, so no egos allowed. (Female, High School Theatre Teacher, Class of 2002)

The advice offered to future teachers closely paralleled the outstanding qualities of respondents' former teachers, but their preferences and priorities shifted here. Like so many responses throughout this survey, several of them contained complex weavings of an array of suggestions, while others focused on specific themes.

Five categories were constructed from respondents' advice to future teachers: *Lifelong Passion*, *Lifelong Challenges*, *Lifelong Relationships*, *Lifelong Learning*, and *Lifelong Resilience* (Table 11).

Table 11. Advice for New Teachers

What advice would you give a university student about to become a high school speech or theatre teacher?
Lifelong Passion—love what you do, maintain energy, enthusiasm and passion; make experiences fun; job requires commitment and sacrifice
Lifelong Challenges—challenge students as artists, maintain high standards for excellence, set up rich creative experiences, tackle issues, challenge status quo
Lifelong Relationships—develop an ethic of care, connect with students (encourage, respect, inspire); create inclusive, equitable, student focused "safe haven," community, and ensemble especially for marginalized students; look beyond the immediate because teacher can impact student's future
Lifelong Learning—need broad range of content knowledge and organized teaching; find and explore challenging scripts; keep learning and find balance between process and product
Lifelong Resilience—because job is hard work and time consuming, teachers should maintain physical and mental health, patience and perseverance especially for political "battles"; remember "less is more" and have a back-up teaching plan

Lifelong Passion.

> Have a passion for your chosen field and for working with teenagers. (Male, Retired Office Clerk, Class of 1970)

Twenty-five percent of respondents advised that future teachers need to "love what you do" and maintain an energetic, enthusiastic, and passionate perspective. The instructor should make the experiences "fun" for both herself and the students as a way to connect:

> Be passionate. I think this is the most important thing for any teacher. If the teacher can't be excited about the material, the topic, the discipline, why should the students? . . . Students need to respect the work. The teacher should instill in the students a sense of discipline, a hard work ethic--but of course, it's also play. There needs to be a balance between the two. (Female, Actor, Class of 2001)

One theme from both theatre and non-theatre career respondents was a do-or-don't charge to commit to the job and immerse one's self in it with selfless and sacrificial understandings:

> I would warn university students who are thinking about becoming high school drama teachers that they need to be prepared to sacrifice a LOT of time to the cause. It must be a labor of love. To be successful . . . takes a lot of afternoons, evenings, and weekends. Without a lot of work and luck, relationships can suffer, . . . they'll find themselves consumed at school with no outside life. (Male, Elementary School Resource Manager, Class of 1975)

Lifelong Challenges.

> Be unique. Be fearless. Don't be afraid to force your students to stretch. (Male, Technology Company CEO, Class of 1988)

Concurrent and within the "safe haven" created by teachers is the need to challenge students as artists--to maintain high standards of excellence for quality achievement through rich creative experiences that tackle issues and challenge the status quo:

> Give high school students credit for understanding tough situations. Give them deep theatre. Don't stick to schmaltz, because students have a craving to dig deeper within themselves than *High School Musical* (though the tunes are catchy). Give them material that challenges them to explore and grow together (Female, University Music Education Major, Class of 2007)

Recall that respondents who felt they did not learn something new about people whose lives and times were different from theirs, remarked that one reason was the benign choice of play scripts that did not explore social issues in depth.

Lifelong Relationships.

> There are so many ways that your work can help your students if you just take the time to listen and find out what is actually going on in their lives. There is more to being a theatre teacher than just putting on shows. (Female, Graduate Educational Theatre Major, Class of 2003)

Closely resembling the qualities of *Lifelong Nurturance* in respondents' memories of former teachers, was *Lifelong Relationships* as a recommendation for future teachers' interactions with students. An ethic of caring about, connecting with, encouraging, respecting, and inspiring young people was reinforced. Teachers are charged to create an inclusive, equitable, and student-focused "safe haven" that cultivates a sense of community and ensemble, especially for marginalized students in search of their "niche":

> The students need teachers as an adult mentor and role model. Someday you may be the only adult that connects to the students and asks them about their day. Do it with caution and at a distance, but be there and support them. (Male, School District Fine Arts Administrator, Class of 1986)

An additional theme in this category was to acknowledge that teachers should always look beyond the immediate and acknowledge that a student's future could be significantly impacted and changed by what happens in the present:

> You may never know just HOW much you may affect and inspire a student to do what he/she loves and teach them to embrace their passions and differences. You could be the one to inspire a person to be brave enough to follow his/her dreams. (Female, University Theatre Major, Class of 2009)

Lifelong Learning.

> Read plays, read as many plays as you can possibly get your hands on. I am constantly trying to find good material for class and for performances. (Female, High School Theatre Teacher, Class of 1995)

Former theatre and speech students advised future high school teachers of the subjects should, perhaps obviously, possess a broad range of content area knowledge and present it in an organized manner, but particularly in the subfield of dramatic literature, strategically selected for both class work and play productions. Several respondents wished there could have been "deeper" material explored during their high school years:

> You have the opportunity to get impressionable kids into some great, great theatre. Take that opportunity. Sure, like any theatre you gotta do *Bye Bye Birdie* and *Little Shop of Horrors* because you can throw huge casts in there and people like them. But . . . throw some great plays at them, even if they are "the typical" great plays. I didn't know a damn thing about, for example, *Waiting for Godot* or *Lysistrata* in high school. I didn't even know about modern classics (and popular high school productions) like *The Laramie Project* or *Fires in the Mirror* that really got people thinking. . . . Give the kids some exciting stuff that will blow their minds. (Male, Actor, No Class Year Specified)

Pedagogical recommendations included the "keep learning" process of professional development, along with reflection on philosophical approaches to education and finding a balance between process and product:

> Really take the time to do some soul-searching about your personal philosophy behind what you do--the "why" part of it. Having a good grasp of WHY you want to teach theatre will allow you to have a more powerful impact on your students, and it will

> impact HOW you go about teaching it. . . . In my opinion, you should strive to be very knowledgeable about the craft/art of teaching, while still maintaining an artist's sense of play and exploration (Male, Education Director of a Theatre for Youth Company, Class of 1999)

Lifelong Resilience.

> It is very hard work. You will be tired all the time. You are never caught up and always have a "list" of things that needs to be done. However, the rewards of positively affecting students' lives can't be found in most jobs--even most other teaching jobs. (Female, High School Theatre/Broadcast/English Teacher, Class of 1981)

Recommendations for future teachers included acknowledgement that the job is a lot of time-consuming hard work. Teachers must maintain their physical and mental health, along with patience and perseverance to deal with "political" battles of various types. Selected respondents currently in theatre education positions at schools suggested novices start with small goals and produce plays with a "less is more" vision. Future teachers are also advised to prepare themselves for better employment with a second teaching field or "back-up plan":

> Although it may seem cliché to become certified in English as a back-up, it really makes sense. If I had pursued English or even Spanish more in college, I would most likely be teaching now instead of working in the corporate world. However, I waited to attempt for an additional certification until it was too late for me to get a job in a school teaching. Fortunately, I do love my current job as well, but my lack of planning simply took me down a different career path. (Male, Call Center Manager, Class of 2004)

What would you tell school administrators or school boards about the importance of having a high school speech and/or theatre program in their schools?

> I am in the field I am in because I learned to speak publicly early on. Additionally, my skills in debate have helped me in my studies by helping me learn to form and support an argument. I may not be in theatre, but I wouldn't be where I am without it. (Female, Leadership Education Specialist, Class of 1999)

Virtually all categories of lifelong outcomes profiled thus far in this report were reiterated in survey responses to this prompt. There are those within the theatre community who decry that we resort to the lowest common denominator when others assert that theatre prepares students for the general work force, as if that pragmatic goal negates the purpose and power of the art form. But former students themselves attested that the benefits and payoffs of speech and theatre participation helped them in their vocational as well as everyday life endeavors, even for those who chose not to pursue careers in theatre.

Many respondents also framed their advocacy statements by comparing them to the perceived enhanced support given by schools toward athletic programs. The frequency of these comments suggested an "us vs. them" view and a persistent comparison of arts vs. athletics in terms of inequitable funding and resources. Rather than focusing on the inferred (and, to some, tiresome) injustice argument, the analysis will instead present the positive attributes proposed by respondents as appreciative inquiry.

Five distinct categories of what participants perceived as enduring outcomes are: *Lifelong Inquiry*, *Lifelong Teamwork*, *Lifelong Work Ethics*, *Lifelong Security*, and *Lifelong Discovery* (Table 12).

Table 12. Advice for Administrators/School Boards

What would you tell school administrators or school boards about the importance of having a high school speech and/or theatre program in their schools?
Lifelong Inquiry—can develop cognitive functions and skills (observation, memory, problem solving, crisis resolution through critical and creative thinking); can learn about art and its role in society (appreciate "great works," enhanced historic, social, cultural awareness); arts motivate learning and academic performance
Lifelong Teamwork—learn teamwork, collaboration, interpersonal skills
Lifelong Work Ethics—business skills cultivated (quest for quality, organization, punctuality, time management, meeting deadlines, meeting responsibilities); developed multi-dimensional public speaking skills (rich use of language, more vibrant presentation of self to others)

Lifelong Inquiry.

In the 21st century, communication is king. Problem-solving, creativity, and critical thinking are paramount. (Male, Teaching Artist, Class of 1990)

Thirty-eight percent of respondents noted cognitive functions and skills could be honed through speech and theatre participation. Basic skills such as observation and memory, plus advanced functions such as problem-solving and "crisis" resolution through critical and creative thinking, can be accelerated through experiences provided by the art forms:

I know my life would be much less rich if I hadn't been involved in theatre in junior and senior high school. The confidence those experiences gave me, not only in myself as a speaker, performer, and worthwhile human, but in my problem-solving and logical thinking abilities as well, are crucial to who I am, what I do, and how I do it. (Male, University Service and Vocation Center Director, Class of 1988)

A second theme was learning about art itself and its role in society. Appreciation of "great works" provides a more well-rounded, multidisciplinary education that enhances one's historic, social, and cultural awareness. A few respondents cited specific studies and researchers

that have provided evidentiary support that the arts are not just entertainment but rich contexts for learning, plus motivators for better school attendance and academic performance:

> Having been a teacher of theatre at all levels, K-12, . . . I do not know how many times students have said to me, "If it were not for drama, I would not come to school," or, "If it were not for drama, I would not have finished high school." Parents have told me the same. (Female, Retired High School Theatre Teacher, Class of 1958)

Lifelong Teamwork.

