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Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed in the Public Speaking and Interpersonal Communication classrooms

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AUGUSTO BOAL’S THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED IN THE PUBLIC SPEAKING AND INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION CLASSROOMS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Communication Studies

by

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B.A., Dillard University, 1991
M.A., Louisiana State University, 1994
August 2003
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated in loving memory of my mother Sandra Joyce Williams, January 12, 1949-February 13, 2001. My mother never met a stranger. She loved life and people. She appreciated a good cross-word puzzle or mystery novel and had an unquenchable thirst for knowledge be it spiritual or secular. Her quick wit and dry sense of humor evoked a laughter that was infectious. It is because of her wisdom, encouragement and occasional “push” that I am where I am today. Though she may be gone from this world she is always with me--in my memories, my heart, my deeds and my actions; through my written text her legacy lives on.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION...............................................................................................................................................iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS...............................................................................................................................iv

ABSTRACT......................................................................................................................................................viii

CHAPTER

1 LOCATING BOAL IN THE COMMUNICATION STUDIES CLASSROOM................................................................------------------------------------------1

   Introduction.................................................................................................................................................1
   Subject of Study.........................................................................................................................................4
   Method......................................................................................................................................................9
   Significance...........................................................................................................................................10
   Chapter Summaries..............................................................................................................................14
   Notes...................................................................................................................................................15

2 AUGUSTO BOAL’S CAREER AND TECHNIQUES.........................................................................................17
   Notes...................................................................................................................................................30

3 BOAL’S PRACTICES IN THE PUBLIC SPEAKING CLASSROOM.................................................................31
   A Self Introductory Speech Assignment:
   Choice, Chance or Fate Speech...........................................................................................................36
   A Persuasive Speech Assignment:
   The Persuasive Speech Forum............................................................................................................44
   Notes...................................................................................................................................................87

4 BOAL’S PRACTICES IN THE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION CLASSROOM..............................................88
   A Self-Image Assignment:
   Communicating Self in Shadow Box Imagery....................................................................................93
   A Nonverbal Norms Assignment:
   Testing Norms by Invisible Role Playing..........................................................................................108
   A Conflict Awareness Assignment: Adapting to Others................................................................118
   Notes................................................................................................................................................131

5. RE(IN)FLECTIONS ON BOAL’S PRACTICES......................................................................................132

WORKS CITED.............................................................................................................................................144

APPENDIX

A DEMOGRAPHICS OF STUDENT PARTICIPANTS.................................................................................151

B PROJECT CONSENT FORMS...................................................................................................................152

C PUBLIC SPEAKING ASSIGNMENTS....................................................................................................156
ABSTRACT

In this study, I document and analyze how I applied Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) techniques in introductory Public Speaking and Interpersonal Communication (IPC) courses. In the first chapter, Boal’s democratic praxis is discussed in terms of critical performance pedagogy and Brecht’s social aesthetics. I identify the qualitative social scientific method of data collection and analysis I used and base the significance of the study in my testing of TO in non-performance educational contexts and in the integrated communication studies curricula that resulted.

In Chapter Two, I summarize Boal’s career as an interactive theatre practitioner. My review includes synopses of his practices and the books he wrote.

In Chapter Three, I document and discuss the two Boal based assignments I developed for the Public Speaking course. In the first, Boal’s newspaper theatre exercises and Gregory Ulmer’s “mystery” method are applied to a self-introductory speech assignment. In the second, Boal’s “cop in the head” exercises and Joker System are adapted to a group project titled The Persuasive Speech Forum.

In Chapter Four, I document and analyze my application of TO to three IPC course assignments. In the first, Boal’s concept of Image Theatre informs an assignment in which students show their understanding of IPC concepts of selfhood in a shadow box they create and present. Boal’s Invisible Theatre practices are used to test nonverbal norms in the second assignment. In the third, a fusion of Boal’s Forum Theatre and Joker System techniques are used by students to investigate interpersonal conflicts and management strategies.

In Chapter Five, I summarize the study and my findings, applying myself to the merits, drawbacks and possibilities of the assignments I developed. Lastly, I discuss the role and function of the educator as a Joker figure.
The Appendices offer course handouts and representative examples of the students’ work which I draw on throughout the study to discuss and evaluate the merits and limitations of the assignments.
CHAPTER ONE

LOCATING BOAL IN THE COMMUNICATION STUDIES CLASSROOM

Theatre is a form of knowledge.

--Augusto Boal, Games for Actors and Non-Actors

Introduction

I have always been fascinated by the power of performance and its multiple functions. Performance can be an activity of cultural enrichment, experimentation, escape, social critique, therapy, education, and self-empowerment. Over the past seven years, I have centered my study of performance on Augusto Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed (TO). Drawing on the pedagogical theories of Paulo Freire, the social aesthetics of Bertolt Brecht, and commonplace theatre exercises and games, Boal developed TO as a flexible system of interactive exercises, games, improvisations and more structured theatrical techniques. Due to the practicality and adaptability of TO, it has been applied by practitioners across the world in different contexts and to serve various functions, such as those I mentioned above.¹

Fundamental to all of Boal’s practices however is a democratic praxis. Specifically, Boal believes that all people have the right to act, to take action, mindful of the social reality and community of which they are a part. Boal’s various practices engage and enact (or operationalize) this basic precept by means of cooperative interaction aimed at problem posing and, as pertinent to the context, problem solving.² In short, the main objectives of Boal’s TO practices are to educate people that they can act and in a cooperative, democratic manner.

It was due to these tenets and the ease and flexibility of Boal’s practices that I was drawn to apply them in the ways that I document in this study. Specifically, I have adapted certain TO
techniques to specific assignments in three introductory courses that I teach in the Department of Communication Studies at Louisiana State University (LSU). The courses are Fundamentals of Public Speaking, Public Speaking, and Interpersonal Communication (IPC). This study provides documentation, analyses, and rationale for my use of Boal’s techniques in these courses.

I first began to consider Boal’s TO as a possible area of study when I met Boal and learned some of his techniques first hand at a TO workshop sponsored by the University of Nebraska at Omaha in March 1996. While the workshop focused on Boal’s “Rainbow of Desire” or therapeutic techniques, I became particularly interested in the use and function of Boal’s Joker figure who is a prominent fixture in all of his techniques. Although the traits and functions of the Joker alter in light of the specific technique and context, generally the Joker’s responsibility is to insure that the assembled participants understand and follow the rules of the interactive event and that the event is fun, fair, and productive for all. My interest lay in analyzing the role and function of the Joker in different TO contexts such as TO training sessions, group problem solving events, personal therapy workshops, rehearsals, and performance classrooms in the academy. At the time, my guiding thesis was that, regardless of the technique, a more aggressive or demanding Joker figure was required in the academic context as compared to, for instance, a therapeutic setting.

Between 1996 and 1998, two related events occurred that proved to redirect the focus my study. First, my teaching responsibilities changed. At the start of my study, I was teaching two sections of Introduction to the Performance of Literature in the Department of Communication Studies at LSU. In 1998, I was re-assigned to teach two sections of Public Speaking and, in 1999, upon assuming an Instructor position in the department and a requisite four course load, I also began to teach the introductory IPC course. Second, although I understood the Public
Speaking and, later, IPC course material, in each case I was uncomfortable with how I was teaching it. Encouraged by a favorite quotation of mine by William Pollard, “without change there is no innovation, creativity, or incentive for improvement” (345), I decided to make a change in my teaching. To do so, I called on some of the TO techniques I had used in the introductory performance studies course, transforming the techniques to fit the aims of the Public Speaking and, then, IPC courses.

At first, my rationale for using TO was simply to regain confidence in my teaching by drawing on a few tools that had served me well in the past. However, my covert use of the TO techniques became more concentrated and explicit as I discovered that my applications were fruitful and intriguing: for me, for many of my students, and for what they highlighted in the course materials. In turn, I realized that I had found two specific academic contexts in which I might test those aspects of TO that I particularly appreciated; namely, its basic tenets and its seeming flexibility. I also realized that I might retain my interest in studying the Joker figure by understanding my role as Joker-like when I taught the TO assignments and by studying how my students enacted the Joker role in their processing of the assignments. In sum, my earlier focus on the Joker figure in various contexts common to TO had narrowed to a study of the Joker figure in academic contexts less common to TO. The latter factor (less familiar TO contexts) in turn became the featured interest. I wondered, how feasible is the application of TO to the Public Speaking and IPC courses? What aspects of TO adapt “faithfully” to assignments geared to address the content and aims of Public Speaking and IPC? What aspects need to be transformed—i.e., not “faithfully” rendered? Conversely, what Public Speaking and IPC aspects are highlighted, adapted, transformed, and also elided by the application? What are the benefits and drawbacks of applying TO in the Public Speaking and IPC classrooms? What do I learn about TO, the two courses, and my teaching of them by pursuing this line of inquiry?
Subject of the Study

In this study, I document and analyze how I applied Boal’s TO techniques in the Fundamentals of Public Speaking, Public Speaking, and IPC courses that I taught in the Department of Communication Studies at LSU between 1998 and 2002. To date, I have applied the techniques in twenty-six sections of the two Public Speaking courses and twelve sections of the introductory IPC course. I have involved nine hundred and twenty-eight students in the research although only representative samples of their immense contributions are offered here. (See Appendix A for additional demographic data and Appendix B for project consent forms.)

In Chapter Two of this study, I review Augusto Boal’s professional career as an interactive theatre practitioner. My review covers the various exercises, games, and more structured techniques he developed and the books he wrote in which he explicates his practices and applications. Many of Boal’s exercises and techniques constitute the subject of my study here although they also serve as pedagogical methods, processes for learning, in my application of them in the three courses.

Boal’s practices are largely influenced by Paulo Freire’s critical pedagogy and Bertolt Brecht’s theatrical concepts and practices of social realism (Brecht 266-270). Freire, a Brazilian pedagogue and author of Pedagogy of the Oppressed, bases his theories in the development of a critical consciousness or, as Freire terms it, “conscientization” (95). For Freire and others, conscientization is elemental to any democratic educational process and it involves recognizing and evaluating structures of power—e.g., within the subject being studied, the methods and discourses used to study it, and the broader educational system. Conscientization differs from “consciousness raising” in that the latter involves the participants in a “banking education” or, as Freire describes it, the transmission of pre-selected knowledge from the expert/teacher to passive
student receptacles who receive, file and store the deposited information (Pedagogy of the Oppressed 58). Conscientization, on the other hand, interrupts and interrogates such distributions of power, inciting critical awareness of one’s own “oppressions” and those of others. According to Freire, the conscientization process involves recognizing that power structures are social-historical constructs rather than predestined or natural systems, analyzing who and what benefits from the constructs, and developing ways to alter or transform the constructs so as to balance the distribution of power or, in Freire’s terms, transform the oppressive circumstances of those who are powerless (99-104).

To activate the process, Freire advocates teaching methods that are, in themselves, democratic. That is, the teacher develops ways to empower her students (e.g., by prompting a conscientization process) or, at the extreme, the teacher and students start from scratch and develop the course together. As Freire and Henry Giroux claim,

If students are going to learn how to take risks, to develop a healthy skepticism towards all master narratives, to recognize the power relations that offer them the opportunity to speak in particular ways, and be willing to critically confront their role as critical citizens who can animate a democratic culture, they need to see such behavior demonstrated in the social practices and subject positions that teachers live out and not merely propose. (Freire and Giroux 141)

In other words, if the broad pedagogical aim is to encourage students to engage critical processes that “animate a democratic culture,” then the teacher should develop ways to enact the same herself, in how she teaches the course material to or with her students.

One of the potential drawbacks in such an aim is that a course in Public Speaking, for instance, may begin to operate in meta- or even hyper-reflexive terms. Highly sensitive to her mission, a teacher may spend precious class time discussing with the students how they might make the course more democratic rather than teaching the fundamentals of public speaking. The irony here is that the students may find the discussion of democratic pedagogy to be “
oppressive” in itself, given their expectations of the course and, more generally, their educational goals.

One of the many ways around this hyper-reflexive roadblock is to concentrate on teaching the course material by having the students enact it. The basic premise here is that by means of active embodiment, the students not only learn the material but also authorize it or at least share in the authorship of it. Understood as “critical performative pedagogy,” this learn-by-doing method “situates the performing body at the center of theory and practice” (Pineau 41). It shifts the emphasis in education from an informative mode, in which teachers provide information, to a performative mode, in which students discover knowledge by means of enacting it; their performative utterances and actions “bring about” the knowledge they learn and hence they become “producers” of it (Pineau 41).

As does Pineau, Freire advocates the integration of performative methods with informative, demonstrative or showing, and analytical reading methods, understanding that while many students are doer-learners, many are not. In short, the primary mode of learning differs for various students and a more democratic curriculum will attempt to make room for the differences.

As I mentioned in the “Introduction” above, the key objectives of Boal’s TO practices are to educate people that they can act and in cooperative, democratic ways. TO then is a practical enactment of Freire’s critical pedagogy or, as re-inflected by performance studies scholars such as Pineau, it is an example of critical performative pedagogy. His Marxist politics aside, Brecht’s theatrical praxis might be understood as critical performative pedagogy too in that the purpose of the staged event is to “help the spectator…understand his social environment” and “adopt an attitude of inquiry and criticism” toward it (Brecht 133, 136). As with Boal, Brecht’s praxis is oriented toward the spectator and their realization that critical, analytical thinking or
“learning” can be “entertaining and instructive” (Brecht 60; emphasis added). The underlying notion here is that education is the empowering agency of taking sustainable action in the social world. By eliding the importance of education, by making it materially or discursively inaccessible or “by presenting it as not enjoyable” (Brecht 60), power is retained by those few who are educated.

While Brecht hoped to incite learning (as critical thinking) in his audience by means of the techniques the performers used on stage, Boal takes many of these same techniques (e.g., defamiliarization, gestus, the showing of complex social processes), and insists that the spectators use them themselves, aiming like Brecht to encourage critical, analytical thinking. As such, Brecht’s desire to “transform…art into a paedagogical [sic] discipline” where spectators are “not only…pupils but…teachers” too (48, 52) is manifested in Boal’s interactive theatre practices.

In my application of TO techniques to certain assignments in the Public Speaking and IPC courses, I adhere to the general pedagogical praxis outlined above. My application of TO is my modest attempt to encourage students to take action in the classroom with a critical consciousness and mindful of the community of which they are a part. It is my experience that Boal’s practices help me realize these goals in ways that are accessible, entertaining and instructive for most students. Freire’s and Boal’s guiding concept of “oppression” does not however prevail in my application of TO in the three courses.

Freire’s pedagogical theories and Boal’s theatrical practices were developed in response to the material oppressions that the Brazilian lower classes have and continue to suffer under the governance of dictatorial regimes. There is then good reason for Freire’s and Boal’s use of the term, “oppression.” As I explain in Chapter Two, Boal further believes that all people suffer from some kind of oppression be it material or ideological and he continues to apply the term in
diverse contexts. While I respect Boal’s rationale, I tend not to use the term in my classroom applications—although I do discuss Boal’s understanding of “oppressions” with the students when I introduce the assignments. My choice is based on my students’ typical responses to the term. Largely white and middle class, the students generally feel that, in the relative scheme of things, they are not oppressed or they feel that the term itself is oppressive. While in the Public Speaking courses the term is sidelined entirely, in the IPC course it occasionally re-asserts itself as relevant to certain students and their investigation of self-image or control issues in relationships. In sum, while I do not insist that the students use the term, I also do not resist their use as long as the student is able to identify and explain the oppression in light of the course content.

