DISSERTATION

A CLASSROOM OF HORRORS AND LESSONS FROM THE DARK:

AN AFFECTIVE LEARNING FRAMEWORK FOR ENGAGING STUDENTS IN LITERACY

Submitted by

Justin Daniel Davis

School of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Spring 2019

Doctoral Committee:

Advisor: Louise Jennings

Daniel Birmingham
Ellen Brinks
William Timpson

ABSTRACT

A CLASSROOM OF HORRORS AND LESSONS FROM THE DARK:

AN AFFECTIVE LEARNING FRAMEWORK FOR ENGAGING STUDENTS IN LITERACY

While student engagement has long been acknowledged as important in the learning process in scholarship, the concept of engagement has just recently shifted from an idea of passive compliance to overt interest. Much of the research continues to focus on largely cognitive aspects of engagement such as higher level thinking processes, taxonomies, and rigor. While cognitive engagement is important, far less attention has focused on affective, or emotional, engagement. The researcher seeks to capture personal student experiences around engagement and analyze participant responses for possible themes to examine the potentially positive impacts and possible constraints of using the horror genre as a means to apply a proposed Affective Learning Framework in order to effectively and holistically engage students. The Affective Learning Framework consisted of four key domains: Relevancy/Connectedness, Interest/Autonomy, Hook/Controversy, and a Positive Learning Environment.

Broadly, the purpose of this research is to capture the insights and voices of secondary students around using horror as a means to emotionally engage them in literacy and relevant real-world issues in an after-school horror literature club in an effort to battle feelings of boredom and disconnectedness that students often experience in the classroom. It examines horror as a potentially powerful teaching tool in secondary and post-secondary settings. As a qualitative study, the analysis of open-ended survey questions, transcribed dialogue, and interviews resulted in a thematic analysis case study in order to detail the potential of emerging or common themes

as they related to the application of the Affective Learning Framework. As student voice is often lacking in the literature about what they feel about engagement, and this was a primary driver for the purpose of this study, student voice is a critical aspect of this research. The study also addresses meaningful implementation of the horror genre into reading and writing, with further implications around the use of subgenres and how this work may fit into the general classroom setting through the Affective Learning Framework.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work would not have been possible without the extensive support given to me by so many people, emotionally, academically, and otherwise. From my own experience, I now believe it takes a fairly large village to make a dissertation, and I am grateful for every single individual who took this journey with me, who offered wisdom and perspective, and who challenged me. Professors, colleagues, friends, family – I could easily double the length of this work by listing all of you – please know I will always be forever grateful in more ways than you could possibly know.

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Louise Jennings. Despite having to "inherit" me unexpectedly as your advisee, you immediately took me under your wing and encouraged me to be myself, dig deep, and patiently nudged me every step of the way – you empowered my voice and believed in me. You helped me become a better writer, a better academic, and a better person. I cannot thank you enough for your guidance, positivity, grace, and mentorship.

I would like to thank Dr. William ("Bill") Timpson. Nearly a decade ago, you sat with me in your office as I considered applying for the Ph.D. program at CSU. You were excited when I shared some of my experience and my passion, which validated my thinking and encouraged me that maybe I did have what it took to pursue my doctorate degree. Besides my own family, you were my earliest cheerleader on my doctoral journey.

I was blessed to have an amazing committee: to Dr. Daniel Birmingham, who helped me frame my inquiry-based approach and advocated for authentic voice throughout, constantly reminding me what, and who, I was doing this study for (students!); to Dr. Ellen Brinks, who

brought so much perspective, insight, and wisdom as I sought to frame the study through the lens of a literary analysis – your time and energy devoted to the success of this work was invaluable.

To my former literacy teachers, Mr. Paul Miller and Dr. Lee Tobin McClain – you helped me see that my passions were not anything to be frightened by, you saw me for who I was, and told me through your kind actions that I was valued and affirmed that I belonged.

I also want to thank my supervisors and co-workers with special shout-outs in particular to Pam Swanson, Cindy Davis, James Duffy, Jeni Gotto, Oliver Grenham, Kiffany Kiewiet, Janelle Stastny, John Thanos, Roger Vadeen, and the many staff who helped provide the flexibility for me to attend classes and encouraged me to continue even when it was difficult.

To my teacher mentor and my adopted brother, Bob Andrew – thanks for making me laugh and reminding me to hold my head up even in the craziest of times.

To my family – for my birth mom, Joan, who consistently showed me the definition of strength and the courage it took to follow one's dreams; to my surrogate mom, my Aunt Sheryl, who, with my late uncle, Butch, prompted me to follow my passions and assured me that reading was a cool thing to do while providing me a safe haven to do it; to my brothers, Brad, David, Ronnie, and Wayne – you encouraged me in anything I wanted to do, and I am proud of each of you every day. To my "dads" – Ron, Jim, Bill, and Uncle Frank – thank you for believing in me and helping provide examples of positive masculinity. I would also like to thank Victor for helping me to become strong.

My wife, Jena – you are my life partner, my best friend, and, in many ways, my inspiration. Simply put, I could not have done this without you. I could not list the number of ways you helped inspire me to do this work. To my children, Fynn and Lyam – thanks for being patient with me. You both inspire me to be my best self every day.

Finally, to my students – those who participated (British Cookie, Cloud, IPod, Karate Kid, Meme Lord, Scare Bear, Jax, Melon, Dean, and all of those in the horror literature club), as well as to all of my students, past, present, and future – this is your story as much as it is mine. Thank you for allowing me the honor and privilege to serve you.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife, Jena, and to my children, Lyam and Fynn. May you walk the world knowing you are always loved.

This work is also dedicated in loving memory to my grandmother, Francis "Hester" Davis. Thank you for being a light in the dark.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I - AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CLASSROOM OF HORRORS

Classroom of Horrors

The little ones stared

With eyes of black night

They waited and gaped – a nerve-wracking sight

For she was expected

To feed them that day

Trapped in the room – no getting away

She tried to explain

She attempted to plea

They crept ever closer – she wanted to flee

Nearer they came

Hungry for more

The teacher, she screamed – and collapsed to the floor

They crowded around her

They slurped and they slopped

She wailed, and she cried – and soon the screams stopped

Chunks of muscle and bone

A few strands of hair

Blood-stained little mouths - all that was there

The students then walked

Back to his or her seat

And waited and readied – for their next piece of meat

The teacher that bored them

Her remains on the floor

A gory red mess – that would lecture no more

For students crave more

Than that one could give

Heed this, teacher - and maybe you'll live

The mind must be fed

This much is true

But if you fail to engage them – they just might eat *you* (Davis, 2016)

Overview

How can I more effectively teach my students?

Arguably, the crux of research on educational effectiveness might (or, more appropriately, *should*) come down to this very question. As a language arts and literacy teacher in secondary and post-secondary classrooms, this question has driven every lesson I have planned and every activity I have facilitated. With growing pressures placed upon educators to increase achievement on standardized tests, it can sometimes be tempting to view a child as a mere set of numerical test performance scores and percentages, a series of data points strewn across a spectrum of time in hews of proficient greens, nearly-there yellows, and struggling reds. For many, education has become a "one size fits all" institution, in both how educators assess students and how they respond to student needs (Cox, 2018). Schools have created elaborate structured dialogues around "data cycles" which typically consist of categorizing each student by his or her performance on the most recent progress monitoring benchmark. From my

experiences as both a teacher and a data-driven dialogue coach in multiple educational settings, typical steps in the aforementioned data process include collecting the data in some visual form, categorizing students into levels of proficiency or non-proficiency, reflecting on the strategies necessary to physically "move" students toward proficiency, implementing said strategies, reassessing students to see if said strategies were effective, and determining next steps, repeating the data cycle as necessary. I have facilitated and participated in hundreds of these cycles as both teacher and administrator Here are the important questions I have rarely heard (and early on in my career, rarely asked) as these data dialogues unfolded: How did the students feel during the lesson? To what level did the students engage in the activities? Did the students have fun? Was this process relevant, meaningful, and interesting to them?

My hope for this study is to emphasize and examine a holistically learner-centered and interest-driven approach to teaching and lesson planning. I do so by centering the horror genre in literacy through a voluntary after-school club. The power of tapping into a student's experiences and interests can be profound as we increase both the effectiveness of teaching and the joys of learning. In examining the potential to use the horror genre as a delivery mechanism for meaningful learning experiences, this study could also shed insights into using other genres to tap into student interests around learning. The cognitive aspects of student engagement have been readily documented and explored, and yet little emphasis has traditionally been placed on the importance of affective learning – that is, learning which emotionally engages students. As such, the study will build upon a proposed Affective Learning Framework in order to better understand its potential effectiveness in building authentic and meaningful student engagement.

The horror genre was utilized for this study because of my own personal love of the genre. The next section outlines my personal experiences and framework as a student who fell in

love with the horror genre and how those experiences have influenced my professional practices. I then propose a purpose for the study and its potential significance around literacy and student engagement. The third section provides some background and an operational definition around the horror genre itself. The fourth section addresses both potential implications and considerations around using the horror genre in a classroom setting. The chapter concludes with the research questions, as well as the limitations and delimitations of the study.

Lessons from the Dark – A Personal Conceptual Framework

When I was in fourth grade, my teacher told me I was going to hell.

To be fair, I had been foolish enough to ask about my place in the damnation spectrum. Earlier that day, I had overheard some students talking at the playground about going to heaven and the somewhat stifling requirements to get there. I began to panic, because the more I heard my peers talking about eternal salvation, the more I didn't think I qualified.

Home life was far from heavenly. Often, I found myself spending time in bars as a child, playing the arcades with an endless barrage of quarters while the adults around me socialized. I hung out with the likes of *Pac-Man* and *Defender*, and became weaned on classic American rock music from the 70s and 80s. I would eventually find solace in books, where I identified more with antiheroes and villains than I did with the stories of glorious heroes taught in schools. I would try to spend hours reading, although there were many times when my stepfather would physically smack, belt, or verbally jolt me out of a book, tell me I was "worthless," a "queer" and that I would never amount to being a "real man," if anything at all. Books, after all, were for "sissies."

When I was about five, I was in a store with my stepfather when he noticed that I looked with curiosity upon the cover of a magazine which depicted a black male skiing on a river. I

don't remember seeing anyone of any distinct or different ethnicity other than white prior to that, although my mother had apparently dated a black man when I was very young and before she was married. My stepfather seemed amused at my curiosity, called the man on the cover several hateful names, and clearly acted as if the man on the magazine were inferior to "whites," although I couldn't help but remember wishing I was with the happy-looking man on the cover.

I wished I was anywhere but with my stepfather.

By age seven, we had moved countless times in order for my stepfather to avoid law enforcement. We lived in more campgrounds and rundown trailers than I dare remember, as my parents could hardly hold down steady jobs - we were constantly, and literally, on the run. I quickly learned police were to be feared and mistrusted, since their presence foreshadowed the eventual "up and at 'em." A string of my stepfather's legacy of numerous crimes, from DUIs to domestic violence, inevitably followed us wherever we went. In school, I had trouble connecting with those tales inundated with good deeds and mythical families who ate around the dinner table – at times, we were lucky to eat.

I had hoped what I had heard on the playground wasn't true - I needed validation from someone of authority – an adult who seemed to know everything and didn't threaten to hit me if I asked a dumb question. A religious white woman, my teacher quietly confirmed my worst fears – I couldn't get into heaven unless I was *saved*, whatever that meant. She also told me to stop reading so much unhealthy "garbage" – ghost stories and comic books and fantasy novels – my holy trinity. What I heard was, "You are trash. Your interests are trash. You're not good enough to be here." I was devastated, and the threat of eternal damnation ever loomed.

I was a shy student, as I had come to learn if I mentioned my fascination with the macabre, I would be subject to adult scrutiny, something I avoided with fierce determination.

While I was at times teased by my peers for being too sensitive and quiet, I also had the fortune of having a remarkable teacher in a Florida elementary school (Mr. Rico, an African American male). Through Mr. Rico's gentleness and ability to provide a safe learning environment, I quickly learned the hateful images my stepfather spewed of peoples of various cultures and colors did not coincide nor mesh with the realities of what I actually witnessed through my growing life experience. It was around this time I was becoming an avid reader at school, where Mr. Rico would provide protected and quiet reading time, allowing me to expand my literary tastes and broaden my humanistic perspectives. A pivotal educational moment took place when I picked up a biography of George Washington Carver. I became fascinated (and saddened) such a great man would have to go through so much strife, tragedy, and real-life horrors, from being kidnapped, sold, and abused by slave owners because of the color of his skin, to witnessing the abolishment of slavery and thriving as a family man, scientist, and modern hero. While I hid the fact Carver was black from my stepfather, or, indeed, I was reading anything at all, I deeply, personally, and emotionally connected with Carver's story.

As I grew older, and other middle school students were reading age-appropriate literature, I was acquainting and comforting myself with the likes of Edgar Allen Poe, Bram Stoker, H.P. Lovecraft, Shirley Jackson, and Stephen King. By the time I was in high school, I was considered a good reader, an effective critical thinker, and a pretty solid writer. I grew able – with the help of a few astute adults who were aware enough to encourage interest in what I was reading throughout my K-12 career – to access the classics by relating them to horror through universal themes and ideals. I soon realized much of what we know of as classical literature had elements of horror in it. The genre paved the way for my appreciation and growing understanding of Shakespeare, Hawthorne, Dickens and Twain.

One high school teacher, Mr. Miller, picked up on my thirst for scary stories and fostered my interests without judgment on what I was reading. I remember his particular emphasis on what I would later identify as the horror aspects of tales like Macbeth in context to how an Elizabethan audience may have watched the scenes unfold, much like a "scary" movie. Without any real male role models, I became dependent on teachers, both male and female, to begin shaping my experiences of the positive and nurturing masculine, which also opened new literary journeys for me to take. I quickly fell in love with Charlotte Perkins Gilman, who captured the horrors of patriarchy and oppression. I identified with Nathaniel Hawthorne as he strove to rise from the shadows of the perceived atrocities of his ancestors and became excited "Young Goodman Brown" was considered both a literary "classic" and an early part of the American Gothic Movement, as it validated my connection with the horror genre. While I was a student in undergrad, I had an intriguing class in gothic literature with the esteemed Dr. Lee Tobin McClain, who helped hone my writing and modeled using books like King's *The Shining* and Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* to explore literary themes; I remember thinking – why couldn't all my reading classes be this way?

I *comforted* myself with horror and, as I did with Carver's biography, emotionally connected with the genre - *this* was the literature which gave me hope – monsters were overcome, wrongs were generally righted, and heroes emerged from the dark. As I had noted in my preface to my Master's thesis, "The Mirror of Ugliness," never in any of the *Nightmare on Elm Street* or *Friday the Thirteenth* movies did the monsters win – they were typically (if temporarily) vanquished. A theme that resonated with me was that many cinematic monsters were generally shaped by the shortcomings of the society in which they lived: Freddy Krueger, the prolific nightmare fictional child killer, was himself abused as a child as he moved from

foster home to foster home; Jason Vorhees, stalking children in his infamous hockey mask, witnessed the murder of his mother as a child and sought eternal revenge against those who had wronged him. Beneath the gore and violence often pervading the genre,

> there is a hope of redemption and liberation, a hope of what we deem (as) good triumphing over what we know (as) evil. This is what horror has to teach us; the reason that it is so offensive is that it reflects a side of ourselves we don't like to admit exists: the dark secret, the road-raging maniac, the aggressive and murderous soccer parent. To ignore these tendencies, as any horror novel worth its weight in salt can tell you, is sheer folly and truly dangerous. If we hope to overcome the darkness within ourselves, we must acknowledge (these tendencies) as ever-present… (Davis, 2007, pgs. v-vi)

With every fiber of my being, I hoped in my adolescence, both naively and simplistically, good would triumph over evil, fictionally and otherwise. I soon realized, through my growing exposure to literature and my own experiences, life was not a thing of black and white, but one where both terrible and beautiful things took place, often simultaneously. The horror genre both captured and represented this for me. Stephen King suggested that horror is not only a means of entertainment, but can serve as a filter from our darkest realities:

> I believe these stories exist because we sometimes need to create unreal monsters and bogies to stand in for all the things we fear in our real lives: the parent who punches instead of kissing, the auto accident that takes a loved one, the cancer we one day discover living in our own bodies. If such terrible occurrences were acts of darkness, they might actually be easier to cope with. But instead of being dark, they have their own terrible brilliance, it seems to me, and none shine so bright as the acts of cruelty we sometimes perpetrate in our own families. To look directly at such brilliance is to be

> blinded, and so we create any number of filters. The ghost story, the horror story, the uncanny tale – all of these are such filters. The man or woman who insists there are no ghosts is only ignoring the whispers of his or her own heart, and how cruel that seems to me. Surely even the most malignant ghost is a lonely thing, left out in the dark, desperate to be heard. (King, 2001)

Horror has the capacity to provide a safety net, of sorts, in allowing one to examine the darkest places of human nature. From this perspective, horror can be a powerful tool of both reflection and learning.

Classroom of Horrors – A Teacher's Perspective

When I became a teacher, I carried a foundational and personalized framework of seeing hope and good even through the horror. This served me well when I encountered my first middle school class filled with students who shared similar and, often, much more harrowing childhood tales than my own.

At some point in the middle of my first year as an English teacher in the classroom, I realized I was exhausted. I knew this because I could see the evidence of my weary instruction in the lackadaisical work of my students. I wasn't connecting. Frustrated and ready to throw in the towel, I sat quietly at my desk one afternoon after school for a moment of reflection. Why was I not getting through to these kids? After about twenty minutes of what could only be called brooding, I turned on my music playlist and began grading, disheartened at my ineffectiveness. About three songs in, the theme from John Carpenter's Halloween came on, and a personal epiphany nearly jolted me from my seat.

The next day, I asked the students in my language arts class to take out a sheet of paper. This was met by the cacophony of sighs, groans, and whines I had come to expect, with a sprinkle of mild expletives for extra flavor.

"It's almost Halloween," I said.

"So why do you have your mask on now?" one of my students in the back asked. This earned a few chuckles.

I smiled. "I didn't want you to feel like you were the scariest thing in here." Laughter. "I'm going to play something for you. I want you to make a list of things you think about." A slew of hands shot up. "No, you do not have to write any paragraphs." The hands went down. "I just want you to listen and write whatever words or images come to mind."

As Carpenter's hypnotic and eerie music jarred its way out of the speakers, I looked around the room and had to shake my head to ensure I was still awake. The students were writing! Later, they made *paragraphs* based on what they had heard and how it had made them feel as they imagined Mike Meyers stalking around in the halls. Soon after, I utilized urban legends to teach literacy concepts, such as fictional story elements, and became inspired (and, frankly, surprised) by how much students engaged in the learning. I was especially interested in how students personally and emotionally connected to the legends through their own experiences, which resulted in richer discussion and a higher level of quality work completion. That year, our standardized test scores improved. Of course, there is no way to retroactively correlate these scores with horror-themed activities, but the level of engagement and connection to the material likely did not hurt. Since then, I have incorporated horror into many of my reading and writing lessons. My "deranged" passion and "sick" love for the genre seems to click

with students, and we get the best of both worlds – meaningful learning around standards and lessons which are interesting to them.

The question of appropriateness of the genre in the classroom can be examined in context to my own personal struggles in realizing I liked to be scared (in the fictional sense). Simply stated, human beings are capable of both horrific atrocities as well as heroic feats. For this horror fan, there is an overwhelming sense of the latter in many works, a sense of *hope*, as monsters are overcome, wrongs are righted, and heroes emerge out of the chaos. As noted, in many horror films, the monsters or villains do not actually win in the end. Horror can be a means of not only teaching standards, but to explore complex real-world issues through a creative and entertaining lens.

As an educator, I believe interest-driven and relevant materials in which students can emotionally connect and engage are more powerful as delivery mediums in context to the curriculum than that of traditionally prescribed content. Throughout this study, I will examine horror as but one example of how an affective framework could be utilized to effectively teach students. My own educational experiences helped me understand education and curriculum should focus around students, not around institutions, texts, or adult authorities. A well-rounded equitable education could be key to lifting human oppression and, at the very least, ignorance.

I also learned, if I'm going to hell, as my fourth grade teacher suggested, I'd probably be in good company.

Examining Affective Learning through the Horror Genre

With the continued academic tradition of dismissing the horror genre as having far less worth or merit than other more scholarly types of literature (Hirshberg, 2014), many literacy and reading educators have felt the need to teach the same prescribed materials from one year to the next. The continued dropout and illiteracy levels across the country, however, suggest educators

have not done enough in bridging the relevancy gap and engaging the student in reading instruction (Literacy Rate, 2008).

While the cognitive aspects of student engagement are well-researched, far fewer academic studies discuss the importance of the emotional aspects in building, and maintaining, student engagement. Despite a recent focus on student engagement, current literature suggests that students continue to feel disengaged at school and describe it as boring (Bauerlein, 2013). In my own experiences, it was the emotional connection to what I was reading that led me to be an avid reader.

I attempted to conceptualize affective learning through a framework that includes interest or autonomy (student choice), relevance (individual importance), and controversy (argument, debate, or a "hook") as recurring themes in the literature that build emotional connection; these constructs are framed against the backdrop of effective instructional strategies, a student's sense of belonging, and metacognition. In context, I sought to emphasize the horror genre as a powerful means of tapping into this affective framework to enrich student learning. This framework is described in more depth and detail in the following chapter.

Ultimately, the purpose of this research was to capture the insights of secondary students around using horror as a means to emotionally engage them in literacy and relevant real-world issues in an after-school horror literature club. I examined, from the perspectives of students and my own perspective as a teacher, the importance of tapping into student interests and experiences in order to engage them in learning. I explored horror as a potentially powerful teaching tool in secondary and post-secondary settings. The analysis of open-ended survey questions, field notes of classroom interaction, transcribed dialogue were examined through thematic analysis. In this study, three key areas of a proposed affective framework were applied a priori in context to

horror literature and against the backdrop of my own reflections as the educator and my experiences as a learner in order to determine potential effectiveness around the use of student interest- identified subgenres. The next section provides a definition and a background for the horror genre and an overview of its potential to promote affective learning.

Background and Definition – The Horror Genre and Affective Learning

In 2010, a popular course offered by Dr. Arnold Blumberg, "Media Genres: Zombies" gained national media attention as a non-traditional vehicle in understanding pop-culture and symbolism. Not that this course was unique – several colleges and universities at the time were offering courses outside of tradition in an effort to diversify and meet the needs of an eclectic student population, a movement which seems to be growing.

> "These seemingly offbeat courses perform the same kind of function as other liberal arts courses, and that is to train you as a critical thinker and reader," says Thomas S. Davis, assistant professor of English at Ohio State University. "You are learning to be a more discerning reader of cultural texts and phenomena, and that's a good thing." (Katchen, 2010)

Researcher James Grant argued the power of dreams and the resulting interpretations of psychological horror as significant when considering a learner-centered classroom and how a thematic analysis of the unexpected might guide student learning (2016). Clearly, in an age when teachers are now competing with a student's electronic access to an overwhelming amount of information, interests, and diversions, we must reexamine traditional teaching methods and materials in regards to the instruction of literature and writing. Engagement, addressed in the literature review of this study, is a complex construct with numerous influences and

interpretations, although there seem to be common characteristics and conditions on which engagement is built.

In an opinion piece published in *The Wall Street Journal* and based on the Beach Books report created by the National Association of Scholars (Randall, 2016), college reading programs have traded rigor for a "sweetener of easy, exciting reading" (Notable, 2016), indicting genres in the vein of science fiction and comic books as "no-fuss digestibles" (p. A11). Randall offers several recommendations to college book selection committees, including a focus on earlier works of literature and the tightening of admission efforts "so as to select a student body with the capacity and desire to read a challenging book" (p.9). Along with the alarming and potential implications of selecting only those privileged enough to have had prior access to literature analysis for college admission, Randall misses the point that educators at every level need training on how to make literature instruction accessible and connect to both celebrated and non-celebrated literary works, humanistic themes, and academic rigor. Similarly, many continue to dismiss modern horror literature as glorified, mind-numbing entertainment of no significance. The inherent gore and excessive violence sometimes found within the genre are often the focus of rejection of scholarship and reviews; these traits alone, it might be assumed, do not produce the literature of aesthetic value sought by the intelligent readers of today (Hirshberg, 2014). The avid horror reader might concede this point and also note quality horror literature reflects the current state of culture and society. One could access a nightly news program on a public television network anywhere in the continental United States and witness atrocities far greater than the literary results of any artist's imagination.

While it is important to first define horror literature in the study of it, a problematic issue arises when one attempts a universally appropriate or appealing definition. It is no easy task to

define the horror genre in a simplistic or universal term, particularly as one must consider individualistic and cultural contexts and perceptions around fear (Davis, 2015). Typically, the genre includes some imposition of an "evil" or alien entity, either supernatural or otherwise, intended to unsettle or scare the reader.

> Horror, nurtured in the fears we have of pain and death, and in our dark fears of the unknown, is a taste acquired by those with sufficient imagination to see beyond, beneath, and through what we take for granted as normal and familiar, to the sources of their other "real," our imaginations and the "imaginary" of culture, and our psychological, emotional, and intuitive elements of experience. (Wisker, 2005)

The Horror Writers' Association defines horror literature as that which "elicits" fear in the reader (2009). Scriptlab.com states horror "…is a genre that aims to create a sense of fear, panic, alarm, and dread for the audience" (2016). While these definitions are acceptable, they suggest horror as eliciting explicitly negative emotions. For the purpose of this study, I have defined the horror genre can be any medium (film, literature, music, or art) designed to *entertain* (affective engagement) and/or promote critical thinking through a lens of horror and fear. I unpack this definition more fully in the following section.

When looking at the horror genre, it is easy to become overwhelmed by its scope. Horror has a rich history, arguably predating written form, when cautionary myths and symbolic tales were spun around campfires. These ancient stories likely surpassed mere entertainment value – as evidenced in the likes of Grimm's fairy tales and well-known religious texts, horror has long served as a vehicle for symbolic morality and a stark warning of what could happen if one strays too far from the path of accepted "righteousness" or socialized norms. This is an enduring theme readily present in the horror films of today, as, for example, unruly teenagers are "punished"

when they fall into a stereotypical world of promiscuity and violence. The virtuous character often survives to the end, although films like *It Follows* (2014) are turning this idea on its head. Horroronscreen.com has identified over thirty types of subgenres of horror (2013). While the genre has taken a myriad of modern forms, there are generally four broad categories to which horror might fall. Psychological and "body" horror, often internalized, encapsulate the human psyche, dealing with themes of madness, health, phobias, and self-destruction. Sociological horror provides commentary on a specific aspect of society, be it on cultural tradition, values, corruption, or social issues. Allegorical horror is largely symbolic and may hold a deeper or almost hidden meaning, drawing on both internalized and externalized horrors (Davis, 2015). Paranormal or supernatural horror encompasses the fear of the unknown: ghosts, demons, monsters, entities, and occurrences not readily explained through logic. The lines between the types of horror often blur in a single story or film.

Perceptions, Concerns, and Responsibilities – Using Horror in the Classroom

The horror genre as a whole has endured countless attacks from various moral-based, religious, and political groups attempting to tie significant acts of violence and hatred to horror-based literature and art. Ku Klux Klan-turned evangelist Johnny Lee Clary devoted most of his now-defunct web site attacking shock artists such as musicians Marilyn Manson and Eminem, going so far as to hold them personally responsible for the murderous actions of others. "Madman Marilyn Manson is as guilty for the Columbine High School Massacre as the two maniacs who pulled the triggers. His music incited the killers to violence (Clary)." Clary is neither alone nor the first to lay blame to horror-genre artists or their works for inciting or inspiring criminal activity. Writer and media analyst Martin Barker recounts a famous England

murder trial in which a horror film was directly assaulted by prosecutors in an attempt to lay blame to violent media:

> At the trial, the judge speculated on what might have prompted the killing. He wondered if there wasn't a connection with violent videos. He didn't mention any particular films, but the press had been primed, and one film, Child's Play 3, became their target. However, it soon became clear that, despite police efforts, there was not a scrap of evidence that the boys had watched the film. (Barker, 2001)

The genre has long served as a scapegoat for misconduct, evidenced in efforts like the U.S. Senate subcommittee hearings of 1954, which attacked horror-themed comic books and media as promoting juvenile delinquency (Kefauver, 1955). Human history, predating any form of written or cinematic horror, confirms humankind has long held a propensity for bloodshed, independent of any external artistic influence (Ury, 2000). In a historical context and, to one of the points of this study, horror enables one to examine pertinent moral issues even as it helps raise significant philosophical debate about the scope of human nature in its uncensored entirety. In other words, horror can be a powerful means to engage students through controversy (Marzano, 2007).

Still, teachers and instructors who desire to engage students with horror-themed materials and lessons need to be aware and responsible when planning and delivering learning experiences. Horror can help meet state and national standards; however, the needs and interests of the students, and not the attractiveness or novelty of the materials, should drive the focus of teaching and learning. A teacher must remain diligent to ensure every learning activity, be it horror-based or otherwise, is designed with a specific learning outcome in mind. Essentially, what new or enhanced skill will the student gain from the learning experience? How will the students'

knowledge and understanding deepen? A teacher who shows an "R" rated movie clip indiscriminately to a group of middle school students does so at the risk of his or her career, and understandably so. Generally, the practice of exposing K-12 students to such material, even a short fifteen-second clip from an "R" rated movie, is prohibited, particularly when there is no purpose beyond a superfluous, filler, and thoughtless level.

Not everyone likes or accepts the horror genre. Students need not be needlessly frightened, nor should teachers incur the wrath of angered parents and community members. Potential issues can be avoided proactively through careful planning and clear communication. An educator should begin by looking at the policies and practices of the school or institution. Are teachers encouraged to utilize supplemental materials? A discussion with an administrator or colleague can help clarify and ensure policies are not inadvertently violated. The educator should also know the audience, which will help guide the selection of appropriate materials and the creation of meaningful learning experiences. It is important to note each student brings with her or him a wealth of experiences, some of which may be traumatic and "invisible" in nature. What seems frightening to one student may not be to another. Adversely, an offhand mention of a ghost story can trigger terror for some. A student expects a teacher or instructor to create and maintain a safe and trusting classroom where ideas, and, at times, vulnerabilities, can be shared without fear of judgment. Students should be active participants, and not passive bystanders, in their own education. Establishing shared norms and routines around feedback and discussion and then both modeling and adhering to those agreed upon routines can go a long way in building relationships and promoting productivity within the classroom. It is important to "read the room" while being sensitive and responsive to student reactions, interests, and needs.

In a K-12 setting, permission slips detailing the reason behind the activity, the standards driving the activity, and the desired outcomes of the activity should be provided to parents (an example of one such form has been included in the appendices), particularly in instances where a teacher may be using popular horror literature that isn't an obvious part of the classically accepted pedagogy of literature. Lesson plans can be given to administration for additional insight, feedback, and support. Teachers and instructors are highly encouraged to invite administrators, colleagues, and parents to sit in and observe a horror-themed lesson - this can help grow an advocacy base for future lessons and planning.

Research Questions

To address the research questions specific to this study, I conducted thematic analysis case study approach within the qualitative research design framework. I, as the teacher-researcher, organized a ten-week after-school program for secondary students consisting of ten sessions (one session a week). Designed around the Affective Learning Framework, the after school program used horror-themed materials to teach and reinforce literacy concepts and included class discussion, group collaboration, and learning activities. In an effort to authentically capture student responses, perspectives, and experiences as they interacted with the horror genre, each session was digitally audio recorded and then analyzed for potential themes. Data were also collected using interviews, field notes, reflections, and open-ended question surveys. I also used journaling to capture my own experiences. The data collection procedures are provided in detail in the methodology chapter. Ultimately, I sought to better understand how the application of the Affective Learning Framework and the use of the horror genre might both benefit and potentially constrain literacy instruction in a classroom setting.

The following research questions were posed:

- What prominent themes are constructed when middle school-aged participants in the horror literature club are asked about personal experiences with literacy instruction? Could these themes shift or change when horror is used to teach literacy?
- In what ways could the horror genre promote or constrain affective learning for middle school-aged participants in an after-school horror fiction club?
- What are the experiences of middle school-aged participants in the horror literature club when an Affective Learning Framework is utilized?

The first research question and its sub-question (*What prominent themes are constructed when middle school-aged participants in the horror literature club are asked about personal experiences with literacy instruction? Could these themes shift or change when horror is used to teach literacy?*) explored the patterns and themes which emerged as a result of the analysis of student experiences, responses, and discussion around typical literacy instruction. These questions were important in capturing authentic student perspectives and challenging my own assumptions and biases that horror could increase emotional connection for all students. The study both advocated for and depended upon a student-centered approach to learning.

The second research question (*In what ways could the horror genre promote or constrain affective learning for middle school-aged participants in an after-school horror literature club?*) focused on the experiences of secondary-aged students as they participated in horror-themed activities to teach literature. From a constructivist learning perspective, I understand learning experiences are both shared and personalized. There exists some challenge as we attempt to generalize the results of this study. The students who were selected to participate volunteered to do so in part as a result of their assumed interest in horror. It cannot be assumed all students would resonate with the genre. In this context, the potential for the constraints which the use of

the genre may have placed on learners is significant and must be noted. The Affective Learning Framework described in the literature review, and subsequently revised in the final chapter, provides implications around building upon emotional connection to increase student engagement in the classroom.

The final research question (*What are the experiences of middle school-aged participants in the horror literature club when an Affective Learning Framework is utilized?*) focused around the results of using Interest/Autonomy, Relevancy, and Controversy to build an emotional connection to learning. The supplemental Critical Literary Analysis Chapter provides examples of how the Affective Learning Framework might be applied in lesson and learning activity planning. This question is arguably the least limited to this study; the Affective Learning Framework could be applied regardless of content or genre.

Delimitations

The selection of students was based on the criteria they were interested in the after-school club, they had the means to attend (transportation, time), and they attended the school in which the study was conducted.

Limitations

The study has several limitations. It draws heavily on the personal and academic experiences of the researcher to build a case for using the horror genre as a means to explore effective student engagement while outlining the shared experiences of both the participating students and the teacher-researcher. All participants were asked the same questions and the responses were coded using thematic analysis. The study is designed to examine a framework of using subgenres and materials interesting to students to build engagement and defended the horror genre as but one means to this end. Due to access issues, the voluntary participant

selection focused on secondary students in one setting. As attendance was voluntary, there was inconsistency in participation throughout the ten weeks; while this posed no problem in regards to attrition, additional students continued to join the club, even into its final weeks. Future research could include multiple settings across levels (middle school, high school, and college) and utilize a more randomized approach to gathering information in order to address challenges around generalizability, validity, and practical application.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview & Rationale

The concept of horror is never far away. It stalks us as we watch a news program sensationalizing the most recent neighborhood victim of an unfathomable crime. It whispers in our ear as we read yet another report of a soldier lost in the latest global skirmish. It creeps onto our pillows as we dream and fantasize about things best left forgotten in the daylight. It will clutch us in its cold and hungry grasp as we walk hastily through a darkened parking lot under the gaping eye of a cloud-riddled moon.

The implications surrounding certain terrors in education are not lost, either. According to the NAAL (National Assessment of Adult Literacy), about one in every seven Americans are illiterate (Literacy Rate, 2008), prompting educators to re-examine the way literacy is being taught in schools. Now the subject of many studies and dissertations, illiteracy continues to be an area of focus for educational researchers as they come to grips with the realities of increasing trends in education: effective versus ineffective teaching, shortened attention spans, student attitudes regarding learning, teacher attitudes regarding teaching, and cultural sensitivities and considerations, to name a few. While these problems are all worthy of further academic consideration and study, the intent of this research is to examine the horror genre as a viable tool to authentically, emotionally, and effectively engage students in literacy instruction. It is important to note literacy as more than simply reading and writing.

> Literacy is the ability to read, view, write, design, speak and listen in a way that allows you to communicate effectively. The power of literacy lies not just in the ability to read

and write, but rather in a person's capacity to apply these skills to effectively connect, interpret and discern the intricacies of the world in which they live. (Neilson, 2014)

As I share my research interest, I am often asked: why horror? As a child, I was not a solid reader. I had little interest in reading beyond a superficial, comic-book model and wasn't very confident about putting my own ideas onto paper. Issues of alcoholism and violence plaguing my family did not easily coincide with the tales of heroism and beauty told in the classroom, resulting in personal feelings of inadequacy and non-acceptance. At some point, I became fascinated with the study of "vampires," because they seemed nearly as messed up on the inside as I felt. In my mind, we were both equally misunderstood. I built a personalized, emotional connection to what I was reading and saw myself in the flawed characters I found within the horror genre. I was excited I had discovered disturbing and haunting yarns reflecting me in ways the typical or "normal" school stories did not. I soon became interested in reading books and making connections across genres. When I later became a middle school teacher, I found success in tapping into the genre and creating lessons meaningful to students. Through allegorical, psychological, and sociological symbolism, the horror genre reflects humanity's less-celebrated primal nature while emphasizing the challenges and issues we face (Campbell, 1988). Horror, designed to entertain, can elicit emotional response, prompt critical analyses, and address controversy. I often (half) jokingly concede that reading Stephen King was my gateway drug to understanding William Shakespeare.

In an effort to increase literacy, educators should be open to hitherto nontraditional territories, be they zombies, vampires, or monsters, and engage blossoming readers on their own turfs and with their own texts – as teachers and instructors, we must be willing to release the attitude that if it is not classic literature, it is not worth reading or writing about (Amanda, 2011).

The critical review of the literature in the first five sections of this chapter largely centers on one of the key research questions of this study: In what ways does the horror genre promote and constrain affective (emotional) connection and relevancy for students in an after-school horror fiction club? In order to begin to answer this question, the literature review first provides a brief overview and operational definition of student engagement. It then identifies an affective learning framework, emphasizing the importance of student interest, controversy, and relevancy as potential means to building personalized learning connections.

Student Engagement Framework and Definition

In the numerous discussions regarding effective teaching practices in literacy, a critical component is what educators are doing to engage students in the reading process (Hawley, 2007). Just because a teacher thinks a piece of literature is important does not mean a student will automatically connect with it emotionally (Barkley, 2009) – indeed, the best reading instruction is the most relevant and engaging to the student, not the teacher (Gunn, 2007). When a teacher is able to guide a student to make an authentic connection to a text of personal interest and merit, the results in learning and student growth can be profound (Timpson, 2002). Dr. Richard D. Jones, in an article written for the International Center for Leadership in Education (2008), suggested that in order to teach reading effectively, teachers must be aware of the *cognitive* (beliefs, values), *emotional* (motivation, feelings), and *behavioral* (habits, skills) domains of learning. Often, in my experience as a participant in a multitude of literacy workshops, teachers are encouraged to capitalize on the behavioral and cognitive domains of engagement while generally disregarding emotional opportunities to connect students with text in a meaningful way (Goss and Sonnemann, 2017).

To examine research aligned to the affective aspects of student engagement, I conducted an EBSCO search in October 2016. In searching the term "student engagement," the electronic database yielded 4,068 potential resources. Adding the term "cognitive" yielded over 300 results, while adding the term "affective" yielded 80 possible sources. This result highlights how cognitive and behavioral domains of engagement are discussed extensively in research, whereas the affective domain, which is associated with emotional and interest-driven connections to learning, has had far less attention. While the concept of interest-driven learning, or learning activities that promote or capitalize on student interests, is gaining ground in both theory and practice, engagement from the perspective of the student is notably lacking in a critical review of the literature (Taylor & Parsons, 2011).

Many scholars and educators have sought to define the term *student engagement*, yet it is interesting to note there are no uniformly accepted definitions of what the term is, let alone what it looks like or how it is measured in varying instructional settings. As a relatively recent phenomenon formalized by the likes of theoretical frameworks posed by Finn (1989), the concept of classroom engagement arguably came to prominence in part as a response to the publication of 1983's Carnegie Report, "Nation at Risk: The Imperative of Educational Reform," which in turn prompted the current national focus on "high-stakes" testing and teacher effectiveness reform (Manigault, 2014). Despite the possible ambiguity surrounding student engagement, trends have emerged in education that demanding attention. A 2006 survey given to 81,000 high school students found that 75% of respondents felt boredom simply because the material or lesson delivery was not interesting (Yazzie-Mintz, 2007). The Quaglia Institute for Aspirations (2014) conducted a survey of 66,314 high school students from across nine states indicating that 40% of the participants were disengaged from school. According to the report,

engaged students were 16 times more likely to find academic motivation and thus become successful in school (p. 8). The online Glossary of Education Reform defines engagement as the extent "of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show" when learning and how motivated they are to do so (2015). Using this definition as a construct to engagement, when students are independently driven by their own questioning, when they are interested in the material and lesson delivery, when they are emotionally connected to the learning, and when they are inspired in the classroom, true learning can occur.

Laying the Foundation – Affective Learning

In the mid-1980s, Strong, Silver, and Robinson (1995) asked high school students and teachers about the kind of work they found to be engaging, and, conversely, the kind of work they hated doing. The researchers determined from the responses that both groups disliked tasks that felt repetitive, forced upon them, and overly simplified. They were also able to identify recurring themes in engaging work: success, curiosity, originality, relationships, and energy, which comprised what the researchers labeled as the SCORE model. Success, the researchers argued, was an important possibility to foster in each child. A teacher would need to share the success criteria necessary for a specific task or skill, but would also encourage the idea every student could find success in context to the skill or lesson being taught. Curiosity was composed of two essential elements: the 'hook," in which students were engaged by information which could be fragmentary, mysterious, or, as Marzano (2007) has stated, controversial in nature, and which promoted a student's personal connection to the context of the lesson. Originality captured the level of self- or creative expression the student was able to exhibit in the completion of the learning task. For example, was the student able to connect the task to something personally meaningful? The idea of student autonomy, or self-directed learning in which

students had a choice in the manner in which they work, fell under the construct of originality. The researchers briefly mentioned the use of a science fiction story as a means for accessing literacy and having students identify themes meaningful to them, which is a cornerstone of my intended research. Relationships were foundational to building trust and a sense of wonder in the classroom and are prominent in the literature around engagement. Energy, the final construct of the SCORE framework, was all encompassing and may be interpreted as the reciprocating positive energy between teacher and student necessary for engagement, as well as the energy captured as a result of a high level of classroom engagement.