> The camaraderie and spirit generated by a group of students working together on a show can buoy an entire school and lead to increased feelings of school community. (Female, Doctoral Educational Theatre Major, Class of 1999)

Twenty-five percent of respondents asserted learning outcomes of teamwork and collaboration, plus the interpersonal skills necessary to make them happen effectively, were another benefit of speech and theatre participation. Teamwork has been a recurring theme throughout survey responses profiled thus far, not only as a default condition of speech and theatre activities, but as a recursive and exponential process and product. As teams are built, so are friendships, peer support, humanity, and other personal and social skills:

> The theatre program is not just about putting on plays; it is about building relationships and skills that will serve students always. Theatre also gives kids a second home, a place where they can be free to be themselves, and a feeling of belonging. (Female, Graduate Educational Theatre Major, Class of 1997)

Lifelong Work Ethics.

> [Theatre] links artistry and creativity with entrepreneurial experience and project management skills. (Female, Education Director of a Professional Theatre for Youth Company, Class of 1983)

Respondents attested that business skills, both intrinsic and pragmatic, can be cultivated through speech and theatre programming. Intrinsically, a quest for quality in one's work can be achieved through such disciplined traits as organization, punctuality, time management, and meeting deadlines, plus professional and responsible dedication to the goal-oriented task at hand. Survey respondents who elected not to pursue theatre-related vocations testified the work ethics developed through speech and theatre transferred into their current fields and careers:

> I was able to transfer the skills of speaking in public, performing on stage, trying to understand what motivates others, etc. to my professional life in presentations, meeting new clients, and interviews. It is interesting to note that in the university development area where I work, there are many former actors and actresses. I believe they are successful in development because of their unique training in understanding [people] of all types. (Female, University Director of Alumni Relations, School of Nursing, Class of 1977)

Respondents also offered that the public speaking skills they acquired were multidimensional, assisting with various forms such as oral and written communication, rich use of language, and a more vibrant presentation of self to others:

> Some children are athletes and some are musicians; our schools have long catered to those talents very well. However, other children yearn to perform as actors or speakers; they wish to feel what it is like to make an audience laugh or cry or simply THINK as a

result of what they, as speakers or actors, do and say on stage or from a lectern. Such young people are likely to be society's next lawyers, legislators, mayors, county executives, and perhaps even our Supreme Court justices, congressmen, senators, and presidents. Their talents and contributions matter and should be nurtured. (Male, Attorney, Class of 1986)

Lifelong Security.

Theatre gave me a group, a place where I could do something constructive and positive. Not only did it do things like build my confidence, but on a very basic level, all the hours I spent in rehearsal were hours I wasn't getting into trouble somewhere else. (Female, Adjunct Professor of Theatre, Class of 1998)

Twenty-four percent of respondents reinforced that speech and theatre programs provide a "safe haven" and outlet for a "niche" community of supportive peers to become friends and to creatively express themselves. The security of an accepting environment provides students a forum or "outlet" for emerging identities. Twenty-eight percent of respondents also testified that *self-confidence* is one of the most significant outcomes of speech and theatre programming. In this extended excerpt, a survey respondent recalls how a theatre program provided opportunistic space for the emotional, social, and developmental needs of his adolescence:

We often hear so much about the value that sports brings to the high school experience, and I don't disagree with that. Sports provides lifelong lessons about the importance of hard work, perseverance, teamwork, and the importance of community. Without theatre, I wouldn't have had the benefit of contact with other students that became role models for me to push myself. I wouldn't have had a social support system that helped me do better in my other studies, not just theatre. I wouldn't have had the opportunity to act, to be

> expressive, to be creative in ways that gave me confidence and self-esteem. I was a geeky, awkward, misfit sort of teenager. I was terrible at sports, bullied and humiliated in required physical education classes. But theatre wiped all that away--it helped to, at least. It made me feel not awkward, but graceful; not geeky, but attractive; not a misfit, but someone who belonged. (Male, Adjunct Professor of Art, Class of 1978)

Lifelong Discovery.

> The drama classroom is often the only safe space within a school for students to discover their identities, build community, explore and solve conflict, tolerance, diversity, and understanding in a healthy environment. (Male, Professional Theatre and Television Director, Class of 1976)

Twenty-three percent of participants focused on the potential of theatre and speech as a medium for creative expression that teaches about one's self. The art forms develop the "whole" human being: a mature, emotionally intelligent, joyful, and humane citizen of character, one who is empathetic to and accepting of the multiple perspectives around her:

> Educators are faced with the challenge of teaching young people who are often disaffected, distracted, and emotionally unstable. Theatre offers a natural means of engaging students and instilling in them a personal confidence and well-being that is difficult to achieve in a high-school environment. (Male, Wildlife Park Ranger, Class of 2003)

Opportunities to excel and "shine" on stage or at the competitive speech event nurtures one's potential and talent, enhances self-esteem, and provides a forum for students to discover their voices and evolving identities:

Theatre gives kids of all backgrounds a way to channel all the confusing emotions of growing up in a safe and healthy environment. It allows kids to discover who they want to be by allowing them to explore who they currently are. (Female, University Music Education Major, Class of 2007)

CHAPTER 3: DATA QUERIES

Queries--or in everyday language, "hunches"--are opportunities to explore possible interrelationships and differences between qualitative data that have been reconfigured into particular areas of investigator interest. The findings thus far have been generated from the complete data corpus--i.e., all survey responses pooled into and analyzed as one large group. The co-researchers wondered if queries would suggest any additional insights on particular groupings of respondents, their perceptions, and the lifelong impacts of theatre and speech education. Interpretations such as these may better inform the final synthesis. Therefore, we further analyzed the data by separating and comparing quantitative means and qualitative codes between these groupings (when respondent attributes such as career, gender, etc. were available):

- *by Careers*: between those who pursued theatre- and speech-oriented higher education and/or careers (n = 121), and those who chose non-theatre/speech related careers (n = 113);
- *by Theatre/Speech Experiences*: between those who participated in theatre *and* speech (classes, tournaments, forensics, debate, etc.) (n = 103), and those who participated in theatre *only* (classes and/or productions) (n = 131);
- *by Gender*: between women (n = 156) and men (n = 77); and
- *by Generation*: between decades of graduation from high school.

The latter group posed statistical and qualitative dilemmas due to the unequal distribution of respondents' graduation years across the decades:

1950s = 3

1960s = 9

1970s = 29

1980s = 50

1990s = 64

2000s = 69

We pooled respondents who graduated in the 1950s through 1970s as one large group (n = 41) to provide a somewhat comparable data set for comparison with high school graduates from the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. We acknowledge that this is an artificial division and reassembly of the corpus since inquiries such as these should seek *when* changes seem to emerge across a timeline, rather than impose arbitrary categorizations such as decades for comparative analysis (Saldaña, 2003). Hence, we frontload our analyses and reporting for this grouping with this condition in mind.

All queries focused on responses from the five survey prompts that asked for both a numeric rating and supplemental comments (see Appendix A, questions 5 through 9). Though not part of the original research design, this enabled us to apply a modified mixed-methods analysis to the reconfigured data--comparing means between two groups and applying a two-tailed *t*-test to discern any significant statistical differences ($p < .05$), followed by a qualitative comparison of codes. After a few initial queries, we observed *paradigmatic corroboration*--in other words, the lower and more significant the *p* level, the more qualitative differences seemed to appear between groups; conversely, when the *p* level was moderate or high, the less qualitative differences we could detect between groups. This phenomenon in our own data harmonized with mixed-methodological analytic theory (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003) and guided our decisions about whether quantitative results merited qualitative follow-up and inquiry.

Queries by Career

The first query compared those who pursued theatre- and speech-oriented higher education and/or careers with those who chose non-theatre/speech related careers. The latter group's occupations ranged from administrative positions to professionals such as elementary and high school teachers (language arts, biology, social studies, etc.), attorneys, nurses, physicians, CEOs, and college/university students majoring in such fields as computing science, journalism, music, chemistry, etc.

The prompt, "I had a good high school speech and/or theatre teacher(s)," yielded a statistically significant difference ($p < .003$ on a two-tailed *t*-test) between the groups' means when separated by career. The theatre respondents' mean was 3.41; the non-theatre respondents' mean was 3.69. Generally, the majority of both groups perceived their former theatre/speech teachers as caring, dedicated, inspiring, knowledgeable, passionate, and supportive individuals. But theatre respondents who would later pursue careers in the field recalled their high school theatre/speech teachers as more encouraging yet more disciplined and challenging professionals with higher standards and expectations than teachers of non-theatre respondents. The 10% of both theatre and non-theatre respondents, when speaking negatively about their experiences, perceived dysfunctional teacher personalities at work. But theatre respondents tended to recall their former teachers' inexperience, disorganization, and ineffective play production supervision (from casting to product quality) as rationale for their lower ratings.

It is shaky reasoning to assert students will become more motivated to pursue careers in theatre if their high school theatre/speech teachers are more encouraging, yet more disciplined and challenging professionals, with higher standards and expectations. We speculate the

theatre/speech group's perceptions, coupled with their lower mean rating and more critical comments of dysfunctional teachers, may be due to their adult professional experiences in the field and/or insider knowledge of what makes effective theatre pedagogy.

Another statistically significant difference ($p < .002$ on a two-tailed *t*-test) between the groups' means appeared in response to the prompt, "My participation in high school speech and/or theatre has affected the adult I am now." The theatre respondents' mean was 3.90; the non-theatre respondents' mean was 3.73. Obviously, a theatre/speech respondent who chose an education and/or career in theatre/speech will consider high school experiences in the art forms as significant influences, so *occupational preparation* will not be considered as a variable of difference here. The variable, in fact, can be plausibly considered the primary factor that led to the significant difference. Both theatre and non-theatre groups perceived they gained a sense of self-confidence, made long-lasting friendships, enhanced their communication and presentation skills, and (for some) developed their leadership skills.

