

THE ROLE OF COLLABORATIVE SKILLS IN ENHANCING POWERFUL GROUP LEARNING, AND UNDERSTANDING OF SHAKESPEARE'S *MACBETH*

Anita Trolese

St John's Preparatory School, Johannesburg, South Africa

Abstract

In October 2016, an English class of twenty-two Year 7 boys participated in a six-week group learning project searching for the answer to the question, "Why Shakespeare in 2016?" The boys were required to download the *Macbeth Graphic Novel Quick Text* onto their devices (we are a BYOD school) and this text formed the launch pad for their study.

Through the careful structuring of a number of group learning tasks, this action research project sought to evaluate how the explicit teaching of key collaboration skills might impact not only on the efficacy of this group learning project, but also on developing and enhancing a deeper understanding of a number of key elements in Shakespeare's work – not least of which was his relevance in the twenty-first century. The targeted collaboration skills were kept "top of mind" throughout the project and opportunities to reflect upon the boys' use of the taught strategies, both as individuals and as a group, were built into the project design.

When evaluating the final project submitted by each group, as well as analysing the results of the boys' self and peer reflections, it was clear that the focus on teaching collaboration skills contributed significantly to the success of the boys' learning and their deep understanding of the task. This success was felt on a personal level as well as in terms of meeting all the criteria for a successful and powerful group learning project.

The results of this action research project are significant in that it focused my attention as an educator on the strategies employed when conducting group learning activities. Once I experienced the success of this project and the deep learning that had occurred, I could not go back to my practices of the past. Even the placement of classroom furniture had to be reconsidered at the start of the 2017 school year so as to enable effective ongoing collaboration. Moreover, it has led me on a path of sharing my findings with my colleagues and seeking to work collaboratively with them to create curricula that acknowledge the importance of interpersonal relationships in learning and understanding.

Introduction

The 2016/2017 IBSC topic, *Collaboration and the Power of Group Learning*, offered me the opportunity to explore my concerns and observations about the efficacy of previous and future group work activities.

Our staff have spent an extensive amount of time studying and utilising Harvard University's Visible Thinking routines. These routines support and scaffold the boys' thinking and learning. The actual routines, however, are only one of the eight "cultural forces" that Ron Ritchhart (2015) highlights in his book *Creating Cultures of Thinking – The 8 Forces We Must Master to Truly Transform Schools*. Ritchhart emphasises the importance of "interactions" and reminds us that, "Learning is a social endeavour in which our interactions with others not only support the learning process but are inseparable from it" (p. 203). Furthermore, studies into Enquiry-Based Learning, another methodology being actively explored by my school's curriculum developers, all emphasise the pivotal role that group learning and collaboration play in the efficacy of this methodology. Kahn and O'Rourke, (2005) assert that, "[Students] seek evidence to support their ideas and take responsibility for analysing and presenting this appropriately, either as part of a group or as an individual supported by others. They are thus engaged as partners in the learning process" (p. 1).

What is problematic is the assumption that young learners are able to work effectively as "partners" in their learning. A supposition is made that all students have the ability to collaborate effectively with each other and therefore gain the optimum benefit from group learning experiences. However, experience has shown me that this is not always the case.

When reflecting on the IBSC action research topic, *Collaboration and the Power of Group Learning*, the question that I felt needed to be asked was, if boys were able to identify the shortcomings in their collaboration skills and these were explicitly taught, would they derive a greater benefit from a group learning task, and would the outcome thereof be enhanced and optimised? To this end, I chose to investigate the following question: *How might the explicit teaching of collaborative skills in a study of Macbeth enhance powerful group learning and understanding for Year 7 boys?*

The model of action research, as outlined by Stringer (2014), proved most effective in ascertaining the efficacy of my intended action. The premise that, "All stakeholders - those whose lives are affected by the problem under study - should be engaged in the process of investigation" (p. 15) was most important. Through the cyclical process of consulting with

the boys, the primary stakeholders, and gathering and reflecting on the data collected in their responses, adjustments were made when implementing the next phase of activity. The flexibility of this form of research was also most appropriate in the school context – as the teacher, I was as much a participant in the process as the boys were. As we reflected upon the outcome of each stage of the action, we could make changes and adjust the process. This ensured the boys extracted the optimum benefit from the project and hopefully acquired skills that will serve them well in the years ahead.