Traditionally, the concept of engagement has been heavily associated with observable, on-task behaviors. Parsons, Nuland, and Parsons (2014) highlighted a hypothetical scenario in which students practiced compliance, such as note-taking or following directions, which were observable behaviors but which were questionable in regards to whether or not the actions could be categorized as true engagement. The study posited three dimensions of student engagement: *affective* (a student's sense of belonging in the classroom community, content or task enthusiasm), *behavioral* (limited here to participation and effort) and *cognitive* (intrinsic motivation, metacognitive) (p. 24). These domains are typical and recurring throughout the literature on student engagement. The article provided overall examples of what these domains might look like in the classroom and offered three overly general engagement tips geared toward classroom professionals. The researchers summarized existing theory and contributed little new information on what engagement is or how it should be implemented in the classroom. Of note, however, was the inclusion of a basic student-self report which examined, albeit briefly, engagement domain behaviors as measured from a student perspective (p. 28), which is largely missing in traditional studies on engagement. This article is typical in merely rehashing previous

research and information, so further "summary" articles were generally avoided for the purpose of this review.

While Marzano's *The Art and Science of Teaching* (2007) acknowledged the importance of thinking about engagement through the lenses of student emotion and voice (affective), the focus of overt engagement was largely defined as "on-task" behaviors (p. 99), and this work aligns with other literature which has suggested engagement as generally compliance and routine, limiting the potential for affective and cognitive engagement opportunities. Marzano's *The Highly Engaged Classroom* (2011) shifted attention to the importance of building emotional connection, focusing on four main affective themes from a student's point of view: feelings (how am I feeling as a result of this lesson or activity?), interest (does the topic excite or motivate me?), importance (why do I need to know this?), and access (am I able to perform the task being asked of me?). In *The New Art and Science of Teaching* (2017), Marzano includes language around *inspiring* students as part of an operational construct of engagement, signifying an encouraging evolution to a more affective approach to lesson planning. Growing prominence in research and practice regarding affective dimensions of engagement is also evidenced in works such as *Motivating and Inspiring Students: Strategies to Awaken the Learner*, in which Marzano, Scott, Boogren, and Newcomb (2017) link the foundations of learning to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Goals and address the importance of emotional connection as it applies to teaching and learning. They posited that each of Maslow's levels – physiological, safety, belongingness, and esteem – needed to be met for students to truly engage in the learning at the highest level: self-actualization.

Clearly, there has been a marked shift from framing engagement as mere compliance to truly motivating students to engage. While educators have long realized the importance of

cognitive taxonomies to help students and teachers access higher levels of thinking in the classroom, the need for an affective approach teaching and learning, while not as emphasized, is nothing new.

Cognitive and Affective Taxonomies

A misconception about engagement is its exclusive association with cognitive process. The application of cognitive thinking in the classroom setting has typically been linked to Bloom's Taxonomy (1956), which has come to dominate research and literature around engagement. The original taxonomy suggested thinking could be categorized into six domains ranging on a spectrum from basic (knowledge, comprehension) to more complex skills (analyze, synthesize, evaluate). Later, a student of Bloom's would revise his original taxonomy to include a metacognitive awareness lens and specific actions linked to each domain. The revised taxonomy offered "create" as a reflection of the deepest mode of thought (Anderson, et al., 2001). Bloom's Taxonomy has been referenced in a trending need to facilitate learning that taps into higher level thinking skills, although the idea of placing the thinking process into a hierarchy may suggest teachers should always strive for higher-level thinking activities, which could be misleading, as thinking skills falling into "lower" categories (recall, memory) can be deemed equally important. Webb's (2005) Depth of Knowledge presented the cognitive process as a wheel of knowledge and somewhat challenged Bloom's hierarchy of thought, although the wheel presented four domains (Recall, Skill/Concept, Strategic, Extended) in ordered levels (2005). Modern studies of engagement, while having some clear links to Bloom's work, have identified three broad domains of learning that heavily align with much of the recent foundational research around engagement: cognitive (mental), affective (feelings and emotion), and psychomotor (physical) (Clark, 2015). The affective, emotional aspects of engagement are often overlooked

in current pedagogy, although they have long been considerations toward enhancing student motivation. In fact, Bloom himself would, less than a decade after his cognitive taxonomy was published, go on to assist David Krathwohl in creating an "internalized" framework.

Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia (1964) discussed the affective domain as inherently driven by values and the lens a student may place on information based on intrinsic or external motivations. There were five identified stages: receiving (stage 1), which indicated the level of sensitivity/willingness of the student to engage in the material being presented; responding (stage 2), which described the motivation for the student to learn and respond; valuing (stage 3), which reflected a student's core-beliefs and how these interact with the material presented; organization (4^{th} stage), which focused on the student's ability to relate new ideas and values with those pre-existing, and, finally, characterization (5^{th} stage), the level of consistency in which a student may act or interact as aligned with personal philosophies or ideals (Wilson, 2016). Friedman (2010) provided a visual representation of each of the five levels of the affective framework as it was initially proposed:

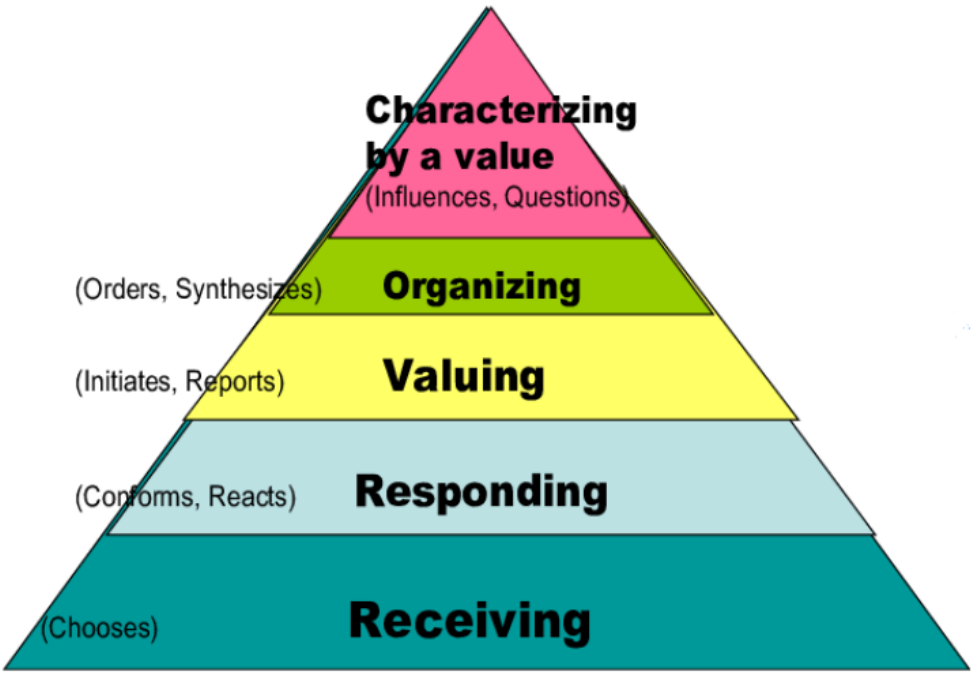


Figure 1. Krathwohl's taxonomy of affective learning (Friedman, 2010)

Clark (2010) proposed an alignment of instructional strategies with each of the levels of Krathwohl's Taxonomy of Affective Learning as well as the cognitive levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. Table 1 seeks to represent this thinking by providing a summary of instructional strategies commonly observed in classroom practices as they align with the traditional cognitive (Bloom, 1956) and affective (Krathwohl, et al., 1964) domains. To provide further context, Anderson's (2001) revision of Bloom's work was also included in order to identify where Bloom's revised work could fall. It is an arguable point as to whether or not the instructional strategies listed should be categorized exclusively to single domains.

Table 1. Instructional Strategy Alignment with Traditional Cognitive and Affective Domains

Instructional strategy	Cognitive	Affective (Krathwohl)
Lecture and presentation (including film, reading)	Knowledge (Bloom), remembering (Anderson)	Receiving phenomena
Collaborations and discussion (including role-play, group work, multi-media)	Comprehension (Bloom), understanding (Anderson); Application (Bloom), applying (Anderson)	Response to phenomena
On-the-job training (including experiential learning)	Analysis (Bloom), analyzing (Anderson)	Valuing
Real-world experiences (including simulations, problem-based learning)	Synthesis, evaluation (Bloom), creating (Anderson)	Prioritize values (Organization)
Self-directed (including mentoring, coaching, self-study)	Evaluation (Bloom), creating (Anderson)	Internalizing values (Characterization)

Note. Adapted from *nwlink.com*, Instructional strategy selection chart by D. Clark, 2010.

While the table above represents each of the five levels of the original affective taxonomy, more recently, the affective framework has become associated with attitude, which includes interests, values, motivation, opinion, and intrinsic motivation (Koballa, 2016). Hauenstein (1998) would redefine Krathwohl's Affective Taxonomy to include an emphasis on dispositional factors – that is, those values and beliefs the learner brings and uses to frame his or her perceptions of the world (Thies, 2014). Perhaps aligned to the paradigm of this value-added lens, Jensen (2013) identified seven factors with potential implications around affective learning for students who come from low socio-economic backgrounds, and yet align to the basic needs of all learners as proposed in Marzano's (2017) interpretation of Maslow's work mentioned earlier: health/nutrition, vocabulary, effort/energy, mind-set, cognitive capacity, relationships, and stress level (p. 8). Teachers often make assumptions about students who are "lazy" or

"defiant," but educators need to broaden their perspectives when it comes to students from diverse backgrounds and be cautious of the detrimental and deficit thinking around student potential and limited, stereotypical views on the effects of poverty, as popularized by the likes of Ruby Payne and Eric Jensen. This deficit thinking can lead to a teacher's misguided attempts to affectively engage students "of poverty" or make other potentially damaging and limiting assumptions. Extreme caution should be practiced in the generalization which may result in thinking all students from impoverished households are a certain or similar type and can be engaged uniformly. While Jensen attempted to address affective learning, he missed the point around the strategies that teachers should use to promote true affective engagement. Jensen's work has been linked to a broader framework known as "deficit ideology" (Gorski, 2014), which is criticized for promoting the notion of superficial student stereotypes.

A great deal of focus has been given to Bloom's Taxonomy and the importance of cognitive process and rigor. While recent literature is beginning to become more prominent around the importance of affective learning as a means to authentic student engagement, the idea was at least initially formalized with Krathwohl's work. At the foundation of the "receiving" level of the affective taxonomy, Friedman, in Figure 1, used the descriptor "chooses," implying that a student's level of autonomy (interest and autonomy) could be directly linked to his or her willingness to engage. The levels of "responding" included the descriptor word "reacts," which indicates the student's motivation to learn (relevance), while the third level, "valuing," reflected the core-beliefs of the student as they interacted with the materials (relevance, controversy). "Organization" and "characterization," the fourth and fifth values of Krathwohl's Taxonomy respectively, are steeped in how students relate to and apply new ideas or learning (relevancy). The literature also concludes that a student's wellness and sense of belonging are critical to

promoting student learning and engagement. As we begin to see the foundations of an affective learning paradigm emerge, questions emerge as to how this knowledge may be utilized explicitly and purposefully for the benefit of student engagement. What appears lacking in the literature is a simple and applicable framework of affective learning that can be applied to the classroom.

The Affective Learning Framework

In exploring the research around student learning, disengagement, and boredom, common themes that exist across studies include indicators that students often lacked motivation to want to learn about a teacher-prescribed topic, had little choice or voice in content, and found the learning to be irrelevant. With these factors in mind, and drawing upon prior research, I have conceptualized affective learning through a framework that includes interest or autonomy (student choice), relevance (individual importance), and controversy (argument, debate, or a "hook") as recurring themes in the literature that build emotional connection; these constructs are framed against the backdrop of effective instructional strategies, a student's sense of belonging, and metacognition. Figure 1 illustrates this framework, representing the possible connections between interest, controversy, and relevance. In context, this study emphasizes the horror genre as a powerful means of tapping into this affective framework to enrich student learning.

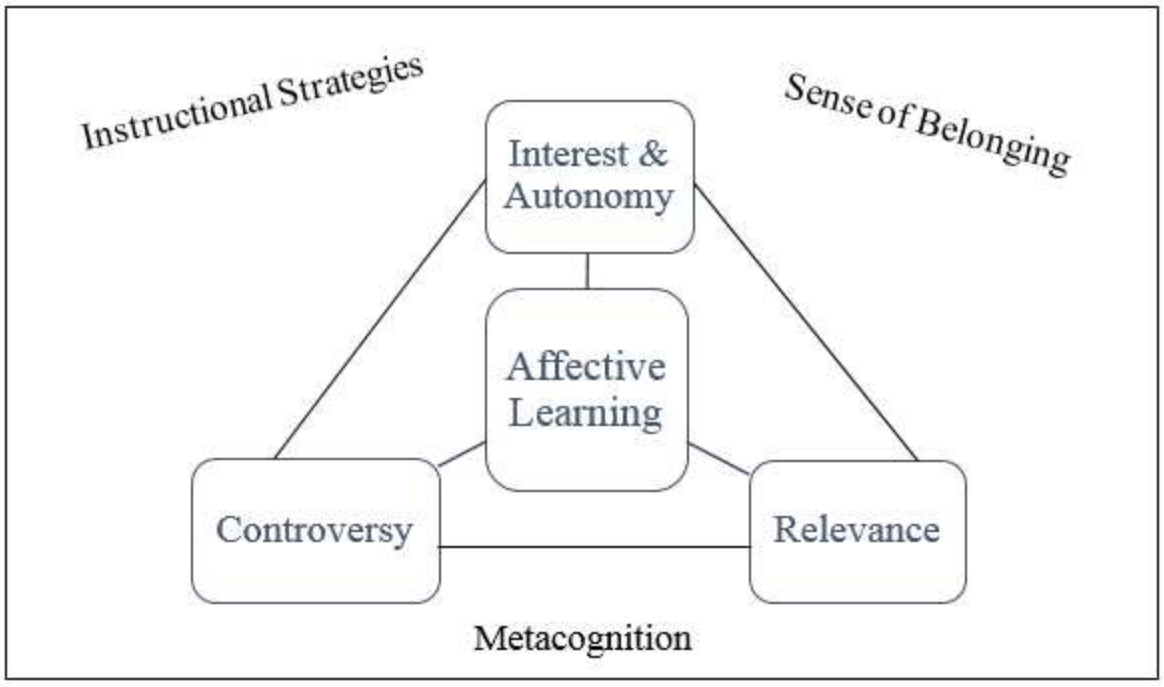


Figure 2. Originally proposed affective learning framework

Each domain of the Affective Learning Framework, as illustrated in Figure 2, is intended to drive the study's planning and analysis of students who will take part in the horror literature club. Each lesson was designed to explicitly link the instructional strategies to the components of the Affective Learning Framework. Students, for example, had choice in the horror materials stories studied and what they would want to talk about in the horror literature club (Interest/Autonomy). At the beginning of each session, I sought to frame a question of relevancy designed to engage students to think about the context of the stories/literature we were studying. In discussions, I engaged students with questions designed to promote controversy. This process is discussed in more detail in the final section of this chapter, as well as in the methodology, data analysis, and findings chapters.

Interest and Autonomy as Affective Learning

Burrows (2010) identified affective, or emotional, engagement as including student interest and enthusiasm, although these traits were missing in his adapted four-part typology of

student engagement (Appleton et al., 2008). Here, he noted a student's sense of belonging and his or her identification with the school as the main aspects of the affective domain. In reflecting on my own experiences outlined in the introduction of this study, the feeling of a sense of belonging helped frame my deeper emotional connection to the horror genre, as I related to the imperfect heroes and monsters of these tales.

In much of the literature, interest and autonomy play key roles in how students engage in the learning. Interest is a significant factor that should be considered in facilitating a personalized connection to the learning. One of Marzano's emblematic questions that leads to engagement revolves around using interest as a vehicle for instruction. If a teacher is unable to tap into a student's interest and create a dynamic lesson, she or he will not be able to compete with thoughts and ideas that have little to do with learning (2011, p. 8). Similarly, Barseghian (2011) identified three specific trends that could shape the future of curriculum. While two are technologically focused, the third, *interest-driven*, revolves around the learner-centered classroom. Learner-centered is another educational term at the mercy of interpretation and semantics. In context to this study, however, an interest-driven educational scenario might include a teacher inventorying student interests, having students self-select or identify predetermined targets or standards (autonomy), and then collaborating with the instructor to build a learning activity that capitalizes on a student's enthusiasm and interest for the topic. With established norms of student professionalism and acceptability, nearly anything could serve as a vehicle for academic exploration: sports, art, film, and horror literature. As one example of the growing awareness of the importance of interest-based lessons, in 2010, an organization called Comic Book Classroom emerged from the founders of the Denver Comic Convention (Denver Comic Con). The initial idea was to create rich learning in literacy through the

exploration of comic books as an after school program. To reflect a growing influence of pop-culture, the Pop Culture Classroom now offers a venue for teaching literacy skills for the purpose of "sparking the creative spirit within every child" (Our story, 2016).

Parsons, Malloy, Parsons and Burrowbridge (2015) categorized affective engagement as containing two types of interest: personal and situational. Personal interest was framed as a subject or a topic the student is interested in (horror, science fiction, fantasy, and videogames would be examples). For situational interest, the researchers provided an example of a hypothetical student who does not like writing, but who might enjoy writing in the context of corresponding to a pen pal.

> They are not interested in the topic of writing letters; rather, they are experiencing situational interest in the task. Because there is an element of personal interest or curiosity that aids in sustaining effort, affective engagement is associated with increased learning. Similarly, researchers have found that affective engagement is associated with increased reading comprehension (p. 138).

In an effort to promote student and reading comprehension, Malloy (2015) cites earlier research to identify three methods: Creating "situational interest" to promote familiarity and intrinsic value, encouraging curriculum development which takes into consideration student relevancy, and making the learning accessible by providing "optimally motivated student learning" (p. 150). Naceur and Schiefele (2005) defined situational interest as a "momentary state of effortless concentration, stimulation, and engagement" (p. 156). The researchers identified individual interest as a more definitive aspiration toward certain learning domains. Situational interest has been further distinguished as "triggered," which involves capturing the attention or "hooking" a student into the learning, and "maintained," which is established interest

over time. Marzano identified using games or game-like activities, friendly controversy, unusual information, and questioning strategies as four strategies to tap into both types of situational interest (2010, p. 9).

In using the musical theme from the film *Halloween* to engage students in writing, I was unknowingly tapping into situational interest to promote a higher level of writing effort and, consequently, higher-quality work. This is an important consideration in using the horror genre to teach literacy and falls decidedly in the Interest-Driven Learning (IDL) Framework (Edelson & Joseph, 2001). Edelson and Joseph address the relative complexity of designing interest-driven learning, specifically discussing the challenges of covering learning objectives through the lens of interest, and the variances of individual interests and sustained interest over time (p. 12). The researchers cite pleasure, concern, identity, affirmation, life goals, and curiosity as sources of interest, which educators could utilize to build effective interest-based lessons.

Relevance

Corso, Bundick, Quaglia, and Haywood (2013) proposed a multi-tiered framework that placed student engagement as the collective result of relationships between student and teacher, the *relevance* between student and content, and the expertise between teacher and content (p. 55). Focusing on the connection between student and content, the construct of relevance was considered paramount in making individualized and meaningful connections based on student interests and personal significance. Edwards (2015) proposed an active learning framework that consisted of intellectual, social, and physical domains. Referencing Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) of different types of cognitive thinking associated with certain intellectual tasks, the study emphasized the importance of relevance and critical thinking (intellectual), collaborative peer work (social), and movement (physical) (Edwards, p.27).

Relevance in context to education is twofold, referring to "learning experiences that are either directly applicable to the personal aspirations, interests, or cultural experiences of students (personal relevance) or that are connected in some way to real-world issues, problems, and contexts (life relevance)" (Relevance, 2013). Teachers who serve English Language Learners have long understood the importance of a student connecting new material with background, or personally relevant, information, yet the importance of relevancy is generally recognized as an instructional tool which promotes widespread engagement for all students. Willis, Faeth, and Immordino-Yang offer three tips to teachers in fostering relevancy: using suspense, allowing student autonomy, and connecting the material to personal experiences. "Relevant, meaningful activities that both engage students emotionally and connect with what they already know are what help build neural connections and long-term memory storage" (Bernard, 2015). Fox (2011) stressed the importance of identifying relevance at the beginning of every lesson by answering questions around what students would be doing in class, why it would matter to them, and how content would be addressed.

The foundations of building affective engagement through relevancy have also been linked to Gardner's work and the Theory of Multiple Intelligences, originally published as *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1983). Gardner has been influential in building awareness around the concept of differing "learning styles." In this theory, each individual has a dominant or inherent style in which he or she could excel under the proper nurturement and conditions, also known as *human potential*. Gardner, and many other researchers, have posited current form of high-stakes standardized testing as limited in scope as a means to accurately reflect and measure the content knowledge of diverse learners (2000). There is an underscoring implication of students who may not excel in logical or linguistic learning

styles as disadvantaged when forced to take traditional methods of standardized assessment. Gardner's work has been widely accepted by classroom teachers, but also heavily criticized, particularly by researchers who believe the concept of multiple intelligences lacking in empirical data or evidence to suggest anything beyond an existing or singular intelligence. Gardner has countered these critics by stating the theory was never intended to be used as an educational intervention, but to bring an awareness and "hope that students can be reached in different ways" (Mathews, 2004). Gardner's thinking might also be deemed too overly simplistic – learners often defy the boundaries of categorization through unique individualism and experience. Still, the idea of relevance, or fostering the conditions that allow students to connect the learning to their own lives, can lead to increased buy-in and engagement.

Using horror in the classroom can promote relevance, as students identify themes and ideas in the genre and apply them to real-world scenarios or, as I did, to personal life events. To paraphrase Stephen King (2001), horror can serve as a non-threatening filter for analyzing critical, real world problems and issues from the relatively safe perspective as reader or audience member.

Controversy

While it can be aligned to relevance and interest, addressing a complex or controversial issue can also build engagement and increase a student's emotional connection to the lesson. Controversy may refer to the study of controversial material in a classroom setting, the hook used to elicit a response from the learner, or building friendly controversy in terms of argument and debate. Johnson and Johnson (2012) have long advocated for the Constructive Controversy Theory as a tool for increasing quality student interaction and learning. The researchers have stated the discussion necessary to solve problems suggested by controversial subjects helps lead

students to richer learning outcomes and socially complex interactions. Jacobs (2010) discussed the benefits of Johnson, Johnson, and Smith's (1996) Academic Controversy model to increase the depths and types of cognitive and complex thinking, promote additional internal motivation to learn, encourage collaboration at deeper levels, bolster the ability to examine and make meaning of ambiguity, and foster an openness to new perspectives (2010).

Marzano (2011) has argued building "friendly controversy" teaches students how to take a position on a topic or idea and to use evidence to argue a point, which leads to increased engagement while building deductive, inductive, and inferential skills (Ocasio, 2014). Ocasio (2015) suggested the implementation of friendly controversy increases rigor. By using "friendly" controversy, the instructor or teacher facilitates socially appropriate routines which result in a respectful exchange of ideas where participants feel comfortable speaking out, challenging ideas, and listening to the perspectives of others.

Wissinger and De La Paz (2016) conducted a study in which middle school students (N=151) studied several historical controversies. Students were randomly assigned to two groups: one group used an argumentative framework and critical guiding questions to examine documents linked to the controversies, while the other group used traditional questions to guide their discussions on key issues. Using several argumentation models to frame the study, the researchers found students in the experimental control group to have provided more substantial evidence and counterclaims in their arguments than students who were placed in traditional question groups. They linked their research to the findings of other studies which suggested "learning argument schemes and critical questions led to gains in students' written arguments" (p. 55).

The horror genre can serve as a venue for discussions around problematic events and challenges attributed to humanity: violence, racism, and hatred, to name a few. As horror as entertainment is designed to elicit an emotion of dread, discomfort, and fear, it stands to reason the genre can be a powerful vehicle for addressing and better understanding the at times horrific controversies we face. In this way, horror would allow classroom teachers to engage students through a controversy if an affective learning framework is applied.

Implicit Supports to the Affective Learning Framework

It is critical to acknowledge the significance and impact of effective instructional practices when discussing a student's emotional engagement toward learning; otherwise, it would be easy to simply expose students to interesting materials without academic rigor or expectations. In 2014, a researcher received 274 teacher responses to the prompt,"Name some research-based strategies you use in the classroom" (Goodwin, p. 4). Thirteen percent of the participants listed some form of the 9 Research Based Strategies identified by Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001). Goodwin noted a majority of the responses were steeped in curriculum resources and professional development (p. 5). The most identified practices as defined by Marzano were cooperative learning (n = 51) and identifying similarities and differences (n = 48), while the least identified practices were questions, cues, and advanced organizers (n = 13), nonlinguistic representations (n = 11), and homework and practice (n = 4). In the open question responses recorded and presented in the study, teachers seemed to have a negative or neutral outlook in regards to the usefulness of research-based strategies, although the nine identified in the study were not necessarily all-inclusive.

O'Conner (2013) challenged the instructional techniques often associated with engagement. The *Initiate-Response-Feedback* method is observable and has been so popularized

in film and media as the obvious mode of classroom participation, it is arguably the stereotype most associated with typical and widespread classroom practice. In a common scenario, the conversation is largely one-sided, as the teacher or instructor lectures on a specified topic, periodically asks voluntary questions, receives a student response, provides a brief form of affirming or non-affirming feedback, and moves on to the next question or topic. The problem here is that, often, a few students actively participate while a majority of students sit passively, making it hard to determine the level, if any, of student engagement. To get around this, many educators have implemented the *cold-call* (O'Conner, date p. 341), in which students may or may not be randomly called upon by the teacher in order to produce an answer. Group discussion has also become more frequently used. While none of these delivery methods are necessarily bad, used strategically and with modification, O'Conner (date) proposed alternative strategies that are student-centered. These strategies include physical movement, *response systems* (the use of all students using their fingers to signal agreement, for example, to a single student response), *quick writing* (which encourages reflection and structured conversation around learning), and *Think-Pair-Share* (a technique that gained momentum in the late 1980's) (Lyman, 1987). The overall research suggested the more dependent a teacher or professor is on the "sage-on-stage" lesson delivery format, the less likely the student will enjoy the class, leading to a lack of interest and affective disengagement.

Pittman and Honchell (2014) explored the benefits of increased collaboration and discussion as a means to improve both cognitive and affective student engagement and, consequently, literacy comprehension. The researchers discussed the importance of utilizing a classroom's inherent diversity (socio-economic, disability, ethnic, artistic, athletic) as a vehicle to both building and framing rich discussion between student participants around a chosen text,

with the intent of students being able to share their individualized experiences while learning from others. Qualitative analyses of open-ended pre-and-post surveys, interview transcriptions, and observations, resulted in two emerging themes: discussion around text resulted in greater enjoyment of reading, and a student's ability to connect the text with personalized experiences led to stronger comprehension (p. 124). The study used a sample (n = 45) of seventh graders (20% African American, 4% Hispanic, 2% Asian, 74% Caucasian) from a K-8 school which received Title I funding and was identified as rural. Of the two classes, both taught by a middle school teacher who was also the lead researcher in the study, one was identified as ethnically diverse; interestingly, this was also the class that represented the highest number of struggling learners. The class with the higher performing readers consisted of only one child who was not White, which may have strong implications beyond the scope of Pittman and Honchell's work around systemic challenges and the consequences underlying ethnic privilege. Another potential limitation of this study would be the extent of discussion access for students identified as English Language learners, who may not involve themselves in structured discussion due to a non-understanding or a lack of confidence of the non-native language required to participate. While guiding questions were provided, additional research would be necessary to provide in-depth examples of discussion-based lesson planning, as it may be assumed the knowledge of the teacher-researcher is collective, as well as the potential application of literacy discussion as defined in this study in urban or more diversified settings. The data do align with previous studies to suggest student autonomy as important in generating interest in reading. In looking at engagement and lesson planning, the educator should be aware of the diverse and often multitudinous cultural backgrounds represented in each classroom. In planning, for example, a horror literature or writing project, how might one tap into cultural folklore, regional legends,

and personal stories to facilitate a stronger personal and emotional connection to desired learning outcomes?

Parsons, Malloy, Parsons and Burrowbridge (2015) also link affect with metacognition. Metacognition includes "a critical awareness of a) one's thinking and learning and b) oneself as a thinker and learner" (Chick, 2016). Using journals to reflect on learning or experiences and having students share their feelings around a learning topic are examples, which fall into the realm of metacognition.

In examining literature around student engagement, metacognition, a student's sense of belonging, and instructional strategies all appeared important, if not as explicit, factors to the potential for student engagement. These elements are included as a collective backdrop to support the proposed affective learning framework.

Application – Using Horror to Teach Reading and Coach Teachers

In order to provide perspective on how an affective learning framework might be applied in a typical classroom setting independent of my own passion for the horror genre, I have been given permission to share details of an opportunity I had to coach a middle school teacher who was struggling with classroom management. At the time, the educator, "Ms. Smith," was a second-year teacher in a PreK-8 school responsible for teaching 7th grade reading. She reported students as being openly defiant in her class and not engaged in the reading materials, resulting in a loss of instructional time and a strain on academic focus. As I had also taught middle school reading, she had asked for my input; we met several times over the course of a few weeks as I listened to her frustrations. I explained the importance of finding reading materials that would both meet the instructional standards as well as heighten the interest of students in that age group. After some reflection and acquiring a basic inventory of student interests, Ms. Smith

agreed to use one of my horror-themed lesson plans, and, from her perspective, determined whether or not the lessons were effective in promoting engagement. We noted any potential delivery issues where my lesson plans could fit her own teaching style and reiterated a standards-based focus (regardless of the material used, we would always be working toward a 7th grade reading standard).

The first sequence of the lesson involved looking at *Phenomena* (1999), part of a compilation of interest-driven readings designed to assist students with skills such as context clues, author's purpose, making inferences, and locating main ideas. Each article ran approximately three pages and highlighted a case study of a haunting or other strange event. The lesson placed the student in the role of a "paranormal investigator," where they had to collect evidence to determine whether an incident should be deemed factual or a hoax. The first week, the teacher devoted three days to this work. She would open with a photo study, in which students would look at pictures and she would provide some historical context about the "haunting" or paranormal event. She noted an immediate increase in student participation and heard from students who had rarely spoken up in class. Over the course of the next few weeks, she continued to use horror, which resulted in far less terrifying results: classroom management issues decreased, students were excited about reading, and the teacher was able to maximize her instructional time and address reading and writing standards in a timely manner.

In an attempt to link the discussed theoretical frameworks around engagement, an example of a lesson plan in a format influenced by Wiggin's and McTighe's (2005) backward design has been included in the appendices, which includes three stages of planning: identifying desired outcomes, determining evidence of skill mastery, and an overall learning plan. Figure 2 provides a visual taxonomic outline of how such a lesson plan might be structured to promote

affective engagement. The lesson plan, also adapted and used by Ms. Smith in the preceding example, utilizes horror literature as an engagement vehicle to teach two specific standards focused on textual evidences and central ideas.

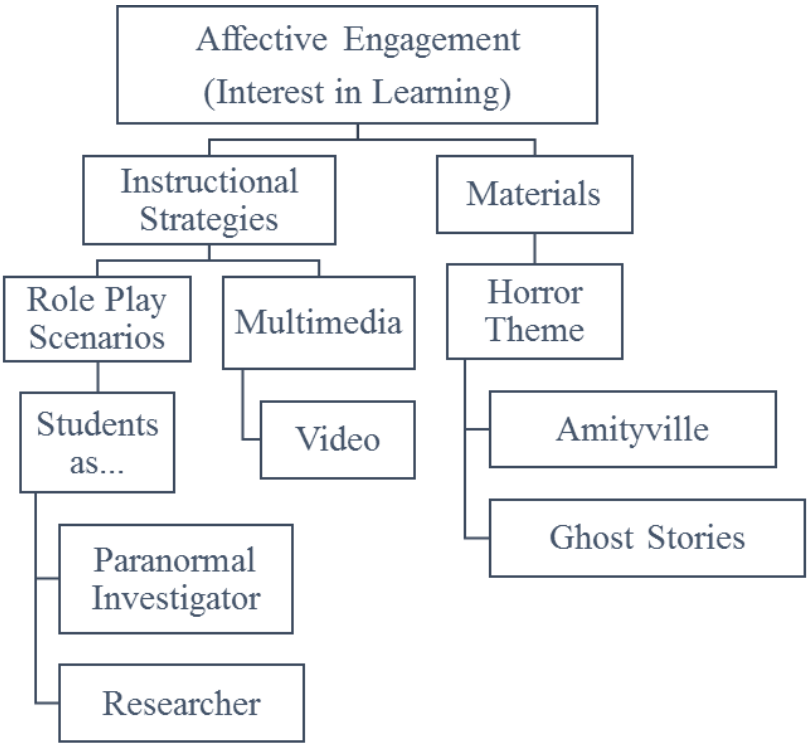


Figure 3. Taxonomic outline of affective engagement using a horror-themed lesson

In the previous example, the use of the horror genre not only affectively engaged middle school students, but also resulted in better and observable classroom management for the teacher. Effective instructional strategies and planning meaningful learning activities (as represented in Figure 3) are significant factors in ensuring that learning is taking place in all contexts.

Affective Learning and a Thematic Approach

The present inquiry centered on each of the components of the Affective Learning Framework. I attempted to capture the experiences of both the student and the teacher. As the Affective Learning Framework was applied a priori, I indicated connections to Interest/Autonomy, Controversy, and Relevance. Each lesson and activity was strategically designed to reflect one of the three initial components of affective learning. Interest/Autonomy,

for example, was used in the students' ability to choose from a selection of horror literature, including urban legends and short stories, which interested them. At the beginning of each session, a controversy was poised either regarding an element from the story or in the study of horror itself. Students were also encouraged to make real-world connections throughout each session. Students were asked to provide written and verbal feedback at the end of each session. The discussions, interviews, and sessions were recorded electronically and then transcribed. Transcriptions were then examined for potential recurring themes. This process is discussed at length in the methodology chapter.

Summary

In this chapter, I emphasized the reason that the horror genre could be an effective tool for learning. Disengagement and boredom were common themes that presented themselves across studies. Students often lacked motivation to want to learn about a teacher-prescribed topic, had little choice or voice in content, and found the learning to be irrelevant. An affective learning framework was proposed that included interest or autonomy (student choice), relevance (individual importance), and controversy (argument, debate, or a "hook") as recurring themes in the literature that build emotional connection; these constructs were framed against the backdrop of effective instructional strategies, a student's sense of belonging, and metacognition as represented in Figure 1. The final section of the chapter highlighted a personal anecdote as to how horror could potentially engage students and support teachers in the learning process.

CHAPTER III – METHODOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of this research was to examine the shared experiences of secondary students around using horror as a means to engage them, as well as my own experiences as a teacher-researcher used a qualitative case study design and thematic analysis. Specifically, this study seeks to examine student experiences in the context of applying components of the Affective Learning Framework through the use of the horror genre in an after-school horror literature club. As a researcher, I am interested in the potential of tapping into student interests while planning and delivering lessons that foster emotional connection through the Affective Learning Framework. Specifically, this study was designed to examine horror as a potentially relevant and powerful teaching tool within the classroom in secondary and post-secondary settings when the framework is applied. The study examines how a literature unit organized around the horror genre might both support and possibly constrain student engagement in a secondary after-school setting. The study also addresses meaningful implementation of the genre into literacy instruction, with further implications around the use of subgenres and how this work may fit into a variety of classroom settings (secondary and post-secondary).

Research Design

Initially, I had sought to conduct a narrative inquiry in order to interpret student experiences. I realized, however, that by placing my own interpretation onto student experiences, I was potentially at risk of eliminating their authentic reactions and voices. As student voice is often lacking in the literature about what they feel about engagement, and this was a primary driver for the purpose of this study, it was critical to me to ensure that their voices emerged from

this work. This has resulted in a case study thematic analysis approach with narrative elements in which the students shared their own stories, which were analyzed and included.

As this study focused on implementing the horror genre, applying the Affective Learning Framework, and describing the shared experiences of the student and the teacher-researcher as a result in a singular setting over a period of ten weeks, a case study thematic analysis with narrative elements was utilized. Thematic analysis is a method for "identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set" (Nowell, et al., 2017). Merriam (1988) defined the case study as the "examination of a specific phenomenon such as a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group" (p. 9). Creswell (2012) defined the case study as an "in-depth exploration of a bounded system based on extensive data collection (p. 465). Creswell referred to bounded in that the case is designated as research in a specific setting. In my case study, I utilize an interpretivist approach, in which one seeks a deeper understanding through emerging trends based on observations and experiences and encourages the collection of artifacts and data in an authentic setting (Willis, 2007, p. 240).

While there are multiple data collection tools a researcher could utilize in the process of both case studies and narrative inquiry, Connelly and Clandinin (1990) highlighted six. In one example, the researcher, who was an active part of the research scenario alongside participants (teacher and students), used *field notes of shared experience*. As the experience unfolded, she recorded notes of the events that took place. I utilized field notes throughout the process and referenced them as I began to analyze transcript data. *Journal records* were used by both participant and researcher in order to analyze and "make sense of her work with the children in her classroom" and "understand the parallels between her experiences of learning" (p. 5) with the students involved in the study. Initially, I had intended to journal my own experiences, yet did so

in sporadically and have not included these journal entries into the data analysis beyond personal recollections. Transcribed *interviews* between the participants and the researcher about a given topic relating to the framework of the study have long been a tool for data collection in the qualitative traditions and were a main point of data collection during this study. *Story telling* attempts to recount or capture lived experiences or perceptions of experiences and ideas. This element is present in my own personal recollections and experiences as teacher and student, particularly in the introduction and findings chapters. *Letter writing* can provide insight through the analysis of written exchanged responses. *Autobiographical* and *biographical* writing are also commonly used narrative inquiry tools. As referenced in the data collection section later in the chapter, field notes, interviews, and audio recording transcripts have been used in order to collect and to represent data.

This research began with a story – my own. The horror genre gave me a new perspective on how to address the fear I held about the world around me, and allowed me to identify with characters and stories as I never had before. It built my confidence in understanding I was not alone in the world, and that even the darkest stories often had the most beautiful and inspiring outcomes, giving me hope and comfort. Of course, I can't miss perhaps the most important point of this scholarly undertaking – reading and writing can, and should be, fun! As a teacher, I want to share the experiences of students and model for other educators the importance of a learner-centered lesson. I want to tap into student interests to foster a connectedness to literacy instruction while building confidence in their own critical and analytical perspectives. The case study approach enabled me to present the shared experiences as both an extension of my own story and the inclusion of the students' experiences as a result of the horror literature club.

Participants and Setting

Participants included middle school students at a public secondary school in the Denver metro-area. The largest demographic student group district-wide is Hispanic (73%), followed by White (18%), and Asian (5%). Approximately 70% of students are on a free/reduced lunch plan.

The students volunteered to participate in an after-school horror literature club in the fall of 2017. Initially, the after school horror literature club consisted of one sixth grade student, two seventh grade students, and three eighth grade students for a total of six students; by the end of the study, there were thirteen students who participated in the club, including two additional sixth grade students, three additional seventh grade students, and two additional eighth grade students.

The school is part of a district that has transitioned to a competency-based system over the past decade. Essentially, the district has moved away from the age-based classroom, where children are placed at a grade synonymous with their physical age, and has adopted an approach where students are placed at their performance level in the areas of literacy, math, social studies, and science. The grade system is not percentage based as in many traditional systems; students are scored based on evidence of each learning target which is aligned to a corresponding standard. This indicates a potential constraint, or, at the very least, a caution when generalizing the results of this study; instead of a law of averages that a lot of districts use, the district and the school site use a law of progression and scores student work on a four-point scale. For example, a 1.0 score on an assignment would be considered non-proficient; a 2.0 would be considered partially proficient. A student must reach a score of 3.0 to be considered proficient. Once at least 80% of the learning targets are met with at least a 3.0 (proficiency), the student is eligible to

move to the next level in that content regardless of age. For a student to score a 4.0, he, she or they must have shown mastery beyond proficiency as determined by the teacher.

I have worked as an elementary school principal for the district and, at the time of this writing, serve as a competency-based model classroom teacher and instructional coach for the district. The school site used for my study was selected for access, performance, and its student population. According to the school's website, the school's student demographics (2015-2016) reflect those of the district; Hispanic (73%), White (33%), Asian (3%), African American (2%), and Native American (2%). These demographics also include students who identified with two or more ethnicities. Like most schools in Colorado, the middle school transitioned to the PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College) standardized assessment in 2015. Prior reading data were taken from student performance on TCAP (Transitional Colorado Assessment Program). The data showed the school to be trending with district data in students scoring proficient or above in reading performance for 2013 and 2014 while, as a whole, the district was trending significantly below state averages in achievement for these two years. Writing data indicated the school to be significantly below the state average for 2013 and 2014. While recent PARCC data indicate an overall ELA (English Language Arts) score, it should be noted that reading and writing were combined into a single performance score and cannot be broken down by individual performance scores. PARCC data from 2015 indicate that approximately ten percent of all students either met or exceeded expectations in the ELA test, which was significantly lower than state averages. While PARCC data from 2016 through 2018 indicate growth in literacy rates to around approximately 25% of students in grades 6, 7, and 8 meeting or exceeding expectations on the ELA test in the spring of 2018, the state and district are still trending behind state averages in the area of "achievement" as measured by PARCC.

Expected annual growth for students in the school and district has trended above state averages in several measured sub-categories. At the end of the ten-seek study, students who chose to participate in the study seemed to generally have strong skills in the areas of story elements, rhetorical criticism, identifying themes and central ideas, and literary comparisons. The consistency of the data collection as compared to their work being scored in literacy class by various teachers and the fact that these data were not assessed nor examined prior to the beginning of the horror literature club make the potential results of the horror literature club inconclusive in regards to measuring actual growth in reading skills. As such, these detailed data are provided in the findings chapter for context only. This posed as a potential limitation of this study in actually determining the effects on student growth and achievement but did provide implications for future research.