But what else differs between the groups? Non-theatre respondents overwhelmingly testified to their better public speaking skills and their appreciation of the art form as a patron and advocate. Non-theatre respondents also felt their high school experiences made them better with particular aspects (e.g., presentation of self, professional and social interaction, leadership) of their chosen occupations such as teaching, law, politics, writing/editing, journalism, and business entrepreneurship. Several college/university students not majoring in theatre/speech reported their high school experiences made them better at classroom oral presentations. Theatre respondents spoke more of matters that could be directly related to the art form's production training such as vocal articulation, collaboration, teamwork, commitment, and time management. Intrapersonal affects for theatre respondents included empathy, discovery, and self-awareness.

Though not quite statistically significant ($p < .06$ on a two-tailed *t*-test), the theatre respondents' mean was 3.90 and the non-theatre respondents' mean was 3.83 to the prompt, "I have good memories from my speech and/or drama participation." Both groups mentioned in mostly equal measure fond memories related to "family" (as in theatre family), friendships, the support of peers and teachers, having fun, and the epiphanic "highs" and sense of accomplishment from performance experiences. Theatre respondents, however, made more references about portraying lead characters and holding leadership roles such as independently directing one-act productions. Non-theatre people made more references to memories about speech tournaments, forensic competitions, and placements/awards. Interestingly, non-theatre people were more likely to use the words "bonding" and "camaraderie" while theatre people used "belonging" and "community." Perhaps for the latter group, these terms are more frequently employed among the theatre profession and thus worked their way into survey responses.

No statistically significant difference ($p < .14$) was generated between the theatre and non-theatre respondents to the prompt, "There were times, when I was a high school student in speech and/or theatre, when I learned something new about people whose lives and times were different from mine by a character I portrayed or a play we worked on, and/or the other people I worked with." Both groups attested to their learning about historic periods and cultural diversity, and working with others, for example. But qualitatively, theatre respondents were much more critical of not having opportunities or experiences that would have enabled them to delve deeper into socio-cultural issues at their high schools. Theatre respondents also acknowledged cultivating more sympathy and understanding, plus empathy in general and empathy for the characters they portrayed in particular.

No statistically significant difference ($p < .47$) was generated between the theatre and non-theatre respondents to the prompt, "I overcame challenges through my high school speech and/or theatre participation." No apparent qualitative differences seem to stand out to its follow-up prompt, "Looking back, what do you think was the biggest challenge you overcame/faced in high school speech and theatre?"

Queries by Theatre/Speech Experiences

Survey responses were then pooled by those who participated in theatre *and* speech (classes, tournaments, forensics, debate, etc.), and those who participated in theatre *only* (classes and/or productions). The most striking statistically significant difference ($p < .000$) appeared in response to the prompt, "I had a good high school speech and/or theatre teacher(s)." Mean ratings were 3.73 for theatre *and* speech participants; and 3.41 for theatre participants only. Selected respondents who were only involved with theatre were more critical of their teachers, primarily due to production matters--specifically, perceptions of favoritism and "politics" in casting decisions, inexperienced directors, unorganized rehearsals, and dysfunctional personality traits of their instructors ("crazy," "high strung," "frazzled," etc.). Granted, most respondents from both groups also saw positive qualities in their teachers such as encouragement, inspiration, and passion. But theatre *and* speech participants were more inclined to feel *motivated* by their teachers, while theatre students felt more *challenged* yet *supported*. Those who participated in theatre-only also used more superlatives in their praise (e.g., teachers were "amazing," "brilliant," "experienced"). Not surprisingly, those who participated in theatre *and* speech noted more often that their public speaking skills had been enhanced, while those in theatre-only felt they received adult occupational preparation during high school.

Though not statistically significant ($p < .08$), a qualitative query was also conducted between the groups in response to, "There were times . . . when I learned something new about people whose lives and times were different from mine by a character I portrayed or a play we worked on, and/or the other people I worked with." Theatre students were much more critical of limited social issues exploration at their schools, yet still claimed themselves to be more cognizant of learnings about "culture" (broadly construed) and "community," in addition to more personal learnings about one's self. Generally, those in theatre *and* speech programming seemed to possess a broader worldview of perspectives, whereas theatre respondents' learnings were more related to one's self, working with fellow production company members, and the contexts of the play (e.g., specific characters, historic settings). Interestingly, theatre *and* speech respondents appeared more attuned to the "differences" among and "diversity" of people, while theatre-only respondents claimed more "understanding" of others.

Though also not statistically significant ($p < .13$), a qualitative query was conducted between the groups in response to, "I overcame challenges through my high school speech and/or theatre participation. Looking back, what do you think was the biggest challenge you overcame/faced in high school speech and theatre?" Only a few subtle differences could be discerned here. Theatre-only respondents seem to express more challenges related to "fear," "expression," and "belonging," and were more than twice as likely than the theatre/speech group to note "shyness."

Other survey prompts for this respondent pairing query did not yield any statistically significant differences ($p < .63+$).

Queries by Gender

Though not quite statistically significant ($p < .07$ on a two-tailed *t*-test), the female respondents' mean was 3.85 and the male respondents' mean was 3.93 to the prompt, "I have good memories from my speech and/or drama participation." Women seemed to recall their production work as peers sharing a "common" goal and purpose and being "part" of something bigger. Women were also much more likely to recall specific and lead roles they portrayed plus the various challenges they faced in classes and productions. They also made note of "validation" they received from selected peers and adults, some of which came from leadership roles they held as student directors and technicians. Friendships were important to both genders but especially more so for the women; men recalled their relationships as "social" with more "camaraderie" among peers.

McCammon attributes these observations to girls' higher social orientation, plus the conundrum that there are frequently more females than males in high school classes, yet most plays have more male roles than female roles. It would be harder for a high school girl to get a lead role than for a boy, and females could have seen this as a greater accomplishment. Adolescent females in leadership roles, especially in the 1950s through 1970s, were occasional, so these opportunities for production responsibility as a director and technician would remain as impacting memories.

Queries by Generation

Since there were four groups for comparison in this query rather than two, *F*-tests were initially employed to assess any statistical differences between groups, but were later discarded due to questionable parameters (i.e., group *n*s became smaller and results potentially less valid).

Thus, we focused on longitudinal qualitative data analysis (Saldaña, 2003) to interpret any patterns of change across time and the generations.

Since the 1950s to today, survey respondents' "good" theatre teachers have been perceived as knowledgeable artists who were challenging and brought out the best in their students through support, encouragement, and inspiration. There was a noticeable shift in teacher-student dynamics beginning with graduates from the 1990s. Previously, teachers were recalled as "enthusiastic" and "motivating" individuals, but 1990s and 2000s graduates placed more currency on teachers who were "supportive" in "safe" spaces. They were also perceived as experienced and demanding educators. Unfortunately, dysfunctional theatre teachers have been around as long as the good ones--fortunately, the lower-rated educators were small in number.

As for the challenges survey respondents faced, theatre and speech students since the 1950s have had concerns about shyness, a lack of confidence, and a search for identity. Respondents who graduated from the 1980s also dealt with explorations of "self"; from the 1990s, a particular need to "belong" and "fit in"; and from the 2000s, a sense of "fear."

With memories, the generations' categories became more complexly demarcated *and* interwoven, phenomena consistent with the recent genre of "memory work" in qualitative inquiry (Grbich 2007; Liamputtong, 2009; McLeod & Thomson, 2009). Generally, respondents from the 1950s through 1990s seemed to attribute importance to *extrinsic* awards (trophies, titles, placements, "winning," etc.), while 2000s graduates appeared to specify more *intrinsic* and ephemeral rewards (status, affirmation, performance "rush," etc.). Student connections with *audiences* seemed to appear as a theme from 1950s through 1980s graduates, but this dissipated during the 1990s; connections with *self, characters portrayed*, and *peers* better identified the

2000s graduates. The 2000s was also a decade when there was less "feeling part of something bigger"--a production phenomenon noticeably present in the 1980s and 1990s graduates.

"Friendships" and "fun" were consistent fond memories throughout the decades, as was the phenomenon of group cohesion, termed "camaraderie" most often by the 1950s-1970s, and "community," "family," and "teamwork" by the 1980s-2000s. The 1980s graduates onward mentioned leading roles they portrayed as significant memories. The 1990s and 2000s graduates addressed more "ownership" of their work from independent production projects.

As for the respondents' perceptions of how speech and theatre participation affected them as the adults they are today, all generations felt their *work* and *work ethics*, regardless of occupational choice, have been enhanced. From the 1980s onward, benefits to *self* were also recalled more often. Consistent patterns of outcome across the generations included: increased confidence, public speaking skills and presentation of self, leadership skills, a sense of "paying it forward," and, for theatre artists, college/university study and occupational preparation. The 1970s onward made note of increased social consciousness; the 1990s onward felt they were more "outgoing" and friendships mattered more; the 2000s felt they became more mature and formed a stronger identity during post high-school years.

The learning about characters or others' survey prompt was the least addressed by respondents, so less data are available for comparison and contrast. Overall, consistent learnings by graduates from the 1960s onward consisted of: various historic periods and cultures, empathy for both the fictional characters they portrayed and actual peer relationships, and working with others productively in collaborative ventures. But it is also important to note several respondents from the 1960s onward felt that no or few opportunities were provided to them for such learnings to occur due to homogenous school demographics and/or benign play script choices by their

directors. Nevertheless, social issues awareness was evident from some school programs from the 1980s onward.

The intergenerational research team offers the following as socio-cultural contexts that may have contributed to the observations above.

McCammon feels that, through time, schools and teachers have become more student-centered. That is, there has been more understanding of and emphasis on constructivist learning paradigms during the latter decades of the twentieth century and first decade of the twenty-first. Omasta adds students graduating in the 1980s onward were more likely to experience drama/theatre *classes* that focused on process over product--a prominent approach to theatre teacher education programs at that time--which could have influenced the way students perceived the drama/theatre education experience. (Ironically, extracurricular programming still seems to emphasize product over process through large-scale play production experiences and the artistic need to deliver quality work.) Social issues exploration and socially conscious work in selected 1980s-2000s theatre/speech curricula harmonized with evolving multicultural and global perspectives in schools during that era.