Literature Review

Over the past few years, much has been said in the field of education about the notion that schools are educating students for a future that cannot possibly be conceived of and for jobs that have not yet been invented. Dr Shimi Kang (2015) states that for our children “to do well in today’s fast-paced, highly social, ultra-competitive and globally connected world, our children need twenty-first-century skills” (p. 84). Dr Kang goes on to cite the work done by an organisation at the University of Melbourne, The Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills (ATC21S™), where a study they conducted identified the following as essential skills: Creativity, Critical Thinking, Communication and Collaboration.

The importance of collaboration is highlighted several times throughout Kang’s (2015) book and, in particular, she draws our attention to the fact that, “By working with others towards a common purpose, we can generate better ideas and find better solutions to problems” (p. 268). This sentiment is echoed very strongly by Ritchhart (2015), who identifies the themes of purpose, commitment, equity and engagement as factors that can create a “dynamic group of people who feel that they are learning together and creating something greater than that which any individual might produce” (p. 5).

As an educator, I too believe in the notion that “we” is greater than “me.” Society has seen how powerful collaboration can be in all areas from the Arts to Science and Technology. Yokana (2014) notes, “Artists and scientists have understood the connections for centuries, from Renaissance artists, architects, and inventors Leonardo da Vinci and Filippo Brunelleschi, to scientists and artists collaborating to create enhanced computer graphics or work on the Large Hadron Collider.” The recent introduction of educational initiatives, such as STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics), reflects the recognition that integrating various disciplines enhances understanding and is in fact how the “real world” works. This observation is echoed by Laura Barnett (2009):

In almost every area of the arts, genres are spilling into each other, cross-pollinating, refusing to remain in neat boxes. You go to the theatre expecting actors under a proscenium arch, and you get videos, animation, and intricate dance routines. Go to the opera expecting corsets and coloratura, and you get electric guitars and costumes designed by Viktor & Rolf.

In conjunction with powerful collaborations, boys need to be exposed to “educational experiences that are active, social, contextual, engaging, and student-owned” (Collaborative Learning: Group Work, 2016) in order for deep learning to occur. However, most experiences boys have of collaboration are not particularly positive. In a pre-project survey asking for the boys’ perceptions of group work, Boy C commented, “During the straw crane activity we completely and utterly failed at making it on time, and we didn’t all work together.” Boy T echoed this sentiment when he wrote, “[Group tasks] are unsuccessful because no one listened to your ideas and [they] messed around while we were trying to share the ideas with each other.” Often, the results of a group project do not reflect the collective ability of the participants. Interactions are unbalanced; one or two boys may dominate the discussions; several boys may opt out – preferring to engage in “off-task” behaviour; and there will often be a falling out with someone complaining that his ideas are never taken seriously. Should the activity be for marks, another layer of anxiety is added to the mix. Burke (2011) uses the term “grouphate” to explain this negative reaction. Notes Burke, “Grouphate has been referred to as the dread and repulsion that many people feel about working in groups or teams” (para. 3). It is my belief that if educators are truly equipping their boys for the future, effective collaboration cannot be left to chance and neither can the development of good collaboration skills. It is imperative that boys are given the opportunity, in the safe environment of school, to participate in authentic group learning projects and to be allowed the opportunity to practise and refine collaborative skills and strategies.

Harvey and Daniels (2015) assert that, “Effective groups are made, not born” (p. 54). They go on to state that, “Effective collaborators have a mostly unconscious repertoire of social strategies they use to operate effectively in group situations” (p. 54). Additionally, it is the authors’ belief that these strategies can be taught, monitored and effectively utilised. They state that, “If we want a classroom – not to mention a community or a world – where all children and teenagers can team up effectively and reliably, day in and day out, these skills need to be modelled and taught” (p. 56).

Upon examination of the various readings and research, the basis of my intended action was the belief that collaboration is an essential skill, as proposed by Kang (2015) and Ritchhart (2015), and that these skills need to be explicitly taught.

Another important consideration would be the relevance and appeal any project would have for a cohort of twelve and thirteen-year-old boys. There are many points of similarity outlined by Lotan (2003), and by Reichert and Hawley (2010). Lotan highlights the importance of carefully constructing any group learning tasks and cognisance was taken of her suggestions in planning my action research project: The tasks were designed to require authentic problem solving. The boys were encouraged to show their competence in multiple ways and they were held individually and interdependently accountable for completing activities. From the outset, the evaluation criteria were made clear to them. In addition, as advised by these authors, it was important that each activity was designed to be open-ended. The boys were required to grapple with significant themes as they explored Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

The encouragement of what Reichert and Hawley (2010) term "personal perspective" (p. 114) was also carefully considered in my project's design. For example, drawing on the boys' personal experiences and knowledge of the concept of ambition, allowed them to make a connection to Macbeth's quest for power. Moreover, Reichert and Hawley state that, "The very process of collaboration seemed to drive the intended learning outcomes forward" (p. 122). The authors acknowledge the fact that boys respond well to situations that require teamwork, and benefit when group learning is shared with one another. These factors were considered in the planning of this unit.