Clearly, my application of Boal’s techniques is particularized by the contexts in which I apply them. The subject matter, methods and aims of the Public Speaking and IPC courses inform my application and hence are important subject areas too. In Chapters Three and Four, I address the particularities of the two courses. Generally, the Public Speaking course is designed to educate students as to the different types of public speech they may be asked to address in their personal and professional lives and, by means of writing and delivering (enacting) speeches, the course prepares the students to fulfill these obligations. The course also focuses on the critical, rhetorical operations of the different types of speeches and public communication generally. The introductory IPC course focuses on everyday life communication processes and situations. The course is designed to provide the students with IPC concepts and methods that help them interpret different interpersonal processes and, in turn, develop strategies to communicate more effectively in their own lives and relationships.
Method

The design of my project is based on a qualitative social scientific model. My thesis is that certain TO techniques offer the educator and students an entertaining and instructive means to engage content particular to the Public Speaking and IPC courses. Implicit to the aims of the courses and TO praxis is the students’ (and teacher’s) development of a critical consciousness which I argue is realized and activated by the students, in their processing of the course material through Boal’s interactive performance techniques. As I detailed above, to test my thesis, I have experimented with TO-based assignments in a total of thirty-eight classes involving more than nine hundred students. I document my findings in the body of the study through representative examples of the assignments and the students’ work while Appendices C through H offer additional, though not comprehensive, examples. I analyze the data by drawing on interpretive perspectives that are implicit to the courses and TO techniques. Specifically, I draw on critical pedagogy, interactive performative pedagogy, the pragmatics of public speech, and basic concepts and theories of interpersonal communication. I discuss the rationale and significance of my project and findings in terms of these same perspectives. Lastly, I assess the success or failure of my experiment by analyzing the representative samples of my students’ work in terms of whether they support the thesis I stated above.

In my writing of the study, I occasionally inform my discussion with my own stories regarding my experiences in the classroom and my process of applying TO. Some of the students’ work reflects storytelling as well. I entertain this method of writing because, for me, storytelling “give[s] shape, direction, and significance to an otherwise chaotic sense” (Strine 367) of what I am “up to” here and what I tried to accomplish by experimenting with Boal’s practices in the classroom over the years. In “Of Boundaries, Borders, and Contact Zones:
Author(iz)ing Pedagogical Practices,” Mary Strine supports the educator-scholar’s use of stories. Strine writes,

[B]y presenting their accounts of memorable teaching practices [educators] construct compelling visions of what teachers are trying to accomplish. In doing that, they help to author(ize) those teaching practices and to revitalize the work of teaching in the process. (375)

Donald Wulff confirms Strine’s call when he claims that “the power of the story—in research, in teaching, in our own evolution…is that narrative can be used as a tool for enhancing understanding of the instructional process” (367, 392). Storytelling, then, is a way I make sense of my research experiments in the classroom and claim authority for them here. At the very least, I hope to engage the reader with my anecdotes and imply the importance of storytelling to my pedagogical process.

**Significance**

This study is significant in a number of ways. First, it tests the professed flexibility and critical pedagogical effect of Boal’s TO practices. Second and thereby, it contributes to the relatively scant scholarship on TO in U.S. publications. Third, while embodied enactment has been and continues to be an integral component in Public Speaking classes and some introductory IPC classes, the study suggests how a deliberate engagement and use of TO-applied techniques may be helpful to some instructors in their teaching of the conceptual and practical components of public speaking and interpersonal communication. Thereby, the study supports the understanding that, while the terms and approaches may vary, performance, public speaking and interpersonal communication (or, more generally, rhetoric and communication theory) are inter-related fields of study, united in their interest in how human beings communicate with each other in diverse ways. Just as beneficial, I believe, the study shows how different aspects of a specific concept or practice are featured given the perspective used. In other words, the study
helps us identify the differences between the various communication studies areas and perspectives. It helps us “make sense” of ourselves. Lastly, the study offers what I hope is a helpful and flexible handbook for instructors who are interested in a similar integration of our already integrated field. Below, I briefly discuss these points, developing some of them further in the fifth chapter of the study.

The main aim of this study is to test the professed flexibility and critical effect of TO as I have applied it in the three courses. The study then is significant to scholars and practitioners who are interested in TO or, more generally, critical performative pedagogy. It is of particular relevance to those who have or want to apply Boal’s techniques in the academic classroom. In the classroom, the course content and allotted time periods restrict, as Boal envisions it, the organic processing of an issue selected by the assembled group. Further, Boal’s insistence on voluntary participation may well be contradicted by the instructor’s use of the techniques. Students may be required to participate or, due to peer or instructor pressure, may opt to involve themselves reluctantly. On the other hand, the course content may provide direction and focus to group interactions (which is often lacking in TO events with heterogeneous participants) while the group interactions and enactments may prove to stimulate the students’ interest in the content. This study then not only tests the claims of TO in an unfamiliar context, it shows how a component of that context—i.e., specified content—potentially enables TO processes, particularly those constituted by a heterogeneous group of individuals.  

To date, there is one study in U.S. publications that examines the use of TO in an academic context that is not directly related to theatre or performance while there are very few which examine the latter application. In the first case, George Sanchez recounts how he uses Boal’s nonverbal image-making exercises in the primary school art classes he teaches. His aim is to help students express their abstract thoughts, feelings and imagery in an embodied form.
which they then translate to clay sculptures. Scholarship on the use of TO in theatre or
performance courses is rare and tends to concentrate on the direct application of a particular TO
technique, such as Boal’s Joker System or Invisible Theatre. The bulk of scholarship on Boal’s
practices in U.S. and Canadian publications is similarly practical and specific, the TO scholar-
practitioner documenting how a particular group applied TO in a workshop situation to address a
problem relevant to the group or the larger community.

The only collection of essays on TO in English is Playing Boal: Theatre, Therapy, Activism edited by Mady Shutzman and Jan Cohen-Cruz. A reprint of the 1990 The Drama Review interview with Boal by Michael Taussig and Richard Schechner introduces the collection which is divided into three parts: case studies, essays that contextualize TO in terms of
psychotherapy, political theatre, and body theories, and three pieces that contest claims that
Boal’s turn toward psycho-drama compromises his initial social aims. The collection concludes
with an interview of Boal by Cohen-Cruz in which they discuss Boal’s direct involvement in
Brazilian politics in the 1990s.

While Boal is prominently featured in the recent rash of Routledge publications that
survey performance studies, performance scholars and practitioners, and performance and
politics, the amount of scholarship on TO itself is relatively scarce. This study contributes to
TO scholarship in an original way in that it documents the use of TO in academic contexts that
are not directly related to theatre or performance. Thereby, the study tests what is professed to
be critical pedagogy in a formal educational setting. As compared to the non-academic
workshops in which TO is commonly applied, the requirements of the academic institution,
department and, in this case, introductory course directives directly impact how the instructor
teaches her students. The critical pedagogy of TO must be adapted and transformed to meet the
expectations of the framing educational system, which is not say that the system disallows
critical pedagogy. Indeed, I believe a critical pedagogical perspective is integral to the content I teach and encouraged by the department in which I teach. The test then is whether TO retains its dynamic as a critical pedagogical method when adapted to the more formal academic context and, regardless of the results, whether the application benefits the students and their learning of the course material.

Of further significance is the application of TO in courses that are not intended to teach students about performance or theatre. Public Speaking highlights the different types of public speech while IPC concentrates on everyday life communication processes. However, throughout the long history of teaching public speaking, embodied enactment has played a crucial part while some IPC course manuals encourage role-playing as a means of learning IPC concepts. Hence, using performance as a method to realize course content is not uncommon in these courses; neither is the forging of a critical consciousness or the critical, analytical processing of material. This study then does not presume to suggest that performance and a critical pedagogy are new to how the Public Speaking and IPC courses are taught at LSU or suggest that “performance” be admitted as a subject of concern. Rather, the study documents how TO-applied techniques are helpful to me in teaching some of the conceptual and practical components of public speaking and interpersonal communication and it offers TO as a possible resource to others who teach similar courses.

Admittedly, by using TO in the Public Speaking and IPC courses, I highlight certain aspects of public speech and interpersonal processes that I value and elide certain other aspects. For instance, in Chapter Three, I explain how I replaced the Persuasive Speech assignment with a TO-inspired Persuasive Speech Forum where a group rather than a single individual speaks to the pros and cons of a particular proposition. I observe that the alteration emphasizes the multiple voices and perspectives “at work” on a public issue and within public speech by
representing them in multiple (student) bodies. The alteration de-emphasizes the importance of a single speaker crafting and delivering a well-organized and uninterrupted argument of her own.

As I argue in Chapter Three, it is my feeling that, given time in the course schedule, it would be beneficial for students to present their own persuasive speech following and informed by the group project.

My point here however is that performance and a performance perspective are embedded in the concepts and methods of Public Speaking and IPC just as rhetoric and interpersonal processes and perspectives are embedded in the course materials and methods of performance studies courses. As a case study of a deliberately integrated perspective, then, this project explores the possibilities and limitations of such an integration. In the final analysis, I propose that the areas that constitute Communication Studies at LSU and elsewhere might enable their curriculum, and their students’ understanding of it, by acknowledging the links between the areas and perspectives more forcefully—if only to better identify the differences between the areas if not also benefit from the similarities.

**Chapter Summaries**

In Chapter Two of the study, I summarize Boal’s professional career as an interactive theatre practitioner. In my overview, I offer synopses of the books he has written and the series of exercises, games and more structured techniques he has developed. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of two of the most important components of his techniques, the spect-actor and Joker figure.

In Chapter Three, I recount the events that led to my applying Boal’s newspaper theatre and Joker System techniques in the Public Speaking course. I offer an overview of the course, detailing the general aims of the two required speeches I re-designed by means of Boal’s techniques. I document the steps the students take in applying newspaper theatre to a speech of
self introduction and the Joker System to a Persuasive Speech Forum. A complete example of
the latter is provided and I analyze it in terms of the aims of the course and the assignment as I
have designed it.

In Chapter Four, I relate my initial encounter with IPC and offer an overview of the
course as I teach it. I describe the process, aims and rationale for the three TO-based
assignments I have developed. To address IPC concepts of self, self-concept and self-image, I
apply the conceptual aspects of Boal’s Image Theatre technique to a “shadow box” assignment.
IPC norms of nonverbal communication are tested in an assignment that draws on Boal’s
Invisible Theatre technique. A fusion of Boal-based practices is brought to bear on an
assignment that addresses interpersonal conflicts. Examples of student work are provided in all
cases and, based on my analyses of the work, I evaluate the success or failure of the assignments.

In Chapter Five, “Re(in)flections on Boal’s Practices,” I summarize the study and my
findings. I proceed to broaden my discussion to address the advantages and disadvantages of my
application of TO in the Public Speaking and IPC courses. Lastly, I discuss the role and function
of the educator as a Joker figure in the classroom as it pertains to critical performative pedagogy.

The Appendices offer the basic (non-quantitative) demographics of the students involved
in the study, project consent forms, assignment worksheets and handouts, and representative
examples of the students’ work on the various assignments.

Notes

1 For representative examples of diverse functions, see Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz’s
collection of essays, and also Albuquerque, Banu, R. Bowman, Cohen-Cruz, Dishman, Fisher,
Gilotte, Gray, Heritage, Howard, Paterson, Rohd, and Vine.

2 In the study, I use the word “operationalize” to signify the capability of an action to
both represent and show the workings or “operations” of an idea or other abstraction. To
represent and show how something works is primary to Brecht’s aesthetics and Harris uses the
term similarly to explain the “operational aesthetic” of cultural expressions and artifacts that
elicit a “delight in observing process and examining for literal truth” (12).
Although assigned different rubrics, the Fundamentals of Public Speaking and Public Speaking courses are similar and I do not differentiate between them in the study except in documents in the Appendices. Also, until spring 2003, the Department of Communication Studies at LSU was titled the Department of Speech Communication. I use the current title except in documents generated prior to spring 2003, such as those in the Appendices.

In addition to Freire, see Giroux, Giroux and Shannon, Jackson, Shor, and Sprague.

In Brecht, the editor and translator, John Willett, notes that “three threads…went to make up” Brecht’s aesthetics: “playing in quotation marks” or gestus; “the detached unemotional style” or, as variously termed, alienation, estrangement, or defamiliarization; and “the portrayal of new and complex processes” which refers to the use of new technologies on stage and the display of how social-political systems operate (Brecht 17).

See Salverson and Spry for essays that examine the benefits of having TO participants identify the issue, their relationship to it, and its complexities before they engage in TO workshops.

See R. Bowman, Campbell, Capo, Gray, and McConachie.

See, for example, Banu, Cohen-Cruz, “Theatre of the Oppressed Workshops with Women,” Diamond, Fisher, Gilotte, Howard, Quiles, Rohd, Salverson, Schweitzer, Spry, Taussig and Schechner, Usmiani, and Vine.

See Goodman with de Gay, Huxley and Witts, Schechner, and Zarrilli.

For histories of teaching public speaking, see Benson, and Wallace. For IPC manuals that suggest role-playing methods, see Alder et al. (1-6), Veenendall et al., Instructor’s Manual (vii-xii), and Walker and Brokaw (ix).
Wouldn’t it be wonderful to see a dance piece where the dancers danced in the first act and in the second showed the audience how to dance? Wouldn’t it be wonderful to see a musical where in the first act the actors sang and in the second we all sang together?...This is...how artists should be—we should be creators and also teach the public how to be creators, how to make art, so that we may all use that art together.

--Augusto Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*

Brazilian born theatre scholar and practitioner, Augusto Boal, began to develop his “theatre of the oppressed” practices in the 1950s and 1960s. Upon graduating from Columbia University in New York in 1955, Boal returned to Brazil to assume the directorship of the Arena Theatre in Sao Paulo. In *Hamlet and the Baker’s Son: My Life in Theatre and Politics*, Boal writes that, while director of the Arena Theatre, he became highly cognizant of “the social function and political significance of theatre” and, informed by Brecht’s similar cogitations, wondered how the Arena Theatre might entertain and educate its public (103, 114). Understanding that “‘educate’ comes from the Latin and means ‘to lead out,’” Boal and his company questioned whether they “[had] the right—or even the power!—to lead our public” particularly in a theatrical space “little larger than a regular dining room” (115, 142).

In response to their questions, Boal and his collaborators developed the Joker System. The Joker System is a flexible formula or technique for transforming and staging extant texts and developing new ones. In the case of the Arena Theatre, the company used the Joker System to transform the classic dramas of the European stage so as to make them explicitly relevant to their community. In addition to localizing content, another key aim of the Joker System is to explore
“multiple interpretations of diverse realities” (Shutzman and Cohen-Cruz 1) while simultaneously analyzing them. In other words, the performance stages a critique of itself.

Four basic tenets inform and activate the objectives. First, drawing directly on Brecht’s concepts of gestus and defamiliarization, the characters are reduced to relatively simple social types by means of “alienation” techniques such as wearing masks, exaggerating gestures, or commenting on one’s character in the third-person. The general purpose is to critically distance the audience from the characters by urging them to view the characters as representatives of social groups rather than singular individuals. Second, the performers engage in continuous role reversal or switching, such that the different characters are played by several actors and the actors play several characters. The main points here are to defamiliarize the singularity of character constructs and insure that the performers approach the story as a whole rather than concentrate on a single part. Third, stylistic eclecticism is privileged and includes the juxtaposition of different genres and forms (e.g., melodrama, realism, burlesque, cartoon, interviews, manifestos and debates), and also unexplained interruptions, re-directions and twists in the action and discourse. Lastly, music is used as an independent language that can enhance or contradict the meanings of the spoken text or action (Boal, Theatre of the Oppressed 167-190; Boal, “The Joker System”; and R. Bowman 140).