Generations of theatre and speech students in this survey who graduated in the 1990s-2000s felt "supported" in "safe" spaces--more so than earlier classes of students. Omasta, one of the research team members and himself a high school graduate of the 1990s, asserts he

> repeatedly found myself thinking that the data are in line with "Generation Me," as seen in responses from graduates of the 1990s and 2000s. As a '90s grad myself, I can attest to the fact that (at least amongst my particular peers), students were frequently reminded that they (a) were already excellent/exceptional, and (b) were expected to remain exceptional and become even more so throughout their lives. . . . "Supportive" teachers

> often both affirm students' abilities and assure them that they will continue to succeed in life.
>
> The idea that 1990s-2000s students seem to appreciate "safe" spaces more than their elders could be attributed to several things. On the one hand, one could argue that (particularly post-2001) the world probably seems "less safe" to young people than it may have to those in previous generations. . . . [In] the "safe" space of theatre (many times, though not always), there is an emphasis on developing empathy, seeing things from other points of view, and understanding others' viewpoints. Those who perceive themselves to be "different" may be increasingly drawn to the (again, theoretically) more accepting spaces of the drama/theatre classroom.

Hines, another research team member from the more recent generation, adds:

> The growth of technology has opened global communication and brought about awareness and, at the same, time uncertainty, creating a moment of fear for all. Our later theatre students could be mirroring this. Also, mass media in its growth has stimulated youth into a submissive dysfunctional, co-dependent relationship with itself--i.e., narcissism.

Saldaña speculates the older generations who graduated from the 1950s-1970s may have placed more value on the tangible products and publicly announced merit from high school speech and theatre participation (awards, trophies, etc. as symbols of "winning") since this is *concrete evidence* of significant accomplishment in one's lifetime--milestones accorded more value from middle-aged and elder adults. Older generations may reflect on personal past achievements as retrospective "memory-mementos"--epiphanic and impacting "I did it" moments from their younger years that were retained through the lifespan. Young adults in their twenties,

developmentally still in ripe searches for evolving personal identities, may have placed more value on intrinsic accomplishments (peer status, affirmation, etc.) of speech and theatre participation because of their immediate impact on and relevance to the current search for and evolution of one's self. The intrinsic, ephemeral "rush" of performance is more memorable within a certain number of years after the event, but its long-term retention after a decade or two is more cognitively recalled as an event that happened, rather than affectively relived through vivid emotional memory.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYTIC SYNTHESIS

> I loved my speech and drama class and, more importantly, out-of-school tournaments. They built a sense of teamwork and a bond that created friendships that have survived a quarter of a century and many miles apart. It is my belief that this is REAL education--teaching us to be better citizens, hard work reaping rewards, and the importance of friendships. (Male, Restaurant Manager and Manager Trainer, Class of 1984)

Survey responses have been profiled and classified thus far into neat and tidy "lifelong" categories. This was the result of content and pattern analysis--a basic and initial step in qualitative data categorization. Yet the co-researchers cannot claim with authority that respondents' perceptions of outcomes after high school will indeed be "lifelong," for there are too many life variables in play that could disrupt or decay their continued development. "Enduring outcomes," a phrase used in educational curriculum planning, may be idealized rhetoric or wishful thinking, rather than solid hypothesizing about life course trajectories.

Nevertheless, respondents' testimonies were multifaceted and often wove multiple outcomes together. Findings presented thus far can be woven even tighter, and the discussion now proceeds to synthesizing the key findings from these testimonies and the implications of them for the field.

First, we present an overview of the theatre/speech teachers' role and impact, then a discussion of students and their teachers in interaction.

Lifelong Teaching Impact

> Becoming a teacher is one of the most noble choices you can make. Do it only if you will execute with excellence. Lift the profession. (Female, Global Leader for Distribution and Sales Force Effectiveness [for a major corporation], Class of 1984)

Two survey prompts solicited responses about previous theatre and speech teachers and recommendations for those about to enter the profession. The eight lifelong categories were pooled into three meta-categories:

- *Lifelong Development* (composed of Lifelong Professionalism, Learning, and Challenges);
- *Lifelong Humanity* (composed of Lifelong Nurturance and Relationships); and
- *Lifelong Endurance* (composed of Lifelong Passion, Resilience, and Dysfunction).

Speech and theatre teachers, according to survey respondents and the co-researchers' interpretation, must commit to *Lifelong Development* before and throughout their careers. This perspective prescribes a sense of quality professionalism exhibited in the classroom, theatre, and organized event that presents artistic challenges for one's self as well as one's students. The teacher, in dual roles as pedagogue and artist, evolves with expert and new learnings to exhibit excellence in all the content areas of speech and/or theatre.

The teacher should also exhibit *Lifelong Humanity* with his or her students--a caring relationship invested in their personal lives, balanced with pedagogical nurturance to bring out the best in them. Physically and emotionally inclusive spaces must created where a niche community finds safe haven and encouragement of expression. We should not discount the *human* dimensions of being a theatre or speech teacher--they are just as important as pedagogical and subject knowledge.

Finally, the speech and theatre teacher should exhibit *Lifelong Endurance* throughout one's career. A self-monitoring reflexivity on one's personal engagement with the profession and art form are necessary to insure a passion for teaching and a resilience to issues are guiding each day, lest dysfunction erode a program and career--not to mention student life.

A current high school theatre teacher offered this array of recommendations for future educators, which seems to capture the general spirit of "good" teachers and advice for those about to enter the profession:

> Choose good scripts. Be tough on the kids but positive. LOVE your job or don't do it--it's time consuming. Have parental and technical support or do very small scale shows. Don't take on too much--less is more. Teach from the heart. Admit when you are wrong and learn from your mistakes. Connect with the kids but have strong boundaries. (Female, High School Theatre Teacher, Class of 1980)

Lifelong Student Impact

Three survey responses frame an important discussion of speech and theatre's *potential* impact on high school students and their future adulthoods:

> Although I don't feel like being involved in theatre has changed my life, it definitely changed my high school experience. It was something I worked hard at, enjoyed, and looked forward to. (Female, High School English Teacher, Class of 2006)

> Any career success I've experienced is largely due to the combination of process thinking developed in engineering school and, more significantly, my theatre, speech and debate experience in high school. I learned to communicate effectively, write well, speak clearly and distinctly, engage and hold an audience with pacing, inflection, movement,

> etc. (Female, Global Leader for Distribution and Sales Force Effectiveness [for a major corporation], Class of 1984)
>
> Theatre and speech saved mine and my brother's lives. (Male, Hollywood Sound Effects and Dialogue Editor, Class of 1999)

These three participant responses highlight the *variability* of lifelong impact. The first quote suggests high school theatre is not necessarily an epiphanic or life-changing experience for everyone, but it can, at the least, function as an important program for adolescent enrichment and engagement. The second quote suggests theatre and/or speech experiences alone, in and of themselves, cannot be solely credited with generating a successful adult career for those who choose nontheatrical professions. And the third quote suggests the art form, guided by a nurturing teacher, can literally and powerfully influence and save human life. We cannot assert that immersed participation in high school theatre or speech programming will benefit everyone to the same degree as they progress through the adult life course. But survey responses collectively suggest a set of *ideal* conditions to maximize the *potential* of lifelong impact.

The 22 major student-focused lifelong categories (see Tables 6-12) and their related assertions were hierarchically arranged in superordinate and subordinate format and flow diagrams to assess how everything "fit" together processually, axially, and thematically (Saldaña, 2009). After several iterations were explored, we propose as the key assertion: *Quality high school theatre and speech experiences can not only significantly influence but even accelerate adolescent development and provide residual, positive, lifelong impacts throughout adulthood*.

What follows is an interweaving of the assertions and analytic statements thus far into a more coherent and storied narrative. We remain solidly grounded in the 234 respondents' data to profile yet suggest transferability of this process to other high school programs in North

America. (See Figure 1, next page, drawn with NVivo8 modeling software, for a condensed process model of the following constructs at work.)

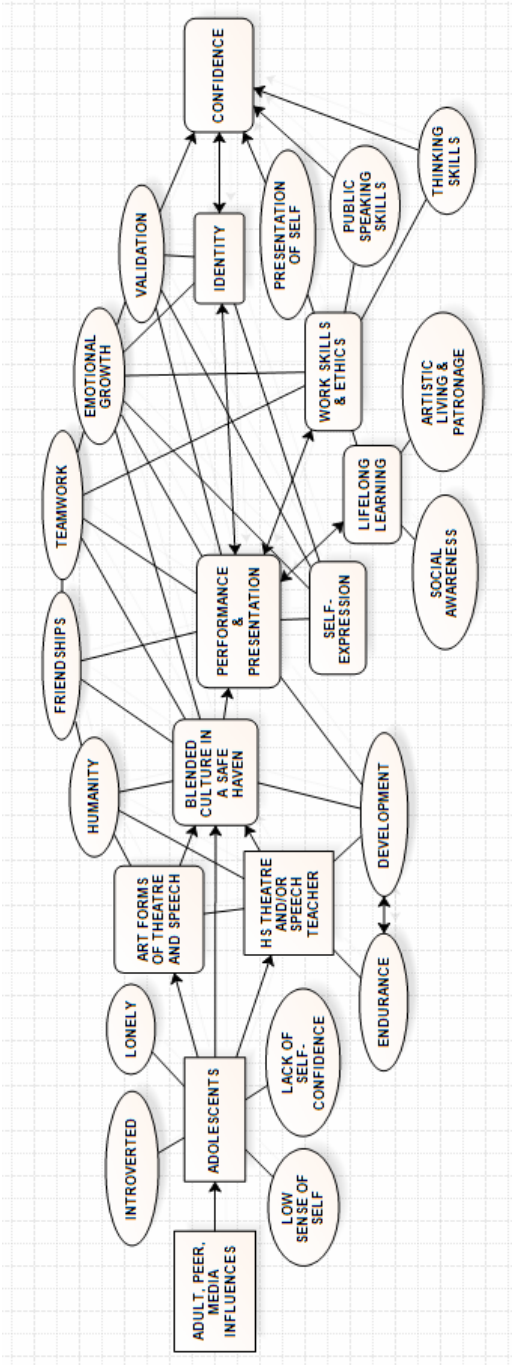
Preshow: First Entrance. Most adolescents will enter high school theatre or speech programs through the influence of someone else--a teacher, sibling, parent, friend, peer, or media celebrities. Those who grow up with the art form before their high school years through theatre attendance with parents or through community theatre classes and productions may perceive theatre as a "given" course to take or as a worthwhile extracurricular activity. A school's production program may have an outstanding reputation that motivates new student participation and immersed involvement. Some adolescents will be exposed to theatre for the very first time during their high school years and become involved because their friends or the influential and popular cliques are also involved. A few girls will participate in theatre because "it's a way to meet boys." A few boys will participate in theatre because "that's where the pretty girls hang out." A parent may encourage his or her child to participate in theatre as simply "something to do." There are occasional anomalies to entry for a few students such as "auditioning on a dare" or taking a theatre class because "there was nowhere else to put me."