By acknowledging the interests of boys as readers and selecting a "boy friendly" format that could be accessed on their digital devices it was hoped that the boys' interest would be further piqued. Laycock's graphic novel action research study (2006) found that the "use of the graphic novel also value-added to the number of boys engaged in school reading." Graphic novels have been used by the boys at the Preparatory School in the past and they were familiar with the format. Taking cognisance of the above, when completing the final activity, the boys were given the opportunity to present a "multi-dimensional" project. Moreover, explicitly teaching and modelling specific collaboration skills was foregrounded. Through the use of a variety of reflections, the boys were tasked with monitoring their own use of the strategies, and those of their peers. The importance of engaging boys in activities that are considered to be "open inquiry" was highlighted. So too was the importance of

drawing on the boys' personal experiences and knowledge to make connections to new understandings.

Research Context

St John's College is an independent Anglican day and boarding school situated in Johannesburg, South Africa. It ranges from nursery school to Sixth Form. Most boys come from middle to high socio-economic backgrounds. The school has a strong reputation of academic excellence and it is the aim of the College to be a "world class Christian school for Africa" where the values of compassion, integrity, responsibility, humility and service are upheld.

My research context was located specifically in the Preparatory School where I chose to conduct my research with my current Year 7 English class. I chose this heterogeneous class of twenty-two 12-13-year-old boys because I felt that exploring the topic of collaboration would serve them well in their transition into the College. Furthermore, an advantage was the amount of contact time I would have with them every week as the project was interwoven into our English curriculum. Another benefit was that this cohort had been together for the nine months prior to the start of the project: relationships had been well established and norms within our English classroom were already agreed upon.

A letter outlining the nature of the action research project was sent to parents, and their consent, along with their son's, was sought. The data collection process was detailed and assurances were given that information collected would only be used for educational purposes and within the context of this research project. Anonymity was maintained by withholding the boys' names when discussing data, responses and during video recordings.

The Action

The twenty-two boys in my English class were divided into mixed-ability groups: four groups of four participants and two groups of three participants, and they remained in these groups for the project's duration.

Two tiers were identified in this project's design. The first tier involved the explicit teaching of collaborative skills and the second tier utilised these skills and strategies in the class's study of the play, *Macbeth*. All activities were designed to be completed as group learning tasks.

The collaborative skills that were identified in the pre-project surveys and which formed the focus of the project were as follows:

- The need to establish group rules
- Active listening
- Active participation (sharing the air, encouragement of others' participation and supporting views and findings)
- Reflection and correction

The six-week unit of work had three main components which led up to the completion of the final project: Activity one explored the graphic novel. The boys were required to examine and discuss various deep questions related to the play. Activity two involved developing an understanding of multiple perspectives and an appreciation of the viewpoint of the various characters and their motivations. The theme of ambition was explored in the third activity, with the boys examining modern examples of occasions when an individual's ambition has led to his/her downfall. For the final task, each group had to present an original project that presented a significant and relevant message in terms of the theme, ambition.

During each activity, the key collaboration skills were introduced and discussed, and the boys were required to use these skills and strategies as they completed the various group learning tasks. Boys were also asked to reflect on these skills at the completion of each activity by completing self and peer assessments, exit tickets and short surveys.

Data Collection

It was my intention to collect qualitative data at the onset of the project as well as at various stages during the process. The data were compared and analysed in order not only to ascertain the efficacy of my action research project, but also to guide the project once the participants' responses were scrutinised. This process ensured that the project transitioned from the "look" to the "think" to the "act" stages of action research as described by Stringer (2014).

Through the use of qualitative research, I tried to gain a better understanding of the boys' perspective of group learning tasks and whether or not they might see any educational or personal value in them. Stringer (2014) states that researchers are required to "gather information about participants' experiences and perspectives and to define the problem or issue in terms that 'make sense' in their own terms" (p. 101). The importance of collating information that would give the researcher a better perspective of the participants involved in the action research project and their respective experiences is very much emphasised in this type of research and that is what I set out to do.