Role of the Researcher

I served concurrently as both the facilitator of the after-school club as well as the researcher of the study. In other words, I engaged in this study as a teacher-researcher. Willis (2007) suggested being open, honest, and ethical in research when it comes to one's almost inevitable subjectivity, which, in and of itself, implies limitations around bias. From the perspective of positionality, I acknowledge my own enjoyment of the genre of horror, as well as my own prior experiences as a teacher who utilized the genre to engage students to seemingly positive effect, resulting in notably increased work completion and achievement. Student-participants volunteered for the study. While in the same district, I had selected a school site that I was in no way affiliated with prior to the study; as such, there were no potential "conflict of issue" concerns insofar as students receiving any actual score or grade for their participation. Nor did I communicate with teachers, staff, or parents about student progress. This was to ensure

each student's emotional safety and to maintain the integrity of the authenticity of the study. As a researcher, I audio-recorded each session and transcribed those sessions to cross-reference with some of my field notes. I used the transcripts from those sessions as the primary data analysis for the study. Field notes were simply referenced as I analyzed the data from transcribed recordings. – this provided multiple perspectives which allowed me to better triangulate the data.

Implementation of the After-School Literacy Club Curriculum

I, as the teacher-researcher, organized a ten-week after-school program for middle school students consisting of ten sessions (one session a week). The after-school program used horror-themed materials to teach and reinforce literacy concepts and included class discussion, group collaboration, and learning activities. I designed the curriculum and pedagogy for the Literacy Club to foster the component of the Affective Learning Framework: Student Interest/Autonomy, Controversy, and Relevance. Each lesson and activity was strategically designed to reflect one of the three components of affective learning. Interest/Autonomy, for example, was used in the students' ability to choose from a selection of horror literature, including urban legends and short stories, which interested them. At the beginning of each session, a controversy was posed either regarding an element from the story or in the study of horror itself. Students were also encouraged to make real-world connections throughout each session.

Research Questions

- What prominent themes are constructed when middle school-aged participants in the horror literature club are asked about personal experiences with literacy instruction? Could these themes shift or change when horror is used to teach literacy?
- In what ways could the horror genre promote or constrain affective learning for middle school-aged participants in an after-school horror fiction club?

- What are the experiences of middle school-aged participants in the horror literature club when an Affective Learning Framework is utilized?

Data Collection Procedures

Before any data were collected, the study, which involved collecting participant responses, was approved by both the Institutional Review Board (IRB – the IRB approval letter can be found in Appendix H) and the school district. Once I acquired research approval, I worked with school administration to determine an appropriate time and physical classroom space for the horror literature club. I spent four weeks promoting the horror literature club in English and Spanish (a sample promotional material poster can be found in Appendix G) and designated a contact person within the school to provide me the names of students who were interested. I held an optional interest-session with participants and their parents to review the purpose of the study and to answer any questions, provide additional clarification, and collect permission slips (parental permission slips are included in Appendix A). Data collection included multiple overlapping approaches: student interest inventories, written and audio recording of learning activities, collection of student artifacts, individual student interviews, and a final group interview.

Student Interest Inventory. All students were asked to complete an interest inventory during the first session of the ten-week horror literature club. Using survey data, as well as a group interview in which responses were electronically recorded (audio), participants were asked several open-ended questions at the beginning of the course around engagement, horror, interests, and learning preferences. These questions were provided to students on paper – students recorded their responses individually with follow-up questioning in the event that additional clarity was necessary. Questions included:

- Normally, do you find reading and writing class interesting? Why or why not?
- What do you wish teachers would do more to make reading class interesting?
- What do you wish teachers would do more to make reading class interesting?
- Describe the most fun you have had in a reading lesson
- Describe the most fun you have had in a writing lesson
- Describe the most boring reading lesson you've had
- Describe the most boring writing lesson you've had

The initial surveys provided to student participants at the first session used three of the nine questions posed: "Do you find literacy/writing class interesting – why or why not?" "What do you wish teachers would do more to make reading instruction interesting?" "What do you wish teachers would do to make writing instruction more interesting?" I decided to exclude the results of the other questions posed on the survey due my concerns around the questions being too leading or favorable toward specific answers.

Over the first week, I analyzed the responses to determine possible trends in data and to embed learning activities I felt students would find interesting into future lessons based on responses. Each lesson was designed to explicitly link the instructional strategies to the components of the Affective Learning Framework. Essentially, I examined and analyzed these data initially from the lenses of Relevancy, Controversy, and Interest/Autonomy. Students, for example, were provided choices in the urban legends and horror stories studied and discussed in the horror literature club (Interest/Autonomy). At the beginning of each session, I framed a question of relevancy designed to engage students to think about the context of the stories/literature we were studying. In discussions, I would engage students with controversies or questions designed to promote reaction and feedback.

Written and Audio Recording of Learning Activities. Each session was electronically audio recorded and transcribed for later analysis. I decided to do the transcription myself in order to better understand the data. For transcription purposes, dialogue and vocalized or auditory student reactions, such as laughter, were recorded. I chose not to include other paralinguistic sounds, such as coughing or background noise. Additionally, I recorded field notes during each session designed to capture student and teacher interactions and dialogue during the learning activities. In the final ten minutes of each session, participants were asked to provide open discussion feedback about what worked well and what could be adjusted to meet their learning needs for the next session. I would typically ask the following types of questions:

- Was this lesson interesting to you? Why or why not?
- What could I (teacher-researcher) have done differently to make the lesson more enjoyable?
- What was your favorite part of the lesson?
- What was your least favorite part of the lesson?

While a lot of rich dialogue was captured as a result of these questions, most, but not all, students chose to participate in the discussion. This could represent a potential constraint around the level of comfort that students felt in being able to share their authentic feelings in a whole group setting; however, it should be noted that I provided opportunities for students to provide feedback in other ways, such as written response, if they chose not to verbalize in front of their peers. I ensured to check in personally with each of them once a week. According to their shared, verbal, or written feedback, students indicated a general enjoyment of the sessions we focused on.

Collection of Student Artifacts. Over the course of the ten weeks, students were given the autonomy to select a project they could begin to work on (some examples include writing a story, creating a comic book, and building a social media page for a character) by the end of the horror literature club. Students unanimously opted to write the introduction to ghost stories based on a collectively agreed-upon scenario; additionally, students orally shared their favorite ghost stories and research around the paranormal throughout the duration of the horror literature club. Additionally, students used plot diagrams to analyze key elements of horror stories. The introductions to the ghost stories, their plot diagram examples, and their transcribed oral stories were collected for the purposes of this study. Representative oral stories that students shared have been included in the findings chapter.

Individual Student Interview. Each student had an option to choose to participate in individual face-to-face interviews for the purposes of the study (n=5). Individual student interviews took place beginning around week four of the club and lasted through week nine at points when students worked or read independently. I made the choice to conduct face-to-face interviews in a separate space of the horror literature club in order to allow students to feel comfortable and not feel that they had to be alone with an adult that they did not know very well. While the five students who participated provided useful data through their articulate responses, and no student expressed any visible or verbalized discomfort with the process, I realize that one potential constraint was that other students may have decided not to participate because of the setting of the interviews. Those students who chose not to participate in face-to-face interviews did complete a written interview, but the different formats represented another possible constraint around generalizability. The average length of the interviews was eight minutes and forty-three seconds. Interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed.

All students were encouraged to come up with their own "pseudonym" in order to help protect their identities for the purposes of the study. As they chose their pseudonyms, they were encouraged to choose something that was specific and relevant to them. Students were asked open ended questions around their literacy class experiences and their level of engagement.

Final Group Interview. Toward the end of the ten-week study, I conducted a final group interview with all thirteen students, asking students to compare their literacy class experiences with that of the horror club sessions. I audio-recorded the responses and struck out any commentary from any students who did not provide consent to be included explicitly in the study findings (n=4). I then transcribed the responses of participating students (n=9). I also opened the conversation up to anything else students felt was important to our observations, questions they had about the overall process, or questions they might want me to think about.

Data Analysis

This section recounts the steps and procedures used to analyze data in order to construct meaning. Creswell offered six areas of data analysis and interpretation which could be applied in thematic analysis, narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study approaches (p.156-157). While qualitative data collection strategies intersect and intermingle across research designs, the following procedures were used as part of a thematic analysis case study framework.

One could note that thematic analysis data collection share similarities with grounded theory and ethnographic approaches. According to Coffey and Atkinson (1996), initial coding is a key step toward categorizing qualitative data into possible themes specific to the questions outlined in the preceding section. Glaser and Strauss (1967) identified this part of the coding process as open, or grounded theory, coding (Crabtree, 2006). Coffey and Atkinson indicated

"…the establishment of ordered relationships codes and concepts is a significant starting point for reflection and for theory building from qualitative data (p. 48). According to Reissman (2008), one might look for themes within the context of an interview and themes across interviews in thematic analysis, in which a researcher might connect a series of single interviews into a single chronological narrative (Chesson, 2009).

The study consisted of ten after-school sessions over a three month period, resulting in seven hours and thirty-eight minutes of recorded audio of horror literature club sessions and forty-three minutes of individual student interview audio. In total, I transcribed eight hours and twenty-one minutes of audio recordings. Each session was recorded via Microsoft Voice Recorder. I listened to each recording at least three times as I transcribed them. Of the approximately eight-and-a-half hours of recorded audio, one-hundred pages of dialogue and interviews were transcribed, taking approximately eighty hours to complete.

There were two distinct phases of coding. The first phase consisted of a priori coding. Transcription data were initially analyzed through the lenses of the three domains of the Affective Learning Framework: Interest & Autonomy, Controversy, and Relevance. I identified occurrences and dialogue that linked explicitly to one of the pre-determined domains in an effort to determine how the potential of each domain to support or constrain engagement and learning. . Being that the domains were pre-determined, the categorization process in context to the Affective Learning Framework happened concurrently during this first phase. During this phase, eight codes were identified that fit within the constructs of the three domains of the initially proposed Affective Learning Framework – connectedness, lack of connectedness, choice, lack of choice, conditional interest, lack of interest, genre-specific controversy, friendly controversy, and heavy controversy. The three types of controversy were inductively constructed.

In the second phase, which consisted of inductive coding, all transcribed data were reviewed to identify emerging patterns of responses and interactions that may have fallen outside of the construct of the a priori coding; in other words, patterns of responses that could be coded as independent of any of the identified three domains of the Affective Learning Framework and that implied potential constraints of its application. As this data analysis process unfolded, additional notes and annotations were made on the physical transcripts as they were re-read. I color-coded chunks, phrases, words, and sentences of transcripts in order to indicate potential alignment and categorization with each of the domains. Connections were made as to whether or not newly identified codes would fit into the construct of one of the three initially identified domains of the Affective Learning Framework, or if the Affective Learning Framework was too constraining in its originally proposed form. During this phase, I constructed eight additional codes, six of which did not fit into any of the three domains of the initially proposed Affective Learning Framework: safety, lack of safety, teacher relationship, lack of teacher relationship, teacher engagement, and lack of teacher engagement. Two additional codes, humor and workload, were later categorized into the domain of Relevance/Connectedness.

Finally, codes and categories were reviewed to determine if there were any emerging themes which were not already captured by one of the articulated domains of the affective learning framework. The six uncategorized codes eventually fit into a new theme, Positive Learning Environment, which became the fourth domain of the revised Affective Learning Framework. Additionally, the original domain of Relevance was renamed to Relevance/Connectedness, and the original domain of Controversy became Hook/Controversy. The reasoning behind this re-categorization is discussed at length in the findings chapter.

Another ongoing aspect of this process was determining how the emergence of these data addressed each of the research questions posed in the study.

As I identified potential themes as they related to the Affective Learning Framework, personal stories, and types of feedback, I utilized student responses and my observations, reflections, transcripts, and field notes in an effort to both describe and classify the data. As I examined data, I was able to identify and interpret "the larger meaning of the story" (Creswell, 2007, p. 157), thus representing the experience and how the themes connected to or addressed my research questions. Following is a table representation connecting specific types of data collection tools with each research question posed in this study.

Table 2. Research Questions and Key Data Tools

Research Question	Key Data Tool(s)
What prominent themes are constructed when middle school-aged participants in the horror literature club are asked about personal experiences with literacy instruction? Could these themes shift or change when horror is used to teach literacy?	Open-Ended Survey Responses, Transcribed Interviews
In what ways could the horror genre promote or constrain affective learning for middle school-aged participants in an after-school horror fiction club?	Field Notes, Transcribed Audio Recordings
What are the experiences of middle school-aged participants in the horror literature club when an Affective Learning Framework is utilized?	Field Notes, Transcribed Audio Recordings, Open-Ended Survey Responses, Transcribed Interviews, Student Artifacts

Trustworthiness and Quality

Miles and Huberman (1994) noted the challenges of coding a qualitative case study with large amounts of data and to acknowledge the process of coding as "inescapably a selective process" (p. 55). Miles and Huberman discuss the importance of the researcher grounding oneself in both the research questions as well as a qualitative conceptual framework. Identifying

a single conceptual framework proved to be a challenge for this study, for while it utilized a primarily thematic analysis approach, it held elements of narrative inquiry.

Credibility

In context to thematic analysis, credibility refers to one's ability to recognize the experience presented in the research and addresses the "'fit' between respondents' views and the researcher's representation of them" (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 3). In an effort to ensure trustworthiness and quality in this study, it was imperative to ensure that student voices were unfiltered and that my own experiences didn't outshine or devalue theirs. As previously described, audio recordings were made of every session and interview, resulting in one-hundred pages of transcriptions. To ensure quality, each recording was listened to multiple times as they were transcribed. Two distinct phases of coding and categorization emerged – the a priori coding phase which sought to categorize identified themes into one of the three domains of the initially proposed Affective Learning Framework and the inductive coding phase which sought to identify and the categorize codes which did not fit into a specified domain. In order to increase the validity of this study, the following approaches to research reliability in a qualitative study, as identified by Willis (2007), were utilized:

Triangulation

Willis (2007) suggested that triangulation can be a strong alternative to data validity in a qualitative research study. By looking at multiple sources of data and information, one can more clearly corroborate common patterns and potential themes to help answer research questions. In examining data from student participants interviews, horror literature club sessions, and research around student engagement, common themes, such as boredom and a lack of interest as but a few examples, emerged. Each of the identified domains of both the originally proposed Affective

Learning Framework and the revised Affective Learning Framework became clear across multiple sources.

Member Checks

In ensuring student voices were being authentically and accurately represented, I engaged in multiple member checks and follow-up interviews with participants throughout the course of the study. In this way, I ensured that participants were able to review my interpretations or the context in which I presented their words and thinking as authentic to them.

Extended Experience in the Environment

As a teacher and an instructional coach who also served as part of the district where the study took place, I had a deepened understanding and knowledge of the systems which allowed me to focus on providing quality instructional experiences with students. I also served as a classroom teacher to students of a similar demographic within the same district. Over approximately a three-month period, I came to make personal connections with student participants and spent a great deal of time learning from them.

Audit Trail

If a researcher were to attempt to replicate the study, all of the processes, permissions, resources, interview guides, and materials would be made available. The audit trail inventory included consent forms, the process of coding and analysis, transcript format sheets, and recorded audio in an effort to increase quality and trustworthiness.

Negative Case Analysis

By definition, a negative case analysis involves "searching for and discussing elements of the data that do not support or appear to contradict patterns or explanations that are emerging from data analysis" (Negative or Deviant Case Analysis, 2008). One of the research questions

posed in this study inherently centers around potential constraints of affective learning: *In what ways could the horror genre promote or constrain affective learning for middle school-aged participants in an after-school horror fiction club?* Potential constraints are addressed and discussed throughout the findings chapter.

Summary

In this chapter, I provided an overview of the case study design engaging a thematic analysis case study approach. Participants, setting demographics, and setting details were highlighted. The data collection process was detailed. The data analysis process consisted of two phases of coding and categorizing – a priori coding and inductive coding which resulted in sixteen identified codes overall – as a means of examining student experiences when the Affective Learning Framework was applied. Finally, procedures used to support the trustworthiness and quality of the study were outlined.

CHAPTER IV – FINDINGS

Overview

Broadly, the purpose of this study was to better understand how to utilize student interests and relevance to more effectively and authentically engage them in literacy instruction through the use of horror fiction. As outlined primarily in Chapter 2, I view authentic engagement as that students are interested in what they are learning about because they are able to affectively connect with the learning concept in a way that is meaningful to them. This definition extends beyond that of previous studies, a few of which are outlined in the literature review, which have equated mere compliance behaviors with engagement, and have done seemingly little to include a student's perspective.

The following research questions were posed to guide the research:

- What prominent themes are constructed when middle school-aged participants in the horror literature club are asked about personal experiences with literacy instruction? Could these themes shift or change when horror is used to teach literacy?
- In what ways could the horror genre promote or constrain affective learning for middle school-aged participants in an after-school horror fiction club?
- What are the experiences of middle school-aged participants in the horror literature club when an Affective Learning Framework is utilized?

The first section of this chapter consists of student profiles, in which each student who participated is discussed and the method of identify protection, confidentiality, and consent is outlined. The second section highlights a collective reading skill performance snapshot with implications around the levels of student engagement in literacy instruction. The third section

details student perspectives on traditional classroom experiences. The fourth section outlines the overall identified codes and categories of the study. The fifth section focuses on analysis of the Horror Fiction Club activities and student engagement in these activities; I first describe the physical setting of the study itself, an event map charting activities across time, and a thematic analysis of the learning activities of the horror literature club. Potential constraints are noted throughout this section and then addressed again in the discussions chapter.

Participant Profiles

Participants in this ten-week program included middle school students at a secondary school in the Denver metro-area. The students were selected voluntarily for an after-school horror literature club in the spring of 2018. Initially, the after school horror literature club consisted of one sixth grade student, two seventh grade students, and three eighth grade students; by the end of the study and starting in about the fifth week, there were thirteen students who participated in the club, due to the addition of two sixth grade students, three seventh grade students, and two eighth grade students. Of the thirteen students who participated in the literature club, nine students submitted parental consent and student assent forms and are the focus of data collection and analysis. The nine students were comprised of one white male, three white females, one Hispanic non-gender specific student, and four Hispanic females. Because the other four students did not have parental consent and student assent forms, no data about them have been included.

During the study, I served as the facilitator of the horror literature club. As such, I became both participant and researcher, which allowed me to co-create a shared experience with the student participants while also informing my inherent bias as I analyzed the data. Throughout the research process, it has been my intent to honor participant voices as a vital

factor in better understanding how to engage them, since, as I have previously noted, this aspect has been typically lacking in research around student engagement. While all student participants were assigned pseudonyms in order to protect their identities, the nine students I interviewed wanted to create their own pseudonyms inspired by their hopes, interests, and experiences. I honored this request and provided a brief personality profile of each. I divided participant profiles into two groups – those participants who were present for the entirety of the study (Full Participant Profiles, n=6) and those who arrived later in the study (Late Participant Profiles, n=3). One of the positive challenges of the study was the somewhat transient nature of the Horror Literature Club; while students could choose to participate or not participate in any activity, neither would I turn away a newly interested student. While we had no attrition with the original six students, the number of participants grew to over double its initial size by the end of the Horror Literature Club beginning in about the fifth week. In interviewing students about this change, all mentioned their interests and the apparent positive experiences of those who had attended from the beginning. Although I had less time with students who were late participants, their voices, when they were available, were equally relevant and compelling. As noted, Assent Forms and Parent Informed Consent forms were completed for all nine participant students before any data were collected – of the thirteen total participants, transcription data were collected on nine participants over the course of the study. The lack of a completed Student Assent Form or a Parent Informed Consent forms did not exclude students who did not have them from participating in the club. Students who did not complete the forms were able to participate fully in the horror literature club. I simply did not collect data on these four students.

Full Participant Profiles

British Cookie – British Cookie is practical in nature and holds designs to experience the world. When asked about her choice of name, she replied simply, "…I like cookies, and I like Britain." Her interests, indeed, are varied across the globe – she is fascinated with South Korea in particular and wants to experience multiple cultures in her lifetime: "Korea seems like a fun place to go…and the stuff there is cheaper than it is here."

British Cookie is an avid reader of manga (a Japanese style of comic books with often mature themes) and horror stories from Asia; she also enjoys hanging out with her sister in her free time. She is jovial and accepting in nature, and appreciates a good scare every now and then. She longs for adventures in exotic places she's never been and is a person who likes to look at issues from multiple perspectives. This is evidenced in her love of mysteries and trying to figure out the culprit of a crime. Her mom considers her weird for her love of ghosts and zombies.

Cloud – "I don't know if I'd rather be called a boy or a girl." Cloud was very open about the fact, at this point in eir (this student's chosen pronoun) life, ey identified with both genders; as such, I am making a conscious choice to honor this by inserting Cloud's chosen inclusive, non-gender specific pronouns when discussing em (Chak, 2015).

Unwaveringly upbeat, Cloud prizes creativity, kindness, and intelligence as eir strengths. "I like to create things and act like different things, So, I like drawing and cooking and stuff, and it gives me an idea to make different things and do my own thing. …I like to draw…fantasy-type things...I like drawing in the anime art style, so I take video games where they're more realistic and turn them into…anime-ish concepts."

A fan of the *Zelda* gaming series, Cloud is passionate about ensuring that others feel welcomed and supported. Ey is patient and welcoming to those around eir, and offers insights

which are often profound in their optimism and maturity. Cloud shared multiple personal connections throughout the duration of the Horror Literature Club, and it soon became evident that ey was respected by eir peers.

IPod – If given the choice, IPod would listen to music twenty-four hours a day. A perfect day for her would be doing arts and crafts while listening and singing along to her favorite tunes. During the sessions, she was exuded a quiet playfulness, and indicated many times that she enjoyed being a part of the sessions. She feels that she is "creative, funny, and not perfect."

She likes to use her hands to create different forms of art and is intrigued by scrapbooking and other "hands-on" arts. Her presence is supportive and nurturing to others. She tends to remain calm and grounded through her persistent cheeriness.

Karate Kid – It would be safe to say "The Kid" is a walking encyclopedia of esoteric knowledge, particularly around governmental conspiracy theories and the mysterious world of unidentified flying objects (U.F.O.s). A longtime student of the martial arts, he is ever eager to share his enthusiasm for learning new things and his ideas around possible espionage, cover-ups, and intrigue. He resonates with monsters and aliens over the typical ghostly fare and is a huge fan of films like *The Thing*.

"It's crazy, 'cause what goes on is a plain and simple story. …they die, and most of the time it's interesting, but monsters…have some crazy backstories – they fell in a toxic waste thingy or something like that – it gets in-depth."

While disliking writing, Karate Kid appreciates socialization and is excited when reading about and discussing his theories. He likes to think outside of the box and takes nothing for its surface value, always questioning ideas and proposing counter arguments to readily acceptable ideas.

Meme Lord – A talented anime-style artist and a gifted writer who chose a male identity recently, he isn't afraid to offer his witty insights and opinions publically but often keeps his artistic work to himself.

"I like to write sometimes, but nobody really likes it." He states, matter-of-factly, "they don't find it interesting. They read it, and then they're like, eh, I've read that a hundred times before, even though I've never read anything like that." He likes to build the backstories for the characters he creates. "I think it's going pretty swell, but nobody knows about it." He sees humor in the macabre and aspires to, one day, be a computer animator. "I like drawing on the computer, 'cause it's easier to shade…I like drawing traditionally, but shading with colored pencils is difficult."

He has both experienced and observed gender-specific bullying at school, yet is not afraid to advocate for both himself and others. He is articulate, positive, and enthusiastic about his friends and interests. He enjoys good jokes (not dumb ones!) and serves as a good-natured and level-headed "leader" of his group of friends and colleagues.

Scare Bear – To say that Scare Bear is musical would be a mighty understatement; she claims to play over ten instruments!

"I started out with the cello, then I got into trumpet and piano, and then I learned how to play viola and violin by ear. I can't play bass, yet. I play the drums, the flute, the clarinet…the saxophone a little bit. The kazoo." She values the "hands-on" approaches found in classes like orchestra, band, and choir, and prizes those experiences over other academics.

Somewhat shy at first, she is deeply empathetic to the world around her; she cares about current events and dreams of making the world a better place. Once she becomes comfortable in her surroundings, she offers both humorous observations and wisdom, often in the same breath.

Frequently, throughout the recordings, she would provide me with secret messages when I was otherwise occupied:

"Mister, listen, if you are listening to this right now, take a break. You don't want to get a cramp in your hand."

Late Participant Profiles

Jax – Jax joined us at the fifth week of Horror Literature Club. When it comes to competition, Jax is all in. "I like to compete against my friends in games." To that end, physical exercise is a favorite pastime that gives her an edge in friendly competition, although she prefers the outdoors over the gym. "I really like running, swimming, hiking, and biking."

She considers herself a "sleepy sad artist." When asked about how she refers to herself as "sad," she reframes to a description of "thoughtful." Visibly outgoing, Jax has a tendency to tell funny jokes in order to make others laugh and is reflective about her learning.

Melon – Melon joined us at the sixth week of Horror Literature Club. She was quick to adapt to the environment, and it was clear that she had a passion for ghost stories. She refers to herself as Melon "because I have a lot of personalities, like a melon has a lot of flavors."

Melon enjoys watching YouTube videos and drawing realistic subjects and anime for fun. "One thing most people don't know about me is how crazy I am around my family and how much I love a story (but mostly visual stories), because I like seeing the author's point of view." She values kindness, intelligence, and humor. She always finds ways to make personal connections to stories and enjoys the art of storytelling. A bit of a loner at times, she enjoys dancing, singing, and imbuing elements of the foreboding in her stories.

Dean – Dean joined us at the seventh week of Horror Literature Club. She loves the television show *Supernatural* on the CW television network and frequently watches it when she

can on YouTube; as such, she has adopted the moniker of one of her favorite characters: "I can relate to him a lot, aside from being in hell." She has also named her car Castiel after one of the angel characters on the series. She describes herself as a "sleepy emo artist" and is inspired by music. She connects with the ideas around the paranormal and the afterlife in a completely personal way after the recent loss of a loved one, making it clear that she strives to honor a life lived.

Collective Participant Reading Skill Performance Snapshot

While scoring a student's work and proficiency is arguably subjective in nature and falls into implications around the need for further academic examination regarding authentic assessment and assessment validity, I include the following table to identify possible performance strengths and potential performance challenges in key reading skills for participants overall. I include this information simply to provide additional context, as context "sensitivity in qualitative research offers the researcher a unique perspective on the social and historical context of the phenomenon so that greater understanding of the subject under study is achieved" (Chesson, p. 82, 2009). This information may provide additional implications around student engagement in literacy, as this study assumes that, over time, affective student engagement would positively correlate to increased levels of literacy performance – however, the study did not provide an appropriate timeframe to gauge these potential effects. As we know, however, literacy is not simply derived of reading comprehension and is comprised of multiple skills. In the following table, overall percentages are used and broken down by skill as to whether a skill is a possible strength or a possible challenge area so as to ensure students are not identifiable or labeled by academic performance. As identified in the previous chapter, the district has moved away from traditional percentage-based scoring and has adapted a four-point scale to reflect a

progression of mastery in key concepts. For example, a 1.0 score on an assignment would be considered non-proficient; a 2.0 would be considered partially proficient. A student must reach a score of 3.0 to be considered proficient. For a student to score a 4.0, he, she or they must have shown mastery beyond proficiency as determined by the teacher. On a scale of 1 (limited understanding) to 4 (mastery), a score recorded as less than a 2.5 was used as an indicator of a possible reading challenge.

Table 3. Student Participant Reading Skills Snapshot - Week 10

Reading Skill	Possible Reading Strength (*n* Above 2.5)	Possible Reading Challenge (*n* Less than 2.5)
Story Elements – Story Devices (Fiction)	7	2
Rhetorical Criticism	7	2
Themes and Central Ideas – Determine a Central Idea	6	3
Literary Comparisons and Source Material	6	3
Questioning, Inference, and Interpretation – Using textual evidence to support	5	4
Text Structures and Features	5	4
Determining Author's Point-of-View	5	4
Context Clues – Determine meaning of unfamiliar words in a text	5	4

In examining collective performance data of Table 3, the areas of Story Elements, Rhetorical Criticism, Themes and Central Ideas, and Literary Comparisons to Source Material may be general strengths. The fact that these data were not assessed nor examined prior to the beginning of the horror literature club make the potential results of the horror literature club inconclusive in regards to measuring actual growth in reading skills. As such, these detailed data

are provided in the findings chapter for context only but do have implications around further research, specifically in relation to building reading skills. In the next section, participant perspectives on previous experiences in literacy classrooms are further explored.

Participants' Perspectives of Previous Classroom Experiences

"My literacy class is sometimes…so boring!" – British Cookie

This section focuses on students' responses and perspectives around the nature of engaging literacy classes. First, I examined written open-ended survey responses provided by six participants at the first club meeting (and had new participants to the study complete these for analysis purposes as well). I then presented findings from student interviews and spontaneous in-class discussions regarding student participation perceptions on literacy instruction.

Open-Ended Survey Responses

During the first formal session of the after school Horror Literature Club, participant survey questions were distributed with the intent of gathering information on previous literacy class experiences. The questions posed were designed to capture either the application, or the lack thereof, of the elements of the proposed Affective Learning Framework. At this session, six students were present; all returned their anonymous surveys. When asked if students found typical literacy class interesting, five students indicated that they sometimes found class interesting, and one student indicated that reading and writing class was not interesting. Students were asked to provide a brief reason as to why they chose to answer in the manner they did. The following table captures their responses and potential themes.

Table 4. Emerging Themes: Student Experiences – Is Literacy Class Interesting?

Literacy Class Interesting?	Reason	Theme(s)
Sometimes	"…because they pick out stuff that they want, not what students want."	Lack of Choice, Lack of Interest, Lack of Connectedness
Sometimes	"...it is not fun – we sit around on computers."	Lack of Interest, Lack of Connectedness
Sometimes	"It depends on the book we read or what type of work we do. I don't like when we do something that's boring."	Conditional Interest, Lack of Interest (Boredom)
Sometimes	"It all depends on what we do and how interesting it is."	Conditional Interest
Sometimes	"I like literacy sometime (sic) because (sic) we may not do something very fun and sometimes they aren't."	Conditional Interest
No	"…because not many choices for stories."	Lack of Choice

Lack of choice, in which students felt they had no autonomy in selecting activities or reading materials that were interesting to them ("…because they pick out stuff they want…"), was prominent in two of the responses as highlighted in Table 4. Lack of connectedness, in which students did not feel that the information was relevant or meaningful to them, also occurred in two of the responses ("…we sit around on computers."). Lack of interest and conditional interest were each noted by three students. Lack of interest, in which students indicated that they were bored or disengaged in the activity or content, occurred in three responses ("I don't like when we do something that's boring.". The theme of conditional interest

could be defined as dependent on the context of the situation or the assignment ("It depends…"). Conditional interest, in which the student may or may not be interested in the lesson, is dependent on the specific learning activity the student is expected to participate in, the student's relationship with the teacher, the student's perception of the teacher, the student's attitude toward learning, the student's attitude toward the environment, or any combination of the above. Well discussed. What about an overall interpretation of the table. That could be discussed briefly at the start of the paragraph. For example, you might state that no students expressed frequent interest in literacy class, with all but one "no" responding with "sometimes." That only one mentioned times when literacy class was interesting and the rest focused on what was not interesting; that there were multiple reasons that focused on choice, lack of connectedness, lack of interest, and conditional interest. And whatever other overall patterns you see in the table.

When students were asked what they wish teachers would do to make reading instruction more interesting, five students responded as follows:

Table 5. Emerging Themes: Student Responses to Promote Interest in Reading

Response	Theme(s)
"Let us choose our stories to work on an assignment with."	Choice
"I wish the teachers would let us pick what story we read."	Choice
"Let us choose the article or the book."	Choice
"Give us choices."	Choice
"Not give us so much work."	Workload

The concept of choice, which was evident in four responses highlighted in Table 5, focused primarily on the type of reading material used in order to complete an assignment ("Let us choose our stories to work on an assignment with," "I wish the teachers would let us pick what story we read," "Let us choose the article or the book."). The statement, "Give us choices," while broad, could be taken in multiple contexts. In one aspect, this implies a choice of material. On the other hand, it could indicate a student's desire of choice around an assignment. The concept of workload ("Not give us so much work") may imply that students don't find the work relevant or meaningful. It could also denote challenge of accessing the content for a learner who might be having difficulty with the content. This clearly aligns with literature which focuses on the importance of interest and choice (Parsons, Malloy, Parsons and Burrowbridge, 2015).

When students were asked what they wish teachers would do to make writing instruction more interesting, six students responded as follows:

Table 6. Emerging Themes: Student Responses to Promote Interest in Writing

Response	Theme(s)
"Give us a choice."	Choice
"Make us do narrative writing with our interests."	Interest
"Bring more fiction so that you have a wide variety of what to write."	Interest, Choice
"They can make up a story maybe, or they can try also making it fun."	Interest, Connectedness
"Hands on – LEGOS"	Interest, Connectedness
"Give more simple and fun work."	Interest, Connectedness

Choice, or the level of autonomy a student has in selecting materials or content, was prominent in two of the responses in Table 6. Connectedness, which indicates a level of background knowledge or understanding a student has toward the learning, was evident in three of the responses. The statement, "Give more simple…work." suggests that the student found the work inaccessible based on their perceived knowledge in the material as a point of connectedness. "Hands-on…" also implied a desire to deepen understanding of key concepts, as the participant noted that she learned best when having "hands-on" while "…make up a story…" could relate to background knowledge – all aspects of a student's connectedness to the material. The most recurring theme was interest, which was present in five of the responses.

Participant Perspective

When each participant was asked how effective reading teachers were at using their interests to teach literacy or providing reading choice based on student interests, responses typically indicated that they did not feel that teachers consistently addressed or honored their interests outside of independent reading time, when offered. During the horror literature club sessions and participant interviews, discussion around what they found engaging or not emerged in a more natural fashion through dialogue and observations. In the transcript excerpts included in this chapter, I note when participant response or chunks of dialogue are linked to a specific code or theme. In her personal interview, I asked British Cookie what she enjoyed most about her reading class.

> **British Cookie** – Well, the one thing I really like about reading class is that like you – we can read stories about things, and…there's like, manga or there's regular, just books. (INTEREST)
>
> **Davis** – Ok. And when you're reading, do you get silent reading time, independent reading time?
>
> **British Cookie** – Yeah.
>
> **Davis** – Like the first part of the period?
>
> **British Cookie** – Yeah.
>
> **Davis** – So you get to choose (during) that time whatever you read about? (CHOICE)
>
> **British Cookie** – Yeah.
>
> **Davis** – When you're learning about a skill, like let's say you're identifying main idea or doing a plot diagram - do you get to choose the stories that you use when you do that?
>
> *(Brit shakes her head, indicating no)* (LACK OF CHOICE)
>
> **Davis** – No, that's typically chosen by the teacher?
>
> **British Cookie** – Yeah.

Davis – Yeah? Does the teacher pick stories that are interesting to you?

British Cookie – Not that much. (LACK OF INTEREST)

Davis – No? Go ahead and talk to me a little bit about that.

British Cookie – My stories that I would want is like, fiction that are not real, that can, like, take you on an adventure. (INTEREST)

Davis – Mm-hm.

British Cookie – Yeah.

Davis – Ok. And you don't really feel like your teacher gets into that much?

British Cookie – Yeah, not much. (CONDITIONAL INTEREST)

Davis – What does your teacher do?

British Cookie – Like…don't get books that like, take you on an adventure, stuff like that. (LACK OF INTEREST)

Davis – Ok, so you want like a story that tells a tale and tells an adventure.

British Cookie – Yeah.

Davis – Do you think that you could learn reading skills through, like, stories like that?

British Cookie – Mm-hm!

Davis – Or do you think you have to read certain types of stories?

British Cookie – I think I could (learn and) read stories like that. (CONNECTEDNESS)

Davis – Yeah?

British Cookie – And that would get me more in class. (INTEREST, CONNECTEDNESS)
(British Cookie Interview, Lines 117-176)

While British Cookie stated that she was given a choice in the book she selected during independent reading time, she said that she had no choice in being able to self-select materials during classroom instruction. She also implied that independent reading time, the only time she

was allowed choice, was her favorite thing about reading class. The stories that were selected by the teacher for instructional purposes generally didn't interest her. She felt that having choice in what to read would help her engage in the learning – in referencing my field notes, she became particularly animated at the idea of using her interest in manga and multicultural horror to learn key concepts. As British Cookie discussed her lack of choice and lack of interest in what she was reading in literacy class beyond independent reading time, I was able to make these connections across interviews as they related to other student participants. I also discovered in my interviews with students that not all teachers provided the opportunity for independent reading time during class. When asked, in her personal interview, about whether the reading in her class was interesting, Scare Bear responded as follows:

> **Scare Bear** – Um, not as much as it used to be in elementary school, 'cause now I don't get to see everyone, but I have no control over that, but also it's really boring because all we do is paper worksheets or write notes in our notebook or do an online task. It's boring. (LACK OF INTEREST)
>
> **Davis** – Is it boring? Is that how you would describe it?
>
> **Scare Bear** – Except for in orchestra, choir, and band. …'Cause those are hands-on. (INTEREST)
>
> **Davis** – You're speaking to really specifically to literacy and maybe some other classes that aren't so hands-on, right? *(Scare Bear affirms)*
>
> **Davis** – … Do you feel like the teachers give you a choice in what you read about?
>
> **Scare Bear** – No. (LACK OF CHOICE)
>
> **Davis** – Like when you're doing a lesson or something, or when you're doing independent reading, they might give you a choice, right?
>
> **Scare Bear** – We never do that. (LACK OF CONNECTEDNESS)
>
> **Davis** – Really? You don't have independent reading?
>
> *(Scare Bear shakes her)*

Davis – So you just basically are assigned like a story or something, and that's what you do?

Scare Bear – Yeah, pretty much! (LACK OF CHOICE)

Davis – So what does a typical reading lesson look like?

Scare Bear – Um, you get a paragraph, you read it, you read it again, this time you go and highlight claims and evidences, and then you turn it in. (*Facial expression indicates dislike)* (LACK OF INTEREST, LACK OF CONNECTEDNESS)
(Scare Bear Interview, Lines 15-52)

She noted here that reading wasn't as interesting as it used to be to her in elementary school and that she had no choice in selecting reading materials that were interesting to her in order to learn key reading concepts. She explicitly stated that reading class was "boring," and that it lacked the "hands-on" approach she liked. She stated that, unlike British Cookie, her class was never provided independent reading time. She goes on the describe literacy class as a rote and non-engaging learning experience ("…you get a paragraph, you read it, you read it again, this time you go and highlight claims and evidences, and then you turn it in."). Scare Bear described a passive learning environment where it was unclear as to the level of connection a student had to either the paragraph assigned or to the writing of the paragraph, so this was dually coded as a lack of both interest and connectedness.

When I asked Cloud about whether teachers could make their classes more interesting, ey said, "I think so, because a lot of the times with the articles, there's a lot of kids that either fall asleep or don't pay attention in class because based on how good the article is, and I recognized, like, when I was in (Teacher's) class, she, um, did these summative articles, like with the hurricanes and stuff, oh, and it was homework, and all of the kids didn't turn it in, and she asked some of us why, and they said we weren't really interested in it. … the more interested you are in something, the more you'll wanna do it" (INTEREST). When I asked eir what ey most enjoyed

about reading, ey said, “I think the favorite part of my class is like, the first fifteen minutes because (Teacher) lets us read for the first fifteen minutes, and when I read, it’s like I go to a different place” (INTEREST, CHOICE). Cloud noted here that ey is given a choice as to what ey reads during independent reading time, but that, otherwise, reading materials are at the discrimination of the teacher.

When asked about the level of choice he had in his literacy class, Karate Kid indicated that conditional choice was provided to students. “Most of the time, the teacher will pick something, but like, occasionally, if we’re doing good, ‘cause we’re doing argumentative writing, (Teacher) will tomorrow probably have us pick a side for the junk food project” (upon clarification, some participants were required to do a research project on junk food in their literacy classrooms). Each participant interviewed indicated a general lack of choice and interest in the materials they read for reading, aside from a few students’ experiences with independent reading. As participants shared their experiences around literacy class, I noted typical tones of frustration and boredom – exaggerated eye rolls, amused laughter when asked about choice, and explicit statements which suggested disengagement.

A lack of engagement is also suggested by the level of understanding, confidence, or comfort the student has toward a specific skill or task (connectedness). In the following excerpt, Karate Kid claimed that he doesn’t like to write; when prompted further, he stated that he didn’t like writing because it was too challenging for him, indicating a significant lack of connectedness due to his perception of writing as being too hard. When I asked Karate Kid why he didn’t like writing, he replied, “’Cause it’s hard” (Karate Kid Interview, Line 61).

The confidence level or support that a student has around a foundational skill could affect the classroom learning experiences (Briggs, 2014). All students who chose to respond to

questions around the classroom or learning environment emphasized its importance but discussed the challenges inherent to engagement within a potentially unsafe learning space. Meme Lord indicated that the learning environment was negatively affected by students who didn't understand something, that he generally did not feel safe sharing personal reflections with others, and that, often, teachers seemed more frustrated about being asked for help than they were supportive.

> **Davis** – Do you feel like you have a safe environment…to where you could share ideas without feeling ridiculed?
>
> **Meme Lord** – Only in, like, one or two classes…the rest, there are just people who, like, no, you can't say that, or I'll beat you up after school. (SAFETY)
>
> **Davis** – Really? Wow.
>
> **Meme Lord** – Yeah, there's kids like that at this school. This school is not the safest place ever. (SAFETY)
>
> **Davis** – Or people might tease people for saying things that maybe they don't agree with?
>
> **Meme Lord** – Yeah. …don't be too strict on kids who don't really understand something, like try to help them understand what they're not getting right, 'cause usually, in most classes, the teachers are like, I don't know, go ask your student mate right next to you, and the student mate right next to you might not really know what's happening, either, so it's just confusing. (LACK OF CONNECTEDNESS, RELATIONSHIP)
>
> **Davis** – …if you feel like students aren't getting it, do you think the chance of them getting it, if they were reading something they loved, would be a little better?... maybe you don't understand this concept, but maybe I teach it though something you love, do you think there'd be a better chance of a student grasping that?
>
> **Meme Lorde** – Yeah.
>
> **Davis** – Why?
>
> **Meme Lord** – 'Cause they'll focus more on it than some old book, like they're reading something that they like, they'll focus on really important details, sometimes small details, but when they're reading a boring book, they'll just like skim past important stuff and small stuff. (INTEREST, CONNECTEDNESS)
> (Meme Lord Interview, Lines 132-165)

While Meme Lord felt safe in a few of his classes, he did not feel safe in all. He didn't feel as if he or his peers could openly share their thoughts or express their ideas without some sort of public ridicule. He also suggested that teachers needed to generally do more to make students feel comfortable – like Karate Kid, he also noted that perhaps the reason students aren't engaged is because they didn't understand the content. He also noted the importance of a teacher directly supporting a student who might be struggling with a key idea or learning concept with clear implications around how he feels that learning is dependent on being able to feel safe and have a positive relationship with both the teacher and one's peers.