The Joker System consists of seven main parts: dedication, explanation, episodes, scenes, commentary, interviews, and exhortation. The adaptation process begins by dividing the text into major episodes, each of which is further divided into a few more or less independent scenes. The commentary (usually performed by the Joker figure) functions to bridge the scenes and clarify or expand upon the depicted action. The extemporaneous interviews are conducted by the Joker and, depending on the circumstances of the given performance, may occur within or between the scenes. The performance begins with a dedication to some person, group or event
that is of relevance to the assembled audience and, hence, a direct link is made between the performance and the “real” world. It is followed by an explanation in which the Joker offers the audience any information they might need to access the performance. In a sense, the Joker provides the audience with the rules of the performance game of which they will become a part—e.g., by means of the interviews and exhortation. The performance ends with an exhortation to the audience to respond to the subject, themes, and ideas developed in the performance. Often a discussion or debate occurs or, in some cases, scenes are amended and replayed in light of audience suggestions.

Clearly, the Joker figures prominently in the system. In “‘Joking’ with the Classics: Using Boal’s Joker System in the Performance Classroom,” Bowman explains the multiple operations of this role.

The polyvalent Joker figure may be a single actor-character or a group of actor-characters. The Joker may be a character found in the text, or she may be an invention. She may retain her role as Joker throughout the performance, or she may insert herself into any scene and as any character….By means of periodic interviews and commentary she can speak to anyone in the theatre at virtually any time she desires. She can explain things to the audience if things seem unclear, or she can ask the performers, audience, or even the technicians for their ideas about what occurs. The Joker also keeps the performance moving by serving as a mediator between the different parts of the performance—an emcee, in effect. While the Protagonist operates in the domain of psychological realism, trapped in the world of the dramatic plot, the Joker operates in the realm of “magic realism,” able to move easily between the there-and-then world of the Protagonist and the here-and-now world of the actors and audience. (140)

Boal’s Joker then is an explicit manifestation of the implicit operations Brecht embeds within his characters and staging techniques. Since the point of these operations is to incite critical, analytical thinking on the part of the audience, Boal’s Joker might be understood as Brecht’s ideal audience member, serving as an on stage example of the kinds of commentary and questions the audience might ask.
To spur their creativity and also train their voices and bodies, Boal and the Arena Theatre company collected and drew on well known theatre exercises, games and improvisations as well as developed new ones. Later, in _Theatre of the Oppressed_, Boal would arrange these tools and techniques into a four-stage “poetics of the oppressed.” The first stage, “Knowing the body,” consists of a series of exercises that re-acquaint the performer or participant with his body, “its limitations and possibilities, its social distortions and possibilities” (126, 126-130). The second stage, “Making the body expressive,” is a series of games designed to urge the participants to explore other expressive means than just their voices (126, 130-131). In the third stage, “the theater [sic] as language,” the participants come to understand theatre as a language “that is living and present” by engaging in simultaneous dramaturgy, Image Theatre, and Forum Theatre. In the first, participants write or speak the action at the same time as others enact it. In the second, participants speak through the nonverbal images they make with each others’ bodies. In the third, participants “intervene directly in the dramatic action” of a skit or play, replacing others and changing their action (126; emphasis in original, 131-142). In the fourth stage of Boal’s poetics, “the Theater [sic] as discourse,” the participants call on basic formats to create “‘spectacles’” according to their “need to discuss certain themes” or problems and “rehearse certain actions.” In addition to the Joker System, the basic formats Boal discusses are newspaper theatre, invisible theatre, photo-romance, myths and rituals, and a trial or debate format (126; emphasis in original, 142-154).\(^1\)

In the 1960s, Boal began to experiment with his burgeoning poetics in literacy programs and the agit-prop plays that he occasionally toured. While presenting one of these plays before peasants in northern Brazil, Boal realized that the play’s propagandistic style was revolutionary only in theory. The middle-class actors were prescribing behavior for situations they had not experienced. Boal recounts,
We taught the peasants how to fight for their lands—we, who lived in the big cities. We taught the blacks how to combat racial prejudice—we, who were almost all very, very white. We taught women how to struggle against their oppressors. Which oppressors? Why us since we were feminists to a man—and virtually all of us were men. (Rainbow 1).

Realizing his error, Boal designed Forum Theatre, which became a part of the third stage of his poetics.

In Forum Theatre, the assembled group, or a part of it, selects a problem or an issue they share and they feel is relevant to the larger group or community. The group creates a well-defined scene in which the character they identify as the protagonist fails to achieve what she or he needs or desires. The scene is performed before the larger group or community. Then, it is performed again but at a faster pace. The second time around, an audience member may shout “Stop!” whenever she feels the protagonist has taken a wrong turn or a tragic step. The on stage action “freezes” and the audience member replaces the protagonist on stage, enacting her alternative. The other characters in the scene, particularly the antagonist, do not adapt easily to the new solution; rather, they improvise roadblocks, to show “how difficult it is to change reality” (Games 20). And so it goes, the audience seeing the possibilities and limitations of different solutions and intervening to test out amended or new approaches. A Joker figure runs the show, urging involvement, playing traffic cop, and stopping the action should any of the participants propose “magical” solutions, such as winning the lottery or inventing a powerful uncle who “saves the day.” The point of Forum Theatre is for the group to discover and rehearse the multiple ways they might address the depicted problem in “real” life and also realize the multiple roadblocks that stand in their way. As Boal claims, “Forum Theatre is not propaganda theatre, it is not the old didactic theatre. It is pedagogical in the sense that we all learn together, actors and audience” (Games 19).
In 1971, Boal was arrested, jailed and tortured for continually voicing his opposition to the military regime in Brazil. Upon his release three months later, he moved to Argentina where he resided until 1976, involving himself in a literacy campaign in Peru in 1973. During this time, he wrote and published his first book, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, in which he expresses an anti-Aristotelian, Brecht-informed manifesto that culminates in his “poetics of the oppressed.”

Boal’s position is clearly stated when he writes,

> Aristotle proposes a poetics in which the spectator delegates power to the dramatic character so that the latter may act and think for him. Brecht proposes a poetics in which the spectator delegates power to the character who thus acts in his place but the spectator reserves the right to think for himself, often in opposition to the character. In the first case, a “catharsis” occurs; in the second, an awakening of critical consciousness. But the poetics of the oppressed focuses on the action itself: the spectator delegates no power to the character (or actor) either to act or to think in his place; on the contrary, he himself assumes the protagonic [sic.] role, changes the dramatic action, tries out solutions, discusses plans for change—in short, trains himself for real action. (122; emphasis in original)

In so far as the social function of Aristotle’s catharsis operates very like “an awakening of critical consciousness,” Boal’s (and Brecht’s) understanding of Aristotle’s poetics is problematic, reflective of twentieth century interpretations and manifestations more so than the classical Greek perspectives and models that informed Aristotle’s work.

As it turns out, then, Boal’s position is quite practical—and no less challenging for being so. In his poetics, there are no spectators. Everyone acts or learns to take action. As he writes elsewhere, “the fundamental forms [of TO] are based on the same principle, that all men are capable of achieving everything within the limits of human possibility. Theatre is, or can be, an occupation, a profession, but it is above all a vocation. And this vocation is within the reach of everyone” (“A Theatre of Urgency” 7). Simple as it may sound, encouraging people “to act” can be a difficult and, given the circumstances, a dangerous proposition. In the latter case, as Boal himself experienced, instituted sanctions may prohibit certain groups from taking action in
public, the potential ramifications being certain torture or death. In less restrictive societies, such as our own, individuals may be reluctant “to act” due to past failures, lack of experience, internal anxieties, apathy, or fears of physical and verbal abuse from others. Understanding that for many the simple act of speaking-up is difficult, Boal devised a series of largely non-verbal exercises and games. These simple tools constitute the first two stages of his poetics and culminate in his Image Theatre technique. In *Theatre of the Oppressed*, Boal introduces Image Theatre while in *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, he specifies the individual exercises and group games in thorough and helpful detail. He also re-articulates Image Theatre and offers additional or “new image theatre techniques” (*Games* 164-201).

In Boal’s original Image Theatre, the participants select a subject or theme that is of interest to the entire group. Without speaking, one of the participants “sculpts” the bodies of others into a tableau that represents his view of the selected subject or theme. Once completed, other participants may amend the sculpted image so as to include their views of the subject too. The aim is to create an image that everyone in the group finds acceptable as representative of the subject or theme. This initial image is called the “actual” or, in the later *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, the “Real Image.” The same process is undertaken again with the aim of sculpting a collective “ideal image” in which any conflicts or contradictions in the “real image” have disappeared. The third phase is the most difficult. It asks the participants to sculpt a “transitional image” or images, beginning with the “real image” and showing what has to occur in order to begin changing what is “real” (*Theatre of the Oppressed* 135; and *Games* 2-3).

In both *Theatre of the Oppressed* and *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, Boal describes his most controversial technique, Invisible Theatre. The main objectives are for a group to enact a scene in public which the unknowing audience takes to be “real” and which elicits discussion or debate on their part, hence rendering them “actors” too. To realize these aims, the group
selects a problem or an issue that they feel is of “genuine concern” in and to their community (Games 6). They create a little skit in which the problem is expressed, crafting it in anticipation of performing in an appropriate public place. The group rehearses the skit, entertaining the various contingencies that might arise. Entailed here is creating an “agent provocateur” who is ready to provoke debate should the unknowing public show indifference or apathy toward the depicted action. Once prepared, the group stages the skit in public—e.g., in a restaurant, on a bus, at the zoo—and, ideally, their enactment stimulates “people to question issues in a public forum” (Games xx-xxi). As I discuss in Chapter Four, the controversy surrounding Invisible Theatre concerns the ethics of covert play-acting that, in aim, relies on the ignorance of others.

In 1976, Boal sought self-exile in Europe. He settled in Paris in 1978 where he ran the Parisian Center for Theatre of the Oppressed. Confronted with workshop participants who told stories of loneliness, apathy, isolation, guilt, confusion and paranoia, Boal developed his theatre therapy techniques, colloquially known as “cop in the head.” At first, Boal was frustrated with the seeming insignificance of the internal hardships he was seeing and hearing enacted in the TO workshops.

For someone like me, fleeing explicit dictatorships of a cruel and brutal nature, it was natural that these themes should at first seem superficial and scarcely worthy of attention. It was as if I was always asking, mechanically: “But where are the cops?” Because I was used to working with concrete, visible oppressions [sic.]. Little by little, I changed my opinion. I discovered, for instance, that the percentage of suicides was much higher in countries like Sweden and Finland—where the essential needs of the citizen in matters of housing, health, food and social security are met—than in countries like ours, Third World countries. In Latin America, the major killer is hunger; in Europe, it is drug overdose. But, whatever form it comes in, death is still death. And, thinking about the suffering of a person who chooses to take his or her own life in order to put an end to the fear of emptiness or the pangs of loneliness, I decided to work with these new oppressions and to consider them as such. (Rainbow 8)

Boal’s concept of oppression thus expanded to include intimate, familial and societal norms and expectations (as exercised by lovers, parents, siblings, peers, teachers, bosses, spiritual leaders)
that obstruct one’s will and foster passivity. By means of the “cop in the head” techniques, these persistent and often disembodied voices are identified, embodied and addressed by the participants as “real” antagonistic forces. In some cases, the “cops” are further socialized, treated as oppressive forces that the group as a whole shares. In other cases, the group decides that the problem should be treated as particular to the individual and the group then works together to help the individual better understand and address his or her problem. By the early 1980s, the techniques were part of the TO repertoire and are presently addressed at length in Boal’s Rainbow of Desire which was published in 1995.

Like Games for Actors and Non-Actors, published in 1992, Rainbow of Desire was and continues to be immensely popular in Europe, Canada, and the U.S. The “rainbow” collection of exercises, games and improvisations are designed “to examine individual, internalized oppressions and to place them within the larger [social] context” (Rainbow xviii). The techniques propose then that the participants extend their examination beyond the personal level to consider the impact of social factors, such that they begin to instigate social as well as personal change.

In Playing Boal, many of the authors address the apparent drift of TO toward theatre therapy, as manifested in Rainbow of Desire. While there is little doubt that TO can work for therapeutic ends, the authors question whether such a drift compromises Boal’s initial social aim. They wonder whether TO as therapy perpetuates rather than addresses hierarchical systems of power that prevail in western societies generally, based as they are on aggressive individualism. Primary to this question is whether the workshop participants perceive (become critically conscious of) the social and political aspects of personal problems or are quite satisfied to view them as the result of innate individual traumas. Secondarily, TO skeptics view the turn as the ultimate con, the Joker-Boal re-tooling TO as a self-help commodity that markets well in
the narcissistic cultures of the industrial west. Perhaps however such questions tell us more about ourselves than Boal’s practices.

In 1986, after a favorable change in the Brazilian government, Boal returned to his homeland where he established the Center for the Theatre of the Oppressed. In 1992, he ran as an at-large candidate for Vereador of Rio de Janeiro, a position similar to a City Council seat in the U.S. Boal won his bid in 1993 and, while in office, integrated TO into the political system. In *Legislative Theatre*, he documents his use of TO as a legislative tool.

> [N]ow that I am directly involved in politics, I use the means at my disposal—the stage! The Legislative Theatre is a new system, a more complex form, since it includes all the previous forms of Theatre of the Oppressed plus others which have a specifically parliamentary application. (5)

In *Legislative Theatre*, Boal explains how he and his aides used Forum Theatre to enable his constituents to express what they saw to be the main problems in their neighborhoods and community. The theatrical representations and ensuing discussions became the basis for legislation that Boal put forth in the Chamber of Vereadors.

> Hamlet says in his famous speech to the actors that theatre is a mirror in which may be seen the true image of nature, of reality. I wanted to penetrate this mirror, to transform the image I saw in it and to bring that transformed image back to reality: to realize the image of my desire. I wanted it to be possible for the spect-actors in Forum Theatre to transgress, to break the conventions, to enter into the mirror of a theatrical fiction, rehearse forms of struggle and then return to reality with the images of their desires. This discontent was the genesis of the Legislative Theatre, in which the citizen makes the law through the legislator. (*Legislative Theatre* 9-10)

Although TO has been applied to meet multiple functions, the primary theoretical tenets of TO remain consistent. Boal’s praxis rests on the notion that theatre has to be restored to the people or, rather, it has to be reclaimed by the people. In an interview with Robert Enright, Boal states,

> “I believe in democracy, but in real democracy, not a phony democracy in which just powerful people can speak. For me, in a democracy everyone speaks. [TO] is democratic. It can be used as all other forms of theatre against its own basic philosophy,
but everyone can say ‘Stop, I want to have my say.’ That’s democratic, that’s freedom, and that’s what I fight for.” (Enright 49)

Boal enters the “fight” for democracy by means of theatre which he views as a language that everyone, actors and non-actors alike, have an innate tendency and right to use. Just as “actors talk, move, dress to suit the setting, express ideas, reveal passions,” so too do everyday people in their everyday lives. “The only difference,” writes Boal, “is that actors are conscious that they are using the language of theatre, and are thus better able to turn it to their advantage” (Games xxx). It is then the teaching of this language to non-actors as well as actors that is at the practical heart of all TO exercises, games and the more structured techniques.

As such, there are no passive spectators in TO, at least ideally. In an interview with Thomas Mellgren, Boal declares, “I want the spectator to act not watch. It is obscene for a human being who is fully capable of doing to merely watch. The first principle in my Theatre of the Oppressed is liberation of the spectator” (Mellgren; emphasis in original). In the various TO events, then, spectators become “spect-actors,” a neologism which should be understood in both practical and theoretical terms. In the latter case, spect-actor refers back to Freire’s critical pedagogy and as grounded in the development of a critical consciousness. In other words, while a TO participant is encouraged to fully engage the action he or others might enact, he also is urged to stand back from the action and analyze it. Theoretically, a TO participant should work between the roles of a spectator (in Brecht’s ideal sense) and a fully committed actor. In practical terms, full engagement occurs when the spect-actor actively participates in the exercises, games, improvisations and more structured techniques. The here-and-now spontaneity and pleasure of telling a story or sculpting an image or being “in scene” promotes such involvement. Spect-actor reflexivity occurs when the group deliberates as to which subject they should pursue in the workshop, in aftermath discussions, and while listening to and watching
other spect-actors sculpt imagery or enact a scene. In the Joker System, reflexivity is provoked by means of the Joker’s commentary and interviews, and the defamiliarizing conventions of stylistic eclecticism, character gestus, and the switching of roles. The term, spect-actor, then signals Boal’s desire to teach people to act and by means of a full, earnest engagement of an issue and its critical analysis.