Data Analysis

Two pre-project surveys were carried out to find out more about the participants' previous experiences of group learning tasks and whether or not they believed there was any benefit to working collaboratively. Using the process of categorising and coding, I reviewed the comments in the surveys and identified various emergent themes. Based on this information, I extracted key skills that the boys themselves thought would assist in enhancing group learning tasks. These results were shared with the boys and their agreement sought regarding the main collaborative skills we would focus upon.

Interestingly, there was a direct correlation between the boys' feedback and the skills identified by Harvey and Daniels (2015). Their document, *How Proficient Collaborators Think and Act*, was shared with the class and became a point of reference throughout the project.

Armed with the information from the pre-project surveys, I designed my action research project around three main activities. The boys were explicitly taught a particular collaborative skill during each activity which they were then encouraged to utilise as they completed the assigned tasks. At various points during these activities, boys were asked to complete further online surveys, exit tickets and peer assessment rubrics. The results were compared to the information gleaned from the pre-project surveys. In addition to observation, time was factored in during most lessons to review the results of the boys' feedback with them. As all the tasks were designed as group learning activities, all written artefacts (notes, posters and journals) as well as all Google Docs were saved and the main features of each experience identified. The process of triangulation (Stringer, 2014) allowed for the clarification of meaning and a better understanding of the perspectives of the participants.

Once the participants had completed the project's final activity, each boy completed a self- and peer-assessment rubric where they reflected upon the collaboration skills of their group members and the success or failure of their group learning task. These experiences were compared to the findings of previous data collection activities and analysed. The evaluation of all the data was assessed in order to ascertain the effectiveness of the overall action research project.

Discussion of Results

The qualitative data collected during this project were analysed and categorised. When coded,

the following broad themes emerged: the majority of boys enjoyed working and interacting with their peers in group work activities; and all the participants highlighted interpersonal interactions with other group members as an area of frustration when completing these group activities, often citing these interactions as a factor that contributed to the failure of their activity.

Twenty-two boys completed two pre-project surveys seeking insight into their experiences of group work activities and they were asked to reflect on what leads to the success or failure of these group learning opportunities. Just over half of the boys stated that they enjoyed working in groups. Ten of the respondents recognised the benefit of “group thinking” with Boy C commenting, “I enjoy the type of solutions we manage to create when we are in a group.” Four boys enjoyed the social aspect of group work tasks, noting, “Getting to work with friends” was an important factor for them.

When identifying the negative aspects of group learning tasks, seven boys mentioned poor listening as a frustration while six respondents felt that a lack of consensus hindered the success of group learning tasks. Boy M mentioned that, “If you can only submit one answer in the end of a group discussion and everyone has a different opinion then it’s hard to get that final answer.” “Off-task” behaviour, the unequal distribution of workload, and individuals not completing what was required of them were also mentioned. When reflecting on an unsuccessful group learning activity, Boy H noted that, “Some people in our group did not help with the activity as much as they should have... We did not focus on the task at hand and fooled around. Most of our group members were not fully committed to the project,” echoed Boy S.

What was clear when analysing the data in depth, was that most of the boys believed that there is a benefit to working in a group; however, just over half indicated that a lack of appropriate collaboration skills hinders the success of these tasks. When the interpersonal difficulties expressed by the participants were further analysed, these themes emerged as contributing factors to a group’s success or failure:

1. The need for a structured approach to planning a project that includes the establishment of ground rules
2. The need for strategies for effective group communication: active listening; turn taking during discussions
3. The need for a deliberate focus on respectful interaction and responsibility towards

the group

The need for a structured approach to planning a project that includes the establishment of ground rules

Before beginning their first group learning activity, each group was encouraged to think of some ground rules or, as Boy Q called it, “rules of engagement”. All the groups opted to do so and when surveyed, twelve respondents felt that the outcome of their activity was excellent, eight believed the outcome was good, while one boy felt his group’s efforts were fair. When asked if the ground rules contributed to the outcome of their group work activity, eighteen boys responded in the affirmative, two boys responded in the negative and one boy cited “other” as a reason. Boy C said, “If we hadn’t set ground rules before the time, we would’ve messed around and missed our deadlines.” This sentiment was echoed by Boy J, as “it helped people to do the work and there was no complaining.”