The idea of safety and classroom environment came up consistently throughout the session transcripts as an indicator to how participants viewed their learning environments. As students began to share their experiences, another theme emerged which related specifically to two important factors of a positive learning environment – teacher engagement and relationships.

Cloud – Is being a teacher fun?

Davis – It is.

Cloud – It doesn't seem fun here. (TEACHER ENGAGEMENT)

Meme Lord – All the teachers hate the students here. (RELATIONSHIP)

Davis – All the teachers hate the students here?

Cloud – No! *(Multiple students echo Cloud)* Kids are just really annoying. Is there a lot of drama in your school?

Davis – There can be a lot of drama at school.

Scare Bear – Wait until we get there. *(Laughter)*

Cloud – There's a lot of drama happening here; that's what's happening now, so the teachers are stressed out. (TEACHER ENGAGEMENT)

Davis – …So you think…your teachers are stressing a little bit?

(Students indicate general agreement) (TEACHER ENGAGEMENT)

At the beginning of the previous excerpt, one student expressed their feelings that teachers "hated" students while several suggested that teacher stress was both evident and prohibitive in building strong teacher-to-student relationships. Karate Kid went on to state his belief that a teacher might struggle with making the learning engaging because the targets were not fun to teach. "Well, most of the time…they have to do stuff you can't make fun, 'cause there are learning targets that you can't…" In interactions and discussions around relationship and teacher engagement, several of the students felt that being "stressed" was, in many ways, outside of the teacher's control, yet indicated a perception that the more a teacher was "stressed," the more disengaged they were.

Summary – Classroom Experiences

Reflecting their experiences in the literacy classroom, students indicated general boredom when they read something that was chosen for them by the teacher without input. Interestingly, the concept of "boredom" is a recurring theme in the literature around student perceptions of school and in dropout rates – this will be further explored in the discussions chapter. Reading and writing assignments provided in literacy class typically did not align with student interests. A recurring experience was that students generally perceived a lack of help from or general disengagement of the teacher. Students disliked when they had to practice for state assessment, or when they sat passively doing work sheets or computer work. Students indicated having fun in literacy class when they were able to relate and connect to the reading or writing content (relevance, controversy), when teachers were having fun themselves (positive learning environment), and when they had a choice in what to read and write about (interest/autonomy). These findings were not unprecedented, as previous literature around student engagement noted

increased amounts of boredom and disengagement in the classroom (Bauerlein, 2013). However, as noted earlier in chapter two and in the following discussions chapter, student voice has been largely lacking in studies around authentic student engagement. It would stand to reason, then, that this study provided insights around both how students perceived both their previous experiences in literacy classrooms and how teachers might best affectively, and effectively, engage them. The next section outlines the coding and the themes which I constructed as a result of the data analysis of this study, followed by a final section which illustrates the application of the proposed affective learning framework in learning activities facilitated during the horror literature club.

Coding

The study consisted of eleven after-school sessions over a three month period, resulting in a total of eight hours and twenty-one minutes of audio recordings. Each session was recorded via Microsoft Voice Recorder. Of the approximately eight-and-a-half hours of recorded audio, one-hundred pages of dialogue were transcribed.

Interview questions posed to students were either derived from key elements of the Affective Learning Framework or as follow-up inquiries to student responses. Transcriptions of both interviews and recorded after-school sessions were cross referenced with the Affective Learning Framework and examined and coded. The data analysis process consisted of two phases of coding and categorizing – a priori coding and inductive coding which resulted in seventeen identified codes overall – as a means of examining student experiences when the Affective Learning Framework was applied. This process was outlined in further detail in the data analysis section of the methodology chapter.

The following section details identified codes, categories, and themes/domains of the study. Elements of the Affective Learning Framework – Interest/Autonomy, Relevance, and Controversy were foundational as part of the initial inquiry and a priori coding. Over the course of the study, I constructed four major themes/categories (domains of the Affective Learning Framework) out of sixteen identified codes. Potential supports and potential constraints as a result of the Affective Learning Framework are noted throughout.

A Priori Coding – Elements of the Affective Learning Framework

Interest/Autonomy

The ideas of student interest and autonomy in regards to meeting required learning targets were prominent throughout the thematic coding of the transcripts and other relevant data. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, student participants revealed that they felt that they experienced very little choice in their literacy class, with the exception of those who had teachers who facilitated independent reading time. Students did not feel as if their interests were considered when choosing texts or activities. During the horror literature club, students were clearly excited that they had any choice at all and were consistently offered structured autonomy in how they wanted to use their time. Of course, there were implied constraints here as well. I would typically offer choice, but one might argue that it was still "choice" within the framework of a teacher's perspective. For example, I chose to use the short story "Harold" due to my understanding that students enjoyed horror. I did not have students self-select every story they read or that we discussed for the horror literature club.

Relevance/Connectedness

While the element of relevance is addressed at length in the literature review of this study, the concept of connectedness is also significant. Connectedness, as present in this

research, is both indicative of the level of background knowledge or prior understanding a student has regarding a specific concept as well as the ability to make personal connections to the learning. Without connectedness, a learning concept may or may not be relevant – as such, I have now included relevance/connectedness as a revised element of the Affective Learning Framework in the discussions chapter. As noted in the literature review of this study, relevance in context to education is twofold, referring to "learning experiences that are either directly applicable to the personal aspirations, interests, or cultural experiences of students (personal relevance) or that are connected in some way to real-world issues, problems, and contexts (life relevance)" (Relevance, 2013). It should also be noted that relevance in a topic may generate interest.

In order to continually assess interest and feedback in what we were doing in the horror literature club, it was important to do frequent assessments as to student connectedness levels. After every activity, I asked students to reflect, or to provide feedback on, what they had just participated in. This also helped inform our data and allowed me to get a quick "snapshot" of how they were perceiving their experiences. I sometimes asked them to walk to corners which corresponded with a rating scale, or simply asked them to raise their hands and indicate where they fell on the scale with their fingers. "How many of you, on a scale of 1 to 4, 1, I absolutely hated this story, 2, I kind of liked it, 3, I liked it, 4, this was really cool. How many of you liked the story" (Session 1, Lines 569-570)? Students, in this instance, responded with all fours – throughout the horror lit club, student "snapshot" response to the activities we undertook in the horror literature club was consistently positive. A potential constraint was that, with only eleven weeks, it was a little challenging to determine complete buy-in or to completely understand student cues around their interests. This goes back to earlier discussion around students who

chose not to share or chose to remain quiet while students were sharing out. While I connected individually with every student, and most students seemed interested in the work we were doing while we were in the horror literature club, this interpretation could be the result of my own bias in thinking that they were. A key point here, however, is that student feedback is critical in better understanding their interests in order to effectively apply all domains of the Affective Learning Framework.

Hook/Controversy

Teaching the horror genre, in and of itself, is inherently controversial. Every individual differs in their enjoyment and experience around horror. In referencing previous chapters, one of the approaches to the horror literature club was that the horror genre could empower us to examine issues of morality, social issues, and thematic challenges. Horror can serve as an effective way to engage students through controversy. Not all agree, of course – horror is often blamed as being inappropriate, and, frankly, there is a lot of horror that is inappropriate for school-aged children. As the study unfolded, an inherent challenge with the idea of implementing controversy in the classroom is that it proves to be vast in scope. On one end, there exists what Marzano refers to as friendly controversy ("hooking" students with interesting information or engaging them with a controversial idea). The controversial questions I asked or the statements I made to students typically fell into this category. "Why do you think we are fascinated by ghosts or the unexplained" (Session 2, Line 213)? Yet, it should be noted that controversy alone is not a necessity to the successful application of the affective learning framework. Indeed, interesting or fun facts could be used to engage students without controversy. As such, I have re-designated the domain addressing controversy as "Hook/Controversy," in which either could be used to initiate and promote affective learning. In

the course of the study, a different and unanticipated type of controversy emerged, one that I have labeled “heavy controversy.” I discuss this in greater depth in context to the possible constraints of the study near the end of this chapter.

The following table provides information on the number of times instances of dialogue or actions were linked to domains in general. All codes were organized into one of the four element domains of the Affective Learning Framework. Recorded instance numbers are shared by the grouping of all of the codes which align to the domain. I would note that there is no intended implication of any statistical or specific significance to the numerical data presented in Table 7; rather, the intention is to simply indicate general patterns of frequency as I observed them as part of the overall thematic analysis of the data.

Table 7. Domains of the Affective Learning Framework (Themes) and Codes

Domain	Frequency of Domain	Code
Relevance/Connectedness	237	***Connectedness*** – Indicates a level of background knowledge or understanding the student has towards the learning **(Lack of Connectedness)** *Workload* – Indicates the amount of student work – indicators suggest that students feel that the amount of work a teacher provides may be arbitrary and not based on need *Humor* – Indicates a student's amusement of a specific topic or idea
Interest/Autonomy	233	***Choice*** – Students are empowered to choose materials that are interesting to them **(Lack of Choice)** *Conditional Interest* – Interest present based on certain relational or situational conditions (Lack of Interest)
Hook/Controversy	45	***Genre-Specific*** – Controversy may inherently exist with the application of any sub-genre for teaching/learning purposes ***Friendly Controversy*** – Interesting ideas used to hook students into the lesson ***Heavy Controversy*** – Controversial ideas or events that may cause anxiety or discomfort
Positive Learning Environment	31	*Safety* – Students are comfortable sharing their ideas with others in class; they do not feel threatened, bullied, or disempowered (Lack of Safety) *Relationship* – The extent to which students felt comfortable approaching the teacher for help or support (Lack of Relationship) *Teacher Engagement* – The extent of which the teacher is engaged with or enjoying the lesson (Lack of Teacher Engagement)

As noted in the data analysis chapter, there were two distinct phases of coding. The first phase consisted of a priori coding in which I examined transcript data for occurrences of each of the three domains of the originally proposed Affective Learning Framework. As the domains were pre-determined, the categorization process happened concurrently during this first phase. During this phase, eight codes were identified that fit within the constructs of the three domains of the initially proposed Affective Learning Framework – connectedness, lack of connectedness, choice, lack of choice, conditional interest, lack of interest, genre-specific controversy, friendly controversy, and heavy controversy. Codes which were identified in the first phase of coding are bolded in the table above.

In the second phase, which consisted of inductive coding, all transcribed data were reviewed to identify emerging patterns of responses and interactions that could be coded as independent of any of the three domains of the Affective Learning Framework and that implied potential constraints of its application. During this phase, an additional eight codes were identified and constructed, six of which did not fit into any of the three domains of the initially proposed Affective Learning Framework – safety, lack of safety, teacher relationship, lack of teacher relationship, teacher engagement, and lack of teacher engagement were identified as not falling into one of the three original domains, while humor and workload were later categorized into the domain of Relevance/Connectedness. The six codes that did not fit into the original three domains resulted in a fourth domain of the Affective Learning Framework: Positive Learning Environment. The codes identified during the inductive coding process appear as non-bolded in Table 7.

While a priori coding initially helped in determining categories and domains, the second phase of inductive coding analysis indicated additional possibilities for categorizing which are

noted here for record. The following table illustrates two broad categories in context to student experiences, both as they shared their stories and as they participated in the after-school horror literature club. The categories indicated two broad categories that I identified as generally favored student experiences (Preferred Learning Experience) or non-favored learning experiences (Non-Preferred Learning Experience).

Table 8. Categories – Preferred Learning Experiences and Non-Preferred Learning Experiences

Preferred Learning Experiences	Non-Preferred Learning Experiences
Connectedness	Lack of Connectedness
Choice	Lack of Choice
Conditional Interest	Lack of Interest
Genre-Specific Controversy	Lack of Safety
Friendly Controversy	Lack of Teacher Relationship
Heavy Controversy	Lack of Teacher Engagement
Safety	Workload
Teacher Relationship	Heavy Controversy
Teacher Engagement	
Humor	

As illustrated in Table 8, events or dialogue that were coded as positive learning experiences indicated that students seemed to visibly engage when these conditions existed. The codes which were categorized into negative learning experiences indicated that students felt a lack of engagement when these conditions were present. Note that heavy controversy appears in both categories – this is purposeful in that students had both positive experiences (during the horror literature club) and negative experiences (adults in her life) when heavy controversy emerged, although this is somewhat complex – heavy controversy seemed to appear in a negative context when adults and teachers didn't allow the student to engage in a meaningful way.

Learning Environment

The sub-themes of safety, relationship, and teacher engagement all emerged in the form of learning environment. While I had acknowledged "sense of belonging" as important in the

literature review, learning environment was unanticipated as a major theme, and an eventual domain of the Affective Learning Framework. It held clear prominence in discussions and observations. In many ways, the theme of learning environment is representative as to the extent that students feel comfortable in the classroom. Earlier, we discussed teacher engagement, which emerged repeatedly in the forms of stress related to the challenges of school.

> **British Cookie** - I think it would be better if, like, teachers, would not get mad, 'cause if they had a littler class…
>
> **Davis** – Yeah?
>
> **British Cookie** - …and, like, they wouldn't get mad that much if you'll be just sitting there listening, and you'll get done with your work faster. (Session 1, Lines 59-67)

According to British Cookie, larger class sizes equated to anger and frustration on the teacher's part, leading to a less positive learning environment and a general feeling of unwelcome. The idea of comparable class sizes serves as a potential constraint in the study; it would be perceived as easier to engage a group of thirteen students over a classroom of thirty-plus. The small setting of the horror literature club likely supported a positive learning environment, whereas larger class sizes could potentially constrain teacher and student efforts to build a positive learning environment as part of a key domain of the Affective Learning Framework. The theme of student concerns around teacher engagement came up repeatedly, as well as the importance of creating clear expectations, although students, again, implied teacher frustration as beyond their own control as a result, in part, of a perceived issue with student behaviors:

> **Davis** – …do you think that maybe some of the acting out is because students are getting bored, or what do you think that is? …if they were excited about what they were doing, do you think that would ease some of the classroom management stuff, or do you think that it wouldn't really matter?
>
> **Karate Kid** – I think it's mostly the students' fault.

Cloud – Yeah. Some kids talk a lot, so that's a problem because even if they tell us, Well, ok, we'll do something you guys want, they'll still be…they're still gonna talk.

Davis – Yeah? Would they be on task, though?

Karate Kid – Some teachers allow us to talk as long as we're doing our work. (Session 3, Lines 74-86)

Both Karate Kid and Cloud would go on to suggest that teachers could make the learning more engaging if they were approachable and engaged themselves.

The Four Domains of the Affective Learning Framework

Another possibility existed around combining both the presence, and lack thereof, of codes in order to create new categories. In this way, for example, connectedness and lack of connectedness would be simply fall into the category of "connectedness." The following table illustrates this categorization as each relate to the four domains of the revised Affective Learning Framework.

Table 9. Categories and the Domains of the Affective Learning Framework

Domain	Category
Relevance/Connectedness	Connectedness (Lack) Workload Humor
Interest/Autonomy	Choice (Lack) Interest (Lack
Hook/Controversy	Genre-specific Friendly controversy Heavy controversy
Positive Learning Environment	Safety (Lack) Relationship (Lack) Teacher Engagement (Lack)

As categorized in Table 9, each of the codes were organized into eleven key categories. In examining the key categories that emerged from the study, it is important to note that some categories included both the presence of the category or the lack (absence) of that category. For example, under the Positive Learning Domain, the category "Safety (Lack)" indicated both a presence, and a lack, or absence, of Safety.

The organization of a few of the codes into just one overall domain as represented in Table 9 presented a challenge. For example, the idea of choice, depending on context, could also fall into the domain of relevance. The presence of positive humor, when focused around or in context to the learning, can also suggest an effective and safe learning environment. Indeed, as the data were examined, positive learning environment began to emerge as more prominent than initially articulated in the originally proposed framework. I include it here and provide a consequently revised model of the Affective Learning Framework in the discussions chapter.

Summary – Coding

A thematic analysis addressed the following research questions: What prominent themes are constructed when students are asked about personal experiences with literacy instruction? Could these themes shift or change when horror is used to teach literacy? In order to identify potentially emerging themes in the study, the audio and transcripts of student interviews and horror literature club sessions were reviewed multiple times. Elements of the Affective Learning Framework – Interest/Autonomy, Relevance, and Controversy served as initial guidelines of the inquiry of the study. Through the analysis of the numerous transcripts of classroom activities and student interviews, as well as survey findings, I constructed four major themes (domains of the Affective Learning Framework). The seventeen codes at the foundation of this thematic analysis were uncovered through two phases of coding – a priori coding and inductive coding. These

were then clustered into one of the element domains of the Affective Learning Framework: Relevancy/Connectedness (which included workload and "humor"), Interest/Autonomy (which included choice, lack of choice, conditional interest, and lack of interest), Hook/Controversy, which included genre-specific, friendly controversy, and heavy controversy, and Positive Learning Environment (which included safety, relationship, and teacher engagement).

These themes hold clear implications around the research questions posed at the heart of the study and are specifically addressed in the subsequent discussions chapter: In what ways does the horror genre promote or constrain affective learning for students in an after-school horror fiction club? What are the experiences of students when an Affective Learning Framework is utilized? The next section will focus on attempting to address participant perspectives around literacy by engaging them in a few learning activities through materials in which they have expressed interest (the horror genre) and excerpt highlights resulting from the application of the domains of the Affective Learning Framework.

Application of the Affective Learning Framework – The Horror Literature Club

This section details the physical setting of the after-school horror literature club, outlines an event map summarizing who participated and the primary activity that took place in each session, highlights connections to the elements of the Affective Learning Framework, and focuses on factors that supported and constrained student engagement and learning when horror was utilized in a learning environment. The thematic analysis is broken into a series of vignettes by session, in which elements of the Affective Learning Framework are highlighted.

Setting

As the physical environment and setting can play a significant factor in influencing the experience of participants, I make a note of it here in the findings chapter from my own personal

perspective as both participant and researcher. Each session would typically begin by 4:30 P.M. after school. Students would begin arriving about fifteen minutes early. The teacher who would eventually serve as a contact for the club also graciously agreed to allow me to use his room. Snacks, ranging from apples, to popcorn, to low-sodium potato chips, were provided to the students at each session on my dime, culminating in a final pizza party (and a worthy deficit on this researcher's personal finances of about 200 bucks that I won't ever regret) by the end of the Horror Literature Club. The classroom was typical in size and comfortable. After a time, the somewhat stale musty fragrance of what could affectionately be referred to as "old school smell" dissipated as the nostrils acclimated. Contrasting this old school classroom feel was a large interactive television in one corner near the front of the room and a large Chromebook cart for students in the back. The seating included traditional (and blue!) desk-chair combinations typical in almost every popular teen angst, horror, or comedy film that took place in a school in the 1980s – these were organized into pods of four to promote cooperative learning and discussion. During the sessions, students would generally add a few desks and gather around the center pod – when we shared stories or discussions, they asked if we could dim the lights and play eerie music for ambience. I eventually brought an LED candle to set the mood, and a Chromebook was used to play a video of a campfire. Everywhere we turned, we were confronted with bookshelves that lined the walls and were loaded down with an impressive and colorful classroom library of books of multiple genres I would have been excited about when I was a kid – horror, fantasy, sci-fi, graphic novels, historical fiction, and non-fiction books that speculated about the existence of the likes of U.F.O.s, Bigfoot, and the paranormal. Perhaps my contact/host teacher was, in many ways, a kindred spirit to my own; posters of both literary

elements and zombies dotted the room, and he seemed as excited as I was when explaining the purpose of my study. Pictures taken of the classroom environment are included in Appendix F.

Event Map

The following event map provides an overview of each of the after-school horror literature club sessions. The table includes the session, the students who were in attendance, and a brief description of the primary activity that took place during each session.

Table 10. Event Map – Horror Literature Club

Session	Student Participants	Primary Activity	Focus/Additional Activities
Session 1	British Cookie, Cloud, IPod, Meme Lord, Scare Bear, Unnamed Student (*n*=6)	The short story "Harold" is used to teach literary elements. Students construct a plot diagram.	Interest, Connectedness, and Belonging; Introductions, Setting the purpose, Plot diagram/literary element review, "Harold" is discussed, Students reflect on using interest in the classroom
Session 2	British Cookie, Cloud, IPod, Karate Kid, Meme Lord, Scare Bear, 1 Unnamed Student (*n*=7)	Students share paranormal experiences and stories	Personal Connections, Experiences, and Safety; Students discuss haunted concerts, ghostly orbs, strange shadows, disembodied footsteps/voices, intuition, Students begin to identify haunted cases they would like to explore
Session 3	British Cookie, Cloud, IPod, Karate Kid, Meme Lord, Scare Bear, 2 Unnamed Students (*n*=8)	Students select a paranormal case or a topic for research so that they can share their findings with the group	Controversy, Relevance, and Autonomy; Students and Davis discuss the fun of being a teacher, Logistics around snacks, Students finalize research choices: Bermuda Triangle, Suicide Forest of Japan, Korean ghost stories, The Phoenix Lights; Heavy controversy emerges in discussing school shootings
Session 4	British Cookie, Cloud, IPod, Karate Kid, Meme Lord, Scare Bear, 2 Unnamed Students (*n*=8)	Students share the details of their paranormal case and discuss whether they agree or disagree with its paranormal aspects. Students	Safety; Discussion of "drama" and bullying

		are encouraged to make an argument.	
Session 5	British Cookie, Cloud, IPod, Karate Kid, Meme Lord, Scare Bear, 1 Unnamed Students (*n*=7)	Students choose to research local allegedly haunted places – The Stanley Hotel, Riverdale Road, Washington Park. Students summarize key ideas.	Connectedness and Choice; Students want to continue club after study is over, Davis and students review plot diagram and literary elements, Students discuss potential paranormal or allegedly haunted sites near them
Session 6	British Cookie, Cloud, IPod, Karate Kid, Melon, Meme Lord, Scare Bear, 3 Unnamed Students (*n*=11)	Students identify an urban legend of interest. They break down literary elements of urban legend for research.	Connectedness and Choice; Individual interviews are conducted while students look up an urban legend of their choice
Session 7	British Cookie, Cloud, IPod, Karate Kid, Melon, Meme Lord, Scare Bear, 3 Unnamed Students (*n*=11)	Students retell their urban legends in their own words in a "campfire" style.	Humor, Positive Learning Environment, and Connectedness; Setting the tone and the physical environment, Students discuss favorite shows like *Supernatural* and *The Walking Dead*, Everyone is excited about spring break
Session 8	British Cookie, Cloud, IPod, Karate Kid, Melon, Meme Lord,	Students discuss favorite supernatural	Safety and Positive Learning Environment; Mastering the art of the evil laugh, Students

	Scare Bear, 3 Unnamed Students (*n*=11)	television shows and movies. Age appropriate film interpretations of two urban legends are shown.	discuss PG-13 vs R-rated films
Session 9	British Cookie, Cloud, Dean, IPod, Jax, Karate Kid, Melon, Meme Lord, Scare Bear, 4 Unnamed Students (*n*=13)	Students come up with a beginning horror scenario and begin writing narratives with a focus on using literary elements	Choice; Individual interviews are conducted while students work on the introductions to their stories
Session 10	British Cookie, Cloud, Dean, IPod, Jax, Karate Kid, Melon, Meme Lord, Scare Bear, 4 Unnamed Students (*n*=13)	Students provide verbal peer feedback on their short stories. Stories are shared out with additional ideas. Students discuss the importance of literary elements in a good story.	Controversy and Using Horror; Students review the elements of a good story; Students share their perspectives as to whether not teachers should use horror in the classroom

The preceding event map (Table 10) captures a summary of the main activity which anchored our work for that particular lesson – it is not meant to be an exhaustive or comprehensive list of every activity which took place. The table was designed to offer additional context for secondary activities. The third column of the table identifies the key aspects or

domains of the Affective Learning Framework that were focused upon or that emerged in each section.

Following is a breakdown, by session, of some of the highlights that took place in relation to the application of the Affective Learning Framework. When appropriate, the session is framed through a narrative or descriptive lens to help bring context from both the student perspective as well as my own as the teacher-researcher. In presenting these data, I focused on the predominant domain of the Affective Learning Framework that was most emphasized. This is not to say that every domain was not present in every session. In fact, each domain of the Affective Learning Framework was evident throughout every session in some way. Transcribed audio and field notes were extensively used in representing the highlights of each section. Potential constraints, when evident, are noted throughout.

Session 1 – Interest, Connectedness, and Belonging

The first section illustrates my efforts to make students both feel comfortable with a new adult while also feeling safe in the learning environment which is the focus of the first section. Note how, in this first section, I reach out to a student as I visibly see something (an article of clothing in this instance) that could be personally or meaningfully relevant to that student. Note that I attempt to build rapport immediately. I also use cooperative learning structures as a means for students to begin constructing positive interactions amongst themselves.

1.1 – A Safe Learning Environment

The energy was palpable as I looked at the six eager faces before me. Students were happily chatting with each other in anticipation of the horror literature club. Discussions ranged from ghost stories to supernatural anime – their evident enthusiasm clearly indicated a desire to be there. I drew their attention to me as I outlined the purpose of this club. I explained to them I

felt like, in my experience, that literacy class could be fun. Here, students interjected that literacy class was often boring, depending on what the teacher "made" them read.

I noted that one student, Cloud, was wearing a *Zelda* shirt. Being the gamer that I am, I tried to connect with the student that, at this point, I did not know.

"I see a *Zelda* fan, here – correct?"

Cloud nodded, smiling, seemingly surprised that I even knew what the legendary Triforce symbol emblazoned on the shirt even meant. I explained that we could easily find evidence of the hero's journey through the context of the characters of the *Zelda* video game series.

"You could do a research report connecting how the characters and the stories have evolved in every game over time," I said. "Video games tell pretty amazing stories."

Cloud's eyes lit up. "They do."

In the first two minutes of the horror literature club, I had already started, with virtually no effort on my part, applying elements of the Affective Learning Framework. By tapping into Cloud's interest (video games) and making the introduction relevant, Cloud's response indicated that she felt an immediate sense of belonging and connection. This moment of building connection and tapping into students' interests would go on to build a level of openness and trust between the students and myself – a critical component in later being able to capture their authentic voices.

In an effort to establish safety early on in the horror literature club, I facilitated cooperative learning structures designed to promote widespread student discussion, to ensure that all students were equally able to participate, and to encourage students to celebrate each other. Using a cooperative learning model, all students were either assigned as an "A" or a "B." The

discussion itself focused on the idea of connectedness in preparation for the story element lesson plan using the short story, "Harold."

> **Davis** – … my A's – I want you to take about fifteen seconds and tell B everything you know about a scarecrow….I want you to think about it…think about a scarecrow. A's, I'm giving you a little think time. Think about a scarecrow. Alright, A's, when you've got something to say, give me a thumbs up, like I'm ready to share. Are we good? Alright, A's, I'm going to give you about 15 seconds – knock it off – show us what a scarecrow does. What is it? Go!
>
> *(Students take turns sharing. R monitors the discussions and keeps time.)*
>
> **Davis** – Good, now, we had, good A's, good job. B's, give them a thumbs up and say you did a great job.
>
> *(Students do so. Laughter.)*
>
> **Davis** – Alright, now, B's, I want you to tell me kind of a creepy factor of what the scarecrow might be. Why, why do we think that scarecrows may be creepy for some people? For a lot of people. Think about it. So B's – B's, if you've got something, go ahead, go!
> (Session 1, Lines 371-397)

I observed students interacting with each other. I noted that each student took turns sharing as pertaining to the cooperative learning structure. Students laughed, smiled, and seemed visibly enthusiastic about the work that was before us. By establishing trust and emphasizing a shared focus on respect, the horror literature club visibly appeared to be a safe space for students quickly on. The safety was a necessity in laying the foundation to ensure that students felt comfortable with both me and with each other in sharing, authentically, their personal experiences and feedback, something that students indicated throughout the study that they had felt was generally lacking in their literacy classrooms.

There are a few implications around limitations to the study here. As noted earlier, one cannot directly compare the safety felt in a small voluntary after-school club of less than ten students to an entire classroom of students who are required to take literacy for school credit.

There are implications, however, that safety is paramount; indeed, the concept of safety eventually fell under the added domain of positive learning environment in the revised Affective Learning Framework. The next section addresses both connectedness and autonomy as they occurred in the first session.

1.2 – Connectedness and Interest

This section highlights my efforts to tap into student interests and connectedness of learning through our first academic activity. As a result of some of the safety and trust-building activities that occurred early on, most students did not seem to hesitate to ask questions of me. The second section illustrates my attempts to connect students to the learning and engaging them through their interests. This would certainly not be the only time I would do this; these elements would recur throughout each session.

Knowing that I was a high school teacher, students were quick to ask me about what teaching was like and about my classes. I shared with them some of the activities that I had done with my students, like the Paranormal Investigator activity outlined in the appendix of this study. I asked them if this was something that they would be interested in – and there was unanimous approval.

In the first formal session of the horror literature club, I asked students to independently identify the story elements of a plot diagram and what each term represented as part of an anticipatory mini lesson I had planned to facilitate. Students needed a good deal of prompting to eventually identify and then define the following terms: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Sometimes referred to as a plot mountain, a plot diagram is designed to break down the progression of a story.

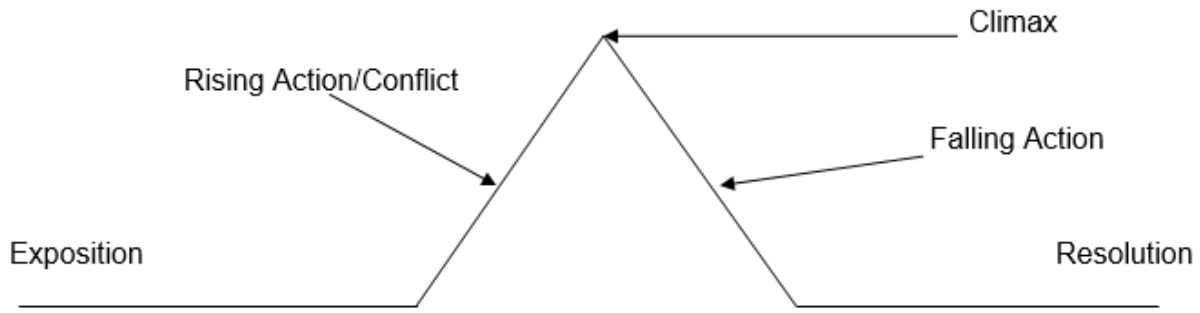


Figure 4. Plot diagram

The term exposition refers to any background information that might be pertinent as the story unfolds; rising action and conflict are events that lead to the eventual climax, or turning point, of a story. Story events begin to settle as the action falls, and new norms are established in the resolution, or "wrap-up," of the story. For a student, understanding these elements in a diagrammatic way can assist a student in identifying main ideas and themes of a fictional text.

For this exercise, I used a short story written by Alvin Schwartz as part of his *Scary Stories to Tell in the* Dark series. I facilitated a mini-lesson about a short story entitled "Harold." In the story, two farmers on an isolated farm create a scarecrow figure as a mockery to another farmer whom they loathed. They would come to mock the scarecrow, becoming verbally and physically abusive, which eventually comes to life and seeks retribution on those who have abused him. In the following excerpt of this mini-lesson, I invited students to make personal and relevant connections to the story. I asked four specific questions in order to promote connectedness and relevance – I've coded these questions below.

Davis –…What would you have done if you heard the thing grunt? (RELEVANCE)

British Cookie – I would go throw it in the trash.

Davis – You'd be like peace out with that?

Scare Bear – I'd kick it where it hurts.

Davis – Wow – I don't know if it would hurt because it's a doll. (*Laughter from students*) Do you think that maybe some of the meanness that the guys were showing Harold… is bringing it to life? (CONNECTEDNESS)

Scare Bear – Yeah.

Davis – Might have been a vengeance thing, right? (CONNECTEDNESS)
(Multiple students agree)

Davis – How many of you have watched a movie where the ghost is coming back for revenge? (RELEVANCE)

Scare Bear – I don't really like scary movies – I just like reading it.
(Session 1, Lines 486-507)

Moving from personal connections, students are then able to make more explicit academic connections around the potential theme, or moral, of the story.

Davis – …when we talk…about right and wrong, what do you think? What's the lesson? What's the lesson in all of this? What was the lesson for these two farmers? What does this lesson tell us?

Cloud – Don't be mean. (CONNECTIONS)

Davis – Don't be mean.

Meme Lord – Or they may skin you. (HUMOR)

Davis – Or they may skin you, right? *(Laughter)* How many of you think that's a pretty good lesson?

(S's raise hands)

Davis – …even a simple short scary story has an important lesson.

Scare Bear – Don't skin people! *(Laughs)* (HUMOR)
(Session 1, Lines 691-707)

In both of the preceding excerpts, one can also note the presence of an important area of relevance – humor. Students are making personal connections through the use of humor ("I would go throw it in the trash," "Don't skin people!"). Student humor was a prominent sub-theme which emerged as a part of the relevance domain, for their humor around topics indicated

both meaningfulness and personal connection. The sub-theme of humor was monitored and examined carefully in order to determine whether or not it fell into the context of the study. Additionally, one can see the rich academic connections (main idea, supporting details) students are making as they discussed the short story.

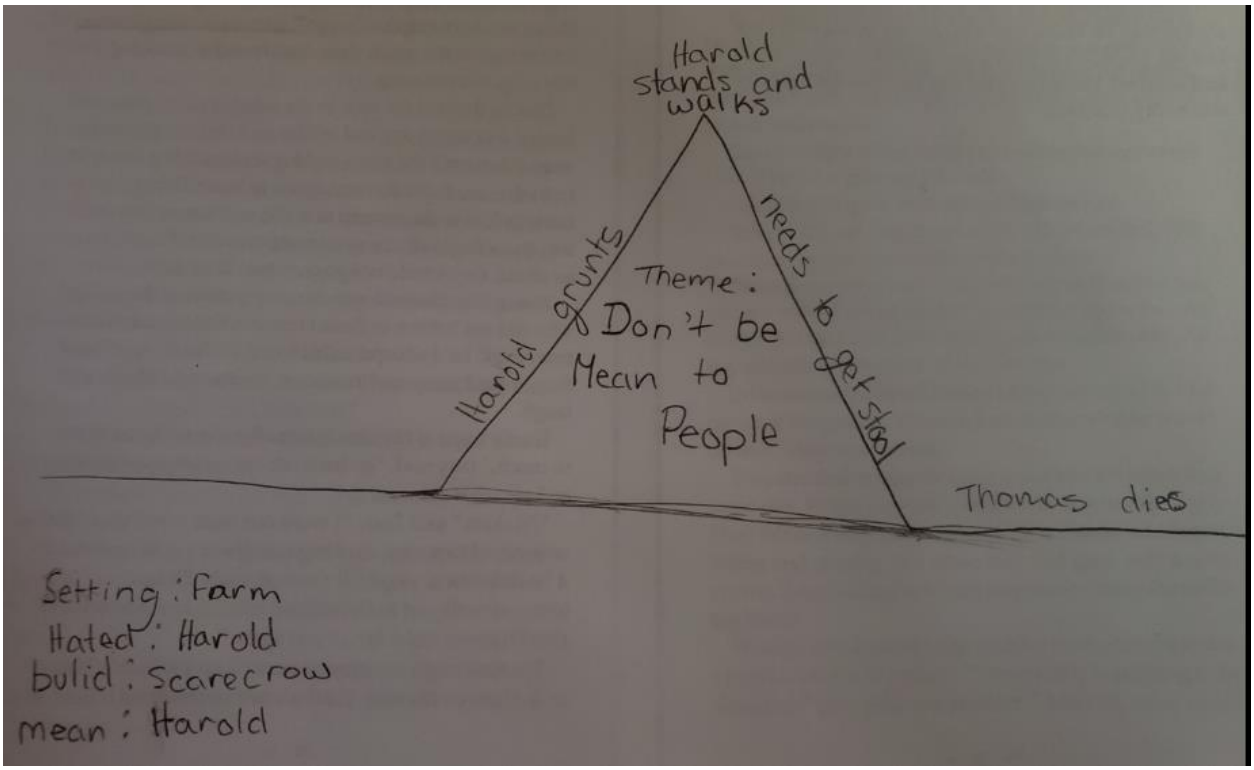


Figure 5. *Harold* plot diagram – student example

Weeks after the "Harold" lesson, students were able to quickly identify the elements of a story (I discuss this in more depth later in the chapter). In the following interview excerpt, Scare Bear referenced the lesson we did around the short story "Harold" nearly two months after the lesson (in session 6). At the time the lesson was delivered, I didn't know student names by heart, and they didn't not know me very well since the lesson had occurred in the first non-logistical session that we held. Despite this, in her personal interview, Scare Bear made clearly affective connections to the learning experience.

> **Davis** - …Do you think if, like, teachers used horror to teach you, do you think students would be more engaged?

Scare Bear – Yes. … Like that one time you read about the scarecrow. (CONNECTEDNESS). …What was his name?

Davis – Harold. When we did the lesson here? ...You liked that?

(Scare Bear affirms) (INTEREST, CONNECTEDNESS)

Davis – …you feel like more of your classes could be like that?

Scare-Bear – Yes! …I do enjoy (horror lit club). It's really fun, and I like that my friends are here too. I like the snacks. But I also really like what we do for it. …I like stories like "Harold" and the plot diagrams. (INTEREST, LEARNING ENVIRONMENT, CONNECTEDNESS).
(Scare Bear Interview, Lines 108-143)

In comparison to her perception of her normal literacy classroom, Scare Bear stated that she enjoyed the use of horror to teach, and independently linked her experience back to the first learning activity that we did in our first session. Not only did she mention that she thought the learning was "fun," she also remembered the specific learning concepts and ideas (plot diagram, story elements) we addressed when using the short story "Harold."

Additionally, in order to link applicability of the learning activities in the horror literature Club to potential practices in the classroom, in addition to the "snapshot" feedback I asked students to provide, I frequently used reflective questioning in order to help determine if they were engaged. After using the short story "Harold" to teach elements of a plot, I asked students for reflection as they connected the lesson to previous experiences in their literacy classes. In the following transcript excerpt, students share their experiences after our story element lesson using the short story, "Harold."

Davis –…you've done these plot diagrams in regular class, right? In regular reading class?

Scare Bear – Yeah.

IPod – A long time ago. *(Later clarification would prove that students discussed this in*

late fall).

Davis –…Do you feel like when you did the plot diagram, …it was interesting when you did it?

Multiple Students – No. (LACK OF INTEREST)

Scare Bear – Eh.

Cloud – They have you do educational stuff; sometimes, those are really boring. (LACK OF INTEREST)

British Cookie – …Yeah, except for *The Outsiders*. Everything else, everything else that they have us read…is like, kind of boring. (INTEREST, LACK OF INTEREST)

Cloud – There was a thing about the hurricanes and stuff - that was kind of cool. (INTEREST)

Scare Bear – That was really boring. (LACK OF INTEREST)

Cloud – It was educational.

Davis – …if your teachers taught with stories that were interesting to you, do you feel like the lessons would be more interesting?

All Students – Yeah.

Meme Lord – Oh, yeah.

IPod – Like if they taught with this story! *(Indicates "Harold")* (INTEREST, CONNECTEDNESS)

Davis – … was this interesting to you as we kind of went through the plot diagram?

All Students – Yes! (INTEREST)

Scare Bear – That was awesome. (INTEREST, CONNECTEDNESS)

Davis – Yeah? Was it maybe not interesting to one or two of you? …or did you all enjoy that…exercise?

(All students indicate general enjoyment) (INTEREST, CONNECTEDNESS) (Session 1, Lines 723-769)

Every student present indicated that, when they learned about a plot diagram in their literacy classes, they did not find it interesting. It is worth noting that Cloud associated boredom with "educational stuff" and that students generally agreed that the materials teachers typically selected for students to read about in their literacy classes were boring. However, of note, Cloud connected with the concept of hurricanes, which is clearly of interest to the participant and not in the specific context of the horror literature club. This holds implication around the universal application of the Affective Leaning Framework in multiple contexts.

A lesson on plot diagram and story elements had been delivered in the literacy classrooms of the student participants the previous October. As evidenced in the preceding excerpt, students felt that the delivery of the instruction during that time had been neither interesting nor engaging. However, when a story was utilized that piqued their interest, student engagement and learning was evident. Student feedback around the learning experiences in the horror literature club was that the activities were consistently interesting and that the choices were empowering.

Session 2 – Personal Connections, Experiences, and Safety

The word was apparently getting out.

Our small group had grown by another – Karate Kid now joined our ranks. The students were warming to me, and they were open to sharing their experiences and engaging in discussion as if they had known me for years. The cooperative learning strategies, the sense of belonging, and the positive learning environment I had tried to help establish in the previous session seemed to be paying dividends in building a positive classroom culture.

Not only did students make personal connections, but they are clearly *eager* to tell their stories. The following excerpt was largely associated with the themes of relevance/connection

and interest, and also highlights a positive learning environment, as evidenced by each participant's willingness to share, interactions with other classmates, and interactions with me. Additional themes which arose were noted.

> **Scare Bear** – …at the concert, I was playing in the middle of the song, and in the back of the auditorium, I just see, this random thing floating. (RELEVANCE)
>
> **Davis** – Really?
>
> **Scare Bear** – It was really weird. …I don't know if it was shadows or not, but it was weird. (RELEVANCE)
>
> **Meme Lord** – I always see things on the side of my eyes. (RELEVANCE)
>
> **Davis** – Do you? Some people would say…paranormal vision, is it that some people have? I mean, it could just be a scientific thing, right?
>
> **Meme Lord** – Probably.
>
> **IPod** – …One time I saw like a person walking at the corner of my eye, even though they weren't walking, it was creepy. (RELEVANCE)
>
> **Karate Kid** – …Those are called spiritual orbs when you see like those dots floating in the air.
>
> **Cloud** – Is that what those are?
>
> **Multiple Students** –Yeah.
> (Session 2, Lines 22-56)

In the preceding excerpt, the idea of acceptance and safety are clearly manifest. In field notes taken during this specific exchange, I noted the level of enthusiasm that students were expressing. They were eager to share their ideas, yet they were very respectful and supportive of each other asking questions. In this way and in the unfolding conversation, one can clearly see evidence of personal connection and an environment where safety has been established.