Another key component of TO is the Joker figure. The term derives from the joker or wild card in a deck of playing cards. Just as the wild card is not restricted to any one suit or value, so too the TO Joker is not aligned with any one viewpoint or opinion that may arise in the process—or, more accurately perhaps, the Joker tries not to show her partiality toward any one perspective. Instead, the Joker’s job is to make everyone feel comfortable, communicate the rules for involvement, encourage the participants to select the subject, theme or problem they want to pursue, likewise encourage active involvement, ask questions and lead discussions that incite critical thinking, and generally make sure the dealings are fun, fair and productive for all.

In the different TO techniques, the specific role and responsibilities of the Joker vary. In the Joker System, the polyvalent Joker serves as the master of ceremonies of the event. He introduces it, serves as a mediator between the different scenes, and moderates the debate or discussion that concludes the performance. The Joker may be or may become one of the characters at any time and, by means of commentary and interviews, he provokes the audience to analyze the event.

In Image and Forum Theatre, the Joker is the facilitator, sometimes the “difficultator,” of the event. She clarifies the rules of the interaction and leads the exercises, games and more structured techniques. In Forum Theatre, specifically, the Joker facilitates the spect-actors’ interventions, defuses misunderstandings, summarizes the essence of each solution and, by
means of questions, undermines facile or “magical” solutions. In these ways, the Joker reinforces the complexity of the situation without mastering it herself.

In Rainbow of Desire, Boal foregoes the Joker title altogether and refers to the workshop leader as a “director.” The director explains the rules of the workshop, facilitates the spect-actors’ selection of an individual’s story and its subsequent processing by the group. Like the Joker, the director does not offer solutions to the problem but neither does he challenge or problematize those offered by the spect-actors. Rather, he makes sure the participants address the problem as expressed by the individual. Given the personal orientation of the “rainbow” techniques, the director’s careful attitude and mild temperament is understandable. However, due to the popularity of the “rainbow” techniques in the U.S., Canada and Europe, a practical problem has arisen. Namely, the therapeutic function of “rainbow” workshops has bled over into other workshops, undermining their critical aims and operations. A playfully aggressive Joker, who insists on reflexive analysis in one way or another, is often replaced by a director who is largely satisfied with emotive expression.³

The Joker in Legislative Theatre is very like the Joker of Image and Forum Theatre except that she helps the spect-actors formulate policies to redress community problems. In Invisible Theatre, the Joker function is implicated in the verbal or non-verbal action that provokes the unknowing spect-actors to respond. On the controversial meta-level of Invisible Theatre, the Joker function is subversive, in that the event relies on the fusion of “real” life and performance.

In the following chapter, I discuss my application of two techniques I have mentioned here, newspaper theatre and the Joker System. I apply the former to the students’ first assignment in the Public Speaking course which is a speech of self-introduction. I use the Joker System in a group assignment that addresses concepts and strategies of persuasive speech. In
Chapter Four, I document my use of Boal’s Image Theatre in an assignment that addresses IPC concepts of self and self-image. Nonverbal norms are tested in an assignment that draws on Invisible Theatre, and a fusion of Boal based practices comes into play in an assignment concerned with interpersonal conflicts.

Notes

1 I detail the newspaper theatre techniques in Chapter Three, as applied to a self introductory speech assignment. Although Boal does not credit antecedents, Brecht made similar use of newspapers—e.g., in his projections and in his “reporterly” style of acting (57-58, 71-72, 121-129)—as did the Living Newspapers of the Federal Theatre Project (1935-1939). See O’Connor.

2 See Salverson, Schutzman, and Spry.

3 See Salverson, Schutzman, “Activism, Therapy, or Nostalgia?: Theatre of the Oppressed in NYC,” Spry, and Cohen-Cruz, “Boal at NYU.” While an early example of TO in the U.S., the “soap-operatic” potential of TO is noted by Cohen-Cruz.
CHAPTER THREE

BOAL’S PRACTICES IN THE PUBLIC SPEAKING CLASSROOM

Do you have a choice to get on that bus?…There are a lot of people who live in your neighborhood who choose NOT to get on that bus. What do they choose to do? They choose to go out and sell drugs. They choose to go out and kill people. They choose to do a lot of other things but they choose NOT to get on that bus. The people who choose to get on that bus, which are YOU, are the people who are saying, “I will not carry myself down to die/when I go to my grave/my head will be high.” That is a choice. There are no victims in this classroom.

--Ms. Johnson in Dangerous Minds

Did you know that neither the Greeks nor the Romans were capable of using the concept of zero? It was your ancestors, the Mayas, who first contemplated the zero—the absence of value. True story. You burros have math in your blood.

--Jaime Garcia in Stand and Deliver

I finally found the key, getting something they were interested in, and this finally got their attention.

--Ms. Shirley in Anne of Avonlea

I love watching movies about teachers. In just a few hours they miraculously solve a major problem in their classrooms. Typically, a crisis arises due to the teacher’s frustration with the apathy of her students, the educational bureaucracy, or her own inadequate teaching style. The instructor ponders the situation, discussing it with a colleague, friend or family member. The problem escalates. The pondering intensifies. The teacher is about to call it quits when, one day, as if by magic, the teacher walks into the classroom and solves the problem. Usually, the teacher’s solution is crafted to appear “revolutionary” or at least “non-traditional” but, in actuality, it recurs across the genre and is not uncommon in “real” classrooms too. The teacher talks with the students.
Sometimes she shares her own stories or asks the students to share their experiences which then serve as analogues for the subject matter. Likewise, the teacher often draws on the experiential knowledge of the students, using rap music to teach poetry or gang behavior to teach history as based in territorial struggles. In these ways, the teacher comes to appreciate her students, develops a new understanding of the subject matter, and reclaims her enthusiasm for teaching. As an audience member to such cinematic struggles, I find I empathize with the teacher’s journey, although I understand my process has and continues to take longer than just a few hours.

Like many university instructors, I was not formally trained to teach. To start, I imitated the teaching style of one of my favorite professors and mentors; a style which I wrongly equated with her conservative dress and somewhat detached demeanor. Since, at the start of my career, I was teaching students who were close to me in age, I felt that such exterior signs might help me gain the students’ respect and facilitate my authority in the classroom. So, I wriggled into pantyhose and a skirt and took the stage as the aloof “Ms. Burleson.”

Needless to say, retaining a distinction between teacher and student roles is beneficial to classroom processes while dressing nicely can signal respect for the educational process and one’s personality too. Where I went astray was equating my garb and demeanor with a prototypical style of teaching, influenced less by my mentor and more by popular fictions of teacher stereotypes. In short, I was very rigid and restrictive in my teaching style. I taught Public Speaking in a cookie cutter fashion, requiring my students to memorize “sterile units of information” rather than (as my
instructor’s manual quite clearly urged) engaging the students in a “process of critical thinking” where they “grapple head-on with ideas” by blending content, experience, and “the wisdom of others” (Lucas, Instructor’s Manual 27). Instead, my thinking and wisdom ruled in the classroom and, as a result, my students were not engaged. I wasn’t engaged either and I found I hated teaching.

Two experiences exacerbated the problem. In my first semester teaching Public Speaking, I had a student who consistently asked loaded questions, racial and otherwise. For instance, when discussing effective speakers, the student asked, “Ms. Burleson, do you think that Hitler was an effective speaker?” or “do you think David Duke is persuasive?” At the time I felt that the student’s questions disrupted the even temperament of the class and the other students’ concentration on the subject matter and so I skirted the issue(s) by giving lectures that effectively closed down discussion.

The second incident occurred the following semester when the students were giving their persuasive speeches. A female student was delivering a speech on Pro-choice in response to which a male student became violent, voicing vulgarities, flinging his desk, and physically threatening the speaker. A few other students and I stepped in and, once the young man calmed down, he told me that he had recently learned that his girlfriend was pregnant and was planning to have an abortion. Upset by her decision, the young man had offered to raise the child himself but to no avail. As a result of this experience, I eliminated certain topics that the students could address in their speeches, knowing all the while that I was censoring my students’ freedom to express their views
and “grapple head-on with ideas” that concerned them. I hated teaching. I was afraid of teaching. My pantyhose itched.

Between 1995 and 1998, I was assigned to teach the introductory Performance of Literature course, and it was during these years that I gained confidence as a teacher and developed a more proactive attitude toward pedagogical processes and possibilities. My development was not due to some innate aspect of performance. Rather, it was due to my familiarity with performance as a subject and method of inquiry. Simply, I was comfortable in the performance classroom and, while I retained my good-looking garb and upheld the student/teacher distinction, I also relaxed my restrictive attitude toward content choices, the issues that arose as a result, and in-class discussions regarding them. Further, I became more at ease “inventing” assignments that addressed the concerns of the course, due again I think to my familiarity with the methods. Upon my return to the Public Speaking classroom in 1998, I decided to take with me some of the performance tools that gave me confidence; that helped me become a more relaxed, interactive, and inventive teacher. Some of these tools were based on Boal’s techniques and, as I saw it, my job was to adapt or transform the techniques so as to meet the aims of the Public Speaking course.

Below, I offer a brief overview of the Public Speaking course before I concentrate on how I applied Boal’s techniques in two of the five required speaking assignments. I describe the steps the students take in applying Boal’s newspaper theatre techniques to a speech of self introduction that I have titled the Choice, Chance, or Fate Speech. I then discuss the process the students follow to apply Boal’s Joker System to a persuasive
speech assignment titled The Persuasive Speech Forum. A complete example of a forum written by students is provided, and I analyze it in terms of the aims of the course and the assignment as I have designed it.

According to a Department of Communication Studies undergraduate course handout, the Public Speaking course is designed to provide students “with the opportunity to become more effective public speakers through the preparation and presentation of classroom speeches.” The different “types, principles and potential of public communication” are shown to be relevant to the students’ personal and professional lives, the main aims being to help the students develop into “critical consumers” and also producers of public communication (1).

To meet these objectives and retain uniformity across the many sections of Public Speaking, all instructors require that their students complete four to five major speaking assignments. One assignment must be an informative speech while another, a persuasive speech. The other two or three assignments are left to the discretion of the instructor. A course manual suggests that the format and sequencing of the assignments should be a self introductory speech, an informative speech, a persuasive speech, a ceremonial speech such as an after-dinner speech or a speech of tribute, inspiration, or goodwill and, lastly, an impromptu speech (Osborn18). To further unify the sections, all instructors give two comprehensive exams (i.e., a midterm and a final) and require their students to write an analytical paper. The topic and format of the paper is determined by each instructor.
A Self Introductory Speech Assignment: Choice, Chance, or Fate Speech

Most instructors, including myself, assign the self introductory speech at the beginning of the semester. The assignment serves as a warm-up for the students. They “introduce” themselves to each other and become acquainted with speaking in public, specifically in front of their peers and an instructor-evaluator. Since the assignment features an expressive mode that is familiar to the students (i.e., speaking about themselves in some way), it is user-friendly, prepares the way for the more difficult assignments to follow, and confirms the connection between personal and public speech forms.

For the self introductory speech assignment, I developed an assignment I call the Choice, Chance, or Fate Speech. I discuss the reasons for the title below. The assignment, its method and aims are a fusion of the self introductory speech as described above, Boal’s newspaper theatre techniques, and his (and others’) understanding of personal experience and expression. (See Appendix C for the assignment handout.)

Boal’s newspaper theatre “consists of several simple techniques for transforming daily news items, or any other non-dramatic material, into theatrical performance” (Theatre of the Oppressed 143). Of the ten techniques Boal lists, six are relevant to the assignment I designed or to my students’ diverse applications of it. They are:

a) Simple reading: the news item is read detaching it from the context of the newspaper….
b) Crossed reading: two news items are read in crossed (alternating) form, one throwing light on the other, explaining it, giving it a new dimension.
c) Complementary reading: data and information generally omitted by the newspaper…are added to the news….
g) Historical: data or scenes showing the same event in other historical
moments, in other countries, or in other social systems, are added to the news.…

i) Concretion of the abstract: that which the news often hides in its purely abstract information is made concrete on the stage.…

j) Text out of context: the news is presented out of the context in which it was published. (143)

Boal situates his newspaper theatre techniques in the fourth stage of his poetics, “theater [sic] as discourse.” Following on the heels of the third stage in which participants come to understand and use theatre as a “language,” the fourth stage urges the participants to understand language as an interpretive process where different forms and perspectives affect different, and sometimes contradictory, meanings. By applying different formats to language, such as newspaper theatre, the Joker System, invisible theatre, photo-romance, myths and rituals, and the dialectical form of trials and debates, different meanings and effects arise (126). Specifically, newspaper theatre attempts to defamiliarize the news (143). That is, one discursive form (newspaper theatre) is used to interpret another discursive form (the news) by investigating how it works. By means of the simple techniques, the news is made to “look strange” and thereby its rhetorical operations and aims are highlighted. For Brecht as well as for Boal, the main point of deconstructing discourse is to incite critical thinking on the part of the audience. While, in applying the techniques to the assignment, my general aim is similar to that of Brecht and Boal, I am not concerned that the news be deconstructed. Rather, it is my hope that the students make a historical connection between the news and their own lives, after which they inquire as to what that connection might mean.
As I discussed in Chapter Two, when Boal adjusted TO to address personal oppressions or problems, some critics accused him of selling out to bourgeois individualism and the capitalist enterprise. From their point of view, a “’third world’ aesthetic of resistance became a ’first-world’ aesthetic of self-help” (Schutzman, “Brechtian Shamanism” 139). Boal’s response to such charges is well expressed in his parable, “The Political Master Swimmer,” which appears in both Playing Boal and The Rainbow of Desire collection of therapeutic exercises and games. In the parable, the “Master Swimmer” is introduced as a “very handsome and very strong…political man” who saved “countless people from the waters of the pool and…wild sea” and “who never stopped thinking about the people: the people of his little village, the people of his country, the disinherited people of the entire world.” One day, the Political Master Swimmer was walking along the side of the pool “reading the complete works of Marx, Engels, and Mao Tse Tung when, all of a sudden, he heard the cries of a man about to drown because he had fallen into the pool and did not know how to swim.” The Master Swimmer was about to jump into the pool to save the man when he stopped, explaining to the dying man, “’Excuse me, dear Sir, but I am a political Master Swimmer and you are nothing but a single individual. When there are at least twenty of you drowning together, then I will be at your service, ready to help you and save your life’” (“The Political Master Swimmer,” in Playing Boal 134).

In the essay that follows the parable, Schutzman lends support to Boal’s implied argument. She claims that to measure TO “in terms of activism, as if clear measure of political efficacy were objectively possible, fails to acknowledge subtle, but significant,
shifts in participants’ critical faculties and socio-political outlooks” (“Brechtian Shaminism” 145). While radical social change may require external crises that “motivate masses of dissatisfied people into action…enduring change requires…theory and therapy; that is, to revolutionize society requires both an analytical overview of social history and a personal, practical investigation of one’s own behavioral psychology” or “a dialog…between theoretical and lived experience” (145-146; emphasis in original). To preface her point, Schutzman takes a brief look at contemporary critical cultural theories that reclaim the subject and subjectivity to history (140-141).