A few school districts may require a speech class as part of every student's program of study. Some students may take a theatre class because they perceive it as "an easy 'A'" or as the "least intimidating" of the available fine arts electives. A theatre or speech teacher may sense exceptional talent in a classroom student and encourage him or her to audition for a play or to join a forensics team. Choir directors may recruit selected singers for the school's musical theatre productions. And television programs such as *High School Musical, American Idol,* and

Figure 1

A Model of Lifelong Teacher and Student Impact from

High School Theatre and/or Speech Programming



Glee may introduce adolescents to the entertainment industry and the potential for celebrity, thus motivating them into high school performance experiences. Overall, students enter theatre and speech programs for multiple and different reasons: some want to, some are persuaded to, some are nurtured to, some are required to, and some just serendipitously "end up there."

Curtain Raiser: Personal Challenges. Many adolescents, before and during the initial stages of theatre/speech programming--whether classes, play production rehearsals, or tournament preparation--characterize themselves as shy, introverted, and socially withdrawn individuals with a lack of self-confidence. Some perceive themselves as lonely individuals who "do not belong" and have few or no friends or little peer acceptance. A handful of them are living with difficult home situations such as parental dysfunction or sexual abuse.

Some are also dealing with low self-esteem and self-worth, personal insecurities, and a fear of judgment. They will appear self-conscious and awkward, and especially fearful as they start speaking in front of others in initial presentational and performance contexts. Depending on their geographic region and upbringing, some will feel particularly self-conscious about their cultural dialects.

Challenges profiled above are common preconditions of those before theatre and speech participation--if not before entry into high school itself. But there are new challenges students will face as the art forms and their teachers make particular discipline-specific demands on them. These students will also undergo a search for and a transformation of their evolving values systems and personal identities.

The Setting: "A Safe Haven." The art forms of theatre and speech themselves--not just their teachers--are central to student transformation. These are mediums of creativity and expression that provide their participants opportunities to excel and to learn about one's self. A

key mediator for these to occur is the teacher, who creates physical and psychological spaces that provide a secure, supportive, and accepting "safe haven" for these "niche" students.

A Major Character: The Teacher. The ideal theatre and speech teacher enjoys working with adolescents and has reflected carefully on her philosophical approaches to education, including the delicate balance between process and product. She is physically and mentally healthy because her job consists of time-consuming hard work. She has cultivated ethics of patience and perseverance because she has committed herself to immersion in the art forms with dedicated and selfless understandings. Most importantly, she loves her job and is passionate about the art form, yet she also knows how to balance those with her personal life.

The ideal teacher is an organized, experienced, knowledgeable, and creative professional artist who possesses a broad range of content area knowledge, particularly in dramatic literature, strategically selected for both class work and play productions. The enthusiastic and sometimes fun learning environments and experiences make students feel part of a community. But at the same time, the teacher maintains high expectations and demands quality work because students desire a dynamic yet disciplined facilitator. Appropriately critical feedback as well as emotional inspiration motivates quality. Meritorious play scripts that tackle issues and even challenge the status quo excitedly engage students.

The ideal instructor is involved in his students' personal as well as artistic development. He cares by being involved in their lives and emotional well-being through encouragement, inspiration, and providing opportunities for students to grow in multiple ways. Whether through class work, productions, or speech/debate activities, students feel that motivating teachers connect with them, nurture creativity, generate passion, bring out the best in them, set them up to succeed, and genuinely care about their accomplishments.

Teachers should always look beyond the immediate and acknowledge a student's future could be significantly impacted and changed by what happens in the present. Some students will consider theatre or speech as a higher education major and career, and the successful learnings from high school lay an important foundation for their life course. Other students will choose non-arts fields as occupations, ranging anywhere from business to medicine, but important work ethics will be developed through high school speech and theatre. For a few students, these experiences will enrich their adolescent years but not significantly impact their adulthoods. Yet it may not be until years later that the teacher discovers he or she literally saved a student's life through an ethic of care and the expressive power of the art form.

The Ensemble: Students. Strong and, for some, lifetime friendships will be developed through theatre and speech participation. This will happen to both genders but more so for young women. Tight bonding as a "family" or "community" sharing a like-minded passion will occur through teamwork, though those dynamics will be tested occasionally. Value, attitude, and belief systems are both challenged and formed through these collaborative experiences and evolution of diverse individuals into a "blended culture." These types of conflict-laden interactions will also lead to a greater understanding of one's self. Students will learn how to get along with others, become more open to and considerate of their collaborators' feelings, and deal diplomatically with various personalities, especially for those who hold student leadership roles such as a director or technician head. High quality accomplishments come from perseverance, determination, and dedication to the collective common goal.

At their best, students will hone their interpersonal skills, appreciate others' talents, and support their peers through social and artistic interaction, even setting aside their differences for

a common purpose. One of the primary reasons for this setting aside of individual interests is acknowledging they are part of something bigger than themselves.

Performance "Magic." During significant play production and speech tournament performances, participants may experience an elusive "magic feeling" through individual and collective high quality work, a ritual-like "rush" that goes beyond self on opening night and immerses them cognitively and emotionally in a new world. These epiphanic "flow experiences" in which they "get it right" artistically makes them feel connected with audiences and stirs the spectators' emotions. Students achieve personal significance through such actions.

Performance Payoffs. Quality performance experiences develop the affective, intra-, and interpersonal domains of learning and especially the formation of one's personal identity. Theatre and speech are opportunities to discover one's talents and strengths, and thus one's focus and purpose. Emotional growth occurs though such conceptual processes as self-esteem, self-worth, values clarification, maturity, and personal character development. For some, speech and theatre clarify "what matters," particularly in domains of human awareness and social interaction. The art forms develop the "whole" human being: a mature, joyful, and humane citizen of character, one who is empathetic to and accepting of the multiple perspectives and human motives around her.

Interlude: Awards. Just as the entertainment industry recognizes and honors its artists for significant work and accomplishment, high school theatre and speech participants also receive--indeed, need--comparable praise. An award, letter jacket, honorary title, competition ranking, or special performance project such as independently directing a production provides students validation for their individual accomplishments and merit. Validation and its consequent boost to self-confidence come not just from peers but also from teachers or parents. It is

interesting to note how the sole recipient will acknowledge he or she is still part of the whole. These significant honors will be remembered for a lifetime.

Post-Show Transfer: The Work Force. The benefits and payoffs of speech and theatre participation will help future adults in their vocational as well as everyday life endeavors. The improvisational and instantaneous problem-solving demands of the art forms simulate real-world dilemmas.

Lifelong work skills and work ethics, both intrinsic and pragmatic, are cultivated, even for those who choose not to pursue careers in the art forms. Intrinsically, a quest for quality in one's work can be achieved through such disciplined traits as organization, punctuality, time management, balancing priorities, and meeting deadlines, plus professional and responsible dedication to the team and goal-oriented task at hand.

Pragmatically, various cognitive processing and intrapersonal coping skills are other subcategories of outcome: observation and memory; thinking quickly, intellectually, critically, and creatively; and handling stress in "high pressure" and risk-taking situations. The performance and public speaking skills they acquire develop oral and written communication, articulate and persuasive use of language, and a more vibrant presentation of self to others, most notably in non-theatrical contexts such as college/university classes and work-related interactions. And since competition is a facet of speech tournaments and one-act play contests, students also learn to accept rejection, to persevere, and become resilient.

Post-Show Transfer: Lifelong Learning. Theatre is not just entertainment but a rich context for learning, plus a motivator for better school attendance and academic performance. Its participants learn about art itself and its role in society. Appreciation of the "great works" provides a more well-rounded, multidisciplinary education. Period play productions are often

supplemented with additional research and reading, which especially enriches those producing the classics. Productions with historic content provide performers deeper understandings of characters during various time periods. They derive historic, global, social, and/or cultural learnings through specific plays and debate activities. Examination of political, religious, and other social forces expands their worldviews of the conditions in their communities and in the world. Those who participate in both theatre *and* speech programming may possess a broader worldview of perspectives and heightened attunement to the differences among and diversity of people.

Adults who understand the power of these art forms will "pay it forward," leaving a legacy as an arts patron and advocate, particularly by parents and by those who choose to teach theatre to children and adolescents.

The Key Theme: Self-Confidence. The most prominent outcome for most high school theatre and speech participants is lifelong *self-confidence*--outgoing, independent expressiveness with an openness to ideas and people. The nature of speech and theatre programming demands that students physically and vocally transcend their "comfort zones" and make themselves open to performance and presentation experiences with poise and composure. Self-confidence reverberates with the ability to excel at public speaking/communication, leadership, and cognitive/thinking affects. Along with confidence, or as a necessary antecedent, comes opportunities for one's potential and talent to be nurtured (if not "pushed"), to achieve significant accomplishment and "shine" on stage or at the forensic event, and to receive validation from peers and adults. Through these processes, a student discovers her voice, enhances her self-esteem, and expresses her evolving identity with passion.

Cautionary Notes. The above narrative profiled the ideal conditions and outcomes from theatre and speech participation. But approximately 10% of survey respondents noted all was not ideal during their high school years. Some felt excluded from their communities due to cliquish student personalities. Collaboration with difficult people disabled the spirit and quality of team accomplishment. Conservative play script choices for production or an ethnically homogenous school population inhibited adolescent awareness of social and cultural issues.

There were several cases in which teachers were perceived as inexperienced and unorganized with classes and who directed productions of lesser quality. Also noted were their dysfunctional personality traits that exhibited favoritism (particularly in casting decisions), anger, and personal issues that clouded judgment. Surprisingly, students still participated in a large amount of play production work at their schools, and maintained their involvement in these less than ideal programs for the strong peer friendships and their commitment to the art form's allure.

CHAPTER 5: INTERPRETATIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Interpretations

The influences and affects on adolescents by a quality teacher and the art forms of theatre and speech are an eclectic combination of the anthropological, sociological, and psychological in addition to the educational, developmental, and aesthetic.