> **Karate Kid** – They're, they're balls of energy that float in photos and stuff…you see them everywhere. (RELEVANCE)

Davis – Karate Kid, that's an interesting story because there are definitely some unexplained orbs and things that get captured on camera. Some of it has been proven to be dust…dust molecules …but a lot of people are like, no that doesn't look like dust to me. It looks like some strange kind of lit orb.

Cloud – So when you see those things, they're a type of spirit?

Davis – (Shrugs shoulders) They could be.

Cloud – That's weird, 'cause I see those a lot. (RELEVANCE)

Karate Kid – On *Strange Evidence*, they thought that those energies was like, alien stuff, 'cause there's this, like, tiny museum from like, Apollo…I forget what it was called. When they landed on the moon? They believe they took something back with them, 'cause they caught a, uh, floating orb when they were in that place, 'cause they had real stuff that was on the…and…(INTEREST)

British Cookie – So, on my bed, I had these light strings coming down, and I had different modes on it. And then, after that, I put it where are the lights were just on, but, um, after going into the kitchen and getting water, my mom asked me why the lights were turning on and off, on and off, and flickering, and I'm like, but they're not, all of them should all be on, and then, after that happened, she would come into my room and all of the lights were turning on and off. (RELEVANCE)

Davis – Really? How did that make you feel?

British Cookie – I wasn't that scared because I've had experiences before. (RELEVANCE)

Davis – How many of you feel that you've had some weird experiences that you can't quite explain?

Karate Kid – Oh, yeah! I saw stuff. (RELEVANCE)

(All students raise hands) (RELEVANCE)

Davis – Every one of you? Ok.

Meme Lord – …Can I tell a story? (RELEVANCE)
(Session 2, Lines 16-117)

As evident in this interaction, each student was able to find validation in their personal experiences and thinking. Indeed, every students shared out something that was relevant or interesting to them. What was really exciting to me, in looking back at my field notes around this

exchange, was the level of respect and space that students gave each other throughout these exchanges. Every student participated – this widespread participation indicated that students felt valued and a sense of belonging. I remember getting emotional as I observed the level of trust, investment, and community that students and I had built together in only the second session of the horror literature club. Students continued to take turns sharing their own personal experiences around the paranormal and other unexplainable things, although some stories were a *little* less mysterious than others.

> **Karate Kid** – …One day, my grandma was over and everything, and we were watching movies waiting for the pizzas to cool off. Our dog was upstairs for some reason, and all the pizzas were gone, for some reason. (RELEVANCE)
>
> **IPod** – But that's the dog's fault. (HUMOR)
>
> **Karate Kid** – No, wait, wait, he didn't have no tomato sauce on his face.
>
> **Davis** – The case of the missing pizzas. I like it. You should write a story about that.
>
> **Karate Kid** – But there *were* scratch marks on the plate. (HUMOR)
>
> **Davis** – *(Laughs)* – See there? You solved your own case.
> (Session 2, Lines 165-177)

The two preceding excerpts highlight some of the personal connections students were able to make to the concept of storytelling in the context of horror. Throughout the study, repeated instances of these widespread discussions occurred, denoting positive interactions and a desire to share with others, indicators of a positive learning environment. Students were clearly interested in the stories they shared, and were equally invested in listening to them throughout the approximately ten minutes that students spoke.

The students who participated in the horror literature club meaningfully connected with the topics and learning that we discussed. Students chose to share their personal experiences, which, when then explicitly linked back to the ideas addressed during our time together, created

a sense of both validation and relevance for each student. In context to a larger classroom, I must again acknowledge the challenge of replicating this study with more students in an exclusively academic setting in which students have diverse interests.

Session 3 – Heavy Controversy, Relevance, and Autonomy

In this session, I provided autonomy in allowing students to choose something they were interested in, or something that was relevant. Again, while this session highlights the aspects of relevance and autonomy, these were present throughout the duration of the horror literature club. What I had not anticipated was the theme of heavy controversy that I would later identify as significant in my data analysis.

I wanted students to explore a topic they were interested in. I noted how on-task students were as they dove into topics that were meaningful to them. Most students had chosen to research the Suicide Forest of Japan, the haunting of the Stanley Hotel in Estes Park, the UFO sightings in Roswell…

As other students worked, Scare Bear raised her hand.

"Does it count…if I research something that's like, you know, that it's happening, like reality?" She pauses. I nod for her to continue. "'Cause I wanna research, like, bad stuff that's going on, like what happened in Florida last week…"

This conversation gave me pause. We were treading in waters which were deeper than the friendly controversy I had envisioned as part of the Affective Learning Framework.

It had been plastered all over the news.

A week after the violence of the school shootings in Parkland, Florida, which claimed seventeen lives, Scare Bear expressed interest in examining not the horror genre, but a horrific

event in real life. Note that, while the power of controversy as a learning tool underlies the following dialogue exchange, instances of the theme of relevance are also present.

Davis – So what video are you looking at right now?

Scare Bear – The bus driver didn't let the kids off the bus.

Davis – Were they in danger?

Scare Bear – I don't know.
Davis – … do you think, as a middle school student, it is important to understand why these issues of violence happen?

Scare Bear – Sometimes. Now everything bad is happening. There's been, like, eighteen shootings since the beginning of the year, and it's only February. That's bad. (RELEVANCE, CONNECTEDNESS)

Davis – Have you- have you watched that on the news?

Scare Bear – Mm-hm.

Davis – Have you talked to your parents about any of it? *(S Nods head)* What do your parents say?

Scare Bear – Wait, what, about the shootings or about why I'm watching this? *(Laughs)*

Davis – Either or both.

Scare Bear – Um, about the shootings, I just think it's really horrible, and I don't think they know how I feel. I told them, but I don't think they understand. (RELEVANCE, CONNECTEDNESS)

Davis – …why do you think your parents might not understand what's going on with your feelings?

Scare Bear – Well, I think they don't think that I know what's going on, and I think that they think that I don't know what it is because they never told me what it is, but it's obvious what it is. (RELEVANCE)

Davis – Yeah.

Scare Bear – And then this morning, (a teacher), she was like, driving, and she heard on the news shows listening to this newscast thing that if you wanna protect your kids, you have to bring a gun into the classroom. (RELEVANCE)

Davis –…Does it make you feel angry? Does it make you feel sad? Does it make you feel all those things?

Scare Bear – Yeah. It makes me feel mixed feelings, but I wanted to research on it to like, prevent it and see how I can help. (RELEVANCE, CONNECTEDNESS)

Davis – Hmm. That's awesome. I think that's really cool. Have you talked to maybe a teacher or two about like doing a research project that would, that would like, maybe propose something different?

Scare Bear – Mm-mm.

Davis – …Do you think if you talked to (Teacher) about your feelings a little bit, do you think (Teacher) would let you do a project like that?

Scare Bear – Mmm. No. (LEARNING ENVIRONMENT)

Davis –…The…thing I want you to know is that…our schools, we really do our best to be safe. You know, we can't control everybody, right? But the thing is, is that we can certainly control ourselves. …if you're ever feeling alone, or you see somebody feeling alone, reach out to them…I think that's one of the ways that we can help every day. It's just reaching out to people we don't really talk to. Right? …would you agree?

Scare Bear – Yes!

Davis – …and I wouldn't get caught up in, like, the…

Scare Bear – …bad stuff?

Davis – Well, not the bad stuff, because it's important (to acknowledge), but…. what can we do about it, as opposed to getting stuck in fear and anger and all of those things?...that's just my opinion – it may not be yours, but that would be my thinking….how do we stop it? …How do we make everyone feel loved enough to where they don't feel that they have to do that…to get attention? Right?
(Session 3, Lines 405-504)

Here, the student made multiple relevant connections to the school shootings and sought to create both meaning and action because of it. I intended to both comfort and validate her experiences, thoughts, and feelings, while also noting to myself that adults were potentially being dismissive of her concerns (her parents), were not perceived to be amenable to her concerns (school staff, teachers), or possibly fueled additional fear without context (the only way to

protect students is for teachers to carry firearms). In this moment, we were both confronted with the true horrors of an atrocious act in the real world. In approaching and designing the study, I had identified controversy as that of the "friendly" kind teachers could use to engage students. It had become apparent here, in session 3, that a different and unanticipated type of controversy would emerge in thematic analysis; it was here that I began to identify this type of controversy as "heavy" – that is, types of controversy that, while possibly uncomfortable to discuss, can be power tools for authentic and affective learning. These concepts are discussed briefly in the previous section and more at length in the discussion chapter.

Session 4 – Safety

In this section, students discussed the concept of safety, which would eventually become more significant in the establishment of a positive learning environment. Students articulated feelings of safety while in the club, yet indicated that the did not always feel comfortable while in the literacy classroom.

The proverbial stage was set. Soon, students would begin to regale us with tales of Korean ghosts, haunted forests, and demon-possession. Prior to students sharing out the results of their research from the previous session, I noted the seeming comfort and openness students displayed – I observed enthusiasm as students shared, asked each other questions, and sought clarification in a non-threatening and collaborative way. I mentioned the fact that I was proud of everyone for wanting to open up, and one student mentioned bullying and how the horror literature club felt "safe."

Davis – Do you guys feel like there's a big bullying issue in the school?

Cloud – Kind of. There's a lot of drama. (SAFETY)

British Cookie – Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes! (SAFETY)

Students *(Multiple)* – Yes! (SAFETY)

Cloud – It's a drama issue.

Meme – A lot of drama.
(Session 3, Lines 111-121)

Here, students were less focused on bullying and keyed in on the "drama" which they perceived as taking place in school and in the classroom. Over the course of the study, several students expressed that they could not be themselves in school, and that the teachers didn't seem to want to be bothered with ensuring that students felt a sense of belonging; to try to be authentic might lead to issues of "drama," either between themselves and other students or themselves and their teacher. In the previous session and as referenced in their account of classroom experiences earlier in the chapter, they had also mentioned that teachers weren't happy and that the classrooms did not feel completely safe to be one's self, which have implications around a student's ability to focus on the learning. Students continually commented upon and demonstrated their feelings of safety within the horror literature club.

One potential constraint around the concept of safety is the possibility of stifling the potential for constructive feedback in what Dr. Jennings, my advisor, would call the "critical friends" concept. The learning space may be so "polite" as to not allow students to properly share their input and perspective as key opportunities for learning and growth. It appeared that most students seemed comfortable in sharing and providing feedback in front of others; one must consider how this would translate to the actual classroom.

Sessions 5 & 6 – Connectedness and Choice

The following section illustrates the power of connectedness and the potential for effective cognitive retention when the Affective Learning Framework is utilized.

As students walked in, I drew a familiar diagram – this time, without labels. I was interested in seeing much students remembered from the lesson a month prior when we used the short story "Harold" to teach elements of a plot through a plot diagram.

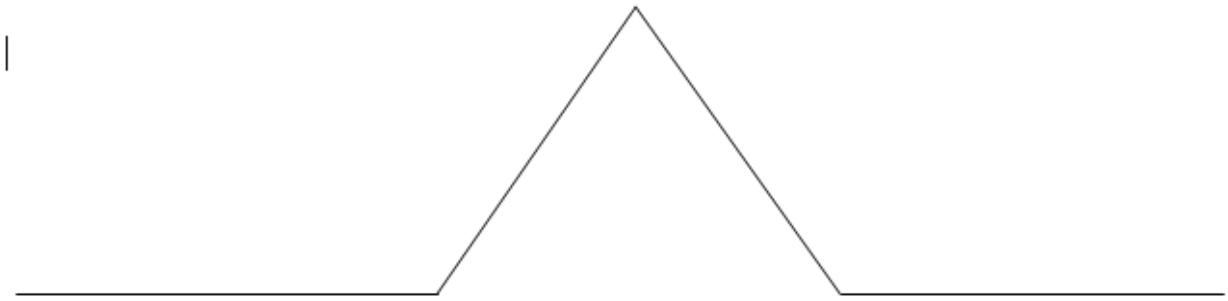


Figure 6. Blank plot diagram.

Davis – You can see, above my dear friend's drawing (*a student had drawn a smiley face on the board*), remember what that was? What'd we do a few weeks ago?

British Cookie – Rising action… (CONNECTEDNESS)

Davis – Plot diagram, right? You can also call it a plot mountain?

Karate Kid – Climax is up here! Something action, going down. (CONNECTEDNESS)

British Cookie – Rising action, falling action, resolution. (CONNECTEDNESS)

Davis – You got it!

Karate Kid – You forgot climax (*points to top of diagram*). (CONNECTEDNESS)

Davis – What's at the beginning here? Does anyone know what the beginning is?

Karate Kid – Resolution?

Davis – Ex…po…

Students (*Multiple*) – Exposition.

Davis – Exposition. And if you ever need a hint, look, most of your markers are Expo! Background information (*labels plot diagram*). (CONNECTEDNESS)

Meme – New Year's Resolution, which no one keeps up.

Davis – (*laughs*) Alright, good. When we're writing a story, we talked about reading a story a little bit, we've looked at some information; when we're writing a story, why do

you think it's important to have some of these elements when we write a story?

Karate Kid – It makes it more interesting. (CONNECTEDNESS)

Davis – It makes it more interesting, right? It makes it more engaging. So what you have all decided is, I remember hearing early on, you wanted to write a story, correct? Do you want to try your own hand at kind of writing a ghost story? Or a horror story? (CHOICE) (Session 5, Lines 23-59)

In the preceding dialogue, students were clearly able to articulate the key terms associated with a basic plot analysis, which indicated a longer term retention of learning than had been apparent when the students learned this in their literacy classes. This was markedly different than when students were introduced to the concept in Session 1. I suggested here that, in Session 1, despite the fact that students had learned about the plot diagram in class, perhaps by using a story that each student was invested or interested in, students were quickly able to recall basic information that they had not been able to recall previously. Additionally, I facilitated connectedness as I attempt to leverage the background knowledge that each learner has regarding plot diagramming. I also provided autonomy for participants to have input as to what activity they would like to do – subsequently, session 6 focused around students completing activities of their choice as identified in session 5 while I focused on individual interviews. Students indicated that they wanted to continue to deepen their research around their specified topics. The following excerpt illustrated how much decision-making I attempted to give students throughout every session around the activities we completed.

Davis – You started looking at an urban legend last week that you really were interested in exploring right? And what I said was...as I still continue interviews, we could use this time to go through, make sure you feel comfortable, and… practice telling a story…next week, we're going to bring it all together…I'll bring my candle back, we'll dim the lights, and we'll have campfire stories, basically, and tell the tale, and give everybody a few minutes…to…share out some creepy, spooky stuff – does that sound fair?

(Students indicate agreement)
(Session 6, Lines 12-22)

While the preceding excerpt highlights the level of autonomy that students had in the content, students were also given a choice as to procedural norms and decision-making –snacks, timing of activities, and logistics were but a few examples of the input that students had. As the horror literature club was scheduled to end in a few sessions, students asked me if it would be able to continue through the rest of the school year. When I asked the students if they were interested in continuing, they unanimously and enthusiastically agreed.

In monitoring student work, all students were on Chromebooks and looking up information their chosen topic. Participants would share out information that was interesting to them. At times, conversation strayed to personal experiences and speculation around the topic, but very few instances were noted that students were "off task" and working on anything but what they decided to do. If participants began discussing other unrelated topics, I would allow them a little space to do so and would prompt them with gentle redirects: "How could you tie that into your research? How do you think that relates to this?"

One potential limitation here is around the informal nature of the after-school horror literature club. I was able to easily monitor student work and gently redirect in an academic environment that had no high-stake performance assessments attached. In examining how this study might connect to teaching literacy in the classroom, the high-stakes focus on achievement is important to consider.

Session 7 – Humor, Positive Learning Environment, and Connectedness

The first section of this session highlights the humor and connectedness which can denote a positive learning environment, which emerged as a major domain in the revised Affective Learning Framework. The potential for constraints around humor is also addressed in this section. The second section highlights a few of the stories and urban legends that students

wanted to share as a result of their research and interests. I audio-recorded the stories as students verbally shared things that interested them; I then transcribed them.

7.1 – Humor, Connectedness, and a Positive Learning Environment

Today was the day to share out the results of the scary stories and urban legends that students chose!

It was the week before spring break. Students were chattering excitedly as I asked them if they were ready, sharing plans about who they were going to visit, what they were going to watch, and how much they were going to sleep. I presented a flameless LED candle to help set the eerie tone as a suitably spooky backdrop for sharing out about what the students had researched in the past few sessions. One of the students, Scare Bear, found some foreboding instrumental music on YouTube. Karate Kid turned out all of the lights. Our faces become dancing shadows.

Davis – If a wizard was knocked out by Dracula in a fight, what would he be?

Meme Lord – What?

Davis – Out for the count! (HUMOR)

Meme Lord – (*groaning and giggling*) Oh my god!

(*Davis and students laugh*)

Davis – How'd we know the vampire was sick?

Scare Bear – Because he was pale.

Davis – Because he was a coffin! (HUMOR)

(*Students laugh*)

Davis – We could call this the dumb joke club!

Meme Lord – Yes.

Cloud – Most people don't like dumb jokes; I am not one of those people. (CONNECTEDNESS)

British Cookie – I love dumb jokes. (CONNECTEDNESS)
(Session 7, Lines 40-59)

As shown in the preceding dialogue, the use of teacher humor was important to building and fostering both connectedness and ongoing trust. As I cracked silly and non-threatening jokes, students laughed, their body language indicated receptivity, and every student seemed visibly and affectively engaged. Students were also quick to make their own jokes throughout the duration of the horror literature club in context to the content. IPod had just shared her urban legend about the babysitter, in which a young adult is tasked with babysitting children who are sleeping in their rooms upstairs. In the legend, the babysitter makes little effort to check on her charges. She receives a series disturbing calls which grow more intense and terrifying as the night progresses; eventually, she realizes that the children under her watch are in danger and that the mysterious caller intends to do them all harm. After the story, I began to facilitate a discussion of the story's theme to the students.

Davis – There's a lesson to that.

Meme Lord – Don't check on the children, that's all I'm saying. (HUMOR)

Karate Kid – *Never* check on the children, no matter *what* their doing. (HUMOR)
(Session 7, Lines 177-181)

Another example of humor took place when Meme Lord was preparing to present "No End House," a Creepy Pasta story.

Meme Lord – I'm going to try to remember it, because the Creepy Pasta site is blocked here.

Davis – Yeah.

Meme Lord – (*Pause*) School's not fun. (HUMOR, LACK OF INTEREST)

(*Students and Davis laugh*)
(Session 7, Lines 258-264)

It is interesting to note that, while Meme Lord smiled and joked about school not being fun, the sentiment that school was not fun or was boring was a recurring statement by students throughout the study. In reviewing the data, I felt it was therefore pertinent to assign both "humor" and "lack of interest" to Meme Lord's dialogue.

In an analysis of the preceding exchanges and the presence of humor throughout the data, humor underlies, in this context, connectedness to the learning and a positive learning environment. In reviewing transcript data, sound recordings, and field notes in an effort to better triangulate these data, the humor was categorized as typically positive and appeared to reflect a sense of positivity in student-to-student and student-to-teacher interactions. As previously noted, a positive learning environment is an important domain in the application an affective learning framework, as this reflects potential foundational conditions for learning by fostering safety and a sense of belonging.

Humor could certainly be seen as a constraint. There were instances throughout the duration of the horror literature club in which students "blurted" out to share a funny anecdote – while this happened more in the earlier sessions, we were able to quickly establish routines and procedures that allowed students to express themselves without the risk of interrupting others. Similarly, it would be important for a teacher to monitor students (and also to ensure that she, he, or they isn't inadvertently resorting to "teasing") to ensure that the humor wasn't at the expense of another student, which could jeopardize collective feelings of safety and could undermine a desired positive learning environment. These are important considerations in the application of the Affective Learning Framework when it comes to utilizing humor as a potential tool for fostering a positive learning environment.

7.2 – Stories and Urban Legends

This section provides an overview of the stories and urban legends that participants chose to share. This section underscores the level of both autonomy in what students chose to discuss as well as an observed interest in the topic. While participants shared their stories, those who listened were visibly engaged and asked follow-up questions. The peer feedback was consistently positive, and every participant who shared was met with applause. As noted, verbal stories were audio-recorded and then later transcribed. I note a few instances where discussion of theme and literary analysis emerge as part of the learning. If students read directly from a source, that source is included here.

> **IPod -** (Reads) A young boy lay sleeping in his bed when he heard footsteps outside his room. He peeked out of his eyes to see what was happening when his door swung open to reveal a murderer carrying corpses of his parents. After silently propping them up on a chair, he wrote something on the wall in the blood of the dead bodies. He then hid under the child's bed. The child got scared beyond belief. He couldn't read the writing on the wall and he knew the man was under his bed. Like any child, he pretended that he slept through the whole thing and hadn't woken up yet. He lay still as the bodies, quietly hearing the breaths from under his bed. An hour passed, and his eyes got adjusted to the darkness. He tried making out the words, but it was a struggle. He gasped when he finally read out the sentence. 'I know you're awake' he read as he felt something shift underneath his bed. (www.scoopwhop.com)
> (Session 7, Lines 81-90)

As participants shared their stories, others adopted what I would describe as general behaviors associated with positive listening and attentiveness.

> **Karate Kid** - Alright, my turn. I'm going to tell the one…somewhere in America…my story is about the Mothman. There were these people, they were like seventeen year-olds, they were driving in the woods and stopped somewhere, messing around doing teenager stuff, and they hear a noise at the campfire, and they see, they see dark red eyes coming from the trees. So they're spooked and then they go in their car. But then when they're driving away, they see this humanoid-like figure flying in the air. Eventually, it revealed itself. They see the creature also known as Mothman, and it has no neck. Instead of arms, it has…and it has no mouth and two bright red eyes. And they like find a way get out of the situation by driving away, and about a week, or a month later, somewhere around that time, Mothman shows up on the Silver Bridge for two minutes, the thing is just standing

there, and then, the bridge collapsed out of nowhere, and everybody wondered what happened…the Mothman was never (seen) again.

Many students engaged in follow-up discussion after each story was shared. I noted the inherent connectedness that students perpetuated in their natural follow-up conversations to Cloud's story.

Cloud – So, it starts off, with, like, little kids, they were, like, running through the forest, or something like that, and they see a really tall man, and he's like asking them to stay and play with him, and then while he's doing that, the kids' moms are calling for them, and he's bringing them back farther and farther into the forest, and they ended up staying with him for a while, and then when they were trying to do like research on what happened to the kids, like, they discovered what he is and stuff, and they discover what happened to the kids, and he gets very angry and starts following them around, and then they find out that the only way they see him is through the cameras and stuff…but eventually, like, they are killed off, because Slender Man chooses his victims, kills them off, and then chooses the next ones.

Karate Kid – There is this video- (CONNECTEDNESS)

Cloud – There was this news thing that I looked at about these three kids – there was a girl and then her two best friends – (CONNECTEDNESS)

Meme Lord – Oh yeah, I remember that. (CONNECTEDNESS)

Scare Bear – They killed one or something?

Meme Lord – No, she survived.

Cloud – So, they were walking back from a skate thing for the girl's birthday, and their friends pulled out a knife and stabbed her multiple times…

Meme Lord – …and then ran away.

Cloud – And then this biker found the girl, and she was ok, but that's what they did, and they said it was to please what Slender Man wanted from them, and I was like, wow.

Karate Kid – Did the girls get arrested?

Meme Lord – Yes.

> **Melon** – The funny part is, I have proof that he's real, because he literally showed up in my background picture….the funny part is, this was technically last year. (CONNECTEDNESS)
> (Session 7, Lines 208-252)

One can note the ongoing connections participants made as stories and research were shared. As mentioned, the atmosphere was one of engagement and positive learning behaviors. One potential constraint of the study is the relatively brief amount of time allocated for students to share their stories or findings in a classroom setting. The teacher would need to consider structured cooperative learning activities in order to engage all students, particularly with larger class sizes. Additionally, another potential concern arose. As I listened to Melon, I felt as if I wanted to explore her perspective that Slender Man, the subject of Cloud's story, was real. In examining notes and follow-up questions, while Melon gave no indication of fear, she clearly and repeatedly articulated her belief in the Slender Man concept. As teachers explore the possibilities of applying the Affective Learning Framework and, specifically, the application of horror literature, it is important to engage so as not to unduly alarm or negatively excite students or belittle their beliefs while ensuring that they are supported as potential misconceptions, or, in extreme cases, when mental health may be compromised.

Session 8 – Safety and Positive Learning Environment

This section addresses a potential constraint around safety and the possibility of peer pressure. Although it could be assumed that the students who chose to participate in the horror literature club were of like mind in their interests around the horror genre, student needs, interests, and experiences are diverse. One cannot simply assume a universal definition of horror. In session 8, Scare Bear, for example, was visibly nervous about some of the PG-13 movies and television series mentioned, while other students were completely comfortable with watching R-Rated movies at home.

IPod – What about a scary series?

Davis – A scary series? What do you mean?

Cloud – *Supernatural*.

(Multiple students agree)

Davis – *Supernatural*?

IPod – Something like that.

Davis – Do you think your parents would all let you watch Supernatural?

(Several students affirm)

Scare Bear – I don't know - isn't it pretty scary?

Meme Lord – I think it's rated PG-13. There's some swearing in it. …I watch rated R movies.

Care Bear – I'm not allowed to do those.

Davis – …What other series would be interesting?

Meme Lord – *Sherlock Holmes*, but that's more mystery.

Davis…*Sherlock Holmes* is not bad. There are some creepy *Sherlock Holmes*. Hey, they just did a *Supernatural* crossover with *Scooby-Doo*.

Jax – I know, that was funny.

(A student mentions Poltergeist*)*

Davis – *Poltergeist*, the original, is PG-13.

Scare Bear – I don't think I'm allowed to watch it.
(Session 8, Lines 136-169)

In fostering an inclusive community, and, in turn, a positive learning environment, it is essential to not only understand the general interests of students in the classroom, but to acknowledge that interest, even in like subjects, is nuanced. It is also important to ensure that students do not feel as if they have to sacrifice their own values to fit in with others. In the above

example, although the students who indicated their willingness to watch R-Rated movies were ultimately supportive of Scare Bear, there was an initial hint of potential pressure to "give in" to the vocal majority, thus potentially jeopardizing the "safety" component of a positive learning environment. In this instance, I gently intervened to remind students that R-Rated movies were designed for those of at least seventeen years of age, and that the fact that students had different tastes and preferences made the environment much more diverse and meaningful. Peer pressure has the potential to become a constraint without establishing clear expectations around respect and supportive interactions. Additionally and as noted previously, a potential constraint around safety would be to have a "safe" environment where courageous conversations or constructive critical feedback are actually restricted. While I did not note this in any of the findings or an analysis of the data, these are important considerations when teachers consider the balance of a safe environment where students both feel valued and that delivery of authentic constructive peer-to-peer feedback is explicitly taught.

The Final Sessions – Friendly Controversy and Using Horror

In the final sessions, students were encouraged to share possible story ideas based on the collective short story scenario that we had started around hearing a noise in the attic when our protagonist is home alone. These sessions also represented extensive commentary by students on what they would like to see teachers do in order to better engage them in literacy classes.

The following excerpt highlights the potential power in engaging students in friendly controversy by eliciting affective (and, often, humorous) responses. The excerpt also indicates positive student response to the experiences of the horror literature club and to using the horror genre in the classroom. I code the questions I asked or the statements I made which related to

friendly controversy below. Note that students discuss the importance of moral, in that stories can have powerful messages and lessons through a thematic literary analysis.

> **Davis**…there are people that would say that horror is not good for kids. (FRIENDLY CONTROVERSY)
>
> **Multiple Students** – Why?
>
> **Cloud** – That' stupid.
>
> **Scare Bear** – Bite me. (HUMOR)
>
> *(Laughter)*
>
> **Davis** – Scary stories…you can't teach anything with scary stories. Would you argue differently? (FRIENDLY CONTROVERSY)
>
> *(All students affirm)*
>
> **Davis** – In fact, how many of you would argue differently…that you could teach (using) scary stories?
>
> *(All students raise hands)*
>
> **Karate Kid** – It has a moral. (CONNECTEDNESS)
>
> **Meme Lorde** – Horror is good for kids. You learn not to die. (HUMOR)
>
> *(Laughter)*
>
> **Karate Kid** – …So, like, learning about the story about the haunted house, and she's like, or the bad guy calls, and there's a moral – go check on the kids. (Referring to *The Babysitter*). (CONNECTEDNESS)
>
> **Dean** – Ok, so…my niece and nephew, from when they were very, very young, they watched horror movies, and they were obsessed with them. They're not really scared of much – I mean, they still are, obviously… and the youngest one (toddler) carries a Chuckie doll around with him. (CONNECTEDNESS)
>
> **R** – Do you think that's healthy? (FRIENDLY CONTROVERSY)
>
> **Dean** – Yes.
>
> **Davis** – Do you think it's healthy even talking about horror? Because when I was a little kid, I saw a horror movie, and I remember it was, it was scary, but I ended up loving

> horror. …Does that mean…did it do something to my brain? I'm a teacher, I've been a horror guy for a long time, right? I write horror, I read horror, like, what would you say to people who say horror is unhealthy? Horror is not good for you. (FRIENDLY CONTROVERSY)
> (Session 10, Lines 120-160)

Students argued that news programming and real life were far scarier than that of the horror genre. Students discussed as a group why horror was important in teaching them about important themes. When pushed on the issue, Meme Lord gave a response which resonated with the entire group: "We're not babies."

While session 9 focused on individual interviews with students and students constructing the introductions to their own narrative horror stories, during the final session of the horror literature club, students were asked whether they felt horror *should* be used in the classroom to teach literacy. A summary of their responses is illustrated in Table 11.

Table 11. Emerging Themes: Student Responses to Using Horror in the Classroom

Response	Theme(s)
"If teachers made us read interesting (horror) books, they won't make us fall asleep."	Interest, Connectedness
"If teachers use student intrest (sic) to help us learn, then students will like school more."	Interest, Connectedness
"…being from a classroom, you notice when kids are board (sic) till they do something they like and that's what you're showing (by using horror)."	Interest, Connectedness
"I wish lit was more like this club. If lit was more fun, I would read."	Interest, Connectedness
"…I also think that horror would be good for lit, and more interesting!"	Interest
"I think it's a good idea to add more horror into litracy (sic) because it would help kids get more involved with the curriculum."	Connectedness

In examining the responses in Table 11, all students indicated that horror, if utilized in the classroom, would increase student interest, connectedness, and, potentially, engagement ("…they won't make us fall asleep.") Both interest and connectedness are well-represented in these responses. One student made direct comparisons between the classroom and the learning activities students experienced in the horror literature club and stated a willingness to read more if it was fun to do: "I wish lit was more like this club. If lit was more fun, I would read."

Meme Lord not only agreed that horror and other subgenres could be used to teach reading skills, but went on to challenge what might be perceived as limited thinking on the part of educators.

> **Davis** – … What would you maybe say to teachers who don't feel like horror or fantasy are that important? That they should stick to the classics, stick to what teachers tell (you)? (GENRE-SPECIFIC)
>
> **Meme Lord** – They don't have much imagination. Like, if they tell us to read a boring book from like the 1800s, then it's not gonna be very interesting, like people'll be sleeping while we're reading it. Like if it's a science fiction book, like, I don't know, this one book called *Nixion*, where it's about, like, space stuff, then kids might like it more than the boring 1800 books. (INTEREST, GENRE SPECIFIC)
> (Meme Lord Interview, Lines 46-52)

Again, the word "boring" is prominent in his response –he mentions the term twice and implies it a third time ("…like people'll be sleeping while we're reading it"). The use of horror and student interests would, in his mind, help students better engage. In her interview, British Cookie suggested that teachers try a student voting system to honor both interest and choice. "They (teachers) could give us stuff that was interesting. …Stuff that we choose, like, they could say stuff, and have us do a vote…the one that gets the most votes is the one that we would read" (CHOICE, INTEREST) (Lines 212-217). In many ways, this statement implies a level of personal empowerment – if students had a choice and were interested, they might feel more invested in the classroom.

Karate Kid noted that the use of horror in the classroom had multiple benefits as both a means to increasing student interest in the learning as well as fostering a positive learning environment through meaningful student-to-student interactions. He also thought, regarding classroom management issues, that

> "…some kids would talk less, and some would also…it might have kids connect more with other kids, 'cause, hey, this person likes something, this person likes the same thing, they might work together, and it might make it easier, and it might make them a friend, or

> something. …the happier the person is, the easier it is to communicate and do stuff. They can do their assignments easier" (LEARNING ENVIRONMENT, CONNECTEDNESS) (Karate Kid Interview, Lines 190-194).

In many ways, Karate Kid suggested that teachers might be less frustrated and "stressed" with student behaviors if teachers were doing more to engage them through interests and choice. Additionally, an environment which fosters collaboration and positive relationships between student-to-student and student-to-teacher is one in which learning is conducive.

Student Voice – The Magic Wand

In an effort to honor my student-participants' voices directly, I posed the following scenario to every student – eight of them shared their thoughts: "You are standing before all of the literacy teachers in the world, and you have a magic wand. You wave that wand and make one wish about what you would want teachers to do to engage students in the classroom, what would it be?"

About teachers, Melon said that she would change "the way they teach because the way they teach is boring and doesn't motivate the kids to finish the assignments on time." Dean suggested that teachers should "try and keep the kids a little more engaged if it's a subject they disliked." Meme Lord got right to the point as he implied a desire for teachers to both engage with the learning and students in a personal way while honoring student interests.

> Be less boring. …Get books that kids will actually like, 'cause there's this one (grade) teacher…(who) rambles on about stuff, and it's really fun, but usually literacy teachers are just, like, boring.
> (Meme Lord Interview, Lines 114-120)

Meme Lord also added that ensuring that students get help when they seek it would go a long way in establishing a positive learning environment through relationship and safety.

> …don't be too strict on kids who don't really understand something, like try to help them understand what they're not getting right, 'cause usually, in most classes, the teachers are like, I don't know, go ask your student mate right next to you, and the student mate right

> next to you might not really know what's happening, either, so it's just confusing.
> (Meme Lord Interview, Lines 149-152)

Cloud reiterated the importance of understanding as critical to establishing a positive learning environment:

> I think what I'd change is I think the way they teach some things because when they explain, like, sometimes, when they explain it, it doesn't make sense, and they try to re-explain it to us again, and so the kids are left like, understood of what they were trying to do, so if they could explain it better, they would have better results with the kids.
> (Cloud Interview, Lines 111-114)

Karate Kid also spoke to establishing connectedness and a positive learning environment through a reward system.

> Do a reward system. 'Cause you know what reward systems are….It's not like something Kindergarten-ish, it's like the system's kind of the same, like you do something, you get points or whatever, and like that leads up to a prize or something. That would be nice.
> (Karate Kid Interview, Lines 152-156)

Scare Bear wanted both relevancy and autonomy from teachers. "I would tell them to… would tell teachers to "give us a project on the computers where we could have free time and whatever we did on the computers, we would have to write about it. Our own story" (Scare Bear Interview, Lines 105-06). IPod would agree, although she would take a different approach to relevancy in her request to teach through video games, a passion of hers: "I would make them have a day without reading and where we play video games…" British Cookie wanted teachers to "give us stuff that is interesting."

> **British Cookie** – …like, let us read stories from around the world.…stories from southeast Asia, or just Asia…
>
> **Davis** – So, going back to your interests? …that's important to you.
>
> *(Brit affirms)*
> (British Cookie Interview, Lines 248-25)

Summary – Application of the Affective Learning Framework in the Horror Club

Students repeatedly made comparisons to the learning activities in the club and the learning activities of the traditional classroom. All students who participated in the horror literature club agreed that the use of horror in literacy instruction would increase student interest, make the learning more relevant to them, and promote a greater feeling of connectedness to the learning. Students were also able to describe the benefits of a positive learning environment – increased student interest as a result of the use of horror to teach literacy would consequently lessen classroom management issues, thereby promoting additional safety while decreasing the stresses students perceived as being placed upon the teacher. Potential constraints to engagement and learning were noted in context to specific lessons and activities and are discussed more in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V – DISCUSSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

In this chapter, I discuss implications around the data collected and presented as detailed in the previous chapter in context to the research questions posed in this research study. I also address how these findings connect to the Affective Learning Framework in order to promote student engagement and, consequently, learning. I also note key possible recommendations for further research in the areas of using the horror genre to teach literature and student engagement as a whole.

Study Overview

This research study was formed around a basic, albeit loaded, question: how can teachers more effectively engage students and promote a deeper understanding in literacy instruction?

While student engagement has long been acknowledged as important in the learning process in scholarship and academic literature, the concept of engagement has just recently shifted from an idea of passive compliance to overt interest. Still, much of the research continues to focus on largely cognitive aspects of engagement such as higher level thinking processes, thinking taxonomies, and rigor. While cognitive engagement is important, far less focus has centered on affective, or emotional, engagement. Using my own experiences as both a learner and a teacher, I sought to examine the potentially positive impacts of using the horror genre as a means to apply what I would come to think of as an Affective Learning Framework, of which I initially posited held three important domains: Relevancy/Connectedness, Interest/Autonomy, and Controversy, with the intent of increasing student enjoyment and engagement in reading and writing. In order to explore this concept, the following research questions were posed:

- What prominent themes are constructed when middle school-aged participants in the horror literature club are asked about personal experiences with literacy instruction? Could these themes shift or change when horror is used to teach literacy?
- In what ways could the horror genre promote or constrain affective learning for middle school-aged participants in an after-school horror fiction club?
- What are the experiences of middle school-aged participants in the horror literature club when an Affective Learning Framework is utilized?

Participants were comprised of thirteen middle school students. The students were selected voluntarily for an after-school horror literature club in the spring of 2018. By electing to be a part of the horror literature club, each student indicated an interest in the genre. We met for ten sessions over an approximately three month period. During that time, horror stories and concepts were discussed and applied to literacy skills. Students also shared their experiences in the traditional literacy classroom and discussed engagement from their perspective in recorded interviews and in dialogue captured in recorded club sessions (notably, student perspective and voices are vastly lacking in current academic literature on engagement). The initial questions and planned activities for the horror literature club were aligned to the Affective Learning Framework posed in the literature review. The study resulted in over eight hours of audio and one-hundred pages of session and interview transcripts. Transcripts were examined for recurring themes around engagement and possible connections to the Affective Learning Framework.

Discussion of Findings

Davis, Summers, and Miller (2012) discussed the growing emphasis and importance around the emotional aspects of student engagement, yet relegate it as a part of cognitive engagement in their model of Interconnected Dimensions of Student Engagement (p. 22). It is

interesting to note, however, that elements of emotional engagement can be seen in the other two dimensions of the model: relational engagement and behavioral engagement. While acknowledging that affective connections can fall under the broad and general scope of psychology, lumping emotional connection into cognitive engagement undermines its importance as a powerful and distinct engagement framework in its own right.

To address the potential of affective engagement, this study proposed an Affective Learning Framework. Initially, in analyzing the session and interview transcripts, the three elements of the Affective Learning Framework highlighted in the literature review were used to guide the categorization of sub-themes: Relevancy, Interest/Autonomy, and Controversy. Figure 1 has been included as a reference:

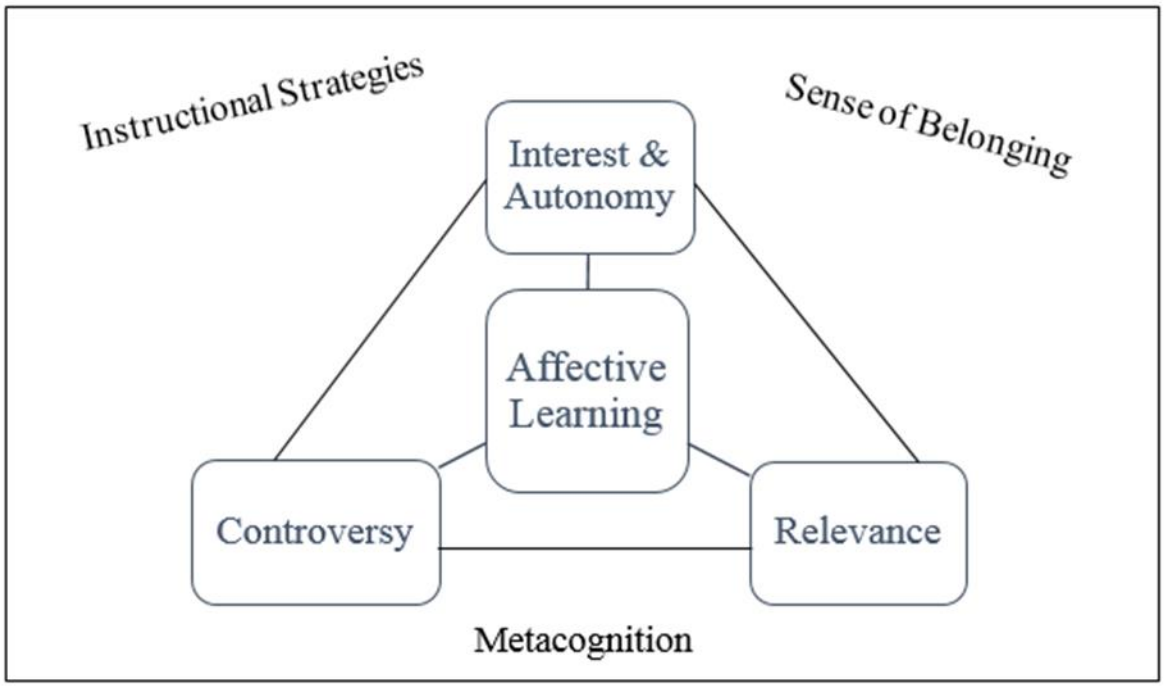


Figure 2. Originally proposed affective learning framework

Sixteen codes were constructed in the data analysis process that further explicate elements of the center box in Figure 1, Affective Learning: Connectedness and Lack of Connectedness, the level of background knowledge a student has toward a specific concept or

idea; Workload, or the amount of work a student is assigned; Humor, or the level of a student's amusement as a result of the concept; Choice and Lack of Choice, the level of autonomy a student has in choosing materials to help meet his or her learning needs; Conditional Interest and Lack of Interest, which may or may not be present based on certain situations or relationships; Genre-Specific Controversy, the inherent controversy which can exist as a result of the application of the sub-genre, Friendly Controversy, non-threatening controversial topics used to hook students into the lesson, Heavy Controversy, those ideas or events that can be uncomfortable to discuss or address within the context of the classroom; Safety, the level of comfort that students in class generally; Relationship, the extent of approachability the student feels the teacher is, and Teacher Engagement, the extent to which the teacher is engaged or having "fun." Summarize the main point of this paragraph in terms of the codes/categories and the 3 major elements.