It is the dialogue between “theoretical and lived experience” and, specifically, history as garnered from the news and one’s own history (i.e., so-called objective and subjective histories) that best articulates my reasons for applying the newspaper theatre techniques to the self introductory speech assignment. Since Schutzman’s essay in 1994, theories and methods of historiography, such as historicity and genealogies of performance, have further articulated the call that history be located in particular people doing things and in our subjective relationship to and representation of them (Pollock, “Introduction” 4; and Roach 25). These ideas find further fruition in a method of historical research called the mystory.

Developed by Gregory Ulmer, the mystory method encourages students, and scholars generally, to acknowledge and track their subjective “story of the ‘self’” in and through the research they pursue (Bowman and Bowman 164). Understanding that identity is enciphered through diverse discourses, the mystory method urges scholars “to conduct and represent research in terms of three general domains of discourse: the
professional..., popular...and the personal” (165). Professional discourse refers to texts and materials that are understood to offer “formal knowledge or expertise” on a given subject such as scholarly essays, the hard news and sciences. Popular discourse includes “contemporary pop culture forms, such as music or television, and more traditional resources, such as family lore, community stories, oral histories” and literary fictions. Personal discourse is autobiographical and may entail the inclusion of one’s own memories, experiences, and stories in (and in terms of) the research one pursues (165).

Taken together, the above-noted theories and methods inform the assignment I designed for the Public Speaking course. In sum, Boal’s merger of social history and personal experience and the mystory method helped me articulate my conceptual aims while Boal’s newspaper theater techniques and the mystory tracking of professional, popular and personal discourses specified a method. Generally, I do not discuss the theoretical or methodological underpinnings with the students when I introduce the assignment, aiming instead to see what they discover by following a few simple steps. (See Appendix C for the assignment handout.)

The Choice, Chance, or Fate Speech assignment consists of six steps. First, I ask the students to research and compile a Birth Month Profile in which they trace the social, political, and cultural news events that occurred during the month in which they were born. For example, born in December 1968, my compilation might include:

December 11
The unemployment rate, at 3.3 percent, is the lowest in fifteen years.

December 12
Robert and Ethel Kennedy's daughter, Rory, their eleventh child is born.
December 17
12:52 a.m., I, Jacqueline Denise Burleson, was born with my umbilical cord wrapped around my neck. I weighed seven and a half pounds, was eighteen inches long and a lovely shade of blue.

December 21
The launch of Apollo 8 begins the first U.S. mission to orbit the Moon.

In the second step of the assignment, the students gather in groups according to their birth years and share their Birth Month Profiles. They discuss content similarities and differences, what each profile suggests about the compiler and what, as a whole, the profiles tell them about the year in which they were born.

For the third step, the students compile a more specific Birth Date Profile, drawing on a newspaper or magazine published on the day or during the week they were born. The caveat here is that the headlines, news items, advertisements, editorials, cartoons and advice bits they collect should represent what they understand to be their personality or personalities.

In the fourth step of the assignment, the students compile and adapt their findings to a speech of self introduction. I ask that they draw on their Birth Month and Birth Date Profiles and include professional, popular, and personal materials or discourses in their crafting of the speech. The students also may include information they collected from their peers in step two. I preface the students’ compilation efforts with Boal’s newspaper theatre techniques, explaining how they might cross, complement or re-context items or how they can make abstract ideas concrete by means of metaphors and metonyms.
In the fifth step, the students deliver their speeches in class. Each speech runs between four and six minutes and, although the students refer to cue cards (e.g., to offer direct quotes from their newspaper or magazine source), an extemporaneous style of delivery is privileged.

The sixth step entails class discussion, and it is in this step that the title of the assignment becomes particularly relevant. That is, we discuss the degree to which the students feel choice, chance and fate inform the histories they drew on, the speeches they crafted, and their personalities as represented therein. While most students are quick to express that the materials they drew on and their speeches are discursive constructs, many are less willing to see their personal self as a construct too. Religious based arguments of an intrinsic soul or self are brought to bear on the discussion as are biological and psychological perspectives, and some argue any relationship between the past and present is mere coincidence. Typically, I find that the students are passionate about this aspect of the assignment because it tests their beliefs regarding their concept of the self, their Self, and how it relates to the past and discourse generally. In turn, many of the students become passionate about their own speeches and those they heard, calling on and analyzing aspects to support their positions. Some observe that the very crafting of the self by means of the newspaper theatre techniques and the three domains of discourse (if not language generally), proves that the self is a construct while others argue that this very crafting is an imposition. Their “real” self doesn’t operate in these terms; fundamentally, the self is not language. Others notice that the content and form of the speeches would have been different had we applied a different format or perspective (i.e.,
not historical). At the close of one class, a student timidly asked whether the self
couldn’t be constituted by choice, chance and fate, her point being that the three
possibilities are not necessarily opposed and that the self, any self, is a pretty complex
entity.

My point in framing the assignment with the choice, chance, or fate question is
not to suggest to the class that we solve it. Rather, the question serves to broaden the
assignment to an abstract concern in which the students have a stake. The assignment is
then a problem-posing rather than problem-solving assignment. In The Texts of Paulo
Freire, Paul Taylor observes,

[T]he purpose of problem-posing education is to create a critical awareness of the
present reality of where “I am” and “We are.” We have to reeducate ourselves to
an understanding that rejects the assumption “that we are merely in the world, not
with the world and with others; that we are spectators and not recreators.” It is
this possession of a social consciousness, of being-in-relationship, that identifies
us as social political beings. (58: emphasis in original)

On the one hand, then, the content of the speech and framing question allow the students
to concentrate on a topic that is of immense importance to them; they are invested in the
self and will write a speech about and discuss it willingly. On the other hand, the format
of the speech and, in discussion, the diverse views on the question insist that the self be
inflected in and through social discourse. The students may talk about themselves but the
assignment also asks them to analyze that talk in terms of the various discourses that arise
in discussion and in their application of the newspaper format.

In these ways, the students come to realize the relationship between personal and
public speech acts. They also realize that public speaking is an interpretive act and
engagement. As their passionate discussion suggests (to them I hope), understanding that the act of public speaking engages multiple perspectives and formats does not necessarily mean that they have to take a relativistic position. They indeed have viewpoints they can express. The assignment is designed to highlight this/the student’s claim to a position; to ask him to analyze it and those of others; and, in discussion, to draw on specific evidence in the speeches to support the analyses. This process is fundamental to critical thinking, and it anticipates the specific public speaking formats the students will handle in the upcoming assignments.

A Persuasive Speech Assignment: The Persuasive Speech Forum

Derived from the Greek verb meaning "to believe,“ persuasion and persuasive speaking entail expressing one’s own beliefs in such a way as to influence the beliefs and actions of others, whether the alteration be a slight shift in opinion or a radical change in behavior. To achieve these ends, the persuasive speaker must have a good understanding of her beliefs and how she might formulate and express them so as to influence her intended audience which, in turn, requires a good understanding of the audience, their beliefs and their abilities to engage the expression as formulated. As K. K. Reardon offers, “Persuasion requires curiosity. It demands a willingness to explore the mind-set of others.” In short, it requires a “Sherlock Homes mentality” (120).

Below, I briefly discuss the concepts, principles and formats that Public Speaking students are expected to learn and apply in their investigation of an issue, their position or proposition regarding it, their formulation of a persuasive speech and in light of an intended audience. I then proceed to discuss my adaptation of Boal’s Joker System to a
persuasive speech assignment that addresses the terms of persuasion and public speaking generally.

In his treatise on rhetoric, Aristotle explains that persuasion is effected by the speaker's use of three modes or forms of rhetorical proof: logos, pathos, and ethos. Pathos concerns the nature of the audience's feelings; ethos, the qualifications and personality of the speaker; and logos, the nature of the message in a speech (Aristotle 14).

Fundamental to logos is the speaker's reasoning and its appeal to the audience and their reasoning. Generally, reasoning can be understood as the process of critical thinking we use in our everyday lives to consciously understand and evaluate things. Specific to persuasion, reasoning is “the process of proving inferences or conclusions from evidence” (German et al. 285). In this sense, reasoning is synonymous with argument.

Typically, an argument consists of a proposition, evidence, and claims of fact, value, and policy.¹ A proposition is a declarative statement of the speaker's position on an issue and, as such, it serves as the central idea of the speech. As drawn from statistics, facts, examples, narratives and testimonies, evidence is used by the speaker to support her proposition; to prove its value, truth, or usefulness to the audience. The type(s) of evidence the speaker draws on depends on the issue and the proposition regarding it. In other words, different propositional claims require different types of evidence.

In the introductory course, there are three basic types of claims the students are expected to know and apply: claims of fact, value, and policy. Arguments that advance fact claims are concerned with proving whether something exists, is true or false, or will
or will not occur. Value claims are judgmental, aiming to show that something is right or wrong, good or bad, worthy or unworthy. As such, evidence used to support value claims tends to be more subjective than factual. Policy claims arise when speakers want to propose that a specific course of action be taken so as to improve a situation or redress a problem. Policy claims are subjunctive, proposing “what if” solutions to “what is” certainties. To build a strong case for a policy claim, the speaker must justify that a problem exists, offer his solution, and provide evidence that the solution is feasible. Claims of fact and value enter into the speaker’s argument as he attempts to prove the existence of the problem or offers subjective evaluations as to the efficacy of his proposal.

The integration of different types of claims is common in persuasive speeches. It also can be strategically savvy in so far as the different claims may appeal to different sectors of the audience and thereby the speech may be persuasive to a broad and diverse assembly. Likewise, speakers often craft speeches that integrate the different rhetorical modes or forms of proof.

Aristotle’s second rhetorical proof, pathos, entails an appeal to the audience's emotions. According to Aristotle, pathos requires "disposing the listener in some way" (37). Two common ways speakers invoke certain feelings in an audience are by means of vivid description and emotionally charged words. Aristotle warns however that relying solely on raw emotion will fail to persuade an audience and a more successful strategy is to counterbalance emotional appeals with logic. While pathos stimulates the audience’s attention and desire to act, sound reasoning justifies the desire and action (235, 274).
According to Aristotle, it also ensures that the praxis of persuasion is ethical.

While Aristotle highlights logos, he recognizes that ethos plays an important part in how an audience receives a speech. He writes,

“An orator must not only try to make the argument of his speech demonstrative and worthy of belief; he must make his own character look right….There are three things which inspire confidence in the orator’s own character—three, namely, that induce us to believe a thing a part from any proof of it: good sense, good moral character and good will.” (quoted in Benjamin 119)

Good sense refers to the speaker's thorough knowledge of the issue and her skillful preparation and delivery of the speech. The latter includes the speaker justifying her expertise. Good moral character refers to the speaker’s ethical standards as reflected in, for example, his straightforward and honest presentation of the argument. An ethos based appeal also demonstrates goodwill toward the audience. By means of the content, form and delivery of the speech, the speaker shows she understands and cares about the concerns, needs and expectations of the audience.

To help the students organize their speeches, three basic formats are offered in the introductory course. They are cause-effect, problem-solution, and Monroe’s motivated sequence. In the cause and effect format, the causes of a given problem are actively demonstrated (e.g., by fact, value, or policy claims and evidence), after which the speaker links the causes to their effects; that is, he further details the problem or issue in light of what causes it. The order may be reversed so that the effects are handled first and the remainder of the speech is devoted to detailing the causes.

The problem-solution format is common to policy claims. A key strategy here is to dramatize the problem to such a degree that there is little doubt in the minds of the
audience that a policy change is needed and, then, to demonstrate how one’s proposed policy offers the best solution to the problem, as dramatized.

In the mid-1930s, Alan Monroe developed the motivated sequence which is largely used in speeches that concentrate on policy claims. While the five step sequence helps a speaker organize his speech, its purpose is to motivate the audience. In the first “attention” step, the speaker hails the audience by expressing something that is of relevance to them. In the second “need” step, the speaker clearly identifies the problem, prompting the audience to see it as a deficit that affects them. In the third “satisfaction” step, the speaker proposes and supports the feasibility of his solution, thereby suggesting to the audience how their need can be satisfied. The speaker then provides the audience with visions of how the solution will benefit them. The speaker’s anticipation of outcomes constitutes the fourth “visualization” step. In the fifth “action” step, the speaker makes a direct request of the audience to take the necessary steps to redress or help him redress the problem (e.g., by voting, boycotting, petitioning). One merit of the motivated sequence is that, like most stories or dramas, it patterns concrete action in a progressive, chronological manner. Hence, the logic of the format is familiar and accessible to most audience members.

Despite the different formats, most persuasive speeches are crafted to present the proposed alternative as superior to other alternatives that might be available to the audience. In short, a pro/con or an advantages/disadvantages model that favors the speaker’s perspective is common.
Given these concepts, principles and formats, I thought that the students would be intrigued by the persuasion process. However, on the in-class evaluation form I ask my students to fill out each semester, the students’ responses were generally unfavorable. They felt there was not enough time in class to prepare and present speeches that “truly persuaded” the audience, particularly on complex and controversial topics. They found the speeches predictable, exercises in form with little substantive depth or originality. The students also wanted to ask questions, refute arguments, and debate the speaker immediately rather than have to wait until the end of the speech or the end of class. Despite the students casting blame elsewhere, I figured the problem was also a result of how I was teaching persuasion. Therefore, in light of the students’ comments and to stimulate my teaching and their interest, I decided to adapt some of Boal’s techniques to the persuasive speech assignment.

Three main ideas contributed to the resulting assignment which is a group project I call The Persuasive Speech Forum. The ideas were to apply Boal’s “cop in the head” exercises and his Joker System to a speech forum, and to context the forum in a generic venue that was relevant to the students.

As I discuss in Chapter Two, Boal’s “cop in the head” exercises are designed to investigate the disembodied voices in our heads that affect how we behave. By means of the exercises, the abstract “cops” are identified, embodied, and addressed by the participants as “real” people. Given the problem, the point in literalizing the abstractions may be to localize the causes of the problem rather than blame them on a dislocated force or system. Another objective may be to show the individual and group that the problem
is socially shared. Yet another aim may be to identify the multifarious roles that constitute the self and, by means of enactment, determine the merits and drawbacks of each role in the given situation.

For instance, in an employer/employee dispute, the standard roles and strategies may appear well determined and limited. However, both the employer and employee have a repertoire of other roles they enact in other situations, such as parent, friend, scout leader, student, lay clergy, athlete, socialite, or craftsperson. Accompanying these roles are different ways of viewing, speaking, behaving and relating to others which may prove helpful in situations other than those in which they are customarily used. In one cop in the head exercise, the multiple roles for each combatant are determined and embodied by spect-actors who position themselves just behind their respective main character. During the enactment of the dispute, the spect-actors may intervene (replace the main characters) whenever they feel their particular role, perspective or way of speaking will offer a beneficial alternative to the case as it is being argued. In this way, different rhetorical strategies are tested for each of the combatants.

In light of the concepts and principles of persuasion, it was this latter function of the cop in the head exercises that particularly intrigued me. By having the students identify and embody the different proofs and claims (e.g., enact the role of pathos or the role of a fact based expert) the differences between the principles might be highlighted. Further, by means of the enactment, the students might understand the strategies as active agencies rather than abstractions. Lastly, the complex of multiple roles, perspectives, voices and behaviors that operate within and upon an issue might be actively realized.
My second idea was to use Boal’s Joker System which I describe at length in Chapter Two. My main reason for applying the Joker System was to take advantage of the Joker figure who, by means of framing commentary and interviews, would insure that the audience involved themselves actively and critically. Further, the students’ desire to ask questions and refute arguments immediately would be integrated into the assignment format. I also felt the Joker System’s use of “scenes” would offer the students a simple and flexible way to contain and sequence the multiple roles or characters they decided to include in their forum. Fourth, I was intrigued by the possibility of the students enacting their particular roles as social types and discourses that we share, social “masks” in Boal’s terms (Theatre of the Oppressed 168). Unlike Boal, my interest was not in deconstructing the social types and discourses in terms of how they restrain action. Rather, I hoped the students would see them as implicit to public speech (Aristotle’s ethos), and also as flexible and beneficial strategies. Since the roles would be characterized in terms of persuasion principles, the students would understand the principles similarly, as implicit, flexible and beneficial speech strategies.