The Aesthetic: Metaphors of Theatre Participation

Data from the "affected the adult I am now" prompt contained four primary metaphoric themes. First, former students referred to *theatre as a parent* and *themselves as its developing children*: "born a theatre person," "created me," "made me," "in your blood," "the seeds of which were planted," "pushed me," "shaped me," "break out of my shell," "growth," "developed," "blossomed," and "opened me up." The second metaphor was *theatre as a visual artist/craftsperson mentor*: "gave me the tools," "have the tools," "expand my worldview," "see life from all sorts of angles," and "create something bigger." The third metaphor was former students referring to *theatre as a journey and a search for one's self and one's place*: "the right path," "lead me to new and exciting places," "an adventure," "a bridge between," "finding my place," "finding my niche," "found my identity," "finding who I truly was," "a place to belong," and "I feel at home in the theatre." And fourth, those with presentation responsibilities in their vocations (e.g., teachers, lawyers, CEOs, administrative leadership positions) referred to their occupational venues (classrooms, courtrooms, training seminars, etc.) as *spaces in which to "perform"*: "the classroom is my personal stage," "put on a play for clients," and "a show must go on attitude." These four metaphors suggest a chronological progression of not just artistic growth

but human development. *Theatre is a parent who raises and equips her young to confidently venture on their own adult searches for self and place*.

The Anthropological and Sociological: Cultural Rituals and Rites of Passage

From social science perspectives (Lancy, Bock, & Gaskins, 2010), there is public expectation and prejudice, if not stigma, toward those who participate in theatre. Adolescent outcasts find their niche among a community tribe of like-minded kin. In these demarcated spaces of classrooms and performance venues, there are operant local school and national cultures of high school educational theatre programs. The adolescent cultural member assumes and adopts the ethos--the values, attitudes, and beliefs--of the social environment in which he/she participates, but with the prerequisite that the young person feels a sense of belonging in that culture. Cognitive maps for survival and safety, emotional and moral socialization, plus individual personality formation occur in these safe spaces through observation, interaction, and challenge. The rote learning and memorization of play scripts and speeches is comparable to the mastery of "sacred texts," valued as "acts of piety, discipline, personal transformation, and cultural preservation" (p. 212). These literal and community narratives contribute to identity, belonging, and expression.

The inherent demands of theatre and speech accelerate adult preparedness. There is high-risk for high status. Achievement through awards, placements, and competitions harkens back to initiation rituals and rites of passage to progress toward a higher level of adulthood. Travel to another world, such as the spiritual one of performance and the spatial one of an out of town speech tournament, is comparable to the classic hero's journey in which trial must precede triumph in order to return to the tribe stronger than before.

The Developmental and Psychological: Confidence

More than anything else, respondents noted that they gained *confidence* through their speech and theatre participation. Furthermore, it is this sense of confidence which they report affecting them most as adults. Many recalled themselves beginning as shy, introverted, lonely, and low-confident teens. So, how did this confidence build?

Speech and theatre participation is a highly social activity. When students enter high school, the friendship groups from middle school are often disrupted. In a theatre or speech class, adolescents can begin to forge new social groups and new identities as they discover a positive environment and meaningful, challenging, and cooperative work (Wigfield & Wagner 2005).

As young people work with others in a structured environment, such as when they learn to rehearse and perform a play or practice and compete in speech tournaments, they learn from both the task and social dimensions. When they work in a climate where there is emotional support from their peers, for example, they learn from each other and develop shared goals. As they take on a shared work ethic (for rehearsals or speech practice) and experience positive outcomes (that "opening night feeling"), young people can also develop a sense of social competence (Wentzel 2005).

Over time, then, students develop a strong sense of shared identity and relatedness. A number of respondents referred to being members of a theatre "tribe", for example. As Wigfield and Wagner (2005) note, "Peers often gravitate to similar others, and strengthen each other's motivational orientations and achievement patterns" (p. 224). The social group and sense of relatedness both challenges and rewards young people.

A related explanation for the kind of learning in speech/theatre may be found by looking at Self Determination Theory. According to Deci and Ryan (1985), human beings have three innate needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Continued participation in speech and theatre activities built the competence of adolescents. Simply put, over time they got better at what they did. Success has a way of breeding success *and* confidence.

It is very likely that this participation also built a strong sense of autonomy. Bandura (2006) observes that individuals in late adolescence must contemplate adulthood and taking on the roles of an adult, yet society "does not provide many preparatory roles for them" (p. 6). Young people can learn adult roles in both theatre and speech: actor, director, stage manager, orator, debater, etc. To function in many of these roles, young people must be both members of a team *and* autonomous individuals. Building autonomy also builds a sense of confidence.

It is very likely that many of the respondents to this survey found their participation met these three needs--competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Their confidence, competence, autonomy, and sense of relatedness continued to sustain them throughout their lives.

The Educational: Enduring Outcomes as Lifelong Impact

An arts sociologist who participated as a survey respondent provided extensive member check comments for the co-researchers. This participant noted that several of the positive outcomes and adolescent development trajectories from theatre and speech participation could just as similarly have occurred through other high school fine arts and athletic programs. Quality teachers who influence and affect students' lives to the degree of making a lifelong impact on them can be found teaching in such traditional curriculum areas as math and English.

Theatre's performing arts cohorts' contributions to development also make lifelong impacts. Music teachers and, in particular, parents play a significant role in childhood through adulthood influence on applied music participation (Bowles, 1991; Cooper, 2001; Darrough & Boswell, 1992; Flowers & Murphy, 2001; Jellison, 1999; Schlegel, 2008; Williams, 2002). Music education promotes such lifelong outcomes as reading/decoding skills (Marshall, 1999), Gardner's musical, intrapersonal, and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences (Harvey, 1997), and abstract reasoning (Rauscher et al., 1997). Dance develops one's personal expressiveness and bodily "voice" (Bond & Stinson, 2000, 2007), functions as a learning modality for traditional curricular subjects, and enables one to think metaphorically, abstractly, and symbolically (Hanna, 2008).

A rigorous high school math teacher can also prepare students for successful professional careers (Matthews, 1989). A well-coached athletics team also builds a strong sense of community and individual self-confidence (Fredricks et al., 2002). And a visual art teacher can also care deeply about his students and make a significant, enduring impact on their adult lives (Barone, 2001). So what, then, makes theatre and speech unique disciplines that offer what no other subject or extracurricular activity can? And what general outcomes make a lifelong impact throughout adulthood on their participants?

First, creativity is not the sole province of the arts; but theatre and speech experiences, according to survey respondent testimony, empower one to *think and function improvisationally* in dynamic and ever-changing contexts. Cognitive capacities multiply to enable not just creative thinking but *multimodal* thinking that is instinctive yet critical, intuitive yet analytical, conceptual yet pragmatic, abstract yet solution-oriented, and holistic yet rapid.

Second, high school theatre and speech experiences deepen an individual's integrated *emotional and social intelligences*. Through intra- and interpersonal actions, reactions, and interactions in both fictional and non-fictional contexts, adolescents encounter exponential identity-forming, empathic-generating, and friendship-building opportunities on a daily basis. A broad spectrum of intricate social exchanges and complex emotional experiences don't just provide but *accelerate* one's personal development of and attunement to self, humanity, and culture.

Third, theatre and speech experiences, perhaps exclusively more than any other subject at the high school level, expand one's verbal and nonverbal *communicative dexterity* in various presentational modes, ranging from job interviews to telephone sales to business presentations to collaborative projects to political speeches to courtroom testimony to doctor-patient consultation to employer-employee relationships to teaching to parenting to broadcasting to writing and, yes, to performance.

Policy Recommendations

The findings of this particular study harmonize with and corroborate comparable predecessors in theatre/arts education research and advocacy (e.g., California Educational Theatre Association, 2008; Davis, 2008; Jensen, 2001). So, in what ways is this study of any value or even utility to the extant literature?

First, there are a few new striking and subtle observations about theatre and speech education in this study.

Most striking to the co-researchers, both seasoned theatre educators, was respondent testimony about the *endurance* of positive outcomes. Eight out of nine participants who graduated from high school in the 1960s (and now presumably range in age from their fifties to sixties) were not involved in theatre or speech as their chosen fields. Yet they maintained their high school experiences in the art forms influenced and affected their occupational and personal lives throughout adulthood. This supports the adjectival use of "lifelong" for categories and assertions of outcome in this particular study, and reinforces that quality theatre and speech educators and experiences can indeed make a lifelong impact on their students. Those currently in the profession should never forget that, particularly when they feel their work may not be making a difference.

A subtle observation that struck the co-researchers was the need to acknowledge the centrality of the art form itself. Quality teachers do make a difference, but even when some survey respondents as high schoolers encountered dysfunctional leadership, the students stayed in their programs out of love for theatre (cf. Gallagher, 2007, p. 83). The field has rightly placed great importance on well-qualified educators to provide young people exceptional experiences in the classroom, on the stage, and at the competitive speech event. But we should also recognize

the art forms in and of themselves, not just talented and charismatic teachers, hold powerful allure for young people.

Another subtle new finding was that those who participated in both theatre *and* speech programming in high school, as opposed to those in theatre only, seem to possess a broader worldview of perspectives and appeared more attuned to the differences among and diversity of people. Respondent testimony seemed to suggest this enhanced outlook emerged from the multiple point-of-view demands of such speech events as debate, extemporaneous and persuasive speaking, plus the social and communal networking with other school populations at speech tournament competitions. Schools may wish to consider how theatre *and* speech joint programming can create more well-rounded citizens.

Another striking finding was the generational differences between and across survey respondents. Older educators testify they have seen the caliber of students change over the past several decades, and the data in this particular survey support that anecdotal observation. If the current generation of recent high school graduates felt a greater sense of "fear," a greater need to feel "safe," and less inclined to feel "part of something bigger than themselves" than earlier cohorts, their collective ethos suggests theatre and speech teachers must align their pedagogy and curricula to accommodate an emotionally and socially at-risk generation of young people (Goleman, 1995, 2007).

A finding that came as no surprise, yet one that reinforces the ever-present debate about play production programming, was respondents' retrospective desire to have been part of more challenging dramatic material. Former students expressed that the plays they produced were fairly conservative and conventional. They would have appreciated occasional work that challenged the social status quo, or pushed the envelope in terms of genre or style. Most

teachers, of course, feel bound to adhere to school and community standards of what is acceptable for public presentation, yet these findings suggest educators should continuously reflect on their directing practices and play script choices, and initiate dialogue with administrators, faculty colleagues, and parents about artistic risk-taking and censorship issues.