While the thematic analysis made visible how these major elements work together to support and constrain affective engagement and learning, the analysis also led to an expansion of the framework in several ways. First, instructional strategies, metacognition, and sense of belonging help support the major elements of the Affective Learning Framework. Through the data analysis process, it became clear that the Affective Learning Framework comprised of a fourth major element: Positive Learning Environment. While initially thought that classroom environment was captured in the extensive research around "sense of belonging" and engagement, , the analysis process led me to see that, if students did not feel safe or comfortable sharing their ideas in the classroom, emotions of insecurity would potentially overwhelm the potential for affective engagement. Additionally, the sub-theme of Connectedness became prominent even as it related to the element of Relevancy. I have therefore modified "Relevancy"

to “Relevancy/Connectedness” in an attempt to be more comprehensive as a major theme description.

Second, through the analysis, I recognized that that, while Controversy could certainly promote affective learning, it was the least occurring of the themes and is not necessary, in and of itself, to emotionally connect students to the learning. In this way, Controversy was limited in scope in the Horror Literature Club. That said, I have modified its domain description to include Hook; that is, information such as trivia or “fun” facts that could be used to promote discussion and, ultimately, affective learning. By adding this description, Hook/Controversy becomes much more comprehensive in scope as a strategic means to build positive anticipation toward the learning. Each of the fourteen sub-themes were then clustered into the major domains of the Affective Learning Framework. To reflect these adjustments, I included a revised visual figure.

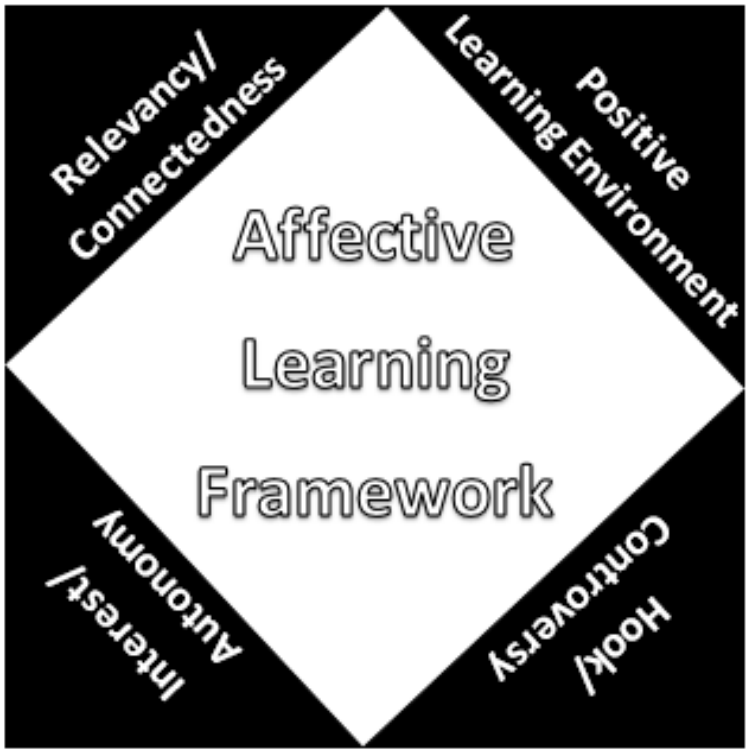


Figure 7. Davis’s Affective Learning Framework

What prominent themes are constructed when students are asked about personal experiences with literacy instruction?

As students shared their literacy experiences, I became disheartened. The disheartenment arose in my growing frustration as students recounted, time and time again, about how bored they were in literacy class. Feelings of boredom were explicitly expressed around how students typically experienced a reading or writing class. The readings generally assigned by teachers were neither interesting nor relevant to these students. This was something that I deeply and personally connected with as, once, I was a disengaged student myself – it was only when I got to high school decades ago that a single teacher even attempted to reach me through literature that I enjoyed. The concept of choice continues to be the exception, it seems, rather than the norm. The implications here are dire. Bauerlein (2013) noted that survey data revealed that the number one cause of student high school dropout was boredom. He cited a 2006 study which revealed that nearly fifty percent of students who had dropped out of school were bored; almost seventy percent of students indicated that school "didn't motivate or excite them. For those students, it wasn't the difficulty of the work that drove them away. It was the tediousness." Jason (2017) cited a 2004 Gallup survey which revealed that half of the teenagers identified "bored" as the number one adjective they would use to describe school. Nearly ten years later, a Gallup poll revealed that eight out of ten elementary students felt "engaged" in school; by contrast, six out of ten high school students felt disengaged. In a 2015 follow-up study, the number of engaged high schools students fell to less than a third. Research has become clear – the older a student gets, the higher probability of boredom in the classroom. A lack of choice in what students were able to learn about, passive learning experiences, and teacher engagement all seemed to contribute to

overall feelings of boredom. The themes of this study were consistent with the findings of broader research around student engagement.

Figure 8. Bored out of their minds (Detweiler, 2017).

Could these themes shift or change when horror is used to teach literacy?

The original question posed in an initial draft of the study was, "**Do** these themes shift or change when horror is used to teach literacy?" As date collection commenced, I realized early on that I would not be able to address this specific form of the question within the scope of this study. The horror literature club was not the student's literacy class and was not designed to emulate a literacy class experience perfectly. As a club, it was often less formal than what a traditional classroom might be. Students chose to participate because they were interested in the horror genre, so, inherently, the data would be skewed from an interest and applicability perspective. To properly address the question of "**Do** these themes shift or change when horror is used to teach literacy," I would reasonably have to implement the horror genre into the lesson planning of an actual classroom to acquire the necessary data in order to draw possible insights and uncover potentially emerging themes. While I shifted to the "Could" question early in the

data collection process, I discuss the "Do" question more in context to further research implications, as well as in context to my own personal experiences as a high school literacy teacher. That said, while disheartenment momentarily took hold of me as students shared their experiences in the general classroom, a validation for the work lifted my hopes that, from the experiences students had in the horror literature club, an instructional shift of mindset could emphatically change the landscape of secondary and post-secondary education. I was profoundly excited as students advocated for themselves throughout this process.

As the study progressed, it became clear, from each of the students' perspectives, on how the implementation of horror (and, really, interest-driven genres) had the potential of shifting themes of experienced boredom through increased interest and relevancy. I asked each participant who chose to respond about whether or not they felt horror could (or should) be used to teach literacy learning skills (refer to Table 11 in Chapter five for a breakdown of key reading skills). Students were unanimous in their responses – for them, the use of horror in the classroom could increase engagement. Additionally, the use of their interests to create academic learning activities seemed to result in effective retention of key learning concepts, as evidenced in students being able to quickly recall literary elements and the application of a plot diagram in text analysis. Lessons modeled during the horror literature club were well-received by student participants, with feedback typically focusing on the comparison of their experiences between the class and the club. Students commonly expressed their sentiments that if the lessons in literacy class were more like those modeled in the horror literature club, then students would be more interested in school. This aligns with studies and literature around perceived student disengagement (Yazzie-Mintz, 2007). In the application of using horror to teach reading and writing, student responses shifted to positive themes which represented authentic engagement.

Of course, the idea of using horror in the classroom, while a relatively recent phenomenon, is not new. In "Don't let a good scare frighten you: Choosing and using quality chillers to promote reading," Richards, Thatcher, Shreeves, Timmons, and Barker (1999) argued that teachers could tap into student interest around the horror genre to teach key reading and writing concepts. Students, for example, could compare elements of their own written scary stories with other scary stories and that horror could serve as an effective tool for promoting key literacy skills. Richards et al. acknowledge that scary stories "deliver an emotional punch; they have fast-paced plots, suspense, and dramatic power" (Luchner, 2010). While not explicitly stated, the idea of "emotional punch" implies affective learning and, subsequently, engagement.

In what ways does the horror genre promote or constrain emotional connection and relevancy for students in an after-school horror fiction club? What are the experiences of students when an Affective Learning Framework is utilized?

Students were visibly eager and excited to share personal experiences and stories in order to more deeply connect to the learning and concepts discussed in the horror literature club. As students made personal connections to learning, their level of participation and investment measurably increased. Four key areas of the proposed Affective Learning Framework appeared to enhance personal connection and student engagement. When a topic or lesson was relevant to a student, it applied to him or her in some meaningful way. When a student was able to apply previous learning experiences (background knowledge) to new concepts or ideas, it seemed to promote additional investment in the discussion. Maldonado (2017) argued that students, particularly those in middle school, have developed a fascination with the macabre and content found within the horror genre. "Hearing daily news of war, mass shootings, and hate crimes, they develop a natural curiosity toward death and violence." While I would argue against the overly

generalized nature of his comment as it applies to all middle school students, he emphasized that horror can promote student Relevancy/Connectedness by directly speaking to their concerns and fears. “Middle schoolers want to understand and overcome their fears. By experiencing them in a fictional setting, they can experience the emotions while still feeling safe” (2017). With implications around further research and how the horror genre could fit literacy in multiple contexts, middle School writing teacher Rebecca Snavely goes further in addressing the genre and its power of potentially increasing personal Relevancy/Connectedness in the language arts.

> Looking at personal fears and horror through creative writing can be both a powerful source of inspiration for good writing, and a way for the students to grow in themselves. A genre with this much emotional tooth opens the door for students to be more invested in wanting to write well and read more. To work with fear, the students are also challenged to work with pacing suspense, humor, imagining the strange, embracing the unknown, and building confidence in themselves. (Maldonado, 2017)

From an affective standpoint, lessons imbued with the element of Relevance/Connectedness seemed to result in a higher degree of retention of knowledge and made the lessons both memorable and engaging for student participants during the horror literature club. Students were enthusiastic about the use of the short story “Harold” to review plot diagrams and the elements of a fiction narrative. Over a month later, the students claimed that the short story lesson helped them retain the information and elements of a plot diagram, and they were much quicker in their responses to the purposes and applicability of a plot diagram as a result. The study also indicated that, if students had trouble accessing the information or had difficulty with a topic, the potential for them to disconnect and disengage increased. Once Karate Kid told me that he didn’t like to write, further probing revealed that he didn’t like it because he

didn't feel confident in his writing skills. I asked him if he would find writing more interesting if he were able to write about a conspiracy theory, one of his favorite topics – his expression changed at the suggestion. Not only would he possibly find writing more interesting, it seemed like he actually wanted to do it.

It is not enough for a teacher to merely tell a student "why the learning is important" (Schunk, 2012). Teachers may need to reexamine their roles as facilitators of learning so that students can engage in meeting their own learning goals. In doing so, a level of choice and autonomy are critical to fostering student engagement, yet, consistently, student participants indicated a general lack of choice in how they were able to learn. I often joke that, a long time ago, I was a Shakespeare teacher; now, I'm a literacy skills teacher who teaches concepts so that students can access whatever text they choose. In my own experience, teachers, particularly in secondary and post-secondary settings, have become so overly attached to the content that they often forget to teach the skills necessary for a student to enjoy it. I consistently hear statements like the following: "Next semester, I am going to teach *Lord of the Flies*." "My next unit is *Romeo and* Juliet." There are a few glaring challenges inherent within statements like these, however. First of all, you can't really teach a novel, just as I can't really teach "horror," and expect that students will better know how to read. Certainly, novels and genres can serve as effective means to teach and deliver necessary skills like critical thinking, context clues, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. By consistently enforcing our ideas upon them of what students should read based on our own biases and the biases found within the very selection of classic western literature, we are effectively stripping away opportunities for student choice based on their own interests. As the study unfolded, students indicated that choice in their literacy experiences had been provided in decidedly superficial ways, such as the ability to

choose a book during independent reading time. While this can be a powerful opportunity for student engagement in context to connecting personal experiences to reading interests, the independent reading time students mentioned appeared completely disconnected from any personalized learning goals or targets, thus becoming a "filler" of time, rather than the potentially powerful learning experience it could be. This opportunity to practice reading using a book of interest was dependent on the teacher the student had; most teachers did not participate in regular independent reading sessions.

McCarthy (2014) often linked interest and relevancy together, yet acknowledged the power of student choice in engaging students. Choice was a significant theme that emerged in this study. Students were visibly engaged when they were provided with structured autonomy in what they read, the projects they worked on, and how they wanted to use their time together. I mention "structured autonomy" as important, since it is critical on the part of the teacher to ensure that the desired and intended learning outcomes or objectives are clear and explicit. In other words, autonomy should not mean "free time." McCarthy suggested teachers should "have clear learning criteria and ensure that students understand them," and to "limit the options to a manageable number" (2014). I would add that frequent checks for understanding (formative assessments) would also be critical in ensuring that students are using their choice-making effectively – again, the idea is not to teach "horror," but to use horror and other genres which students are interested in as a delivery mechanism to teach reading skills. It should be noted that I did select texts for the horror literature club based on participant interest in horror; while this implies challenge around the idea of complete and open student autonomy, students had an opportunity to select another text (I presented a few options). This poses as a potential limitation to this study; it's easy to provide choice to a small group of students, although I would also argue

that teachers could find creative opportunities, such as cohort genre studies, in which students are organized into smaller groupings based on their genre of choice, to effectively allow further autonomy.

The idea of hook/controversy was broken down to include emerging sub-themes of "friendly," generally anticipated controversy, "heavy" controversy – that is, controversial issues which may cause anxiety or discomfort, and genre-specific controversy, which is inherent in the use of the sub-genre of horror (with implications to all sub-genres) to teach meaningful lessons which can meet learning requirements. As I have noted, the use of horror in the classroom is still regarded as taboo for many, and the horror genre itself is often questioned on its artistic merits. There is a growing movement, however, in using horror to teach. While a basic internet search on "Using Horror in the Classrooms" yields minimal results, there is evidence that the use of the genre to teach and address controversial issues is growing, particularly in the post-secondary world and the world of academia, as "the scholastic community has dissected the horror genre to better understand how the many philosophical, cultural, racial, gender, sexual, social, economical, and political complexities that trouble our daily world are portrayed, subverted, and criticized in a variety of macabre films and novels" (Lanzagorta, 2013). Questions often arise around the appropriateness of the genre in a middle or high school classroom.

> Some people worry that this increased interest in violence is a sign of our culture's degrading values, but nothing could be further from the truth. Pick up a copy of some unedited Grimm's fairy tales and you will see that young people's fascination with horror is nothing new. Violence provokes fear and in a world where most of our fears are abated by modern securities, fiction remains one of the few inspirations for it…. Teaching middle schoolers often means trying to engage them on topics while pushing them to look

> inwardly and think for themselves. Horror makes a perfect tool for it. Instead of fearing these dark curiosities inside of ourselves, we can embrace them and turn them into inspiring moments for learning. (Maldonado, 2017)

In the study, I asked students to address those who might view horror as inappropriate. They were unanimously in agreement and passionate about the fact that the real world often exposed them to horrors every day, and that the genre serves as a potential catharsis for addressing their fears. Clearly, while controversy in solitude isn't necessary to facilitate emotional connection, the idea that teachers can use controversy and other interesting facts ("Did you know…?") to build positive anticipation, or to provide important context, to a lesson. I reflect more on heavy controversy in the constraints section which follows.

Timpson and Burgoyne (2002) note the power of "hooking" an audience in order to effectively, and affectively, engage them; otherwise, they would lose interest (p. 84). They use Madeleine Hunter's concept of classroom as *set* – "the comments or actions, activities or experiences that pull students into the lesson for the day, engage their emotions, and focus their minds" (p. 85). While controversy may not be necessary for affective learning, it can certainly be used as a hook or *set* in order to build emotional connection and positive anticipation of a lesson, concept, or idea.

Finally, a positive learning environment, where students felt comfortable sharing ideas with their peers (safe), and where students perceived their teacher as both approachable (relationship) and positively engaged teacher engagement), suggested that students would be more likely to participate. In interviews and discussions, students did not consistently feel safe sharing ideas or expressing themselves in class. Marzano (2017) argued that, for students to

participate effectively, they must address certain leveled questions, questions he posed which aligned to the levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943).

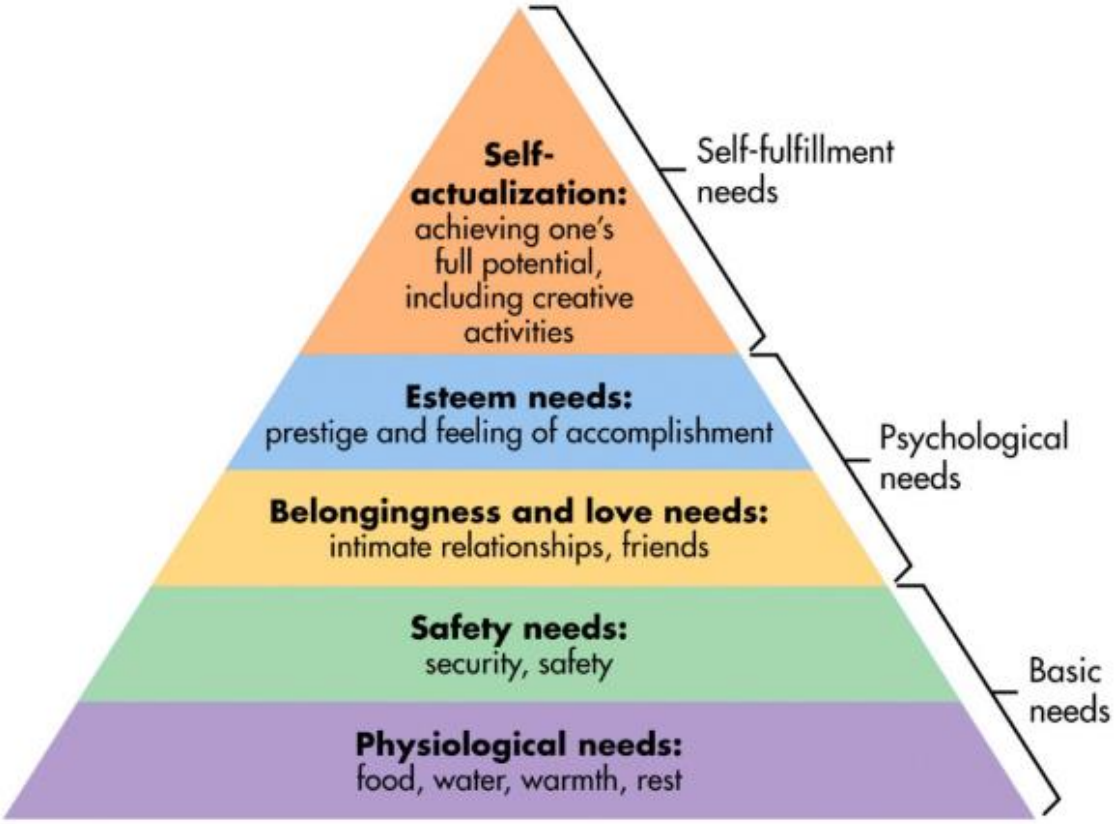


Figure 9. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (McLeod)

Marzano stated that, when students were able to effectively address the questions within the first four levels of the aligned hierarchy, basic foundations of attentiveness and engagement could occur (p. 4). He added a level beyond self-actualization, based on Maslow's later work, which moved beyond the domain of self-actualization and into the domain of "Connection to Something Greater than Self." When the fifth and sixth level questions are able to be addressed by students, the basic foundations of attentiveness and engagement turn into "inspiration and motivation" – in other words, the Affective Learning Framework can be activated to ensure student engagement.

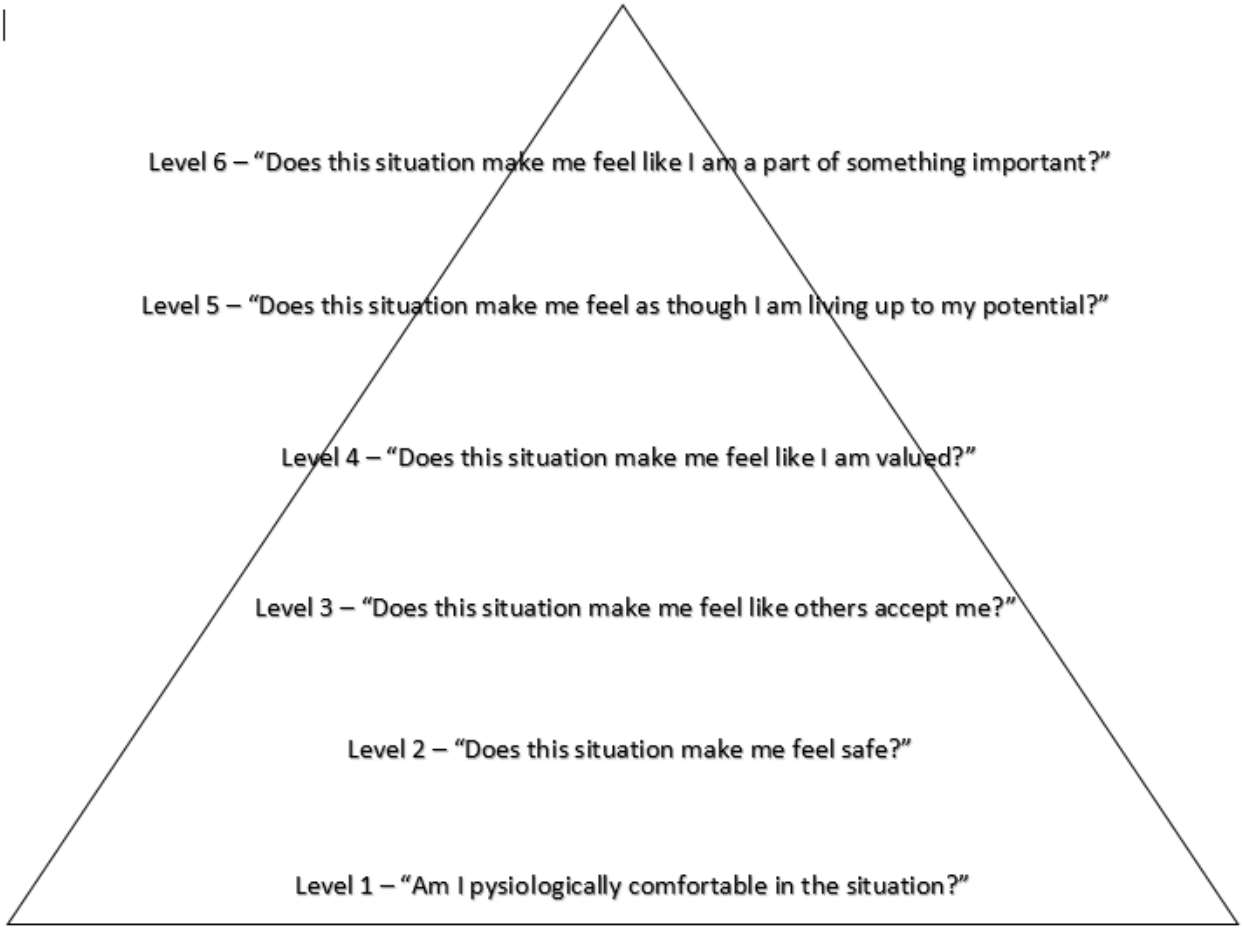


Figure 10. Marzano's question alignment to Maslow's hierarchy of needs

If a student doesn't feel that the teacher honors them or cares about how a student wants to express himself or herself, students would be hard pressed to address through the first two questions of Marzano's proposed questions. The research around a student's "sense of belonging" is profound in its effectiveness to help engage students by making them feel that they are safe and valued in the classroom, something that was noticeably lacking in the responses of student participants in the study. The importance of a positive classroom culture has been well-documented and discussed. According to Timpson and Doe (2008), students are far more likely to remember a negative day than "45 good ones that preceded and followed it" (p. 24); the way students *feel* is a key foundation to how students will engage in the learning. Additionally,

Timpson and Doe also discuss that the classroom culture will greatly affect the teacher and his or her feelings around key classroom concepts and experiences.

While the application of the Affective Learning Framework seemed to promote increased student engagement, heavy controversy, information access, and peer pressure could be considered constraints and serve as potential precautions in the implementation of horror in the literacy classroom.

Potential Constraints of Using Horror in the Classroom

Regarding the possible constraints and limitations in the voluntary after school horror literature club, it is important to note some of the potential challenges as they arose. In many ways, I echo a few of the anticipated concerns and challenges highlighted in the introduction chapter of this study. Throughout the findings chapter, I notes several possible constraints as they arose in context to the application of the Affective Learning Framework in a small group setting in which students chose to be there, as compared to a literacy classroom full of students who are required to take literacy for credit. Among the possible constraints I identified in the findings chapter was that the participants are a part of a competency-based scoring system which is markedly different than traditional percentage-based scoring; however, I refrained from scoring student work and comparisons between the two systems fall decidedly out of the scope of this study. I also noted throughout the previous chapter that considerations should be made when applying these findings to a larger-group or class setting, as the horror literature club was an after-school opportunity of voluntary student participants. The concepts of humor, safety, and choice, for example, may need to be approached differently in a larger-group setting. Beyond the potential constraints that have already been mentioned, I include additional constraints in the next few paragraphs for consideration.

One constraint that took place over the course of the horror literature club was the accessibility of research information. As students researched urban legends and scary stories, such as Creepy Pasta, the school servers frequently blocked students from access for possibly inappropriate content. This led to students often looking on their personal devices, although this made monitoring the information they were examining more difficult. This constraint implies a need to work with both school and district administration around the use of server filters and for the teacher to be clear about the resources she or he might need and why.

Another potential constraint of the after school horror literature club was my own experience of discomfort and uncertainty when certain issues of heavy controversy emerged. While using horror as a means to engage students, friendly controversy and real-life events can certainly empower students to affectively engage. However, "heavy" controversy that can help engage students, while relevant if meaningful (and not used for shock value alone), is not always anticipated or easy to discuss, even for adults. In one instance of what might be deemed as heavy controversy with its potentially religious undertones, a student asked if he could explore the idea of exorcism. In yet another instance, a student who, statistically, may have been considered impressionable to suicide, was fascinated with dark tales from the Suicide Forest in Japan. In addressing the student-initiated question over the real life horror of a series of a tragic school shooting that took place in Florida during the course of the club, I was admittedly and momentarily taken aback. I wanted to ensure students felt safe and comfortable, particularly when students indicated they felt as if adults were either dismissive of their fears or perpetuated them – I was cautious in an attempt to not fall into either category. I was also reflective and became a little sensitive about the potential triggers for students of the horror genre against the atrocities of real life.

While I identified constraints to the study throughout the findings chapter and in this section, it is important to acknowledge that many of these constraints become opportunities as we consider the application of the Affective Learning Framework into different classrooms and settings. For example, as I work with teachers, how we create a proactive measure to ensuring that the learning environment is both safe and also authentic for constructive feedback and critical friends? One point for further study is the potential alignment here to concepts of Social Emotional Learning (SEL). The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines Social Emotional Learning as "the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (2019). In building a safe and positive learning environment, a teacher could tap into the SEL framework, which includes promoting self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, as a way to ensure a positive learning environment while helping students navigate effective constructive feedback and courageous conversations.

In another example, how might small groups be properly leveraged to help support interest and autonomy? Dr. Birmingham, one of my committee members, noted that constraints may imply deficit; however, these challenges also provide a guiding framework for successful implementation.

Implications for Practice

The purpose of this study was to examine horror as a means to effectively engage students and to explore what might, or could happen, with the application of the Affective Learning Framework. From the outset, I wanted this study to reflect the authentic voices of students without imposing my own experiences or viewpoints. I wanted to engage them in self-

advocacy around their hopes for fostering a more engaging learning experience. Far too many studies explore strategies to promote student engagement without actually honoring the perspectives and ideas of those very students we are trying to engage. This, in my mind, denotes an exponential gap in current academic literature around student engagement, which I also addressed in the literature review in chapter two.

In context to the responses of student-participants and their hopes for a more engaged classroom, the application of the Affective Learning Framework would help students more emotionally and meaningfully connect with concepts. As evidenced in their responses when I asked students what they wanted, they wanted to have choice in things that were interesting to them and they wanted to feel less bored in school. Every single student noted their lack of interest or engagement in most of their literacy classes with clear implications and alignment with previous studies that suggest students are bored in school (Bauerlein, 2013; Detweiler, 2017).

It's Not About the Teacher…

Teachers have to be willing to let go of the materials and resources they love and better understand, and leverage, the interests and passions that drive their students. In this way, the findings of this study surpass any specific genre. Horror is how I connected with reading; student-participates indicated that horror could be a meaningful way for them to connect with reading. While not everyone loves horror, every single student has interests and experiences that are meaningful to them. If horror was simply applied to the classroom without thought around what students connected with, then the genre itself could serve as a potential constraint to the learning of those who do not resonate with scary stories. Teachers need to actively and

continually engage and re-assess what interests and motivates their students, and then use the leverage of those interests to teach skills and concepts.

…but it is About How a Teacher Makes Students Feel

"People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel." – Maya Angelou

The argument posed in this study is not about dismissing the importance of cognitive strategies to increase thinking – the argument, in part, is that research and practice have typically been lacking on a balanced and holistic approach to student engagement. Feeling, or emotional connection, is at the heart of a meaningful learning experience. A teacher's conscious and strategic application of the Affective Learning Framework and its four domains can lead to increased student engagement. This was exceedingly clear as student participants voiced their own hopes – interests/autonomy, relevance/connectedness, a positive learning environment, and hook/controversy have the power to emotionally engage students. While the study talks at length about student engagement, one must also acknowledge that teacher engagement is essential in promoting a joyful, safe, and memorable experience for students. The sample lesson activities provided in the third chapter of this study were applied through the domains of promoting student relevancy, interests, and controversy. What is linguistically "missing" in this section is a focus on a positive learning environment; however, this domain rests at the foundations of the effectiveness of the Affective Learning Framework. Once self-actualization and a sense of higher purpose are fostered through the Affective Learning Framework, the results on student engagement can be profound. I address how this might be applied in the classroom in the next section.

Contribution and Further Research

The study attempted to address the importance of engaging students from an affective learning approach. In academic research, the importance of using affective, or emotional, strategies to increase student engagement is often less emphasized and more dismissed than the cognitive aspects which lead to student engagement. While the need for a balanced approach to student engagement is becoming more acknowledged, frameworks that attempt to explicitly address the domains of affective learning are lacking or muddled. This study posited a practical Affective Learning Framework and offered relevant examples for how to implement it meaningfully in literacy lessons using horror as a means to decrease the pandemic of boredom that seems to be raging through secondary classrooms. The study focused on capturing authentic student voices as a means to better understanding how we can become increasingly effective at promoting student engagement.

Future research would include the application of the Affective Learning Framework in multiple classroom settings to examine its effects on student engagement to better address the question, "**Do** these themes shift or change when horror is used to teach literacy?" Additional studies would also focus on student voice and choice, which implies that other genres, besides horror and reflecting student interests, should be utilized in concert with the Affective Learning Framework. Student experiences and recommendations around implementing the Affective Learning Framework should be collected, analyzed, and acted upon in an effort to capture additional data around their perceptions of school and how they would like to be engaged. Finally, additional research to examine the application of the Affective Learning Framework and its potential affects, or lack thereof, on student performance in varying forms and types of assessments would help further solidify its potential importance in closing learning gaps through

increased engagement. Teacher perspective and feedback as a result of the Affective Learning Framework could also be explored for potential themes around teacher engagement.

In regards to the question about the potential implications of how the Affective Learning Framework could either positively or negatively impact student achievement or growth in future studies, my own classroom experience might further inform. While I couldn't address this during the study in context to the horror literature club, I wanted to explore this idea in my own high school literacy classroom. In the introduction chapter, I noted the possible implications of my students' higher test scores through the use of horror as a means to teach and engage, yet I didn't quite have the language or understanding of how the two may or may not have correlated. In the 2017-2018 school year, I began consciously applying elements of the affective learning framework to the lessons in my own class. For example, we utilized the Paranormal Research Project in order to determine whether or not a house in Amityville was truly haunted as a model for students to find different paranormal cases they were interested in exploring. Students were able to argue either for or against whether or not the cases they chose represented authentic hauntings or unexplained phenomenon. The feedback around that project, and projects similar to that, was profound. Students often told me that they enjoyed our classes together. More importantly, they felt that the level of choice they were provided based on their interests, how we connected their learning to something that was meaningful to them, the way we used controversy or information to hook them, and the positive and fun environment actually helped them learn. While I cannot share individual student comments or data for those who were not a part of this study, I wanted to share some collective teacher-specific data. At the beginning, middle, and end of the school year, students in ninth and tenth grades are required to take a computerized formative benchmark assessment on their reading comprehension skills. At the beginning of the

year, student benchmarks determine the expected growth which should be seen as a result of instruction for the year. When students took the Beginning of the Year (BOY) assessment, over twenty scored as intensive, or "far below," in the growth category from the previous spring's assessment. By the end of the year, 89% of all of the over ninety students who took the assessment from my class exceeded their expected annual growth, and every student assessed and identified as "Far Below" moved higher into the growth category, resulting in an aggregate mean growth gain of 171 points between the three of my classes that were assessed. Typically, students are expected to make approximately 70 points of growth over the course of the year as measured by these scantron tests. Essentially, students in my class who took the test scored exceeded growth expectations and made around two years of growth. When I asked students why they felt they did so well, their responses were uniform: they felt like I made their lessons interesting and relevant to them. In the words of one of my students: "You're old, but you're still a great teacher. You give us choices, and you make reading and writing fun."

	Met Annual Target	Growth Category				FALL (7/24/17 to 9/8/17)	SPRING (4/30/18 to 5/23/18)
Students Enrolled	(%)	Far Below	Below	Above	Far Above	Mean SS	Mean SS
38	86%	0	3	13	5	3079	3187
23	90%	0	2	8	11	3000	3220
30	93%	0	2	15	12	2976	3159
91	89%	0	7	36	28	3018	3189

Figure 11. Davis EOY reading growth aggregate (2018 May)

Conclusion

"Here's the shortest horror story in the world. There was a voice in the attic. I ran out of the house. The End." – Horror Literature Club

I had the missing hood dream.

I'm not sure, but I could imagine that it, or one of its ilk, is a fairly common one for doctoral students at some point in their dissertation process. In the dream, I am dressed in my

doctoral robes. As I begin to walk across the stage to accept my degree, I realize that I don't have my hood. My heart skips – where is it? I look frantically around mere moments before my name is supposed to be called. I look everywhere. Suddenly, an unassuming person who looks vaguely familiar (my fourth grade teacher?) shuffles over to me.

With pursed lips and a disappointed-in-me clipped tone which suggested that I should have known better, she says impatiently, "You are not going to be able to graduate."

I'm stunned. "Why?"

"You are missing three academic papers from a class you took two years ago." Feelings of shame. Foolishness. I stand for a moment, aghast.

"Two years ago?!" I can only stammer. "Shouldn't I have known about this before now?"

"Well, yes, you should have." Accusation.

"I – I have people here." I gesture out to the seats – family and friends dotted the auditorium, yet these are not the faces I focus on. Meme Lord, Scare Bear, Karate Kid, and the rest of the horror literature club crew – all looking eagerly on from the front row, waiting for me. I couldn't be sure, but there were others – current students, past students. The faces I recognized were growing in number.

"This is their story!" I plead in desperation, gesturing to the students who filled the auditorium. "I'm here because of them!"

At this thought, I'm legitimately jarred awake, my heart pounding. The fear of disappointing any of my students is my biggest nightmare.

***

As I came to know the student participants, and as I earned their trust over the three months of the horror literature club, I realized that I truly, and almost desperately, wanted each

and every one of them to thrive in ways that perhaps I could not in my own middle and high school experiences. I shudder to think that any of these students, or any of my students I have had the honor and privilege to teach, are at risk of becoming a tragic dropout statistic which resulted from feelings of isolation and boredom. The work around student engagement is vital, and our application of an affective approach to learning is more important than ever before. Let's face it; in this day and age of teaching, an instructor must vie for the attention of her or his students through a growing barrage of challenges, distractions and technologies. In order to do accomplish this seemingly overwhelming task, a balanced approach to teaching and learning, where both cognitive rigor and emotional connection are used to engage students, can potentially yield profound results in student knowledge retention. This realization comes from personal experience – regardless of the personal challenges I faced outside of school, I became a strong reader when I began to read literature that was interesting to me.

As a result of this study, a new chapter has started to unfold. This new chapter, full of possibilities around "what is?" to "what if?," takes place in context to a small and quiet fourth grade student who was once told by his teacher that he was going to hell. This fresh chapter, in many ways, continues this little boy's story, yet, more importantly, introduces some amazing, complex, and beautiful new characters: British Cookie, Cloud, IPod, Karate Kid, Meme Lord, Scare Bear, Jax, Melon, and Dean. While each is unique, their cause, on behalf of students everywhere, is a common one – they desire a literacy classroom experience in which all students can feel welcomed and safe, where students feel their interests and experiences are valued, where they are able to personally connect to the learning, and where they can explore interesting information or controversy in a non-threatening and non-judgmental way as a means to promote deep and complex thinking. Yet there is another character who will be vitally important to the

plot design of future chapters, one who can either serve as a champion of student engagement or the antagonist of it: the teacher. It is my hope that teachers everywhere can feel empowered to pick up the potential power of the Affective Learning Framework and use it in classrooms on behalf of students to change the landscape of education and eliminate "boredom" as a main adjective students use to describe their learning experiences. It's time to find a happy ending to the all-too-common real-life horror story of the disengaged student.

CHAPTER VI: A LITERARY ANALYSIS OF HORROR LITERATURE

Overview

In what ways can the study of horror deepen one's understanding of both the celebrations and the atrocities of humankind, and additionally allow the student to place literary themes in personal and simultaneously collective humanistic contexts? This supplemental chapter is intended to showcase the application of scholarship through a horror lens and to provide sample activities which connect to the three components of the Affective Learning Framework proposed in Chapter Two. I have revised and included a portion of my professionally unpublished M.A. thesis, "The Mirror of Ugliness: The Cultural Catharsis of Horror Literature as a Study of Uninhibited Human Nature Through Allegorical and Psychological Themes." This initial defense of the horror genre as meaningful of academic scholarship was both an extension of my personal framework and the foundational seed of my current focus on using horror to teach literacy. Its purpose is multifold: to explore possible humanistic and universal themes in the horror genre, to provide a history of the horror genre, and to explicitly connect classroom example activities to the affective learning framework. The inclusion of this chapter is untraditional in that it includes an interdisciplinary literary analysis more common in humanities studies than in educational research.

The Affective Learning Framework and "The Mirror of Ugliness" Revised

For those resistant to implementing the horror genre as a means of engaging students, many classic works of literature stand on the threshold of the horror genre and are readily present in middle school, high school, and college classrooms across the United States. As tragedy, according to Aristotle, prompts sympathy and terror in an audience because it touches on a

universal element of human nature (Cunningham, 2006), it would stand to reason the horror genre is a form scholars have been, in actuality, studying for centuries. The play *Macbeth*, as a prominent example by prolific playwright William Shakespeare, is one of the most widely studied texts in English literature. It also made the number two spot of *Horror: The 100 Best Books* (1988). Shakespeare imbued elements of terror and the fantastical in many of his works; in *Macbeth*, he employs the dark services of the "Weird Sisters" to confront the titular character about his pending and dormant ambitions to reign over Scotland.

As in many of Shakespeare's works, there are countless controversies surrounding the exact purpose and intent of the witch-like sisters and their relationship to Macbeth, the play's overall symbolism, and its ultimate driving forces and influences. Does Macbeth truly see a ghostly floating dagger, which leads him into King Duncan's sleeping chamber, and, eventually, to the vicious murder of his king? If so, is the illusion a supernatural occurrence brought on by the three witches? Or is the floating dagger, and the resulting madness, merely the manifestation of Macbeth's and his wife's lust for power? In either case, to an unsettled Elizabethan audience, the conspiracy against Duncan would border on the profane: "In Shakespeare's Day, regicide was regarded as the worst crime of all, as the king or queen was God's consort on Earth" (Blackburn, 1988, p. 14). Shakespeare was purposefully playing on horrific elements to promote feelings of dread in his audience, which he uses to similar effect in Titus Andronicus, often considered his most violent work. Modern audiences (and students) can relate to the possibilities which exist if the barriers around ethical inhibition are left unchecked, and the potential consequences (madness, despair, shame) of such actions.

Table 12. Affective Classroom Connections – *Macbeth*

Creepy Classroom Connections ***Macbeth***		
	Learning Activity	Key Skill(s)
Interest/Autonomy	Students choose one supernatural aspect of the play which they want to know more about. They will construct a research project which explores the history of the supernatural element, the significance of the supernatural element in the play, and how the supernatural element is perceived today.	*Expository Writing, Writing for Purpose & Audience, Research*
Relevance	Macbeth has been placed on modern-day trial for the murder of King Duncan. Students will role play a court scene in which they must determine whether or not Macbeth and Lady Macbeth were under the influence of the supernatural. If not, is Macbeth guilty of murder or should he be able to enter a plea of insanity? What consequence, if any, should Lady Macbeth face?	*Textual Evidence, Complex Character Development, Text Citation*
Controversy	Debate: Witches have been demonized throughout history. Today, many people (women and men) identify themselves as witches, but in Shakespeare's time, witches, typically women, were generally thought to be evil. One team will defend this traditional mindset around the perception of witches and will provide a critical perspective on witchcraft today, while the other team will provide a critical analysis on the traditional witch stereotype and will defend modern day witches through the lens of feminism/human rights.	*Respond to Diverse Perspectives, Speaker Point-of-View, Present Information, Develop Claims & Counterclaims*

Critically acclaimed American author Nathaniel Hawthorne was preoccupied with a personal need to purge and reconcile the history of his family's Puritan past. Both ashamed of and obsessed by his examination of Puritanism and the self-righteous hypocrisy which forged his ancestry, Hawthorne penned many tales paralleling the traditions of his ancestors to those of his

own nineteenth century culture. To Hawthorne, nothing was as it appeared; the rigid godliness of Puritan society served as a mere façade to explicit human evils, found in the likes of the Salem witch trial persecutions, of which Hawthorne's own great grandfather took part as an accusatory magistrate. In his attempts to distance himself from the actions of his family and his personal struggles with the shame of his Puritan heritage, he is widely credited as the author who popularized the allegorical tale representative of the "American Gothic." In "Young Goodman Brown" (1835), Hawthorne examined the internal struggles of temptation and faith in a world where everything seemed morally complex and, from his perspective, was likely tainted. For a classroom, the story is rich in symbolism about the nature of "good," "evil," and the wide spans in between.