The need for strategies for effective group communication: active listening; turn taking during discussions

Prior to the project, Boy A emphatically stated, “Some people don’t like listening so nothing works!” and it was this sentiment that was echoed by most of the boys. When given an explanation of what active listening entails and how they could become fully involved in the group’s discussion, I observed that the boys were generally better equipped to engage more proactively and positively in their group learning activity. In reflecting on their final project, Boy J wrote, “We made a bigger effort to listen actively and be polite.” What was also interesting to note when reviewing the data was that more boys acknowledged their own shortcomings as opposed to focusing on their peers’ deficiencies in this area. Boy H reflected, “I tend to dictate a lot and I think I didn’t dictate as much during this project.” Boy D wrote in his journal, “The skills we learnt allowed me to let others have a turn to speak.” The focus on more productive conversation skills resulted in twenty boys acknowledging that the group discussions they participated in helped deepen their understanding of *Macbeth*, as Boy S stated, “It gave me other people’s perspectives and helped me with mine.”

The need for a deliberate focus on respectful interaction and responsibility towards the group

Seven boys in the pre-project survey mentioned the detrimental effect that “off-task” and uncooperative behaviour had on their learning potential during group tasks. Boy L bluntly wrote, “The other members don’t respect, listen or acknowledge my ideas. Also, the other

members are stubborn and stuff around when there is work to be done.” During the project, when the boys’ attention was drawn to the importance of showing tolerance and respect, a slight shift in behaviour was observed. Those boys who appeared to be more emotionally mature, certainly embraced the skills and strategies taught; however, it was observed that this is an area that will certainly require more attention in future projects. With regards to the individual's responsibility towards the group, only three boys felt that this was a factor that partially impacted on their group’s success when completing the final project.

At the completion of the project, boys were once again asked if their group learning activity was successful. Eighteen respondents replied in the affirmative, with three boys saying they were partially successful. All the boys stated that the focus on collaborative skills and strategies contributed to their success. The boys’ responses also indicated that a shift had occurred from the idea of group work to group learning. Boy M said, “If I didn’t know something I could always refer to a group member to help me ... if we all didn’t understand something then we could discuss it and come up with an amazing idea.”

Conclusion

The explicit teaching of the various collaborative skills, and focusing the boys’ attention on “how a proficient collaborator thinks and acts,” undoubtedly had a very positive effect on the boys’ understanding of the English course content – that being the introduction to Shakespeare through the study of *Macbeth* and answering the question, “Why Shakespeare in 2016?” When the theme of ambition was linked not only to current affairs, but also to the boys’ lives as they navigate the social and academic environment at school, it reinforced the boys’ perception that Shakespeare is still relevant in the twenty-first century.

Because group interactions were optimised through the use of the specific collaboration skills, each group truly benefitted from group thinking. Many powerful discussions were had and complex themes were explored with a greater level of depth, focus and maturity than I had observed previously.

Due to the heightened awareness of co-operative group behaviour, five of the six groups managed to complete the group learning activities successfully, with most group members being more actively involved than in previous projects. Meeting the deadline for each project and completing the assigned tasks was something that the groups managed on their own, freeing me up from the usual duties of disciplinarian and timekeeper and allowing me to be more of a coach or mentor.

The success of this project unquestionably has implications for my future practice. I have seen the benefit of developing the boys' interpersonal and collaborative skills, and I would certainly like to spend more time on this in future. In particular, focus needs to be placed on teaching the boys how to manage differences of opinion and to reach consensus, which is impacted by an individual's level of emotional maturity as well as their emotional intelligence.

Another important aspect to take cognisance of, is the importance of building in sufficient time in our busy and often overloaded curriculum for discussion and reflection. Much of this project's success lay in giving the boys ample opportunity to discuss how things were progressing within their groups and how they were managing their peer interactions. We called this our "touch base" sessions—an opportunity to share experiences beyond the course content, as well as giving all the boys an opportunity to be heard.

This project has implications for our school's curriculum as a whole. Undoubtedly, it is important for collaborative strategies to be taught and employed across our school, thus creating a common language amongst the teachers and boys. To this end, I have started sharing my experience and learnings with my colleagues across subject areas and grade levels and we have formed a working group that is exploring the impact of effective collaboration skills. It is also our aim to link this to developing curricula that support an enquiry-based model. Furthermore, I presented my findings at a whole-school staff learning session in order to reach those members of our teaching team who are not part of our working group.

At the outset of this action research project, it was my hope that my participation would enhance my practice as an educator and, more importantly, the skills learnt by the boys would be of benefit to them; that they would be better equipped to negotiate the world in which they find themselves; and they would start to develop more empathy and insight to contribute to the greater good. It was my wish that through the focus on their collaborative skills, the boys would be able to harness the real power of group learning and they would recognise and come to appreciate their role, as individuals and teams, as catalysts for their own learning and understanding. This project has certainly done this.