My third idea arose from a concern regarding the physical context in which the forums would occur. As I learned while teaching the introductory performance course, it is difficult for student performers to conceive of and enact a character outside of a physical context. They want to situate the character in some literal time and place other than that of the theatrical stage and situation. While teaching students about representational and presentational modes is one of the objectives in the introductory performance course, it is not an objective in Public Speaking and, since the concepts
require some time to articulate and process, I decided not to introduce them. Instead, I decided to provide the students with a physical context in which the forums could occur. When I first implemented the assignment, the students were offered context options such as a town hall meeting, a courtroom drama, a dream, an infomercial, and a talk show. Since the students typically chose the talk show context, I investigated the genre further and discovered it was not unlike the Joker System proper.

Like the Joker System, most talk shows are divided into major episodes and, in some cases, relatively independent scenes, as is the case in late night interview shows. The mix of serious talk on social issues, light topics, spectacular and often prurient content, comedy, commentary, interviews, expert, popular and personal discourses, music, and advertisements is stylistically eclectic. Very like a Joker, the talk show host serves as the emcee of the show. He introduces and concludes it, bridges scenes, clarifies and comments on the content, and conducts interviews. Depending on the show, the host may play other characters as well (e.g., in comic skits or as the token novice who is taught how to cook or care for pets by a featured guest). Like the Joker, many “hard news” talk show hosts understand that their main job is to incite critical thinking on the part of the audience. By interviewing guests who hold opposing views on an issue, the host offers examples of the kinds of questions the audience might ask and the issues they might think about. Others, such as those who host the late night talk shows, use their comic monologues to prompt, if not critical thinking, an evaluative attitude on the part of the audience. Still others pose and, over the course of the show, advocate a particular solution to a complex problem, such as is the case on many daytime self-help talk shows.
In *Can We Talk? The Power and Influence of Talk Shows*, Gini Scott argues that a critical orientation toward the featured topic is implied if not explicit to most talk shows. Scott writes,

[Talk shows] are a mirror reflecting our problems, a window making us aware of what is wrong, and sometimes they can either add to these problems or help us resolve them. Those hosting and producing these shows have the power to do any and all of these things. (6-7)

While some shows may “reflect our problems” in ways that make us “aware of what is wrong,” many do not or, at best, they make us aware of what is wrong with the talk show. The potential deflection of problems is often due to the eclectic style of the shows and how it is managed. While eclecticism insures mass appeal, it also allows the audience to “tune in” for different reasons. Viewers may watch a talk show to escape their problems, to indulge in prurient spectacle, to sympathize or empathize with the depicted hardships, to engage in uninhibited public discourse or to critique the illusion of the same, or some viewers may indeed watch to better understand and critically engage an issue. So while problems may be explicit in the content of many talk shows, the audience’s engagement and analysis of the problem is not ensured due to the eclectic style. For this reason, I ask the students to use a talk show context that is fairly uniform in style, such as the issue-oriented interview shows.

With these ideas in mind I designed The Persuasive Speech Forum assignment which I describe below. Typically, the assignment takes five to seven days to process. This time frame does not include the two weeks of introductory lecture and discussion
regarding the concepts, principles and forms of persuasive speech or the week in which
the students present their forums in class.

To initiate the first step, I developed a questionnaire titled Topic Brainstorming
and Audience Analysis (see Appendix C). The students are asked to complete the
questionnaire on their own in preparation for in-class use. The questionnaire consists of
six fill-in-the-blank questions, beneath each of which are eight sub-questions. The six
questions are:

1. I have problems with
2. I am concerned with
3. I have issues with
4. I feel that
5. It is my opinion that
6. I have been raised to believe that __________ but I ___________

As illustrated below, each of the main questions are followed by eight fill-in-the-blank
sub-questions.

1. I have problems with_______________________________.
   I believe my classmates would agree or disagree with my views
   a. As a student because….
   b. As a woman or man because….
   c. As a southerner because….
   d. As a United States citizen because…
   e. As a Catholic, Baptist, Protestant, Jew, Muslim (other) because…
   f. As a married, single, dating person because…
   g. As a democrat, republican, independent (other) because…
   h. As a mother, father, son, daughter or pet owner because…

In class, the students gather in small groups for about ten minutes to discuss their
completed questionnaires. They share their concerns and opinions, note similarities in
their answers, and speculate as to how the rest of the class might respond to the points of
similarities they have discovered. This same process occurs three more times, the size of
groups increasing until, on the fourth go-around, the entire class meets to discuss the
points they share. Thereby, they generate a “master list” of possible topics which they
agree are of interest to the class as a whole. Over the years, some of the “master list”
topics included student loan issues, bookstore buy back policies, campus parking
problems, dormitory policies, excessive drinking and drug use, date rape, the morning-
after pill, preferential treatment of athletes, the use of the confederate flag on college
paraphernalia, required course instructors who spoke English poorly, and TOPS
standards. The following class meeting, the students discuss and reduce the “master list”
to three or four “hot” topics. Each student ranks the topics on paper and, in light of their
preferences, the students are placed in the groups that will constitute the forums.
Generally, in each class, there are four to five groups consisting of five to six members.

I involve the students in this process of topic selection because it imitates a
similar process and function in TO. Near the start of a TO workshop, everyone is urged
to express their own individual view, opinion, story, or visual image. By means of noting
similarities, making amendments (e.g., to visual imagery), or casting votes, the group
reduces the mass of individual ideas to a topic they all agree is of importance to them.
Theoretically, the process ensures participant commitment to and involvement in the
subsequent address of the issue. It also enacts critical performative pedagogy in that, by
means analytical and democratic action, the participants “produce” the topic they will
pursue (Pineau 42).

The process also involves the students in analyzing their target audience which is
a key component of persuasion. The questionnaire and the group discussions help the
students realize this objective. In turn, the generic topics and recycled arguments that haunt the Public Speaking course, such as abortion, euthanasia and capital punishment, are avoided or specified. For instance, one group of students specified abortion concerns in terms of the controversy surrounding the morning-after pill, which is a relatively inexpensive contraceptive drug used largely by young woman in the days following unprotected intercourse (see Appendix D). The students’ specification of the topic in this case demonstrates how the topic selection process encourages the students to take ownership of the issues and in light of their intended audience.

The next step of the assignment requires each group to develop a proposition on which their forum will be based. As discussed above, a proposition is fundamental to the content and form of a persuasive speech. It has been my experience that students find it difficult to write a proposition due to its concise declarative form and, to start, the group interaction tends to exacerbate the difficulty. Group processes are rarely efficient. The trade-off is that by means of group discussion the students are forced to consider many different views of the issue and also struggle with the diverse ways they might express their position in a concise written form. In sum, the group process activates the critical analysis of the issue.

Having determined their proposition, the students research the topic, gathering at least fifteen or more sources of data or evidence on their topic. The required amount compels the students to find diverse perspectives on the issue, lends complexity to their arguments, and facilitates the steps to follow. As regards TO, this and the surrounding steps are similar to Julie Salverson’s use of an educational tool called “Naming the
Moment” or NTM (158). NTM requires TO groups to clearly identify the central issue, their relationship to it, and its various complexities before they engage in TO enactments. Salverson’s objectives are to keep the groups focused on the issues and, by means of the research, claim ownership and responsibility for what they say and do. As a result, the TO enactment is framed as both “earnest and playful” or “serious play” (Turner 35).

Upon collecting their sources, the group members discuss them in class, aiming to specify the various individuals and groups who have a stake in the issue and, in persuasion terms, of what their arguments consist and how they operate. Again, due to the group process, the students are forced to consider all the points of view (as based on their research) rather than a select few. As Boal says of the Joker System, the participants “interpret the totality” of the issue in a “collective” manner rather than approach it from the point of view of a single character or perspective (Theatre of the Oppressed 170).

Based on their sources, the group assigns the various arguments they have identified to the individual members. Each member develops a role or character based on the argument and in turn draws from the source base to compile a persuasive narrative; a speech representative of the role and argument. In the forum proper, the student will enact the assigned role and deliver the narrative she or he has developed. To ensure that each forum demonstrates the different persuasive principles and strategies, I ask that each student develop a narrative based on one of the formats listed below and that the group include at least two of the formats in their presentation. (For the complete assignment handout, see Appendix C.)
Single or Composite Voice, Personal Narrative: personal discourse that recounts one's own or others’ experiences, drawn from eyewitness accounts, anecdotes, testimony, parables, poems, and so forth.

Single Voice, Pro or Con Perspective: expert, prestigious, lay (non-expert) discourse of a single voice within a single source that advances a pro or con view of the issue.

Composite Voice, Pro or Con Perspective: expert, prestigious, lay (non-expert) discourse compiled from two or more voices within a single source or multiple sources that advances a pro or con view of the issue.

As noted above, the purpose of the formats is to ensure that the students apply the concepts and principles of persuasion in their forums. For instance, the first format implicates a pathos based appeal while the second two emphasize a logos or an ethos based argument—understanding, of course, that all three rhetorical proofs are in operation to some degree in most arguments. The discourse delineations encourage the students to draw on different kinds of texts while the pro and con delineations ensure that different positions on the proposition are expressed in the forum. The single and multiple source draws allow the students flexibility as regards the claims they develop and the texts or evidence they call on. Most students opt to draw on multiple sources and develop a composite narrative that, then, falls within the first or third format.

When I first implemented the assignment, I did not use the formats. As a result, the forums were filled with single voice, personal narratives driven by pathos and supported largely by value claims and evidence. It was awful. The format requirements have resulted in more diverse and balanced forums. They also have had a positive affect on the pathos centered personal narratives which most groups continue to include and at the beginning of their forums. In many cases, students are opting to develop a composite
personal narrative in which a fairly standard personal testimony gives way to other types of discourse, claims and evidence. For instance, in the first sample script in Appendix D, the character “Mary Haley” offers personal testimony to start and, midway through, shifts to an expert position drawing on fact claims and evidence. Since integrating the principles of persuasion is a commonplace and encouraged practice in persuasive speaking, the “Mary Haley” narrative is neither new nor profound. Rather, it simply demonstrates that, within the forum assignment, students are drawing on and integrating the principles of persuasion. The differences are that the students’ speeches are delivered by characters in a forum with other characters. At the end of the chapter, I discuss the merits and drawbacks of these differences.

Below I offer examples of how two students developed their narratives. The first is an example of the “single voice, personal narrative” format while the second exemplifies the “composite voice, pro or con perspective” format. My aims here are to demonstrate the flexibility of the formats and the differences between a single and composite source draw. In each case, I have provided the character profile that all students are required to write and include in their forum script. The profile identifies the proposition, the character’s name, his or her position, the narrative format, and any identity traits relevant to the argument. It also summarizes the key points of the argument and cites the source(s) the student used to develop his or her narrative. I then provide the source(s) in full, using a bold face font to highlight the sections the student excerpted for his or her narrative. I then document the resulting narrative, after which I discuss it.
The following character profile and narrative were composed by Khannh Le who was a student in a Public Speaking class I taught in fall 2000.²

Proposition: People who drink, drive and kill should be tried for first-degree murder and sentenced to capital punishment.

Theresa Hall
A. Position: Pro
B. Identity: Single voice, personal narrative
   1. Wife of a victim who was killed by a drunk driver
C. Arguments
   1. The victim left dependent children
   2. Theresa was critically injured in the accident
   3. The drunk driver was fined and sentenced to six months in jail
   4. He is a free man while the husband lies dead in his grave
D. Source

My name is Theresa. On Dec. 3, 1997 my thirty-nine year old husband and I were hit head on by a drunk driver. My husband, Mike, father of our three sons and father of another daughter and son was crushed and killed. His dead body was trapped inside the car for over two hours. I was critically injured and not expected to live. My injuries included severed intestines in four (4) different places, three (3) broken ribs, a laceration of the left arm and elbow down to the bone, permanent damage to the left eye, cuts and bruises throughout my body, a severe concussion, a coma for two and a half days, brain injury, severe depression from grief and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) since all memories of that night flooded back to me.

The drunk driver that killed Mike was only sentenced to six months in jail, a $1,000.00 fine, restitution in the amount of Mike's funeral, and five years Intensive Probation. He is currently out of jail after serving his six months. He walks around basically a free man while my husband lies in his grave forever. The establishment that catered to his drunken binge that night is still doing business as usual. Providing the alcohol then sitting idly by while drunken patrons stumble to their cars and attempt to drive home safely.

Perhaps with your help, together, we can put a stop to this insanity sentencing. Please contact your Legislative Representatives and tell them you do not approve of the leniency shown toward drunk driving killers. Tell them the acts they commit are no accident that they consciously decide to go out, get drunk and drive a dangerous weapon (a vehicle). Tell them in making this decision they completely strip you of your right to be safe on the roads. Demand that they enact laws requiring that any drunk driver who kills
another person while driving drunk be charged with First or Second Degree Murder and sentenced like any other murderer.

Thank you for visiting my web site at Angelfire. Please sign my Guest Book. Please post a message about your thoughts or opinions on the Bulletin Board or share your own story there for others to see. Look around and see what you think. Feel free to E-Mail me. Please come back and visit again real soon. I'm always enhancing this site with new additions. Thank You Very Much!

You know my husband and I spent a lot of time in our lives teaching our children the difference between right and wrong. We taught them that everyone should respect their fellow man. We taught them that every single human life out here was precious and worth everything. Now our children look at the judicial system in this country and wonder how the courts could place so little value on their own father's life. I do not have one logical reason to give to them.

[Forum narrative:]

On December 3, 1997, my thirty-nine year old husband and I were hit head on by a drunk driver. My husband, Mike, who is the father of our three sons and also the father of another daughter and son was crushed and killed. His dead body was trapped inside the car for over two hours. I was critically injured and not expected to live. My injuries included severed intestines in four different places, three broken ribs, a laceration of the left arm and elbow down to the bone, permanent damage to the left eye, cuts and bruises throughout my body, a severe concussion, a coma for two and a half days, brain injury, severe depression from grief, and post traumatic stress disorder since all memories of that night flooded back to me.

The drunk driver that killed Mike was only sentenced to six months in jail, a $1,000 fine and restitution in the amount of Mike’s funeral, and five years intensive probation. He is currently out of jail after serving his six months. He walks around basically a free man while my husband lies in his grave forever.

I feel we need to put a stop to this insanity sentencing. The acts that drunk driving killers commit are no accident. They consciously decide to go out, get drunk and drive a dangerous weapon, a vehicle. The decision they make completely strips me and you of our rights to be safe on the roads. I feel that the government should enact laws in all states requiring that any drunk driver who kills another person while driving drunk be charged with first degree murder and sentenced like any other murderer.

In Khannh Le’s adaptation of Theresa Hall’s personal testimony, Le retains the vivid detail of the accident and injuries that Hall recounts at the beginning of her narrative. While an appeal to our emotions, the pathos is tempered by the quantifiable
listing of dependent children and injury minutia which, given Hall’s first hand experience, also establishes a credible ethos. Hall’s fact claims extend into the second paragraph when she specifies the driver’s sentence, after which she shifts to a value claim when she contrasts the driver’s current life of freedom with her dead husband. Le retains Hall’s shifts in claims and evidence but, at this point, opts to delete Hall’s unsubstantiated attack on drinking establishments. Instead, Le moves directly to the line, “I feel we need to put a stop to this insanity sentencing.” Thereby, Le makes a direct cause and effect link between the value claim (i.e., contrasting the driver’s life and her husband’s death) and the judicial system. In sum, she appeals to our subjective reasoning or logic: a judicial sentence that leads to such an ironic and unfair situation is “insane.”