Unlike the gothic stories of old, "Young Goodman Brown" inflicts terror on the reader by symbolically internalizing – and therefore, humanizing – the age-old battles of the "holy" and the "profane." The title character (innocence and youth) leaves his wife (faith) on an epic journey into the dark depths of the forest (sin) only to attempt to reclaim himself from the brink of his own damnation. As Young Goodman Brown winds deeper into the woods, he meets up with an "unremarkable" gentleman who appears in the form of Goodman's deceased grandfather and who carries with him a strange staff which appears like a "great black snake" (pg. 53). As the two men journey further along the path, Goodman naively reflects on his perceived goodness of his fathers and forefathers, to which the older companion, a clear allusion to Satan, provides a tongue-in-cheek reprimand.

> Well said, Goodman Brown! I have been as well acquainted with your family as with ever a one among the Puritans; and that's no trifle to say. I helped your grandfather, the constable, when he lashed the Quaker woman so smartly through the streets of Salem;

and it was I that brought your father a pitch-pine knot, kindled at my own hearth, to set fire to an Indian village, in King Philip's war. They were my good friends, both; and many a pleasant walk have we had along this path, and returned merrily after midnight. I would fain be friends with you for their sake. (p. 54)

Corruption, the older gentleman explains, is rampant in Puritan New England; the highest levels of government and religion confer with the Devil in their "godly" law and decision-making. This point is further solidified as the pair come across Goody Cloyse, Young Goodman Brown's catechism teacher, who reveals her true nature while the young man, not wanting to be seen in the company of his evil companion, hides in the shadows.

"The devil!" screamed the pious old lady.

"Then Goody Cloyse knows her old friend?" observed the traveler, comforting her and leaning on his writhing stick.

"Ah, forsooth, and is it your worship indeed?" cried the good dame. (pgs. 55-56)

When Goodman Brown discovers a pink ribbon on a tree he identifies as his wife's (aptly named Faith), the young newlywed's world is thrown asunder as all he deems sacred becomes vile. "My Faith is gone!...There is no good on earth; and sin is but a name. Come, devil; for to thee this world is given" (p. 59). At this proclamation, Goodman descends into a "madness" as he plunges wildly into the woods, monstrous in his own depravity. While the woods are suggested to be full of demons, spirits, devils and savages, "In truth, all through the haunted forest there could be nothing more frightening than the figure of Goodman Brown" (p. 59). Allegorically, Hawthorne makes a statement of human nature - once tainted, the evils of humanity far outcry any evils of any devil or his cohorts, as Brown becomes the most fearsome of beasts in the forest of temptation. Hawthorne notably drops "young" and now refers to the

character as “Goodman Brown,” indicating a lost innocence broken in the darkness of ambiguous sin. After Goodman awakens the next day, he nor the reader is unclear about whether the events truly happened or were simply dreamed. He comes to view the world suspiciously either way:

> Often, awaking suddenly at midnight, he shrank from the bosom of Faith; and at morning or eventide, when the family knelt down at prayer, he scowled and muttered to himself, and gazed sternly at his wife, and turned away. (pg. 64)

Goodman Brown becomes the very epitome of Hawthorne’s paranoid Puritan, constantly reminded of his own sins in the face of others around him, condemning and mistrusting his loved ones, and ultimately damning himself to loneliness and despair.

Table 13. Affective Classroom Connections – *Young Goodman Brown*

Creepy Classroom Connections ***Young Goodman Brown***		
	Learning Activity	Key Skill(s)
Interest/Autonomy	Students choose one character in the play. They create a social media page for that character which reflects the symbolic nature of the character, a visual representation of that character (drawn, painted, picture mock-up), a history of the character, and the character's ultimate motivations.	*Complex Character Development, Theme*
Relevance	Students retell the story of *Young Goodman Brown* as if the characters were high school student in modern times. This group project could be a comic book or a short teen film. Characters will be reimagined and settings can be changed to reflect a modern interpretation. Themes and main ideas should remain the same to capture the overall essence of the original short story.	*Central Idea/Theme, Textual Evidence, Complex Character Development, Writing for Audience, Narrative Structure*
Controversy	Debate: In *Young Goodman Brown*, Brown proclaims the world as the devil's, and his older companion acknowledges the corruption in all facets of society and government. Are they right, and, if so, is the United State currently evil or corrupt? One team will defend this view, citing current real-world issues (allegations of police brutality, institutional racism, privilege, elections influenced by money, etc.) as evidence toward this thinking. The other group will counter this perspective, using evidence (humanitarian efforts, evolvement and focus of human rights, grass roots political movements) to defend the U.S. as a place of optimism and opportunity, and will also investigate the credibility of the characters stating those claims.	*Author Claims, Respond to Diverse Perspectives, Speaker Point-of-View, Present Information, Develop Claims & Counterclaims*

American author Edgar Allen Poe was greatly influenced by the macabre and brooding gothic tales of his youth; many of his stories deal heavily in the death and despair typical to the gothic tradition. A skilled writer, a celebrated literary critic, a respected philosopher, and, by

many accounts, a disturbed man, among his skills was his ability to express complexity of character in short story form. While his tales are imbued with gothic imagery, they are also unique in capturing the horrors of ensuing madness and inner turmoil. His work marks an evolutionary transition of horror which emphasized human nature and intense self-examination, rather than exploring the terrors of the natural world itself. Mary Shelly's popular *Frankenstein* touched on this newfound human desire for power over nature, but warned of the dire consequences for those who violated its laws. Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* was an instrumental novel in the genre's exploration of the internalized darker side of the human psyche and the horrific outcomes of attempting to play the role of God.

When Stevenson wrote the book in 1886, his wife Fanny thought the first version was "too gothic" (Harman viii). Stevenson's second and final draft intoned a horrific new edge as the author attempted to explore the inner workings of human nature rather than the traditional, external forces dominating the gothic in the previous century. The devilish Hyde, Jekyll's alter-ego, is the very "mascot" of horror fiction; he often produces rage in those around him and serves as an unwelcome reminder of an inner darkness many would rather not see or acknowledge in themselves. In this instance, Hyde is observed surrounded by a crowd after he remorselessly tramples over a young girl in the street:

> I had taken a loathing to my gentleman at first site. So had the child's family, which was only natural. But the doctor's case was struck with me. He was the usual cut and dry apothecary, of no particular age and colour [sic], with a strong Edinburgh accent, and about as emotional as a bagpipe. Well, sir, he was like the rest of us; every time he looked at my prisoner, I saw that Sawbones turned sick and white with a desire to kill

him. I knew what was in his mind, just as he knew what was in mine; and killing being out of the question, we did the next best. (Stevenson, 1992, p. 101)

The murderous reaction toward Edward Hyde is typical throughout the novel. Hyde is described as a slight, "dwarfish" figure. The people who encounter Hyde sense there is something inherently "wrong" about him, although no one can articulate the reason as to why. While being forced to recognize human nature as a multifaceted jewel (as Jekyll will conclude in his revealed confession at the end of the novel), the idea as humanity being inherently evil brings about an irrational and, in the case of those who see or interact with Hyde, murderous fear. No one wishes to see their faults displayed before them. Hyde is not just one singular man; he is an everyman of darkness. The very site of him reminds the onlooker of his or her own potential for vileness, cruelty, and indifference. "I never saw a circle of such hateful faces; and there was the man in the middle, with a kind of black, sneering coolness—frightened too, I could see that—but carrying it off, sir, really like Satan" (p. 101). In the blatant desire to kill Hyde, there is a circular desire to ignore and "hide" the despicable part of humanity capable of horrible deeds. The truth of this inherent duality is a harsh truth, particularly to narrator Dr. Lanyon, and it utterly unnerves him.

My life is shaken to the roots; sleep has left me; the deadliest terror sits by me at all hours of the day and night; I feel that my days are numbered, and that I must die; and yet I shall die incredulous. As for the moral turpitude that man unveiled to me, even with tears of penitence, I cannot, even in memory, dwell on it without a start of horror. (p. 141)

While Jekyll is an outwardly good man, he embraces the Hyde part of himself and allows the singular aspect of his evil to consume him. He is unable (and perhaps unwilling) to control

Hyde as he succumbs to his sinister, and possibly truer, self. Jekyll eventually grows to fear the influence and dominion that Hyde holds over his life:

> …if I slept, or even dozed for a moment in my chair, it was always as Hyde that I awakened. Under the strain of the continually impending doom and by the sleeplessness to which I now condemned myself, ay, even beyond what I had thought possible to man, I became, in my own person, a creature eaten up and emptied by fever, languidly weak both in body and in mind, and solely occupied by one thought: the horror of my other self. (p. 154)

Jekyll has become an untraditional gothic prisoner, for not only is he trapped in his lab, he is forced to confront his own twisted soul. One could count *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* as a technical milestone in the horror genre in its simultaneous blending of gothic and horror elements. As suspenseful as it is mysterious and disturbing, the novel articulates a terrifying truth of human duplicity that has long been and continues to be a horrific subject of fascination and study. For the classroom, the novel could foster rich debate about the true nature of humankind.

Table 14. Affective Classroom Connections – The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

Creepy Classroom Connections		
The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde		
	Learning Activity	Key Skill(s)
Interest/Autonomy	Students choose a modern film, television show, comic book, or piece of music which has themes of character duplicity. Students will construct a literary analysis which connects the chosen work with Stevenson's story, making a determination about whether or not *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* continues to influence story-telling today.	*Textual Evidence, Writing for Purpose & Audience, Research*
Relevance	Students write a narrative in which they imagine they have found Dr. Jekyll's formula. In the story, the student decides she or he wants to embrace their evil "Hyde." What would this evil counterpart look like? What qualities would this counterpart have? What would this uninhibited creature do in a day of the student's life?	*Central Idea/Theme, Narrative Structure, Sequencing, Complex Character Development*
Controversy	Debate: Dr. Jekyll intended to separate the good and evil aspects of human nature, yet only Hyde emerged. One team will argue Jekyll's experiment as indicative that human nature is inherently flawed, and that we are attempting to fool ourselves into thinking there is anything good about humanity. The other team will counter this argument by suggesting, with a revision to Jekyll's initial formula, the experiment could have yielded a different outcome and a different, positive aspect of human nature, as there are indeed compassionate, kind people in the world. Both teams will use evidence to reinforce their claims.	*Respond to Diverse Perspectives, Speaker Point-of-View, Present Information, Develop Claims & Counterclaims*

A powerful commentary on oppression and social commentary can be found in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper," published in 1899. Accounting for a feminist and humanist point of view on the subject of primordial regression, this psychologically disturbing and deeply personal tale explores the pressures on one's own sanity once confined within the societal and patriarchal boundaries of the Victorian era. The story originated as a result of the

author's own personal struggles with nervous disorder and the resulting sexist attitudes and incredibly dismissive treatments of the male physicians of the period. In her forced sabbatical, Gilman was expected to refrain from such "unwomanly" endeavors as engaged intellectual thought and overstimulation. Deprived of her writing and soon realizing the restrictive treatment as doing more harm than good, she discontinued the proposed plan and discovered healing and catharsis through her own work.

> I went home and obeyed those directions for some three months, and came so near the borderline of utter mental ruin that I could see over.
>
> Then, using the remnants of intelligence that remained, and helped by a wise friend, I cast the noted specialist's advice to the winds and went to work again--work, the normal life of every human being; work, in which is joy and growth and service, without which one is a pauper and a parasite--ultimately recovering some measure of power.
>
> Being naturally moved to rejoicing by this narrow escape, I wrote The Yellow Wallpaper, with its embellishments and additions, to carry out the ideal (I never had hallucinations or objections to my mural decorations) and sent a copy to the physician who so nearly drove me mad. He never acknowledged it. (Gilman, 1999)

The effectiveness and horror of the story come in its rich symbolism and its acute depiction of an "ordinary" person flailing into the abyss of her own madness through a growing awareness of her own prisonlike state. The reader discovers the protagonist, never identified by name as she is symbolically stripped of all individuality and identity, constricted by treatments purported to help her, and, consequently, repressed by the societal expectations placed upon many women of the Victorian era.

A colonial mansion, a hereditary estate, I would say a haunted house, and reach the height of romantic felicity—but that would be asking too much of fate!

Still I will proudly declare that there is something queer about it.

Else, why should it be bought so cheaply? And why have stood so long untenanted?

John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage. (p. 27)

The narrator has come to accept she is never to be taken seriously, but offers deep insight into her situation. John not only epitomizes the dismissive husband, he comes to represent the entire logistical age in his attempts at reasoning and in his disregard of all things considered romantic.

John is practical in the extreme. He has no patience with faith, an intense horror of superstition, and he scoffs openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures.

John is a physician, and perhaps—(I would not say it to a living soul, of course, but this is dead paper and a relief to my mind)—perhaps that is the reason I do not get well faster.

You see he does not believe I am sick! (p. 27)

The narrator reveals she writes without John's knowledge of her doing so, for he would not approve if he were to find out. Her next journal entry is two weeks later, where she discusses her growing hopelessness regarding her mental health and, as if to prove the point, interjects random thoughts concerning the figures she now feels may be hiding behind the strange yellow wallpaper of her prison-like room. Her mental anguish and exhaustion are apparent, and the next time she writes about her room, her entire energy is focused toward the wallpaper. "I'm getting

rather fond of the room in spite of the wall-paper. Perhaps because of the wall-paper. It dwells in my mind so!" (p. 34). Her inner-conflict regarding the wallpaper becomes more defined as she rejects, fears, and then welcomes the yellow wallpaper, which serves as both a flimsy façade of social reality and the primary instrument of her oppression.

> The front pattern does move—and no wonder! The woman behind shakes it!
>
> Sometimes I think there are a great many women behind, and sometimes only one, and she crawls around fast, and her crawling shakes it all over.
>
> Then in the very bright spots she keeps still, and in the very shady spots she just takes hold of the bars and shakes them hard! (p. 39)

She becomes desperate to free the "creeping" woman she sees behind the wallpaper, which mirrors her imprisoned self. There are moments, the narrator states, where the creeping woman is able to escape in the daytime, but still the yellow wallpaper serves as a barrier against absolute freedom. The narrator begins to strip the wallpaper away with her hands as she further isolates herself from her husband and his sister, eventually locking the door so she can work undisturbed. As she comes closer to freeing her alter ego behind the paper, she removes herself further from society and the limiting expectations imposed on her. When she finally releases this woman from behind the paper, the narrator takes on the creeping aspects she has observed, and is now united with her liberated alter ego. "'I've got out at last," said I, "in spite of you and Jane! And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!' (p. 42)." The narrator has become the "creeping woman," and in her true form, her husband, and therefore society, cannot bear the sight of what they might consider monstrous, and traditional gender stereotypes are momentarily reversed. "Now why should the man have fainted? But he did, and right across my path by the wall, so that I had to creep over him every time!" The irony, is much like the good

Dr. Frankenstein in Shelly's infamous novel, John (society) has created the monster in which it fears most: in this case, a freethinking, "liberated" woman. The repression has played its course on our narrator's well-being; her mind has snapped (liberated) her into a "creeping" mode through ages of an imposed inferior sexist relationship. When she embraces her "primitive" self, the outcome is remarkably revolting to those who pride themselves on upholding an age of reason, civilization, and male dominance. Many students can relate to feelings of isolation and loneliness and the idea of being repressed. In today's context, Gilman's work can pave thoughtful insights on sexism, as well as racism, privilege, and abuse.

Table 15. Affective Classroom Connections – *The Yellow Wallpaper*

Creepy Classroom Connections ***The Yellow Wallpaper***		
	Learning Activity	Key Skill(s)
Interest/Autonomy	Students choose one type of oppression which can be observed today. They will construct a research project which explores the history of this type of oppression, a story or poem which reflects the horrors of this oppression, how this oppression is perpetuated today, and a possible way to help address this oppression.	*Expository Writing, Writing for Purpose & Audience, Research*
Relevance	Students wake up one day and find themselves trapped in the yellow-wallpapered room. Describe, draw, or in some way illustrate this room. What does it represent? How does it make the student feel? Students will write a story or create a presentation about their experience. They will also create a blueprint or some type of visual about the room.	*Central Idea/Theme, Textual Evidence, Complex Character Development, Writing for Audience, Narrative Structure*
Controversy	Debate: Some would argue women's rights have come a long way, while others would argue that women's rights still have a long way to go. One team will identify the shortcomings of current rights granted to women and will argue some solutions to help address these needs, while the other team will defend the evolution of women's rights using evidence (feminism, women's suffrage movement) to highlight the positive aspects of the current state of those rights.	*Respond to Diverse Perspectives, Speaker Point-of-View, Present Information, Develop Claims & Counterclaims*

Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* has been the subject of debate as to its meanings and symbolism since its publication in 1898. Amidst the most popular arguments since the novella first appeared is whether or not the apparitions are indeed real or merely a figment of the governess' tortured (or depraved) imagination. This question is fueled by James' apparent intention to keep the meanings of the story ambiguous; in doing so, he provocatively blurs the

line between realism and fantasy. *The Turn of the Screw* sets a psychological precedent of the horror genre which continues to be emulated today.

The method in which James introduces the governess without revealing her name is reminiscent of the gothic story: the governess has assumed the gothic role of the unidentified nameless symbol of purity. The question remains as to how pure the governess actually is, one of the significant points which makes the story a lasting horror tale.

Unlike gothic romances, James leaves everything to the imagination. There is no simple or neat explanation of anything, nor is there any resolution to the mysteries at hand. Whether or not the ghosts are real or the Governess has conjured them in delusional fancy, the boy's unexpected and mysterious death at the end of the novel is no illusion. The haunting atmosphere of unsolved mysteries with a blend of the supernatural is what makes James a forerunner of the modern horror novel:

> Horror has once again become primarily about emotion. It is once again writing that delves deep inside and forces us to confront who we are, to examine what we are afraid of, and to wonder what lies ahead down the road of life. (Passarella, 2003, pg. 2)

Horror establishes mood, elicits dread, and gives the reader a feeling of unease. James establishes the characteristics of dread and unease in his work and, as such, bridges a gap between the traditional gothic and the modern horror literature of today, paving the way for authors like H.P. Lovecraft and the disturbing examinations of the human psyche through horror literature.

Table 16. Affective Classroom Connections – *The Turn of the Screw*

Creepy Classroom Connections ***The Turn of the Screw***		
	Learning Activity	Key Skill(s)
Interest/Autonomy	Students create a ghost story in the tradition of James' *Turn of the Screw*. The story can be in written form, a graphic novel format, or a well-produced podcast (oral storytelling). Students will work in groups to help and refine each other's stories so they are ready to present to the class.	*Central Idea/Theme, Textual Evidence, Writing for Audience, Narrative Structure, Present Information*
Relevance	Bart Simpson once said while the original *Friday the 13th* film scared audiences when it came out (1980), it was "pretty lame" by today's standards. Would James' *Turn of the* Screw hold the attention or interest of audiences today? Has the concept of horror and scary stories changed to the point where the "classics" are irrelevant? Students write a well-constructed argument detailing their point of view and perspective.	*Argumentative Writing, Textual Evidence, Research, Writing for Audience*
Controversy	Debate: Many people believe in the paranormal while others do not. Some well-documented cases (*The Amityville Horror, The Enfield Haunting)* have been both heavily supported by believers and heavily disputed by skeptics. One team will argue the existence of the paranormal and its possible influence on the actions of human beings, while the other team will argue against paranormal claims, using psychology as a possible means to disprove.	*Respond to Diverse Perspectives, Speaker Point-of-View, Present Information, Develop Claims & Counterclaims,*

Much as we ask for it, the frisson of horror, among the many oddities of our emotional life, is one of the oddest. For one thing, it is usually a response to something that is not there. Under normal circumstances, that is, it attends only to such things as nightmares, phobias, and literature. In that respect it is unlike terror, which is extreme and sudden fear in the face of

material threat...the terror can be dissipated by a round of buckshot. Horror, on the other hand, is fascinated dread in the presence of an immaterial cause. The frights of nightmares cannot be dissipated by a round of buckshot; to flee them is to run into them at every turn. (Hartwell, 1987, pg. 4)

Lovecraft would have agreed; horror is often far from literal ghosts, goblins and monsters. Lovecraft's works reflect the horrors of the psyche, cautiously reminding the reader the greatest and most terrifying evils lie dormant in the shadows of human consciousness. Many of Lovecraft's tales follow the awakening of the primal human urge to consume, destroy, and wreak chaos on the self and on the external world, against a backdrop of the relative indifference of the ancient forces stirring amidst the human chaos. Try as one might, this dark and perverse nature cannot be escaped; the more one denies the "Hyde" within, the more heinous the acts will become once unleashed from the barriers of morality. Lovecraft's short story "The Rats in the Walls" deals with one man's descent into madness as he regresses to this darker and inescapable self, while also implying the horrors of war. The success of Lovecraft's horror story lies in the humanization of his main character, although it must be noted Lovecraft did not afford the same respect in his stereotypical, offensive, and arguably hateful literary depictions of characters of non-Anglo-Saxon descent, reflecting the author's alleged and apparent racism.

The narrator of the story, Delapore, has a unique, secretive, and colorful family history. What was once known about the Delapore family existed in the contents of a sealed envelope which tradition held was only opened by the eldest son after his father's death. The mysterious envelope perished in a fire which killed his grandfather and destroyed his ancestral home when Delapore was very young. The narrator speculates had he known what had been in the envelope, he would never have attempted to restore Exham Priory, his family's ancient house (Lovecraft,

1973, p. 432). During the first World War and while in England, Delapore's son learns more about Exham Priory and the bleak Delapore heritage through Captain Edward Norrys. The Senior Delapore buys his family home at a "surprisingly reasonable figure," yet halts the restoration with the maiming of his son in the war. "During the two years that he lived I thought of nothing but his care, having even placed my business under the direction of partners" (p. 433). Again touched by tragedy when his son dies, the seeds of Delapore's madness become rooted into place. His personal experience, along with the hereditary insanity later revealed, contribute to the creeping infestation that will eventually come to consume his mind. His son's death is the catalyst resulting in a newfound obsession: the restoration of Exham Priory. He refuses to listen to the horror stories and fantastical legends surrounding his home. Delapore soon learns not only is the Priory avoided by locals, but he is also unwelcome by the villagers (p. 433).

Delapore concludes through his research Exham Priory stands on the site of a Druid or prehistoric temple where base acts of ritualistic cannibalism had allegedly taken place. Its history is riddled with mysterious disappearances and acts of violence, and the de la Poers (Delapores) of old are thought by the locals to be tyrants "cursed of God" (434). This view is evidently shared by at least one of Delapore's own ancestors, Walter de la Poer, who was driven to kill his entire family. The slaughter

> was largely condoned by the villagers, and so slackly treated by the law that its perpetrator escaped honoured, unharmed, and undisguised to Virginia; the general whispered consent being that he had purged the land of an immemorial curse (p. 435).

As he works to restore his home, Delapore adapts the traditional spelling of de la Poer for himself, a gesture which appears sentimental but which reflects the acceptance of his birthright and the past atrocities associated with it. The point of mystical and damning hereditary influence

is also touched on in Delapore's mention of his young cousin Randolph Delapore, who "…became a voodoo priest after he returned from the Mexican War" (p. 434). Thematically, young Randolph was presumably changed or traumatized by his own experiences of the horrors of war, for it was not until after the Mexican War that he delved into the art of voodoo. From Lovecraft's skewed perspective, voodoo would likely have been looked upon as exclusively sinister in nature.

Strange dreams accost the narrator after he moves into Exham Priory, dreams in which he witnesses terrible and hideous visions of demonic swine herders and viscous acts of cannibalism. He awakens to find his favored cat transfixed on a point in the wall. Delapore himself believes he sees the stone walls move and can hear the scurrying of rodents within. The incident recalls to the narrator's mind the story of how an army of rats once burst forth from the castle and devoured everything in their path. Delapore's choice to name his cat after a derogatory racial slur is loaded with provocative insinuations. Years after the Civil War, the evils of human inequality are still rampant through unexplainable hatred and violence based on prejudice alone, an atrocity exclusive to the human race.

The day after his initial dreams, Delapore enlists the services of Captain Norrys and the two decide to spend the night in the cellar after the narrator hears rats in the basement. In their explorations, the two men discover a hidden chamber beneath the sub-cellar. The two, with several other men, journey into the underground passage to find a subterranean city, likely dating back to the stone age, littered with the ancient bones of countless cannibalized victims. This is the singular incident which destroys Delapore's inhibitions and launches him into his primal self, a point made when he sanely refers to his friend as "the plump Captain Norrys" (p. 443). Delapore is assaulted by the voices of his own mind, and, thinking that he can now feel the

scurrying rats in the darkness, resorts to a primitive series of grunts and what is later revealed to be a flesh eating frenzy. The instigator of Delapore's fall from grace is arguably far from supernatural. The voices in Delapore's mind are distinctly his own, reminding him of the traumatic experiences in his own life which throw him into the brink of regressive insanity:

> The war ate my boy, damn them all...and the Yanks ate Carfax with flames and burnt Grandsire Delapore and the secret...No, no, I tell you, I am not the daemon swineherd in the twilit grotto! It was not Edward Norry's face on that flabby, fungous thing. Who says I am a de la Poer? He lived, but my boy died! Shall a Norrys hold the lands of a de la Poer?...It' voodoo, I tell you...that spotted snake...'Sblood, thou stinkard, I'll learn ye how to gust...would ye swynke me thilke wys?...Ungl...ungl...rrrhl...chchch... (p. 444)

The rest of his party finds the narrator three hours later, crouching over the half-eaten corpse of Captain Norrys. The rats of Delapore's mind are unleashed as he succumbs to his base appetite. The narrator's own cat is found to be leaping and tearing at Delapore's throat. Many interpretations could be used here, but perhaps Delapore's cat finally understood the rats had been festering in his "master" all along. Of course, taking the cat's racially-inspired name into consideration, this attack may also reflect the notion the oppressed will inevitably rise and turn against the tyranny which has enslaved it, an idea as pertinent today as it has ever been. Lovecraft seems to suggest here humans are as predatory and beast-like as any animal, regardless of how much one tries to repress or hide this aspect of our collective nature.

> When I speak of poor Norrys they accuse me of a hideous thing, but they must that I did not do it. They must know it was the rats; the slithering, scurrying rats whose scampering will never let me sleep; the daemon rats that race behind the padding in this room and

beckon me down to greater horrors than I have ever known; the rats they can never hear, the rats in the walls. (p. 444)

Delapore's self-denial of his being the true monster of the tale contributes to its overall tragic and horrific implications. The evils of war which robbed him of both his son and Carfax, as well as the knowledge of the heinous acts of his ancestors, in turn drive him to commit gruesome murder. Having resorted to this base desire, he will never again be able to escape the "rats in the walls," incarnations of his own murderous psychological madness.

Table 17. Affective Classroom Connections – *The Rats in the Walls*

Creepy Classroom Connections ***The Rats in the Walls***		
	Learning Activity	Key Skill(s)
Interest/Autonomy	Students explore the Lovecraftian mythos. They will choose an "Ancient One" in order to research its history, articulate its origins, and track its influence on literature, films, and other artistic mediums today.	*Expository Writing, Writing for Purpose & Audience, Research*
Relevance	Students examine two Lovecraftian texts and look for themes of racism in the author's work. They will examine historical context and will present their findings comparing and contrasting the viewpoints of Lovecraft's time and the viewpoints of today.	*Textual Evidence, Text Citation, Research*
Controversy	Debate: Bobby Derie (2015) notes the inherent racism of author H.P. Lovecraft, which is evident in both his published writings and private letters. H.P. Lovecraft has been widely considered as influential in the genre of modern horror, yet many feel the author's prejudices undermine his artistic merits. With this information in mind, should the author's works still be read and studied in class, or should teachers and instructors avoid using Lovecraft's work to teach?	*Respond to Diverse Perspectives, Speaker Point-of-View, Present Information, Develop Claims & Counterclaims*

There has been an attempt throughout the horror literary movement to acknowledge, if not embrace, the dark nature of humanity through symbolic monsters and demons which typically plague humankind. Of these, the vampire is arguably the most popular, eliciting dread and fear in its utter "inhumanity."

Perhaps the vampire is so compelling precisely because he is so repellent. Perhaps he works so powerfully on our imaginations because he represents such a distortion of human

nature, a reversal of everything normal. And perhaps–just perhaps–we are fascinated by him because, in our heart of hearts, we want to be just like him. (Ryan, 1987, pg. xvi)

The vampire is often seen to represent repressed sexuality, although this has become a stereotypical and one-dimensional perspective. Recent novels and works have shed a new light on the villain of old, marking the character as distinctively human, and, in the case of Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*, beautiful, tragic, and even likeable.

> The vampire sat down slowly opposite him and, leaning forward, said gently, confidentially, "Don't be afraid. Just start the tape."
>
> And then he reached out over the length of the table. The boy recoiled, sweat running down the sides of his face. The vampire clamped a hand on the boy's shoulder and said, "Believe me, I won't hurt you. I want this opportunity. It's more important to me than you can realize now. I want to begin." And he withdrew his hand and sat collected, waiting. (Rice, 1976, p. 3)

Louis is not the omniscient sinister supernatural force setting the story into motion with his dark or murderous deeds; he is an individual who holds a unique identity and displays a very human sense of humor.

> "...We'd received a land grant and settled two indigo plantations on the Mississippi very near New Orleans..."
>
> "Ah, that's the accent..." the boys said softly.
>
> For a moment, the vampire stared blankly. "I have an accent?" He began to laugh.

> And the boy, flustered, answered quickly. "I noticed it in the bar when I asked you what you did for a living. It's just a slight sharpness to the consonants, that's all. I never guessed it was French."
>
> "It's all right," the vampire assured him. "I'm not as shocked as I pretend to be. It's only that I forget from time to time. (pg. 4)

Louis explains how he grew to resent his vampire maker, Lestat, telling the interviewer Lestat was cruel and often demeaning towards Louis' quest to find meaning in his own undead existence, even as the thread of his humanity became increasingly jeopardized by his dependence on human blood.

> ...no one could in any guise convince me of what I myself knew to be true, that I was damned in my own mind and soul. And when I came to Paris I thought you were powerful and beautiful and without regret. But you were a destroyer just as I was a destroyer, more ruthless and cunning even than I. You showed me the only thing I could really hope to become, what depth of evil, what degree of coldness I would have to attain to end my pain. And I accepted that. And so that passion, that love you saw in me, was extinguished. And you see now simply a mirror of yourself. (p. 340)

Anne Rice's vampires are not invincible to love and loss; through Rice, the vampire takes on the role of a humanity attempting to rise above its ruthless, cold, and destructive nature. Louis, despite all of his power, understands what he is; his plight is part of the collective human consciousness of finding the self. It is not the reader, God, nor the devil who damns Louis for what he is; it is the vampire who damns himself.

In the case of Richard Matheson's prolific *I Am Legend*, a novel about "the vicissitudes of the last mortal on earth" amidst a world "peopled by the monstrous victims of a

technologically precipitated plague of vampirism" (Grixti, 1989, pg. 9), the vampire is far from being the only horrific monster of the tale. Likely the last human survivor on earth after a vampiric plague has wiped humanity nearly extinct, Neville is troubled by his own masculine sexual repression and an unexplainable need to kill as many vampires as he can during the daytime. While Neville reflects on the misdeeds of the human race and contemplates the reasoning for his senseless killing, one can easily note the connotations of racism and prejudice underscoring his thoughts even as he himself relentlessly kills:

> ...Really, now, search your soul, lovie–is the vampire so bad?
>
> All he does is drink blood.
>
> Why then, this unkind prejudice, this thoughtless bias? Why cannot the vampire live where he chooses? Why must he seek out hiding places where none can find him out? Why do you wish him destroyed? Ah, see, you have turned the poor guileless innocent into a hunted animal. He has no means of support, no measures for proper education, he has not the voting franchise. No wonder he is compelled to seek out a predatory nocturnal existence.
>
> Robert Neville grunted a surly grunt. Sure, sure, he thought, but would you let your sister marry one? (Matheson, 1997, pg. 3)

Neville underestimates the process of evolution. In the three-and-a-half years of his lonely existence in the post-apocalyptic world, the vampires have formed an organized, albeit violent, society. This phenomenon remains unknown to the narrow-minded Neville until a female vampire spy, notably looking and acting more human than Neville himself, infiltrates his stronghold and attempts to connect with him. She explains vampires have developed the means to enable them to resist the temptation to feed, no longer justifying his own murderous actions.

"New societies are always primitive," she answered. "You should know that. In a way we're like a revolutionary group–repossessing society by violence. It's inevitable. Violence is no stranger to you. You've killed. Many times."

"Only to...to survive." (pg. 166)

Neville cannot convincingly buy into his own lie, which suggests a growing self-awareness. Ruth's self-proclaimed "revolutionary" idea of creating a new society through violence is nothing new; the vampires are simply replacing another violent society which was founded on bloodshed and war. The old society, and Neville, who once belonged to it, have no place in the new order of existence. Neville is now the fabled monster in a foreign world, a relentless and ancient killer who stalks the vampires by day and who has become a legend in his own right:

Abruptly the realization joined with what he saw on their faces–awe, fear, shrinking terror–and he knew that they *were* afraid of him. To them he was some horrible scourge they had never seen, a scourge even worse than the disease they had come to live with. He was an invisible specter who had left for evidence of his existence the bloodless bodies of their loved ones. And he understood what they felt and did not hate them...

A coughing chuckle filled his throat. He turned and leaned against the wall while he swallowed the pills. Full circle, he thought while the final lethargy crept into his limbs. Full circle. A new terror born in death, a new superstition entering the unassailable fortress of forever.

I am legend. (pgs. 169-170)

Table 18. Affective Classroom Connections – Vampire

Creepy Classroom Connections		
Vampire		
	Learning Activity	Key Skill(s)
Interest/Autonomy	Students will construct a research project which explores the history of the vampire, potential historical contexts around "real-life" cases of vampirism, and how the vampire is perceived today.	*Expository Writing, Writing for Purpose & Audience, Research*
Relevance	Students choose a favorite monster story. Students conduct a literary analysis of the story, determining the tradition of the monster from the author's perspective and culture, the purpose/symbolism of the monster, and how elements of the story's vampire exist in current incarnations. Students will storyboard a new story using the monster in a modern setting.	*Central Idea/Theme, Textual Evidence, Complex Character Development, Writing for Audience, Narrative Structure*
Controversy	Debate: Some would argue franchises today have made the vampire less threatening and thus irrelevant to horror. The sparkling vampires of Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* novel, for example, break tradition by allowing the vampires to live in daylight and coexist, and even fall in love, with humans. One team will decry the act of humanizing the vampire, while the other team will reference points throughout literature and film where the vampire has already been humanized, thus defending modern interpretations.	*Respond to Diverse Perspectives, Speaker Point-of-View, Present Information, Develop Claims & Counterclaims*

Summary

The Creepy Classroom Connections in this chapter highlight the Affective Framework across multiple horror materials by offering sample activities of the three components: Interest/Autonomy, Controversy, and Relevance. Together, with reflection/metacognition, establishing an environment in which students feel connected, and the application of best

instructional practices, the framework can facilitate an emotional connection between the student and the learning, thus resulting in the potential for student engagement. Using the Affective Framework, horror literature can engage students in exciting new ways while providing the perspective that monsters come in many shapes and sizes, the most notorious of which might be found by looking in the mirror. As outlined in the literary analysis portions of this chapter, the rich symbolism inherent in the genre promotes critical thinking and can be a unique way of addressing complex issues and concerns.

REFERENCES

Abbott, S. (Ed.). (2015, June 8). Student engagement. Retrieved from http://edglossary.org/student-engagement/

Amanda. (2011, August 3). Doctor Zhivago by Boris Pasternak: A review. [Web log comment]. Retrieved from http://deadwhiteguyslit.blogspot.com/2011/08/doctor-zhivago-by-boris-pasternak.html

Anderson, L.W., Krathwohl, D.R., Airasian, P.W., Cruikshank, K.A., Mayer, R.E., Pintrich, P.R., Raths, J., Wittrock, M.C. (2001). *A Taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of educational objectives.* New York, NY: Pearson, Allyn & Bacon.

Appleton, J. J., Christenson, S. L, & Furlong, M. J. (2008). Student engagement with school: Critical conceptual and methodological issues of the construct. *Psychology in the schools*, 45(5), 369–386.

Barker, C. (1997). In S. Jones (Ed.), *Clive Barker's A-Z of horror*. New York, NY: Harper.

Barker, M. & Petley, J. (2001). *Ill effects: The Media/violence debate*. London, England: Routledge.

Barkley, E. (2009). *Student engagement techniques: A handbook for college faculty*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Barseghian, T. (2011, February 4). Three trends that will shape the future of curriculum. Retrieved from http://ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/2011/02/04/three-trends-that-will-shape-the-future-of-curriculum/

Bauerlein, M. (2013, September 20). Boredom in class. *Education Next*. Retrieved from https://www.educationnext.org/boredom-in-class/

Bernard, S. (2015, December 1). Science shows making lessons relevant really matters. *Edutopia*. Retrieved from https://www.edutopia.org/neuroscience-brain-based-learning-relevance-improves-engagement

Blackburn, J. (1988). William Shakespeare: The Tragedy of Macbeth. In S. Jones & K. Newman (Eds.), *Horror: The 100 best books* (pp. 14-15). New York, NY: Caroll & Graf.

Bloom, B.S. (Ed.). Engelhart, M.D., Furst, E.J., Hill, W.H., Krathwohl, D.R. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: Handbook I: The cognitive domain.* New York, NY: David McKay Company, Inc.

Briggs, S. (2014). Why self-esteem hurts learning but self-confidence does the opposite. *informED*. Retrieved from https://www.opencolleges.edu.au/informed/features/self-efficacy-and-learning/

Burrows, P. (2010, June). An examination of the relationship among affective, cognitive, behavioral, and academic factors of student engagement of 9th grade students. Eugene, OR: University of Oregon. Retrieved from https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/10850/Burrows_Peter_L_Ed.D2010sp.pdf?sequence=1

Campbell, R. (1988). Foreword. In S. Jones & K. Newman (Eds.), *Horror: The 100 best books* (pp. 3-4). New York, NY: Caroll & Graf.

Chesson, C. E. (2009). Brother to brother: A Narrative inquiry of African American male experiences of academic success at Colorado State University. Fort Collins, CO: Colorado State University.

Chick, N. (2016). Metacognition. Retrieved from https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/metacognition/

Clandinin, D.J. (2013). *Engaging in narrative inquiry*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Clark, D. (1999, January 12). Bloom's Taxonomy of learning domains. Retrieved from nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/bloom.html

Clary, J. L. (2004). The Truth about Marilyn Manson. Retrieved from http://www.johnnyleeclary.com/manson.htm (now defunct)

Coffey, A. & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (2019). *What is SEL?* Retrieved from https://casel.org/what-is-sel/

Connelly, F. M. & D. J. Clandinin. (1990, June-July). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher, 19*(5), 2-14.

Corso, M., Bundick, M., Quaglia, R., & Haywood, D. (2013). Where student, teacher, and content meet: Student engagement in the secondary school classroom. *American Secondary Education Journal, 41*(3), 50-61.

Cox, A. (2018, March). The current education system is failing our students. *Edsurge Independent*. Retrieved from https://edsurgeindependent.com/the-current-education-system-is-failing-our-students-b35614943541

Crabtree, C. D. (2008, July). The positivist paradigm. *Qualitative research guidelines project*. Retrieved from http://www.qualres.org/HomePosi-3515.html

Creswell, J. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Cunningham, L.S. & Reich, J. R. (2006). *Culture and values: A Survey of the humanities.* Florence: Thomson-Wadsworth.

Davis, H. A., Summers, J. J., & Miller, L. M. (2012). *An Interpersonal approach to classroom management: Strategies for improving student engagement.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Davis, J. (2015). Defining horror literature. *BellaOnline.com.* Retrieved from http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art26529.asp

Davis, J. (2015). Types of horror literature. *BellaOnline.com*. Retrieved from http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art41715.asp

Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005, 2011). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Derie, B. (2015). American dread: Alan Moore and the racism of H. P. Lovecraft. *Wordpress.com*. Retrieved from https://factsprovidence.wordpress.com/moore-lovecraft-comics-annotation-index/american-dread-alan-moore-and-the-racism-of-h-p-lovecraft/

Detweiler, T. (2017). Bored out of their minds (illustration). *Harvard Ed Magazine.* Retrieved from https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/ed/17/01/bored-out-their-minds

Edelson, D. C., & Jospeph, D. M. (2001, July 24). Motivating active learning: A design framework for interest-driven learning. Retrieved from http://designbasedresearch.org/reppubs/edelson-joseph.pdf

Edwards, S. (2015). Active learning in the middle grades. *Middle School Journal*, *46*(5), 26-32.

Fesitritzer, E. F. (2011, July 29). Profile of teachers in the U.S.2011. *National Center for Education Information*. Retrieved from http://www.bibme.org/citation-guide/apa/website

Finn, J. D. (1989, Summer). Withdrawing from school. *Review of Educational Research*, 59(2), 117-142.

Friedman, B. (2010, January). Krathwohl's autonomy of affective learning. *Researchgate.* Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Krathwohls-Taxonomy-of-Affective-Learning_fig2_273773847

Fox, J. (2011, May 24). "Why are we doing this?" Establishing relevance to enhance student learning. *Facultyfocus.com*. Retrieved from http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/effective-teaching-strategies/why-are-we-doing-this-establishing-relevance-to-enhance-student-learning/

Gilman, C. P. (1999). Why I wrote 'The Yellow wallpaper.' In C. Lavendar (Ed.). Retrieved from http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/history/lavender/whyyw.html

Gilman, C.P. (1988). The Yellow wallpaper. In J. B. Dock (Ed.), *Charlotte Perkins Gilman's 'The Yellow wallpaper' and the history of its publication and reception.* University Park, PA: Penn State University Press.

Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine.

Goodwin, D. & Webb, M. (2014, October). Toward a common understanding of research-based strategies. *Research in Higher Education Journal, 26*.

Gorski, P. (2014, December 31). Why Eric Jensen is Ruby Payne on steroids. Retrieved from http://mindsofkids.blogspot.com/2014/12/why-eric-jensen-is-ruby-payne-on_31.html

Goss, P. & Sonnemann, J. (2017, February). Engaging students: Creating classrooms that improve learning. Grattan Institute: Melbourne, Australia. Retrieved from: https://grattan.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Engaging-students-creating-classrooms-that-improve-learning.pdf

Grant, J. (2016, February 8). No one here gets out alive: Educational implications of duomining as aesthetic ground in psychological horror. Abingdon, England: Taylor & Francis Group. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/2331186X.2016.1142821

Grixti, J. (1989). Horror fiction and social unease. *Terrors of uncertainty: The Cultural contexts of horror fiction*. London: Routledge.

Groves, M., Sellars, C., Smith, J., & Barber, A. (2015, January 5). Factors affecting student engagement: A Case study examining two cohorts of students attending a post-1992 university in the United Kingdom. *International Journal of Higher Education*.

Gunn, A. et al. (2007). *Igniting student potential*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Harman, C. (1992). Introduction. *The strange case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.* London: Everyman Press.

Hartwell, D. (1987). The Dark descent. *The Dark descent*. New York, NY: Tor.

Hauenstein, A. D. (1998). *A conceptual framework for educational objectives: A holistic approach to traditional taxonomies.* Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Hawley, W. et al. (2007). *The keys to effective schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Hawthorne, N. (1996). Young Goodman Brown. In J. C. Oates (Ed.), *American Gothic Tales.* New York, NY: Penguin.

Henry, J. (1968). *The Turn of the screw.*

Hirshberg, G. (2014, May 19). Is horror literature? *Tor/Forge Blog*. Retrieved from https://www.torforgeblog.com/2014/05/19/is-horror-literature/

Horror. (2016). Retrieved from http://thescriptlab.com/screenplay/genre/horror

Horror genres and sub-genres. (21013, June 10). *Horror on screen.* Retrieved from http://www.horroronscreen.com/2013/06/10/horror-genres/

Jacobs, G. M. (2010, July 12). The Academic controversy technique: Towards cooperative debates. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED510818.pdf

Jason, Z. (2017). Bored out of their minds. *Harvard Ed Magazine.* Retrieved from https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/ed/17/01/bored-out-their-minds

Jensen, E. (2013). *Engaging students with poverty in mind: Practical strategies for raising achievement.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (2012, October). Constructive controversy: Teaching students how to think creatively. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/David_Johnson50/publication/299914215_Constructive_Controversy_Teaching_Students_How_to_Think_Creatively/links/570ec0e908aee76b9dadfe1b

Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T., & Smith, K. A. (1996). Academic Controversy: Enriching college instruction through intellectual conflict. Washington, DC: The George Washington University, Graduate School of Education, *ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report*, 25(3).

Jones, R. D. (2008). Strengthening student engagement. *Student engagement: Creating a culture of academic achievement*. Rexford, NY: International Center for Leadership in Education. Retrieved from the ICLE Web site: http://www.leadered.com/pdf/Strengthen%20Student%20Engagement%20white%20paper.pdf

Kefauver, E. (1955). Comic books and juvenile delinquency. Retrieved from http://www.thecomicbooks.com/1955senateinterim.html

King, S. (2001). Introduction. *The Shining*. New York, NY: Pocket Books.

Koballa, T. R., & Glynn, S. M. (in press). Attitudinal and motivational constructs in college science. In S. K. Abell & N. Lederman (Eds.), *Handbook of research on science education*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Koroboava, N., & Starobin, S. (2015). A Comparative study of student engagement, satisfaction, and academic success among international and American students. *Journal of International Students*, 72-85.

Krathwohl, D.R., Bloom, B.S., & Masia, B.B. (1964). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: Handbook II. The affective domain*. New York, NY: David McKay Company, Inc.

Lanzagorta, M. (2013, June 26). Bringing horror to the classroom with '*Fear and learning'. Pop Matters*. Retrieved from https://www.popmatters.com/172552-fear-and-learning-essays-on-the-pedagogy-of-horror-2495748015.html

Literacy rate: How many are illiterate. (2008). Alexandria, VA: National assessment of adult literacy. Retrieved from the NAAL Web site: http://www.caliteracy.org/rates/

Lovecraft, H.P. (1973). *Supernatural horror*. New York, NY: Dover.

Luchner, K. (2010). Thrills! Chills! Using scary stories to motivate students to read. *Readthinkwrite.* Retrieved from http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/thrills-chills-using-scary-407.html?tab=1#tabs

Lyman, F. (1987). Think-pair-share: An expanding teaching technique. *MAA-CIE Cooperative News*, *1(1)*, 1-2.

Maldonado, N. (2017). Using horror writing prompts for middle schoolers. *Montessori Style Academics.* Retrieved from https://www.arthurmorganschool.org/using-horror-writing-prompts-for-middle-schoolers/

Malloy, J. A. (2015). New insights on motivation in the literacy classroom. In S. R. Parris & K. Headley (Eds.), *Comprehension instruction: Research-based best practices.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Manigault, E. (2014, December 15). A phenomenological study of student engagement in United States history classrooms. *University of South Carolina Scholar Commons.*

Marzano, R. (2017). *The new art and science of teaching*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research.

Marzano, R. (2007). What will I do to engage students? In *The Art and science of teaching*. Alexandria, VA: ACSD.

Marzano, R., & Pickering, D. (2011). *The highly engaged classroom.* Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research.

Marzano, R., Scott, D., Boogren, T., & Newcomb, M. L. (2017). *Motivating & inspiring students: Strategies to awaken the learner.* Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research.

Matheson, R. (1997). *I am legend*. New York, NY: Tor.

Mathews, J. (2004, September 7). 21 Years later, "multiple intelligences" still debated: Educator pushes appealing to all types of learners. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A1337-2004Sep6.html

McCarthy, J. (2014). Learner interest matters: Strategies for empowering student choice. *Edutopia*. Retrieved from https://www.edutopia.org/blog/differentiated-instruction-learner-interest-matters-john-mccarthy

McLeod, S. (2018). Maslow's hierarchy of needs (illustration). *Simply Psychology*. Retrieved from https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html

Merriam, S. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Naceur, A., & Schiefele, U. (2005). Motivation and learning: The Role of interest in construction of representation of text and long-term retention: Inter- and intraindividual analyses. *European Journal of Psychology and Education, 20*(2), 155-170.

Nash, R. (2004). *Liberating scholarly writing: The power of personal narrative*. Teachers College Press: New York, NY.

Negative of Deviant Case Analysis. (2008) Definition: Qualitative research and guidelines project. *Robert Johnson Foundation*. Retrieved from http://www.qualres.org/HomeNega-3694.html

Neilson, D. (2014, August 14). Why is literacy important? Retrieved from http://www.3plearning.com/literacy-important/

Notable and quotable: College 'common reading' (2016, February 9). *The Wall Street Journal*, p. A11.

Nowell, L., Norris, J., White, D., & Moules, N. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Research, 16,* 1-13.

Ocasio, T. (2014, December 3). Friendly controversy, student engagement, and increased rigor. *Marzanocenter.com.* Retrieved from marzanocenter.com/blog/article/friendly-controversy-student-engagement-and-increased-rigor

Ocasio, T. (2015, November 15). Using friendly controversy in the classroom. *Tracyocasio.net*. Retrieved from http://tracyocasio.net/effective-instruction/using-friendly-controversy-in-the-classroom

O'Connor, K. (2013, Spring). Class participation: Promoting in-class student engagement. *Education, 133*(3), 340-344.

Our story. (2016). Retrieved from http://popcultureclassroom.org/history/

Parsons, S.A., Malloy, J.A., Parsons, A.W. & Burrowbridge, S.C. (2015). Students' engagement in literacy tasks. *The reading teacher*, 69(2), 223–231.

Parsons, S., Nuland, L., & Parsons, A. (2014, May 1). The ABC's of student engagement. *Kappan Magazine*, *95*, 23-27.

Passarella, J. (2003, February). What is horror fiction? *Horror Writers Association*. Retrieved from http://www.horror.org/horror-is.htm

Pittman, P., & Honchell, B. (2014, Fall). Literature discussion: Encouraging reading interest and comprehension in struggling middle school readers. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education, 10*(2), 119-133.

Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations. (2014). *My voice national student report (Grades 6-12) 2013-2014*. Retrieved from: qisa.org/dmsview/My_Voice_2013-2014_National_Report_8_25

Randall, D. (2016, February). Beach report: 2014-2016. *National association of scholars.*

Relevance. (2013, August 29). *Edglossary.org.* Retrieved from http://edglossary.org/relevance/

Reissman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Rice, A. (1976). *Interview with the vampire*. New York, NY: Ballantine.

Rosenblatt, L. (1995, January 1). *Literature as exploration*. The Modern Language Association of America. New York City, NY.

Ryan, A. (1987). Introduction. *Vampires*. Garden City, NJ: Doubleday.

Schunk, D. H., Pintrich, P.R., & Meece, J. (2012). *Motivation in education: Theory, research, and applications.* Columbus, OH: Pearson. 37-38.

Shakespeare, W. (1997). *Macbeth*. In S. Greenblatt, W. Cohen, J. Howard, and K. E. Maus (Eds.), *The Norton Shakespeare*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.

Spivak, A., White, S., Juhoven, J., & Graham, S. (2015, April 1). Correlates of prosocial behaviors of students in ethnically and racially diverse middle schools. *Merril-Palmer Quarterly*, 236-263.

Stevenson, R. L. (1992). *The Strange case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and other stories*. London: Everyman.

Strong, R, Silver, F., & Robinson, A. (1995, September). Strengthening student engagement: What do students want? *Educational Leadership*, 53(1), 8-12.

Taylor, L. & Parsons, J. (2011). Improving student engagement. *Current issues in education*, 14(1). Retrieved from http://cie.asu.edu/

Thies, T. T. (2014). Affective learning experiences influence positive interactions with anxiety: comprehensive musicianship with seventh grade jazz students. PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) thesis, University of Iowa, 2014. Retrieved from http://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/1406.

Timpson, W. & S. Burgoyne. (2002). *Teaching & performing: Ideas for energizing your classes*. Madison, WI: Atwood.

Timpson, W. & S. Doe. (2008). *Concepts & choices for teaching*. Madison, WI: Atwood.

Ury, W. (2000). *The third side: Why we fight and how we can stop*. New York, NY: Penguin.

Webb, N. (2005, February 2). Web alignment tool. Madison: Wisconsin Center for Education Research. Retrieved from static/pdesas.org/content/documents/M1-Slide_19_DOK_Wheel_Slide.pdf

What is horror? (2009). *The Horror writers' association.* Retrieved from http://www.horror.org/horror-is.htm

Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (2005). Understanding by design. Alexandrai, VA: ASCD.

Willis, J. W. (2007). *Foundations of qualitative research: Interpretive and critical approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Wilson, L. (2016). Three domains of learning - Cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Retrieved from thesecondprinciple.com/instructional-design/threedomainsoflearning

Wisker, G. (2005). *Horror literature: An Introduction.* New York, NY: Continuum.

Wissiner, D. R., & De La Paz, S. (2016, January 1). Effects of critical discussions on middle school students' written historical arguments. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 108*(1), 43-59.

Yazzie-Mintz, E. (2007). *Voices of students on engagement: A report on the 2006 High School Survey of Student Engagement*. Bloomington, IN: Center for Evaluation and Education Policy, Indiana University.

APPENDIX A. PARENTAL PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH (ENGLISH)

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT RESEARCH PROJECT -SAMPLE
Using the Horror Genre to Teach Reading and Writing

November 2016

Dear Parent or Guardian:

My name is Justin Davis. I am a doctoral student at Colorado State University. As part of the completion of my degree, I am conducting a research project on using the horror genre (ghost stories, urban legends, etc.) to make literacy fun and interesting for students. I request permission for your child to participate.

The study consists of a voluntary after-school literacy club in which students would work on learning targets while reading and writing about age-appropriate horror stories and materials. I feel we, as educators, can do a better job at tapping into the interests of each student in order to foster a love of reading and writing. All materials from the horror literature club would be available to parents for review as requested.

Even if you give your permission for your child to participate, your child is free to refuse. If your child agrees to participate, he or she is free to end participation at any time. You and your child are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your child's participation in this research study.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process. Only I will have access to information from your child. I will then interpret these results in story format to tell a symbolic series of stories around engagement and horror. My data collection methods will include anonymous survey questions, completed assignments which can be, at the discretion of the student, school administration, and staff, submitted for the purposes of learning target completion, and student journals. The names of the students, school, or staff will not be made public. Student names will be replaced by pseudonyms that will make the child unidentifiable in both the dissertation. My hope is to then professionally publish the research project where, again, your child will not be identified.

The club will take place on (TBD) at (TBD). (TRANSPORTATION|TBD)

Should you have any questions or desire further information, please call me at (720) 232-0059 or email me at j.daniel.davis@hotmail.com. Please retain this front page for your information. Please separate and return the completed second page of this letter to your child's literacy teacher. Please note I have been given permission by Westminster Public Schools to conduct this independent research project for my degree, but it is in no way associated with Westminster Public Schools, its staff, or its affiliates.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Justin Davis

Justin Davis
Ph.D. Candidate – Education Sciences
Colorado State University

Page 1 of 2

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT RESEARCH PROJECT -SAMPLE
Using the Horror Genre to Teach Reading and Writing

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN ONLY THIS PAGE

Please indicate whether or not you wish to allow your child to participate in this project by checking one of the statements below, signing your name and returning this page to your child's literacy teacher.

_____ I grant permission for my child to participate in Justin Davis' study on using the horror genre to make reading and writing fun and engaging for students. I give them permission to stay after school (TIME, LOCATION TBD)

_____ I do not grant permission for my child to participate in Justin Davis' study on using the horror genre to make reading and writing fun and engaging for students.

_____ _____
Signature of Parent/Guardian Printed Parent/Guardian Name

_____ _____
Printed Name of Child Date

APPENDIX B. PARENTAL PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH (SPANISH)

Estimado Padre O Tutor:

Mi nombre es Justin Davis. Soy un estudiante de doctorado en la Universidad Estatal de Colorado. Como parte de la terminación de mi carrera, estoy llevando a cabo un proyecto de investigación sobre el uso del género de terror (historias de fantasmas, leyendas urbanas, etc.) para hacer interesante y divertida la alfabetización para los estudiantes. Solicito permiso para que sus hijos participen.

El estudio consta de un club de alfabetización voluntario después de la escuela en la que los estudiantes trabajaran en objetivos de aprendizaje mientras leen y escriben con material de historias apto para la edad. Yo siento que, como educadores, podemos hacer un trabajo mejor aprovechando los intereses de cada estudiante con el fin de fomentar el amor por la lectura y la escritura. Todo el material instructivo del club de literatura de terror estará disponible para los padres para revisión cuando lo solicite.

Su hijo/s es libre de negarse aun si usted le ha dado autorización para que participe. Si su hijo acepta participar, su hijo/s puede finalizar la participación en cualquier momento si así lo desea. Usted y su hijo no están renunciando a ningún reclamo legal, derechos o compensaciones debido a la participación de su hijo/s en este estudio de investigación.

Todo se mantendrá confidencial durante el proceso. Cualquier información que se obtenga en relación con este estudio y que se pueda vincular a su identidad o la de su hijo se mantendrá reservado. Solo yo y mi comité de investigación, tendrá acceso a la información de su hijo. Luego yo interpretare estos resultados en formato histórico que mencionen series simbólicas alrededor de compromiso y de horror. Mis métodos de recolección de datos incluyen encuestas con preguntas anónimas, entrevistas con su hijo, tareas lo más completas que se puedan a la discreción del estudiante, administración escolar y personal, que se presente a los efectos diarios del estudiante y del cumplimiento del objetivo de aprendizaje. Los nombres de los estudiantes, la escuela o el personal no se harán públicos. El nombre del estudiante se sustituirá por un seudónimo que hará al niño identificar la tesis. Mi esperanza entonces será publicar profesionalmente el proyecto de investigación donde, otra vez, su hijo no será identificado. No existen riesgos conocidos o beneficios directos para usted o su hijo, pero esperamos que esta investigación pueda ayudar a los estudiantes a fomentar el amor por la lectura y la escritura.

El compromiso de su hijo para esta investigación será aproximadamente de un tiempo de 9 a 12 horas en su totalidad durante un periodo de 8 semanas. Si tiene alguna pregunta o desea más información, por favor llámeme al (720) 232-0059 o envíeme un correo electrónico a j.daniel.davis@hotmail.com. Por favor guarde esta página para su información. Por favor separe y devuelva la segunda página de esta carta completamente contestada, al maestro de alfabetización de su niño. Atención: me han dado permiso las escuelas públicas de Westminster para llevar a cabo este proyecto de investigación independiente de mi carrera, pero es proyecto de ninguna manera está asociado con las escuelas públicas de Westminster, su personal o sus afiliados. Si usted tiene alguna pregunta sobre los derechos de su hijo como voluntario en esta investigación, póngase en contacto con CSU IRB enRICRO_IRB@mail.colostate.edu; 970-491-1553.

Gracias por su tiempo y consideración.

Sinceramente,

Justin Davis

APPENDIX C. STUDENT ASSENT FORM

Student Assent Form

Study Title: Classroom of Horrors: Lessons from the Dark (After School Horror Literature Club)

What will happen in this study? The study, also known as research, will be a voluntary after-school literacy club in which students would work on learning targets while reading and writing about age-appropriate horror stories and materials. I feel we, as educators, can do a better job at tapping into your interests to foster a love of reading and writing.

What would you (the student) be doing in this study? If you choose to participate in the horror literature club, you would read horror stories, write about the stories and your reaction to using horror to learn literacy, and talk about horror literature with other students and with the teacher. You will be asked to complete questions about your interests, horror literature, and what you think teachers could do to make reading and writing more interesting. You will also be asked to share some of your experiences in literacy classrooms.

What will I (the researcher) be doing in this study? I will be collecting your surveys, taking notes about my observations of the horror literature club, and facilitating discussion, lessons, and activities around horror literature. I will also be interviewing you to make sure that I am capturing your thoughts and feelings! I will then write about your experiences, our experiences together, and will attempt to publish the work.

What will you get if you choose to take part? Hopefully, you will get the opportunity to have fun and to express your opinions and thoughts about using horror to teach literacy and how teachers can make reading and writing more interesting. There will be no other benefit to you for participating in the study. There are also no dangers or risks involved – your work will not be assessed or graded. If you would like to submit your work to teachers as evidence of meeting a learning target or extracurricular activity participation, I would be happy to work with you and your guardian to get permission.

Will anyone know I am a part of the study? Your parents will know, as well as the other students who choose to participate. Additionally, your principal and teachers would know. However, all of your information – your name, your work, and your responses, will be kept confidential by me. Only my committee (teachers who are helping me with my study), and I will have access to your information. When I write and publish the study, your name and other easily identifiable information will not be used or published.

Do I have to stay in the Horror Literature Club if I start? This club is voluntary. If you say "yes" now and later change your mind, you can stop at any time by simply letting me know. You can refuse to participate in any activity at any time. If you feel uncomfortable or need help, please let me know. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact CSU IRB at RICRO_IRB@mail.colostate.edu; 970-491-1553.

Please keep this page for your records and information.

Student Assent Form (To be returned to Mr. Davis)

If you want to be a part of the after-school Horror Literature Club study, please print and sign below. I will also ask your parents/guardians if you can participate on another form:

_____ _____

Student (Printed) Date

_____ _____

Student (Signature) Date

VIDEO RECORDING PERMISSION (YOU CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE AFTER-SCHOOL CLUB REGARDLESS OF YOUR CHOICE BELOW)

Throughout the Horror Literature Club, I will be video and audio recording each session, as well as audio-recording your interviews. These videos will not be shared or published and will be kept confidential. As the session unfolds, I will be examining these videos and recordings for the purposes of transcribing, or writing down, the events which took place. These videos will be destroyed per federal regulations after the research. If you choose not to be recorded, you may still participate in the after-school horror literature club. You or your parent/guardian may request to stop recording at any time, even if permission has been previously granted.

(Please check one)

____ I DO give permission to you to record my work and/or image on video/audio recordings as part of video.audio(s) to be used by Mr. Davis for recording purposes ONLY. I understand that my name will or image will not be shared with others.

____ I DO NOT give permission to you to include my work and/or image on video/audio recordings as part of video/audio(s) to be used by Mr. Davis for recording purposes.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D. OPEN SURVEY RESPONSE QUESTIONS (SAMPLE)

HORROR LITERATURE CLUB

Justin Davis, Facilitator

STUDENT SURVEY QUESTIONS – STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (SAMPLE)

1. DO YOU FIND LITERACY/WRITING CLASS INTERESTING?

____YES ____NO ____SOMETIMES

1.A. PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. WHAT DO YOU WISH TEACHERS WOULD DO MORE TO MAKE READING INSTRUCTION INTERESTING?_____

_____

_____

_____

3. WHAT DO YOU WISH TEACHERS WOULD DO MORE TO MAKE WRITING INSTRUCTION INTERESTING?_____

_____

_____

_____

4. DESCRIBE THE MOST FUN YOU HAVE HAD IN A READING LESSON:

_____

_____

_____

5. DESCRIBE THE MOST FUN YOU HAVE HAD IN A WRITING LESSON:

6. DESCRIBE THE MOST BORING READING LESSON YOU'VE HAD:

7. DESCRIBE THE MOST BORING WRITING LESSON YOU'VE HAD:

APPENDIX E. PARANORMAL INVESTIGATOR LESSON PLAN

(UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN FORMAT)

Title:	Horror Literature Analysis
Teacher(s):	Davis
School:	Horror Middle School
Subject:	Language Arts
Grade level:	8
Duration:	14 Instructional Days

Identify Desired Results (Stage 1)

Content Standards :

- **Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (CAS: 8.2.1.a.i) (CCSS: RL.8.1) (LI.08.821.01.04)**
- **Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text. (CAS: 8.2.1.a.ii) (CCSS: RL.8.2) (LI.08.821.02.04)**

Understandings	**Essential Questions**	
Overarching Understanding	Overarching	Topical
• On a daily basis, people are confronted with multiple points of view. Analyzing viewpoints and perspectives will help them see both sides of an issue. • Having the opportunity to explore a variety of authors and literature will expand personal interest and choice of reading.	To what extent does a literary work serve as a mirror to the historical context in which it was conceived? What makes such a theme relevant today? How does one classify a literary theme or idea as timeless? What are the some common aspects to timeless theme? How much influence does personal experience have on the interpretation of literary texts?	How do authors develop theme? In what ways do different authors, such as Stephen King and Ray Bradbury, typically approach story elements? What are the key components of creating a proficient summary of a specific text?
Related Misconceptions		
• There is only one way to interpret or analyze literature, and the reader should only address the original intent of the author • Personal life experience is disregarded by many teachers when allowing students to explore a literary text • Themes and main ideas always remain stagnant within a story • Classic literature should be the basis of all academic or scholarly analyses		

<table>
<tr><td>

- Character, setting, and plot are always, respectively, a person, a place, and a clear sequence of events

</td><td></td><td>How do the literary elements of the story contribute to specific genres of literature?

What elements should we consider when applying a literary analysis to a text?</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Knowledge
Students will know…</td><td colspan="2">Skills
Students will be able to…</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">

- …the importance of using textual citations in the development of analyses and interpretation. **(CAS: 8.2.1.a.i)**
- …what inference means and its role in text analyses. **(CAS: 8.2.1.a.i)**
- …how to create an objective summary of a text. **(CAS: 8.2.1.a.ii)**
- …how to identify literary elements, such as setting, plot, and character, and their relationship to the main idea **(CAS: 8.2.1.a.ii)**
- …how to use supporting details to help identify the main idea/theme **(CAS: 8.2.1.a.ii)**

</td><td colspan="2">

- …cite textual evidence in order to justify personal interpretation and analyses in written and verbal forms. **(CAS: 8.2.1.a.i)**
- …use the text to make reasonable predictions and draw appropriate conclusions. **(CAS: 8.2.1.a.i)**
- …create a text summary using complete sentences and embedding key plot and theme details. **(CAS: 8.2.1.a.i)**
- …construct a visual plot diagram of various elements in a sequence of events. **(CAS: 8.2.1.a.ii)**
- …identify the main idea using supporting details in a text in verbal and written forms. **(CAS: 8.2.1.a.ii)**

</td></tr>
</table>

Assessment Evidence (Stage 2)

Performance Task Description:

Paranormal Investigator – The Case of Amityville

- Interpretation Paper – Text Analysis
  Students will be provided packets with various information and materials that represent opposing viewpoints, as well as historical records, around the case of the Amityville Horror. Students will view a documentary (*Amityville: Horror or Hoax?*) and will read excerpts from both *The Amityville Horror* © as well as other supporting documents. The ultimate goal will be for the paranormal investigator (the student) to determine whether or not the colonial house on Ocean Avenue in Amityville is truly haunted, or whether it is an elaborate hoax. Using evidence from the text, as well as citations from other sources, each student will create a 5 page interpretation paper which seeks to justify and support their expressed theory.
- Debate – Presenting an Analysis
  Once the paper is completed, students will work in small groups comprised of investigators with like viewpoints in order to present their findings collectively at the Davis Institute of Astute Paranormal Educational Research (DIAPER). The group is tasked with implementing production value – a recording, a mini-documentary, art project, Etc., which will lend credence to the group's point of view.
- Summary Diagram – Opposing Viewpoint
  Once the main presentation is complete, students will create a one-page summary diagram of a student's work which had an opposing viewpoint.

Project Timeline – 60 Minute Increments (Permission slips to be sent home the week prior)

Week One

- Day One – Background on Case, Research Packets, Introduction to Assignment
- Day Two – The Amityville Horror – Characters, Setting, Plot – Socratic Seminar on Historical Context – How is the setting influenced by the time and culture?
- Day Three – View Documentary with Thinking Map/Note Catcher – *Amityville: Horror or Hoax?*
- Day Four – Library – Looking at Evidence, Building Your Case – A summary report of findings and where you are leaning
- Day Five – Article – *The Paranormal Investigator* – Exemplars of reporting, submit your stance with a quick abstract on your stance

Weekend Assignment: Find a ghost story or urban legend you like and construct a plot diagram with a summary of main points

Week Two

- Day Six – Computer Lab – Research and Writing, Individual Conferencing with Davis
- Day Seven – Computer Lab – Research and Writing, Individual Conferencing with Davis
- Day Eight – Writing, Identify Groups for Project

- Day Nine – Papers Due, Group Planning Projects
- Day Ten – Socratic Seminar – Share Plot Diagrams and Urban Legend/Ghost Story Synopsis – The Careful Reader

Weekend Assignment – Collaborate on Projects and Production Value

Week Three

- Day Eleven – Final Presentation Polishing
- Day Twelve – Presentations (10 Minutes Each)
- Day Thirteen – Presentations (10 Minutes Each), Reflection
- Day Fourteen – Summary Due, Reflections on Project

Other Evidence

- Exit Slips – Daily Learning Reflections and Summaries
- HW – Themed to Literary Terms and Relevance (Nightly with the exception of writing days) – Entrance Tickets
  i.e., Monday – Create a storyboard from the dog's point of view in Amityville.
  Tuesday – Construct a visual timeline of the sequence of events of Amityville's house
- Vocabulary Quizzes and Journal – Weekly
- Readers' Journal – Weekly
- Urban Legend Plot Diagram – Can Amityville be defined as an urban legend?

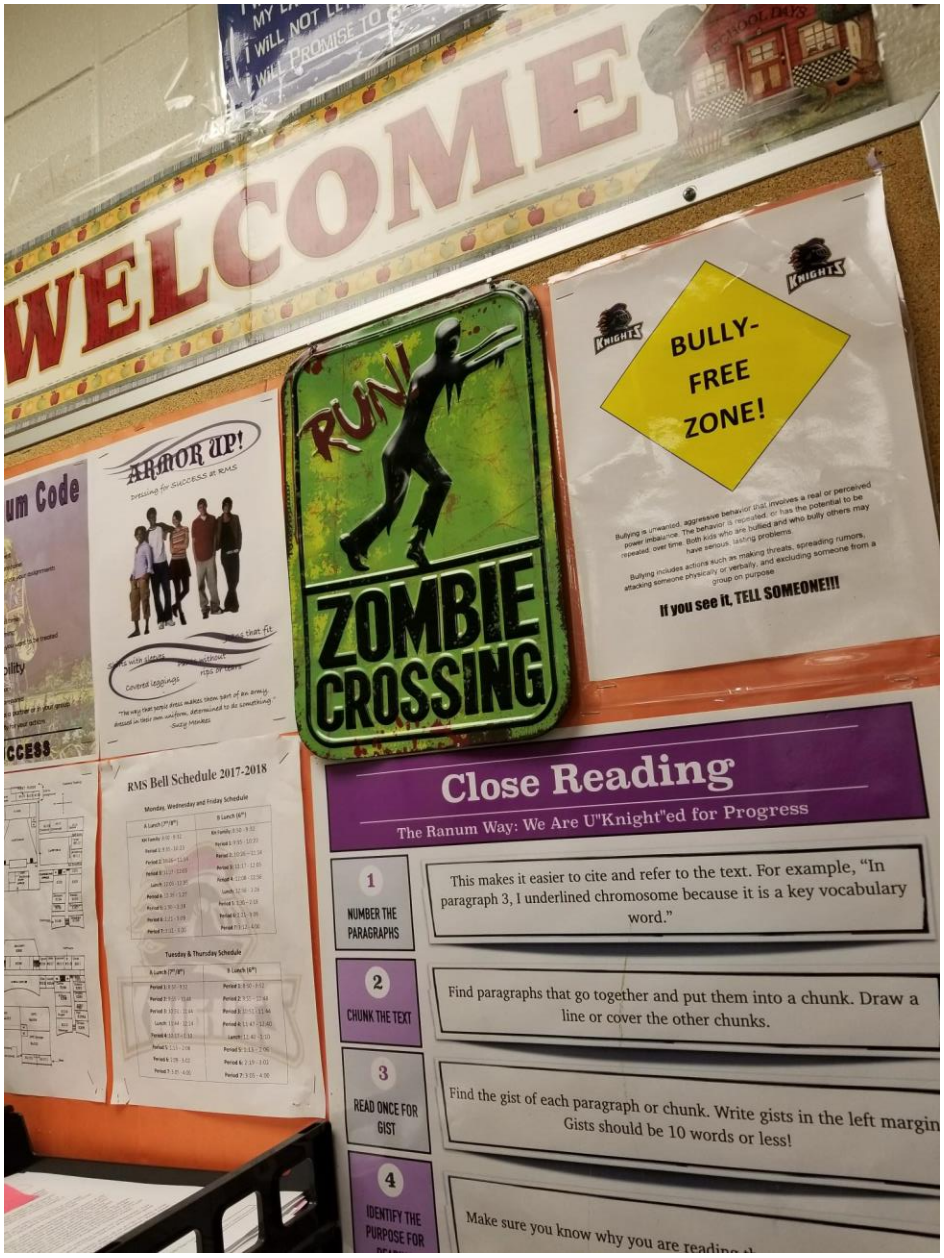
Learning Plan (Stage 3)

Where are your students headed? Where have they been? How will you make sure the students know where they are going?	Ultimately, students are to complete a five-page interpretation paper which indicates that they can use textual evidence from their readings to not only interpret different texts but to justify their responses and viewpoints while making personal connections. Hypothetically, we have worked on smaller projects to help them feel more comfortable about sharing their thoughts on a text through the lens of their own life experiences. Additionally, other skills would be embedded in the project – context clue practice would be utilized to help students uncover vocabulary. In addition to the end products, their will be frequent checks for understanding (daily exit slips, homework, readers' journal, and individual writing workshop) in order to allow a continuous flow of communication for every student.
How will you hook students at the beginning of the unit?	First, I would attempt to determine how many students have ever experienced anything paranormal and whether or not they thought they believed in ghosts. I would attempt to build an emotional connection to the learning and provide some of the more gruesome (permission slips required!) and unexplainable details from the Amityville case to pique interest. I will also discuss the relevance of looking at everything with a discerning, critical eye, and how t sound like an expert using citations from the text as

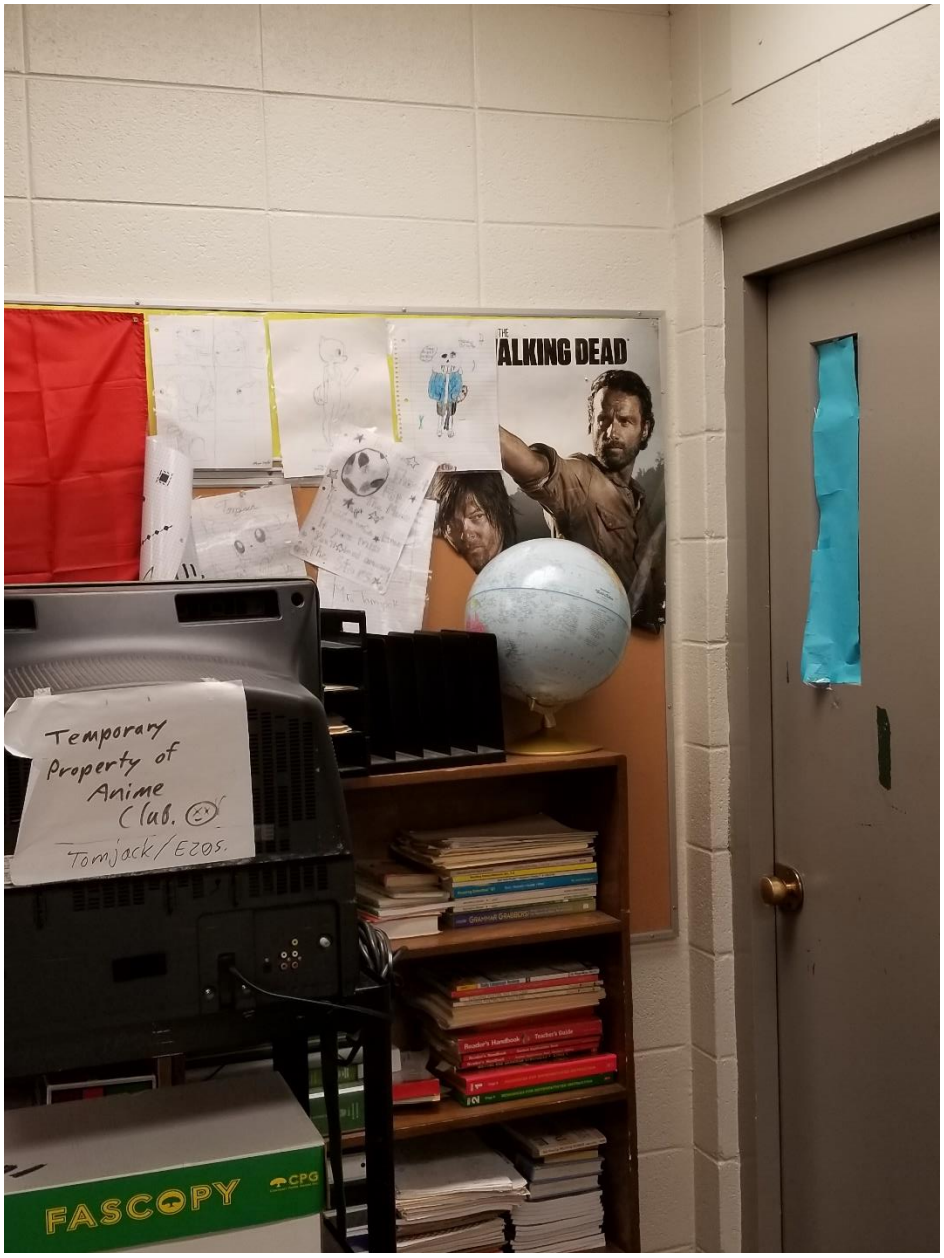
	a major job-building and career skill. I would also express my own enthusiasm and share some personal anecdotes about my experiences with horror literature, as well as identify what, at the end, the students, as "paranormal investigators," would accomplish.
What events will help students experience and explore the big idea and questions in the unit? How will you equip them with needed skills and knowledge?	On a daily basis, people are confronted with multiple points of view. Analyzing viewpoints and perspectives will help them see both sides of an issue. – I think the idea of reviewing such a polarizing case which breeds either belief in the haunting alleged at the house or a firm resolution that the horrors were made up by human imagination and peddled as hoax helps expose the student to a wide range of perspectives regarding a single case, which would hopefully reinforce student participation and confidence in their own text analyses skills. Also, the setting plays an important part of the horror of the case – there were no cell phones, for example, when the murders and the alleged haunting took place. Having the opportunity to explore a variety of authors and literature will expand personal interest and choice of reading. – The goal here would be to engage students on a highly interactive, "choose your own adventure" style of learning. Of course, I would have inventoried interests and learning styles in order to more accurately determine the types of readings and projects I would use throughout the course, so an assumption is being made for the sake of this lesson that there would be interest in horror and the paranormal.
How will you cause students to reflect and rethink? How will you guide them in rehearsing, revising, and refining their work?	This goes back to regular and daily reflective discussion – but the real power of daily reflection will come in the form of the exit slips. Framing questions: How could you apply text interpretation to your career? Discuss an important learning goal for yourself as we work on this project? How do you think being a good reader connects to being an effective paranormal investigator? I would then use the individual writing workshop conferences as a means of checking in. During group projects, I would rotate between each group in order to mentor and answer questions – it would be great to see if I could work with upper grades at the high school to bring some student artists and writers down to assist and be available as necessary.
How will you help your students to exhibit and self-evaluate their growing skills, knowledge, and understanding throughout the unit?	I think a large part of self-evaluation throughout the learning will come into play on the rubrics and common understanding we build before we begin the project, as well as what we would like to refine of that rubric/performance framework during and after the learning activity. Making frequent checklist connections to how each activity falls under learning one of the essential skills and targets will be a daily task. I will also model self-evaluation – we would have done some front-loading

	around categorizing work to the rubric and/or performance expectations.
How will you tailor and otherwise personalize the learning plan to optimize the engagement and effectiveness of ALL students, without compromising the goals of the unit?	Providing choice in autonomy with how they chose to justify their text analyses as well as what they do to incorporate "production value" in their presentations will be entirely up to them. The individual conferencing will allow me to also get their feedback on how the project is going for them, and what each student might need in order to be successful. I would likely have students complete some sort of feedback survey after the activity is complete so that I better understand how to modify the lesson for the future or what I need to think about in planning the next activity from the students' perspective.
How will you organize and sequence the learning activities to optimize the engagement and achievement of ALL students?	This goes back to paying close attention to the daily exit tickets and building an emotional connection for students on the potential fun the class can have while displaying strong reading skills. I included a project timeline in the lesson which builds in consistent reflection and frequent check-in opportunities.

APPENDIX F1. HORROR LITERATURE CLUB PHYSICAL SPACE (PICTURE 1)



APPENDIX F2. HORROR LITERATURE CLUB PHYSICAL SPACE (PICTURE 2)



APPENDIX F3. HORROR LITERATURE CLUB PHYSICAL SPACE (PICTURE 3)

APPENDIX F4. HORROR LITERATURE CLUB PHYSICAL SPACE (PICTURE 4)

APPENDIX G. EARLY DRAFT RECRUITMENT POSTER

JOIN US...

IF YOU DARE

Horror Literature Club

WHEN: (TBD)

WHERE: (TBD)

Be a part of something fun, unique, and terrifying! This activity is being conducted as part of a research study around having fun reading and writing. If interested, contact (school principal).

APPENDIX H. IRB APPROVAL LETTER

Colorado State University
Knowledge to Go Places

Research Integrity & Compliance Review Office
Office of the Vice President for Research
321 General Services Building - Campus Delivery 2011 eprotocol
TEL: (970) 491-1553
FAX: (970) 491-2293

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

DATE:	October 05, 2017
TO:	Jennings, Louise, School of Education
	Gloeckner, Gene, School of Education, Davis, Justin, School of Education
FROM:	Swiss, Evelyn, CSU IRB 2
PROTOCOL TITLE:	A Classroom of Horrors and Lessons from the Dark: A Narrative Inquiry of Affectively Engaging Students in Reading and Writing Instruction Using the Horror Genre
FUNDING SOURCE:	NONE
PROTOCOL NUMBER:	17-7383H
APPROVAL PERIOD:	Approval Date: October 04, 2017 Expiration Date: August 15, 2018

The CSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects has reviewed the protocol entitled: A Classroom of Horrors and Lessons from the Dark: A Narrative Inquiry of Affectively Engaging Students in Reading and Writing Instruction Using the Horror Genre. The project has been approved for the procedures and subjects described in the protocol. This protocol must be reviewed for renewal on a yearly basis for as long as the research remains active. Should the protocol not be renewed before expiration, all activities must cease until the protocol has been re-reviewed.

Important Reminder: If you will consent your participants with a signed consent document, it is your responsibility to use the consent form that has been finalized and uploaded into the consent section of eProtocol by the IRB coordinators. Failure to use the finalized consent form available to you in eProtocol is a reportable protocol violation.

If approval did not accompany a proposal when it was submitted to a sponsor, it is the PI's responsibility to provide the sponsor with the approval notice.

This approval is issued under Colorado State University's Federal Wide Assurance 00000647 with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). If you have any questions regarding your obligations under CSU's Assurance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please direct any questions about the IRB's actions on this project to:

IRB Office - (970) 491-1553; RICRO_IRB@mail.Colostate.edu
Evelyn Swiss, Senior IRB Coordinator - (970) 491-1381; Evelyn.Swiss@Colostate.edu
Tammy Felton-Noyle, IRB Biomedical Coordinator - (970) 491-1655; Tammy.Felton-Noyle@Colostate.edu

Evelyn Swiss

Swiss, Evelyn

Protocol was reviewed via the expedite-review process and determined to be no more risk than everyday living. Approval is to recruit 12 participants with the approved parent consent, child assent, and recruitment. The