Kang (2015) acknowledges that there is more to collaboration than working with others: "It involves being respectful, reliable, and competent; using our social skills; and motivating, challenging, and inspiring one another ... [collaboration is] deepened by spending time with, working with, and exchanging ideas with diverse people in diverse situations" (p. 268) – all

vital skills needed in the global village of the twenty-first century and during this divisive age in which we find ourselves.

Reflection

Participation in this action research project has significantly changed me as a teacher and changed my approach in the classroom. I came to question the assumptions I had made in my twenty-one year teaching career and thoroughly enjoyed immersing myself in the world of educational research once again. I came to appreciate the value of action research as a means to apply new methodologies and effect positive change within my classroom and hopefully in the educational experience of the boys I teach.

The completion of some of the tasks was challenging and stretched my abilities in some instances. I would be lying if I did not admit that I questioned my sanity in participating in this project on more than one occasion as the pressure of finding the time to meet the various requirements clashed with my day-to-day duties and obligations. The amount of work necessary to rewrite our English curriculum and the hours needed to meticulously plan the activities was something I had underestimated; however, it was because of this thoughtful and considered approach that the boys' experience was so profound. When the unit ended and they submitted their final projects, their sense of pride and enthusiasm for what they had achieved was palpable. As their teacher, I was overwhelmed by the thoughtful and creative work they had produced and was amazed by the high quality of thinking and understanding reflected in their projects. Once a teacher has had that kind of experience, she can never go back!

An undertaking such as this would be next to impossible without the support of key people who embody the notion of professional collaboration. I am exceptionally grateful to St John's Preparatory School and our headmaster, Mr Patrick Lees, for supporting my participation in the IBSC Action Research Project. Mrs Margot Long, in her capacity as my mentor, colleague and friend, was invaluable in offering guidance and a very willing ear as we worked through the project with our Year 7 boys. Finally, I must thank my Team Advisor, Mr Bruce Collins, who through his patience and understanding was an encouraging guide on this journey. His gentle mentorship ensured that this was a hugely rewarding and positive experience.

References

- Barnett, L (2009, June 8). The best of both worlds. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2009/jun/08/art-collaboration-dance-theatre-music>
- Burke, A. (2011). Group work: How to use groups effectively. *The Journal of Effective Teaching*, 11(2), 87-95.
- Cain, S. (2012). *Quiet*. London, UK: Penguin Books.
- Collaborative Learning: Group Work*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/engaging-students/collaborative-learning.html>
- Corgill, A. M. (Producer). (n.d.). *Growing a Collaborative Classroom*. [Webinar]. Retrieved from <https://inside.collaborativeclassroom.org/video/771/webinar-growing-a-collaborative-classroom-three-essentials-with-ann-marie-corgill>
- Kang, S.K. (2015). *The dolphin parent*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Penguin Books.
- Kahn, P., & O'Rourke, K. (2005). *Handbook of enquiry and problem-based learning Irish case studies and international perspectives*. Retrieved from <http://www.aishe.org/readings/2005-2/contents.html>
- Harvey, S., & Daniels, H. (2015). *Comprehension and collaboration* (Rev ed.). Portsmouth, UK: Heinemann.
- Herrimann, Z. (2016) Usable Knowledge: *Making it work for everyone – Seven ways to create a classroom that meets the needs of all your students*. Retrieved from <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/uk/blog/making-it-work-everyone>
- Laycock, D. (2006). *Going graphic: Using graphic novels to engage boys in school reading*. Retrieved from <https://www.theibsc.org/member-portal/action-research-archive>
- Lotan, R.A. (2003). Creating caring schools. *Group-worthy tasks*. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/mar03/vol60/num06/Group-Worthy_Tasks.aspx
- McFann, J. (2004, August). *Boys and books*. Retrieved from <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/boys-and-books>

MindShift (Ed.). *How listening and sharing help shape collaborative learning experiences.*

Retrieved from KQED website: <http://ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/2016/08/04/how-listening-and-sharing-help-shape-collaborative-learning-experiences/>

Reichert, M., & Hawley, R. (2010). *Reaching boys teaching boys*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Ritchhart, R. (2015). *Creating cultures of thinking. The 8 forces we must master to truly transform our schools*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Stringer, E. T. (2014). *Action research* (4th ed.). London, UK: SAGE Publications.

Yokana, L. (2014) *The art of thinking like an artist*. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/ascd-express/vol9/909-yokana.aspx>