Le is in a good position to move to a policy claim at this point, as Hall does in her narrative. Instead, Le maintains the value based argument supporting it with her own subjective feelings on the issue. While Hall tells the reader what they should do to effect change in the judicial system (e.g., “contact your Legislative Representatives”), Le alters this part of the narrative to express her own “feelings” toward a generalized “government.” Le concludes her narrative with Hall’s clear statement of her position, deleting Hall’s final paragraphs which include an upbeat call to the reader for internet interaction and a humanistic rumination that, in the final sentence, turns pathetic.

In my opinion, Le’s adaptation of Hall’s narrative took advantage of its strengths up to the point where Le chose not to advance Hall’s policy claim and charge to the audience. While Le’s alterations acknowledge the speaker’s subjective perspective, they
also personalize the issue and who is shown to “act” on it, creating an impact that is not much different from the tragic silence implied in Hall’s coda.

Below is an example of a narrative based on the “composite voice, pro or con perspective” format. The character profile and the narrative were composed by Stacy McGraw who was in the same forum as Khannh Le.

Proposition: People who drink, drive and kill should be tried for first-degree murder and sentenced to capital punishment.

Billie Chadwick
A. Position: Con
B. Identity: Composite personal and lay expert narrative
   1. Son was killed by a drunk driver
   2. Does not believe drunk drivers who kill should be sentenced to capital punishment
C. Arguments
   1. Driver will live with the guilt for the rest of his life
   2. Severe penalty does not bring the victim back
   3. Should focus on preventing DUI accidents
D. Sources


I have always heard the word "closure" used by victims of crime, particularly those that involved death. During the O.J. Simpson trial, I heard it used many times by the press and by Mr. Goldman, i.e., “we want to get some closure to what has happened.” My twenty-one year old son, Michael, was killed instantly on October 23, 1993 in a car crash. His best friend, in the back seat, was also killed. The driver of the car, who had been drinking and was speeding and driving recklessly, received minor injuries. He was subsequently charged with two counts of vehicular homicide. Evidence was presented in court that he was driving at an extremely high rate of speed with a blood alcohol level of 0.14. The blood test was taken about two hours after the wreck. It is safe to assume that the level was substantially higher at the time of the crash. Michael had trace alcohol in his system and his best friend had none.
The wheels of justice grind along very slowly. The courts took more than a year to decide the case against the driver. We attended hearing after hearing, each time having the case delayed by the defense. The defendant pleaded not guilty and was scheduled for trial. The trial was delayed twice before a single piece of evidence was introduced. There was an attempt by the defense attorney to discredit the findings of the blood alcohol test. The claim was that the driver's rights had been violated by taking the test prior to reading him his Miranda Rights. It is law in the State of Louisiana that a test is administered, with or without consent, in all traffic accidents involving fatalities where alcohol is even suspected to be a factor. The defense's test of that law failed. Finally, the defendant changed his plea to guilty. He was sentenced to six years per count, to be served concurrently. We had suggested to the probation office that perhaps a "boot camp" style program would be of some benefit. At a point after that, we received a pretty ugly letter from the boy's mother suggesting that we were somehow pushing for the maximum sentence. She just didn't have her facts straight. We were actually trying to help her son. She said that if it were her son that had died and Michael had been driving, that she would not hold a grudge. I suggested to her that until her son were actually dead, she should not guess what she might or might not do. He was finally sentenced to six months in the boot camp program with the rest of his six year sentence to be served on intensive parole. In other words, in six months, her son was coming home. Ours was not.

I guess I had bought into the belief that somehow things would be different after the perpetrator had been brought to justice. I think that is what people mean when they talk about getting "closure." Somehow I guess we think that if there is someone to blame, then we can put the matter to rest. It's sort of like thinking that it somehow "makes sense" if the victims get some sort of "justice" then the pain will finally go away. Since Michael's death, I have read countless accounts of bereaved people looking for closure of this sort. I have seen victims on Oprah shouting for the death penalty, as if having the perpetrator dead will somehow bring a sense of "closure" to the matter.

Here is what I have come to learn from my own experience with this. During the trial period and for some time after, I was processing a lot of anger. The trial and some of the proceedings allowed me to get in touch with that anger. I was angry at the driver, of course. But I also realized that I was angry at Michael too. After all, he had made some really bad decisions that night that put his life in peril. I had to go through this process in order to get where I needed to be with the anger, to feel the feelings. However, upon completion of the sentencing, I DID NOT have any "closure." What I did have was the same big hole in my soul and nothing to fill it with.

It was some months later that the reality hit me. It was not until I could FORGIVE the driver that I would get this "closure" that I was looking for. Forgiveness is different from removing responsibility. The driver was still responsible for the death but I had to forgive him for it before I could let it go.
There was no amount of punishment that would ever even the score. I had to be willing to forgive without the score being even. This process of forgiveness did not really involve the driver; it involved ME. It was a process that I had to go through! MY perception had to change, no matter what HIS perception was.

It was a long and painful journey on the road to this forgiveness. **And I had to forgive more than just the driver. I had to forgive Michael, and God (for allowing it to happen), and ultimately I had to forgive myself. Really, forgiving myself was the root of my anger.** There were many times in Michael's life that I had driven him places under the influence of alcohol. This was the key to my forgiveness, to forgive myself. My anger at other people, it turned out, was just my own fear turned outward. I projected my own guilt onto the driver, the courts, God, Michael, so that I would not have to look at myself. The guilt that I saw in them was just a projection of the guilt that I felt for myself. It wasn't until I could see MY PART in this that my perception could change. I learned that the "closure" we seek is really forgiveness. We can choose to forgive now, or we can wait and forgive later, or we can choose not to forgive at all. "Closure" is really up to us. The power to forgive lies not in the external things but within our own Soul.


Drunk driving, like most other social problems, resists simple solutions. However, there are a number of actions, each of which can contribute toward a reduction of the problem:

- **Automatic license revocation appears to be the single most effective measure to reduce drunk driving.** Not only is license revocation effective, but we should remember that driving is a privilege, not a right. Just as we do not license those who lack eyesight, we should not hesitate to revoke the licenses of those who lack the good judgment not to drive drunk.
- **Automatic license revocation along with a mandatory jail sentence appears to be even more effective than just automatic license revocation.**
- Passing mandatory alcohol and drug testing in fatal crashes would promote successful prosecution of drunk and drugged drivers.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that 18-20% of injured drivers are using drugs and although drinking is on the decline, drug use is on the increase. However, this figure appears to be much too low. For example:

- A study by the Addiction Research Foundation of vehicle crash victims who tested positive for either legal or illegal substances found that just 15% had consumed only alcohol.
- A Tennessee study found that over half of reckless drivers not intoxicated by alcohol were intoxicated by other substances and noted that “studies of injured
drivers suggest that driving under the influence of drugs other than alcohol is a growing cause of traffic injuries in the United States.”

Promising but inadequately evaluated measures include:

- Marking the license plate to indicate ownership in the family of someone whose driver's license is suspended or revoked for alcohol offenses.
- Impounding or confiscating the plates of vehicles used in the offense of drunk driving.
- Impounding and confiscating vehicles used in the commission of drunk driving.
- Passing and enforcing bans on open containers would reduce drunk driving by deterring drinking while driving. Surprisingly, twenty-two states have no open container laws.
- Imposing graded or multi-tiered penalties based on BAC at the time of arrest.
- Expanding alcohol server training programs.
- Restricting nighttime driving by young people. This appears to be effective in those states with such restrictions.
- Requiring every state to provide adequate information on alcohol and driving to prospective drivers and adequately testing them on the subject in their driver's exams. In too many states, the subject is given only brief mention and seven states do not include any information or testing in the process of obtaining a driver's license.

All of these very promising measures should be rigorously evaluated scientifically to determine their potential contribution to improving safety.

Measures of little or no value:

- Jail or prison sentences for alcohol offenses, in spite of their great popularity, appear to be of little value in deterring high BAC drivers.
- Such sentences may deter low BAC drinkers, but such drivers are not the problem. Incarceration is probably ineffective with high BAC drivers, who tend to be alcohol dependent individuals with very serious problems who need treatment.
- The perception of swift and certain punishment is more important than severity.
- Large fines (for example $500) would have little deterrent effect, according to a nation-wide study.
- Increasing the cost of alcohol with a ten percent tax would have virtually no impact on reducing drunk driving. Why would it? Both research and common sense suggest that heavy drinkers are not deterred by cost. However, increasing the cost would tend to discriminate against lower income consumers and create other problems of unknown magnitude.
- Improved roads and vehicles can contribute significantly to increased highway safety. Technological improvements include raised lane markers, which are
easier to see and also emit a startling sound when a tire wanders over them. Similarly corrugations along the edges of roads emit a sound when driven over, thus alerting inattentive drivers to their inappropriate location. Wider roads, improved street and highway lighting, break-away sign posts, brake lights positioned at eye level, door crash bars, and many other improvements can save lives and are cost-effective.


**A promising new approach to drunk driving is the Victims Impact Panel (VIP).** VIP consists of volunteers who have lost a love one in DUI accidents. The volunteers visit high schools to speak to the students about their experiences. While their personal accounts impact the students emotionally, the volunteers’ cautionary advice gives the students practical ways to avoid driving drunk.…

[Forum narrative:]

My son Michael was a popular, athletic college student of twenty-one years. On October 23, 1993, his life on earth ended abruptly. The night began as any regular Friday night. Michael and two of his friends, Shane and Mark, were going out like normal college kids. After a few beers, they left the party and somehow while Shane was driving them home he hit a railroad trestle. Michael died instantly of a broken neck. Mark died four days later and Shane, the driver, escaped with only minor injuries.

One cannot put into words the unimaginable pain that accompanies the loss of a child. I found myself despising other parents whose children were alive and well. I blamed everyone for the accident: Shane for drinking and driving, Michael for getting in that car, and even God for allowing this to happen. After some deep soul searching, I now know that God was the first to cry that night.

Shane was one of Michael’s best friends and, as hard as it is to admit, I know he has suffered enough. He will live everyday for the rest of his life knowing that his irresponsible actions took the lives of two of his dearest friends. With God’s help, I even told Shane I forgave him when we were at Michael’s wake. Executing Shane will not bring my son back. I can’t say that enough. Also, I could not imagine deliberately putting Shane’s parents, who are friends of our family, through the same pain and torture that we went through. We must remember that everyone, even drunk drivers, have families and friends that love them.

Instead of focusing on how to punish drunk drivers that kill, we should focus on preventing drunk driving from occurring at all. Every single accident that involves alcohol is preventable. We need to catch drunk drivers before they injure others or themselves. We need more roadblocks. The Alcohol Problems and Solutions website suggests that we should make license plates that indicate prior DUI involvement, or we should impound vehicles or the license plates of
vehicles of those who abuse alcohol. The site also says that twenty-two U.S. states have no open container laws. If we establish stricter open container laws, it will be harder for people to drink and drive.

We also should work with those who are just getting their driver’s license; namely, high school students. A promising new approach to drunk driving is the Victims Impact Panel (VIP). VIP consists of volunteers who have lost a love one in DUI accidents. The volunteers visit high schools to speak to the students about their experiences. Their stories offer young people real examples with real pictures of preventable deaths. While their personal accounts impact the students emotionally, the volunteers’ cautionary advice gives the students practical ways to avoid driving drunk.

I offer Stacy McGraw’s work to demonstrate how she compiled three sources into a single narrative and to show that the formats are flexible as regards the students’ rewriting sources so as to craft speeches they feel are persuasive. Although, in my opinion, McGraw’s persuasive strategies are not exceptional, what I do find striking are the alterations she made in the ethos of the speaker, Bill Chadwick. In the source text, Chadwick’s stream-of-consciousness narrative leads to a cathartic epiphany of self-forgiveness. In and by means of writing, Chadwick purges his hate and realizes he must forgive himself and others. His appeal then is self-directed; it does not matter what the audience thinks or feels. Of course, an audience does think and feel and, in this case, they may find Chadwick’s self-directed pathos a mark of good will or not. McGraw rewrites Chadwick’s narrative as a post-epiphany account. She also transforms the speaker into a female, “Billie,” who reflects on, rather than from within, her feelings. Thereby, McGraw directs the pathos outward and toward making the point that “even drunk drivers have families and friends that love them” and hence they should not be executed. While rendering the speaker as a female and mother helps to justify this claim, McGraw further transforms the character and good will of the speaker. Unlike
Chadwick, Billie does not objectify the drunk driver, she calls him by (an invented) name, and is on friendly terms with his family. In short, McGraw attempts a rhetoric of inclusion to make her point.

Le’s and McGraw’s characters appeared in the same forum which I document in full below. The group was interested in how the audience would respond to two females who offered opposing views but similar arguments (i.e., pathos oriented with supporting claims of value and fact). In addition to Le’s and McGraw’s characters, three male characters offer their arguments in the forum and a Joker figure, or host, presides.

The student who hosts the forum is involved in all the steps I have described above except that he is not required to develop and, in the forum, deliver a particular argument. Instead, he is required to analyze his colleagues’ character profiles, source texts and resulting narratives and, based on his analysis, generate a bank of questions that he can ask the panelists and audience during the forum. In addition to executing this most crucial task, the host introduces and concludes the forum and provides commentary to bridge the scenes.

Below is a full script compiled by students for The Persuasive Speech Forum assignment. The title and proposition of the forum is “People who drink, drive and kill should be tried for first degree murder and sentenced to capital punishment.” In addition to Khannh Le and Stacy McGraw, Andrew Smith, Joe Schick, Patrick Thibodeaux, and Casey Cowley developed and appeared in the forum. They were students in a Public Speaking class I taught in fall 2000. Throughout the script, I use brackets to indicate the students’ use of Boal’s Joker System. (See Appendix D for additional student scripts.)
Proposition: People who drink, drive and kill should be tried for first degree murder and sentenced to capital punishment.

[Host]

Good afternoon and welcome to the Casey Cowley Show, the show where audience members are urged to make a difference. Today we will talk about an issue that has affected the lives of millions and millions of people. It is an issue that is dear to the heart of many among us in our society. It is surrounded in controversy not only because of its emotional impact, but also because of the many legal questions that accompany it. First of all, I think it is safe to say that accidents and tragedies due to drunk driving are issues that we would rather not have to face but, in the same breath, I can say that so long as we are human, so long as there is that human element about us, we will continue to have to face them. It then becomes necessary for us to find measures by which to prevent it and also to come up with fair ways to punish those who do drive drunk. I have invited a panel of five distinguished guests to the show today to discuss whether or not those who kill someone while driving drunk should get the death penalty.

My first guest is a woman whose life has been changed forever because of a drunk driving tragedy. She and her husband were met head on by a drunk driver and her husband, the father of her three children, was killed. The man responsible for the accident was given what she felt was mere slap on the wrist. She feels that, for justice to have been served, this man should have been treated like any other first degree murderer. Theresa Hall, welcome to the show.

[Theresa Hall]

Thank you Casey. On December 3, 1997, my thirty-nine year old husband and I were hit head on by a drunk driver. My husband, Mike, who is the father of our three sons and also the father of another daughter and son was crushed and killed. His dead body was trapped inside the car for over two hours. I was critically injured and not expected to live. My injuries included severed intestines in four different places, three broken ribs, a laceration of the left arm and elbow down to the bone, permanent damage to the left eye, cuts and bruises throughout my body, a severe concussion, a coma for two and a half days, brain injury, severe depression from grief, and post traumatic stress disorder since all memories of that night flooded back to me.

The drunk driver that killed Mike was only sentenced to six months in jail a $1,000 fine and restitution in the amount of Mike’s funeral, and five years intensive probation. He is currently out of jail after serving his six months. He walks around basically a free man while my husband lies in his grave forever.