A second major policy recommendation these survey results suggest is that theatre and speech teacher education at the college/university level should consider the cultivation of a future educator's *personality* in addition to content-area pedagogy and practice. Former high school students testified that their teachers' positive qualities of *Lifelong Humanity* (e.g., Lifelong Nurturance and Relationships) and *Lifelong Endurance* (e.g., Lifelong Passion and Resilience) played critical roles during their adolescent experiences and development. Teacher educators should not assume these personal attributes are automatically hardwired into all future high school theatre and speech teachers. They must be actively taught as essential traits for the profession and periodically assessed throughout pre-service educators' course work and field experiences. We must not only produce outstanding artists but outstanding *people* to work in the secondary schools.

A third and final major policy recommendation these survey results suggest is that a niche of high school students don't just want but *need* theatre and speech programming--for some to enrich their adolescent educational experience, for most to influence and affect their human development and career trajectories throughout adulthood, and for a few to literally save their lives. Each school, school district, and state department of education is so unique that the co-researchers cannot possibly prescribe a one-size-fits-all policy recommendation that is economically feasible in these uncertain times and dovetails with the phenomenon of high-stakes assessment. But we personally believe that, as long as people have bodies and voices, there will

always be theatre. We leave it to administrators and policy makers to weigh the evidence presented in this report and to make their own informed choices about the merits of theatre and speech classes and extracurricular programming at the secondary school level.

CLOSURE

> It has changed my life in a succinct, poignant way, so that even if I never do get the opportunity [to do theatre again], I still have fond memories and am grateful for the opportunities I had. (Male, Youth Program and Worship Arts Coordinator, Class of 2002).

HLN cable TV anchor Robin Meade, two-time Academy Award-winning actor Tom Hanks, Tony Award-winning actress Harriet Sansom Harris, Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Robert Shenkkan, Las Vegas entertainer Shannel (Bryan Watkins), *Last Comic Standing* contestant Gabriel Iglesias, *American Idol* winner Jordin Sparks, and scores of television performers such as John Goodman, Christopher Rich, and Emmy Award-winner Valerie Mahaffey, were involved in high school theatre or speech programs and attest to their influential "roots." Andrew Stanton, the 2009 Oscar-winning director for Best Animated Film, *WALL*E*, thanked his high school theatre teacher, Phil Perry, during his acceptance speech for casting him in the role of Barnaby in his high school musical production of *Hello Dolly!*. The Barnaby character sings "Put On Your Sunday Clothes," a signature song also featured prominently in Stanton's animated film. Stanton remarked in his acceptance speech, "Creative seeds are sown in the oddest of places."

Not everyone who participates in theatre will win a major award. And not everyone who participates in speech and theatre during high school will pursue those fields as a university major or as an occupation. But the 113 respondents who chose *not* to make the fields of theatre, speech, film, or the entertainment industry their life's work are perhaps the most important contributors to and beneficiaries of these survey results. For these people's testimonies are the

most representative of what types of lifelong impacts have occurred in their lives, and what types of lifelong impacts may be possible for others "in the oddest of places." Arguably, it was the majority of non-theatre and non-speech survey respondents who often had the most articulate thoughts, the most compelling insights, and the most heartfelt stories to share:

> In high school, theatre was so important to me that when my parents decided to move out of state between my junior and senior years to a small town, with a small high school and little in the way of theatre, I ran away from home to go back to my old high school. My parents let me stay with a relative and finish high school. It was my MOST successful high school year. My grades were higher than they had ever been, even with my high involvement in rehearsals after school and socializing with my theatre friends. It all worked. I learned independence, dedication, and time management skills that year. Had I felt that way about myself when I began high school a few years earlier, my GPA might have been higher (I ended up with a 3.40) and I might have attracted notice of some good schools. Anyway, I would not have survived high school without my theatre. (Male, Adjunct Professor of Art, Class of 1978)

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Appendix A

Lifelong Impact Survey

Lifelong Impact:
Adult Perceptions of Their High School Speech and/or Theatre Participation

You received this e-mail because a former speech or theatre teacher, or a personal acquaintance of yours, forwarded it to you or referred us to you.

You are invited to voluntarily participate in the above-titled research study, conducted by Johnny Saldaña, a professor of Theatre at Arizona State University (Tempe), and Laura A. McCammon, a professor of Theatre at the University of Arizona (Tucson).

The purpose of the study is to learn more about the potential long-term benefits and learnings for those who participated in high school speech and/or drama classes, and related extracurricular activities such as play productions and speech tournaments.

Below is a survey that asks you to provide some basic information about yourself, your high school experiences, and your opinions. It will take you anywhere from 20 to 45 minutes to complete the survey, depending on how much information you wish to share with us. We have also indicated a place for you to let us know if you are willing to be contacted by phone to answer some follow-up questions suggested by the survey responses.

In the survey, we do ask for your name (if you wish to be interviewed) and the name(s) of the high school(s) you attended. But your actual name will not appear in any final reports of this study. All responses will be available only to the researchers.

There is no cost to you except your time. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can skip any question you do not wish to answer. There are no foreseeable risks from your participation, and we hope you will benefit from your reflections on how your high school experiences may have positively impacted you as an adult.

Your responses will be kept anonymous and your actual name will not be used in any reports. This research may result in publications of various types, including journal articles, conference presentations, books, and instructional materials for schools.

You must be 18 years or older to participate in this study. Return of the survey will be considered your consent to participate.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact:

Johnny Saldaña, Arizona State University, 480-965-2661, Johnny.Saldana@asu.edu
Laura McCammon, University of Arizona, mccammon@e-mail.arizona.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

Thank you!

THE SURVEY

PART 1 – ABOUT YOU

1. What are you doing now? (work, college, family, etc.):

2. Please list the name(s), location(s), and the years you attended high school:

3. What speech and/or theatre classes did you take in high school?:

4. Briefly describe some of the speech and/or theatre activities you participated in during high school (plays, musicals, speech tournaments, theatre festivals, etc.):

PART 2 – ABOUT YOUR PARTICIPATION

Please choose the most appropriate response and complete the open ended question. When you choose a numeric rating, you can: type the rating number after the statement, **bold** your preferred response, or delete the ones that do not apply:

5. I had a good high school speech and/or theatre teacher(s):
   4—Strongly agree, 3—Agree, 2—Disagree; 1—Strongly Disagree

   Describe briefly why you selected your response:

6. I overcame challenges through my high school speech and/or theatre participation:
   4—Strongly agree, 3—Agree, 2—Disagree; 1—Strongly Disagree

   Looking back, what do you think was the biggest challenge you overcame/faced in high school speech and theatre?:

7. I have good memories from my speech and/or drama participation.
   4—Strongly agree, 3—Agree, 2—Disagree; 1—Strongly Disagree

   What are a few of your fondest memories of your speech and/or theatre participation? Why did you select those moments?:

8. My participation in high school speech and/or theatre has affected the adult I am now:
   4—Strongly agree, 3—Agree, 2—Disagree; 1—Strongly Disagree

   In what ways do you think your participation in speech and/or theatre as a high school student has affected the adult you have become?:

9. There were times, when I was a high school student in speech and/or theatre, when I learned something new about people whose lives and times were different from mine by a character I portrayed or a play we worked on, and/or the other people I worked with**:**
   4—Strongly agree, 3—Agree, 2—Disagree; 1—Strongly Disagree

   Please explain your answer:

PART 3 – LOOKING AHEAD

10. What advice would you give a university student about to become a high school speech or theatre teacher?:

11. What would you tell school administrators or school boards about the importance of having a high school speech and/or theatre program in their schools?:

12. Please tell the researcher anything else not addressed in this survey that you'd like me to know:

13. May we contact you for a short phone interview or further e-mail correspondence? Yes No

14. Please provide us your contact information ONLY if you answered "Yes":

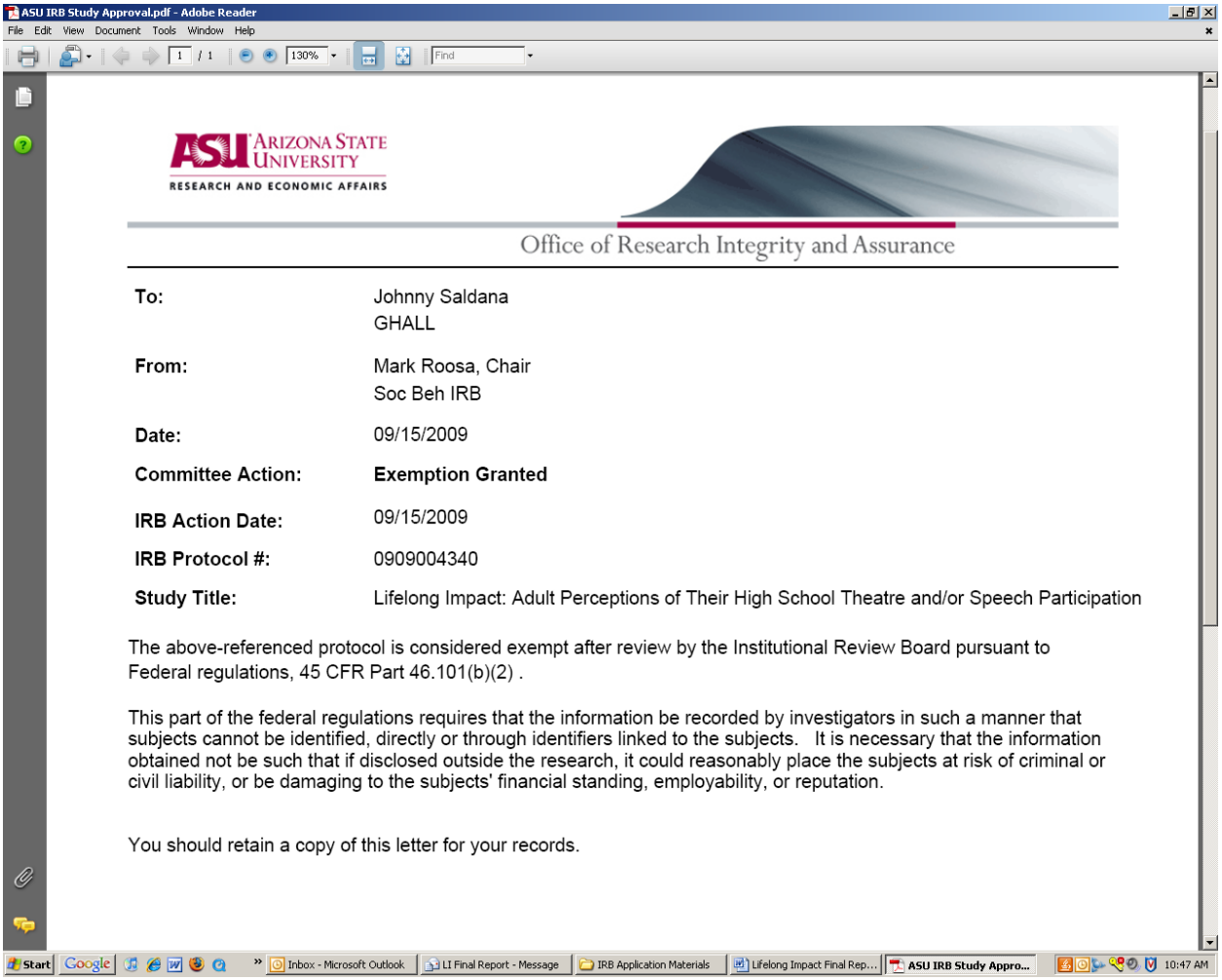
Your Name:
Your Preferred E-mail Address:
Your Area Code and Phone Number:
Your preferred way and days/times I may contact you:

Thank you! Please e-mail this completed survey to:

Johnny Saldaña, Johnny.Saldana@asu.edu

Appendix B

ASU and UA Human Subjects Approvals



ASU IRB Study Approval.pdf - Adobe Reader

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY
RESEARCH AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

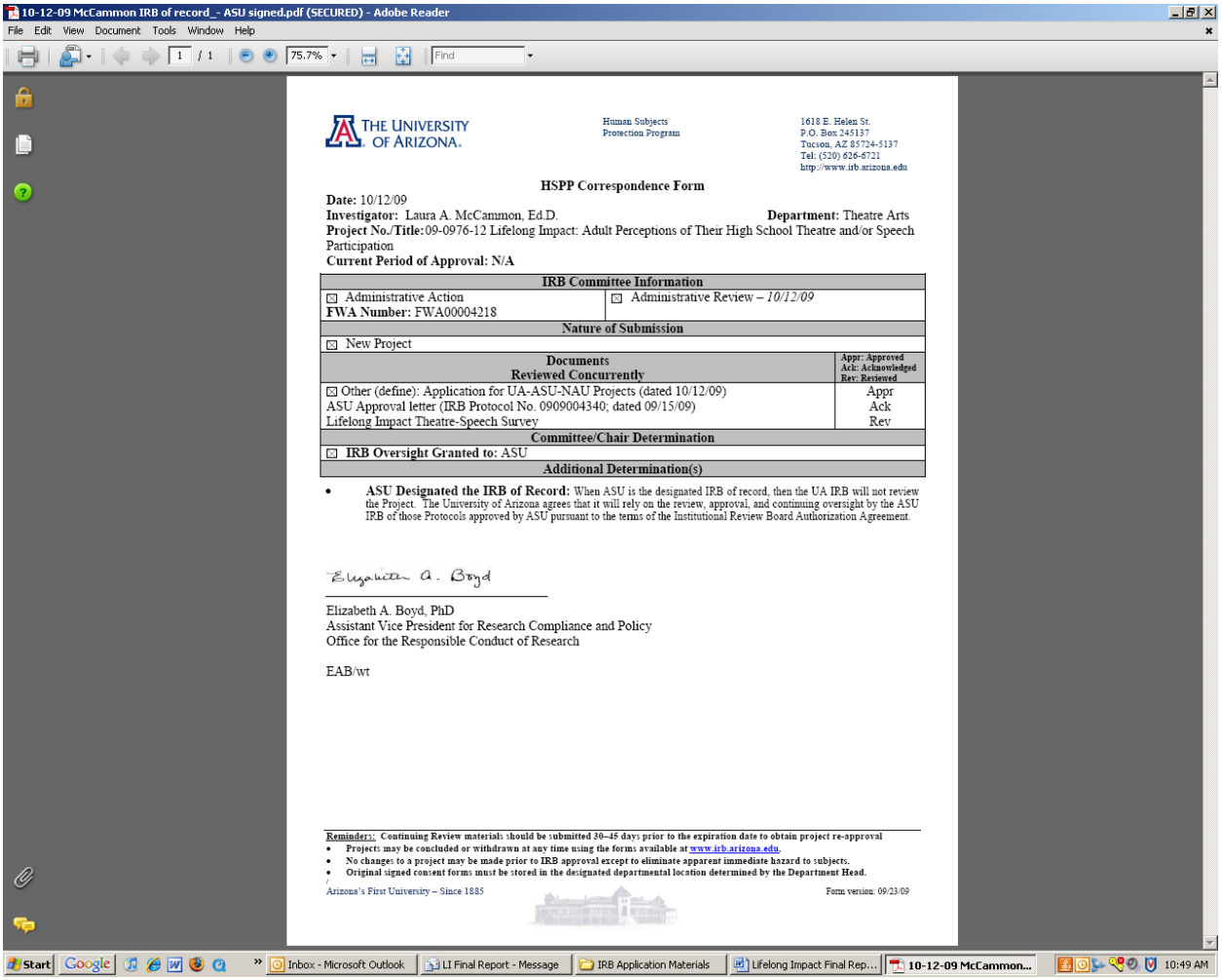
Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

To:	Johnny Saldana GHALL
From:	Mark Roosa, Chair Soc Beh IRB
Date:	09/15/2009
Committee Action:	**Exemption Granted**
IRB Action Date:	09/15/2009
IRB Protocol #:	0909004340
Study Title:	Lifelong Impact: Adult Perceptions of Their High School Theatre and/or Speech Participation

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2) .

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.



10-12-09 McCammon IRB of record_- ASU signed.pdf (SECURED) - Adobe Reader

File Edit View Document Tools Window Help

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA.

Human Subjects Protection Program

1618 E. Helen St.
P.O. Box 245137
Tucson, AZ 85724-5137
Tel: (520) 626-6721
http://www.irb.arizona.edu

HSPP Correspondence Form

Date: 10/12/09
Investigator: Laura A. McCammon, Ed.D. **Department:** Theatre Arts
Project No./Title: 09-0976-12 Lifelong Impact: Adult Perceptions of Their High School Theatre and/or Speech Participation
Current Period of Approval: N/A

IRB Committee Information	
☒ Administrative Action **FWA Number:** FWA00004218	☒ Administrative Review – *10/12/09*
Nature of Submission	
☒ New Project	

Documents Reviewed Concurrently	**Appr: Approved Ack: Acknowledged Rev: Reviewed**
☒ Other (define): Application for UA-ASU-NAU Projects (dated 10/12/09)	Appr
ASU Approval letter (IRB Protocol No. 0909004340; dated 09/15/09)	Ack
Lifelong Impact Theatre-Speech Survey	Rev

Committee/Chair Determination
☒ **IRB Oversight Granted to:** ASU
Additional Determination(s)

- **ASU Designated the IRB of Record:** When ASU is the designated IRB of record, then the UA IRB will not review the Project. The University of Arizona agrees that it will rely on the review, approval, and continuing oversight by the ASU IRB of those Protocols approved by ASU pursuant to the terms of the Institutional Review Board Authorization Agreement.

Elizabeth A. Boyd

Elizabeth A. Boyd, PhD
Assistant Vice President for Research Compliance and Policy
Office for the Responsible Conduct of Research

EAB/wt

Reminders: Continuing Review materials should be submitted 30–45 days prior to the expiration date to obtain project re-approval
- Projects may be concluded or withdrawn at any time using the forms available at www.irb.arizona.edu.
- No changes to a project may be made prior to IRB approval except to eliminate apparent immediate hazard to subjects.
- Original signed consent forms must be stored in the designated departmental location determined by the Department Head.

Arizona's First University – Since 1885

Form version: 09/23/09

Start Google Inbox - Microsoft Outlook LI Final Report - Message IRB Application Materials Lifelong Impact Final Rep... 10-12-09 McCammon... 10:49 AM

Appendix C

Member Check E-mail Correspondence

August 31, 2010

Dear Friend,

Johnny Saldaña of Arizona State University and Laura McCammon of the University of Arizona here.

In 2009 or 2010 you graciously participated in a research survey called "Lifelong Impact: Adult Perceptions of Their High School Speech and/or Theatre Participation." We received a total of 234 responses nationwide, and have analyzed the data for preliminary reports and conference presentations.

This next stage of this project is called a "member check," where we present selected results, to date, to those who participated in the survey. If you wish to read the findings below and respond, we would appreciate your time and comments to help us assess the credibility of these assertions.

The full report is over 100 pages thus far, but we do not wish to take up any more of your time than is necessary. If opportunity permits, please read the summary findings below and let us know whether we seem to be on target, whether there are some findings you question, or if there's anything else you would like to add that may help us with the final report.

And, if you would like to respond to just one more question, we would appreciate your collective answers to make our report a bit more complete:

How and/or why did you get involved in high school theatre and/or speech in the first place? (Some of you already told us in your surveys, but we'd like to get even more responses.)

We would appreciate a response **by Thursday, September 30, 2010**. If the formatting of the findings below isn't clear, let me know and I'll send it to you as a Word attachment. Thanks!

Data Analysis (as of Aug. 18, 2010) - "Lifelong Impact: Adult Perceptions of Their High School Speech and/or Theatre Participation"

The co-researchers cannot assert that immersed participation in high school theatre or speech programming will benefit everyone to the same degree as they progress through the adult life course. But survey responses collectively suggest a set of *ideal* conditions to maximize the *potential* of lifelong impact.

We propose as the key assertion: *Quality high school theatre and speech experiences can not only significantly influence but even accelerate adolescent development, and provide residual, positive, lifelong impacts throughout adulthood*.

What follows is an interweaving of the assertions and analytic statements thus far into a more coherent and storied narrative. We remain solidly grounded in the 234 respondents' data to profile yet suggest transferability of this process to other high school programs in North America.

[Analytic Synthesis inserted here]