I feel we need to put a stop to this insanity sentencing. The acts that drunk driving killers commit are no accident. They consciously decide to go out, get
drunk and drive a dangerous weapon, a vehicle. The decision they make completely strips me and you of our rights to be safe on the roads. I feel that the government should enact laws in all states requiring that any drunk driver who kills another person while driving drunk be charged with first degree murder and sentenced like any other murderer.

Now I would like to read a poem that explains how I feel about the victims of drunk driving. It is written by an unknown author and called the “The Undefended Victim.”

For me, no gavel hammers.
The scales were never weighed.
My crime was that of victim.
My life, the price I paid.

And when my life was taken,
Why were MY rights not read?
And the statement “overruled”
When they pronounced me dead!

No lawyer to call on me
To take the witness stand.
My fate was decided when—
Left in the offender’s hand.

Yet now the courtroom’s crowded.
A lawyer pleads her case,
And the glimmer of a tear
Creeps down her somber face.

Oh, that I could take the stand,
They’d witness my last breath,
And could see the terror,
I went through facing death!

But they missed my pleading cries
And the look upon my face.
The scales have not been
Balanced in this case!

If I could tell the jury
Exactly how it was,
The fear and pain I went through
Struck down without a cause.
Can the jury weigh it all
Now listening to her pleas?
The only emotion now
Her hopes of going free.

The final verdict now is in!
The defendant is in tears.
If only I’d done half as well,
Probation in four years.

The poem makes me feel stronger about getting the justice that my husband deserves. It was no accident that this person took that first drink and allowed himself to get into a drunken state. This drunken person’s injuries have healed but mine never will. Pain is my constant companion.

[Scene Two: Composite Personal and Lay Expert Narrative]
Billie Chadwick

My son Michael was a popular, athletic college student of twenty-one years. On October 23, 1993, his life on earth ended abruptly. The night began as any regular Friday night. Michael and two of his friends, Shane and Mark, were going out like normal college kids. After a few beers, they left the party and somehow while Shane was driving them home he hit a railroad trestle. Michael died instantly of a broken neck. Mark died four days later and Shane, the driver, escaped with only minor injuries.

One cannot put into words the unimaginable pain that accompanies the loss of a child. I found myself despising other parents whose children were alive and well. I blamed everyone for the accident: Shane for drinking and driving, Michael for getting in that car, and even God for allowing this to happen. After some deep soul searching, I now know that God was the first to cry that night.
[Joker Interview]

Host
So how do you feel about the legal sentencing of those who drink, drive and take the life of another?

Billie Chadwick
Shane was one of Michael’s best friends and, as hard as it is to admit, I know he has suffered enough. He will live everyday for the rest of his life knowing that his irresponsible actions took the lives of two of his dearest friends. With God’s help, I even told Shane I forgave him when we were at Michael’s wake. Executing Shane will not bring my son back. I can’t say that enough. Also, I could not imagine deliberately putting Shane’s parents, who are friends of our family, through the same pain and torture that we went through. We must remember that everyone, even drunk drivers, have families and friends that love them.

Host
What do you suggest we do to stop drinking and driving?

Billie
Instead of focusing on how to punish drunk drivers that kill, we should focus on preventing drunk driving from occurring at all. Every single accident that involves alcohol is preventable. We need to catch drunk drivers before they injure others or themselves. We need more roadblocks. The Alcohol Problems and Solutions website suggests that we should make license plates that indicate prior DUI involvement, or we should impound vehicles or the license plates of vehicles of those who abuse alcohol. The site also says that twenty-two U.S. states have no open container laws. If we establish stricter open container laws, it will be harder for people to drink and drive.

We also should work with those who are just getting their driver’s license; namely, high school students. A promising new approach to drunk driving is the Victims Impact Panel (VIP). VIP consists of volunteers who have lost a love one in DUI accidents. The volunteers visit high schools to speak to the students about their experiences. Their stories offer young people real examples with real pictures of preventable deaths. While their personal accounts impact the students emotionally, the volunteers’ cautionary advice gives the students practical ways to avoid driving drunk.

[Joker Transition and Commentary]

Host
My next guest is an assistant district attorney in North Carolina. He was the prosecutor in a landmark case in Winston-Salem that was the first to seek a charge of first degree murder for a drunk driver who killed someone. Mr. Vince
Rabil, you have spent a lot of time researching this topic and you feel that the
death penalty for drunk drivers would benefit all of our nation’s families. Tell us
why you believe this.

[Scene Three: Composite Expert Narrative]

Vince Rabil

Thank you, Casey, for allowing me to come on your show and publicly
address this serious issue. Before I propose to you the legislation I want Congress
to pass, allow me to offer some statistics that will put the issue into perspective.

According to MADD, 15,796 people were killed in alcohol related crashes
in 1999 which made up 37.9% of all traffic deaths in the U.S. that year. This
means that over one out of every three deaths that occur each year from traffic
accidents happens because of one person having too much to drink. To be more
specific, the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration reports that, in
Louisiana, 46.2% of all traffic fatalities occur because of alcohol in some manner.
This amounts to approximately over 420 deaths each year. These deaths include
people such as mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, and friends. And it is this
human factor that is important to me because it is the impact of a person losing a
loved one that drives one to find a way to stop these senseless killings in any way
possible.

In my profession I have found the best way to do this is by making the
punishment harsher for those who decide to drink and drive and murder. That is
why I decided to ask a jury in 1997 to give an individual the death penalty after he
had murdered two college students while driving recklessly.

Therefore, it is my advocacy that those who drink and drive and kill
someone should be eligible for the death penalty. A vehicle becomes a deadly
weapon when a person operating it is drunk. There is no difference between a
person drinking and driving and a person taking a gun and shooting it randomly in
a super market. There might be a chance that no one is shot just as there is a
chance that no one will get hurt by a drunk driver but, as a society, we must not
allow such possibilities to over-rule us. Just as our law permits us to seek the
deadly penalty for a person who shoots another, it is not only logical but also
necessary for the death penalty to be sought for those who kill with a vehicle
while under the influence. North Carolina is not alone in the belief that killing a
person who drinks and drives should be treated as murder. According to the St.
Louis Dispatch, “Prosecutors won murder convictions in similar trials in
Washington State in 1996 and California in 1995 but declined to seek the death
penalty.”

Some may question the feasibility or impact that this legislation may bring
to society but I can ensure them that it will have a positive effect. The purpose of
this proposal is to ensure that justice is served. Murder is one of the most heinous
crimes that an individual can commit in society and therefore deserves the
harshest punishment. On the issue of deterrence, I’ll admit that there may not be
a significant impact. However, I believe that if this proposal prevents one drunken person from getting behind the wheel then it is in the best interests of our nation. If this proposal has the potential to save just one life, such as that of Michael Hall’s, then there should be no hesitation for society and the Legislature to approve of it and to help its passage.

In closing, I wouldn’t be advocating this resolution if I didn’t sincerely believe it would be beneficial to all of our nation’s families. I wouldn’t be promoting this resolution if I didn’t think that it is advantageous compared to the status quo. The time has come to stop drunk drivers from murdering innocent people. The time has come to put the threat of the death penalty before those who take the chance of driving while under the influence: You Drink, You Drive, You Kill, You Die.

[Joker Transition and Commentary]

Host

Conveniently enough, we have the defense attorney from this landmark case on our show today. Mr. David Freedman, thank you for coming on the show. Mr. Freedman couldn’t believe his client was being tried for first degree murder and says a conviction in this case could have set a nasty precedent.

[Scene Four: Composite Expert Narrative]

David Freedman

Thank you, Mr. Cowley. First off, I would like to extend my sympathies to Mrs. Hall and Mrs. Chadwick and their respective families.

Now, I was taken aback when I found out that my client, Thomas Jones, was going to be prosecuted for first-degree murder instead of manslaughter. The possible ramifications of Mr. Jones being executed for this crime are even more heinous. If the conviction is upheld, the felony murder rule could be applied to any motorist who intentionally violates a safety standard and unintentionally kills in the process. The possibilities are huge because you could apply it to almost any accident case. For instance, this could be applied to any motorist who runs a red light or stop sign. This would mean that the number of motorists on trial for first-degree murder, with the possibility of facing execution, would be astronomical.

Just think about it: according to MADD, in 1998, there were 41,471 accident deaths in the U.S. Of these, 15,935 were related to alcohol. Now, add in the number of motorists who accidentally kill someone while running a stop sign, for example. Under the precedent that this case will set, there would have been fifteen thousand people tried for first degree murder who were under the influence and an untold number of people who accidentally killed while driving but were not intoxicated. That is scary.

Now, a question we need to ask is if the death penalty is actually needed in alcohol related deaths. According to DUI.com, between 1990 and 1997, the
number of arrests for DUI has actually gone down 18% while the number of licensed drivers has increased 15%. Obviously the penalties and regulations that are in effect are now adequate and some might argue even helpful in deterring the problem. So if arrests are decreasing and drivers are increasing, is the death penalty necessary? I don’t think so.

Another factor that we must look at is the death penalty itself. I mean, it has not proven to be beneficial in any way. There hasn’t been any study that has found it to be a deterrent to crime and yet North Carolina wants to use it to punish my client. A study by the Columbia University Law School found that 70% of execution cases have occurrences of serious errors such as unreliable evidence, faulty representation, and falsifications. Do we really want to apply this ineffective practice to “accidental” deaths?

There is also the question of cost. A Maryland study found that a death penalty sentence is 42% more expensive than a life sentence. So, in addition to killing more people, we are going to increase your tax dollars to help finance it. It doesn’t sound right does it?

The danger is that when you create a law like this, it opens up a Pandora’s Box. What we have is a man who killed two girls while under the influence of alcohol. The prosecution wants to execute Mr. Jones but what they don’t realize is that by doing this they are going to radically change the way we prosecute vehicular homicide. By seeking the death penalty for Mr. Jones, the prosecution would: 1) kill more people; 2) increase taxpayer cost; and 3) possibly execute thousands of innocent people. Is the current judicial system so bad that we need to do this? I don’t feel that it is.

[Joker Interview]

Host

Mr. Rabil you obviously would like to make a rebuttal.

Vince Rabil

Yes, Casey. Mr. Freedman’s Pandora Box reference is absurdly ridiculous. This proposal is applicable to those people who drink and drive and kill. District attorneys across the nation will not use this law as a way to give the death penalty for anyone who kills while committing another felony unless it is blatantly demanded. Furthermore, I would like to argue that this resolution would specifically prevent that from occurring because it specifically lays out the law so there is no chance of ambiguity. As for Mr. Freedman’s next argument, that the cost of the death penalty means that it shouldn’t be used, I argue that right now the death penalty is being done in several states. The cost to taxpayers to put a person to death does not even compare to the cost of the family and friends of the victims. In addition, I don’t believe it is right to put a price limit on the amount of pain and suffering that is experienced by all of society when a person kills. I will close by stating this, justice has never been cheap and I believe that it shouldn’t
be. We as a country and as a society should be willing to spend any amount of money to ensure that justice is not only served but that the correct punishment is rendered to the individual who dares to commit such heinous crimes.

[Joker Transition and Commentary]

Host

My next guest is the Program Coordinator for the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty. As Program Coordinator, he maintains the largest collection of death penalty information in the country. He also edits the NCADP’s two publications, *Lifelines* and *National Execution Alert*. Brian Henniger, welcome to the show.

Brian Henniger

Thank you.

Host

As an opponent of the death penalty, you are obviously against this.

[Scene Five: Composite Expert Narrative]

Brian Henniger

Absolutely. The death penalty is a huge injustice in our society. Take the financial burden of capital punishment. It is often suggested that abolishing capital punishment is unfair to the taxpayer, as though life imprisonment were obviously more expensive than executions. If one takes into account all of the relevant costs, the reverse is true. A murder trial normally takes much longer when the death penalty is at issue than when it’s not. Litigation costs—including the time of judges, prosecutors, public defenders, and court reporters, and the high cost of briefs—are all borne by the taxpayer. A 1982 study showed that if the death penalty were reintroduced in New York, the cost of the capital trial alone would be more than double the cost of a life term in prison.

There is also the matter of simple human decency. The traditional mode of execution, still available in a few states, is hanging. Death on the gallows is easily bungled: if the drop is too short, there will be a slow and agonizing death by strangulation. If the drop is too long, the head will be torn off. Two states, Idaho and Utah, still authorize the firing squad. The prisoner is strapped into a chair and hooded. A target is pinned to the chest. Five marksmen, one with blanks, take aim and fire. Electrocution has been the most widely used form of execution in this country in this century. The condemned prisoner is led, or dragged, into the death chamber, strapped into the chair, and electrodes are fastened to the head and legs. When the switch is thrown the body strains, jolting as the voltage is raised and lowered. Often smoke rises from the head. There is the awful odor of burning flesh. No one knows how long electrocuted individuals remain conscious.
I’m also not alone in my convictions! Public opinion of the death penalty is lower than ever before! The media commonly reports that the American public overwhelmingly supports the death penalty. But more careful analysis of public attitudes reveals that most Americans would oppose the death penalty if convicted murderers were sentenced to life without parole and were required to make some form of financial restitution. In California, for example, a Field Institute survey showed that, in 1990, 82% approved the death penalty in principle. But, when asked to choose between the death penalty and life imprisonment plus restitution, only a small minority, 26%, continued to favor executions. A comparable change in attitude toward the death penalty has been verified in many other states and contradicted in none.

[Joker Interview and Exhortation]

Host

Thank you very much. I would now like to open the floor to the audience. Do you have any questions you would like to ask the panelists?

Host’s Question Bank for Audience

1. First of all, how many of you favor the death penalty in this case? For those that do not, do you think the sentence handed down to the driver responsible for the death of Mrs. Hall’s husband was sufficient and fair? How should it have been changed?
2. In his testimony, Mr. Rabil said “there is no difference between a person drinking and driving and a person taking a gun and randomly shooting it in a supermarket.” Do you agree with that statement?
3. In the North Carolina trial of Thomas Jones, it was said that his vehicle was a deadly weapon because he was operating it while drunk. If he were convicted of first degree murder, could it then be said that someone who kills another while operating a vehicle at an excessive rate of speed could be convicted of first degree murder because he/she is using a vehicle as a deadly weapon?
4. Is a vehicle a “deadly weapon” when the person operating it is drunk? Can it be compared to a gun or knife?

Host’s Question Bank for Panelists

For Theresa Hall:

1. Has dealing with the loss of your husband been more difficult knowing that the man responsible for his death walks around, as you say, “basically a free man”?
2. Would it make the healing process easier to know that he wasn’t walking around a free man?
3. Who can we contact to enforce stronger penalties?
For Billie Chadwick
1. It is hard for us to imagine what it feels like to go through the process, the wreck and then the legal matters. Tell us how you feel about the legal sentencing of those who drink, drive and take the life of another.
2. For someone who has been directly affected by a drunk driving tragedy, how do you suggest we stop drinking and driving?

For Vince Rabil:
1. A young man finds out he has been accepted to the graduate school of his choice. He goes out with his friends to celebrate and ends up getting behind the wheel under the influence and kills someone on the road. He has a totally clean record, and rarely drinks. Should he be prosecuted the same as a man who has been in and out of rehab and has had numerous brushes with the law if he were to kill someone while driving drunk?

For David Freedman
1. You said that careful analysis of the death penalty reveals that most Americans would oppose the death penalty if convicted murderers were sentenced to life without parole and were required to make some form of financial restitution. Are you suggesting then that this be the penalty for drunk drivers involved in a fatal accident?

[Joker Commentary and Conclusion]
Host
I would like to thank the audience for asking some excellent questions and I would like to thank the panel for taking time to be with us today to shed some light on this tough issue. No matter how we feel about the punishment of drunk drivers, I am sure that we all can agree that drunk driving is an issue that we can take positive steps to prevent in the future. Now, go make a difference.

The Persuasive Speech Forum that the students developed meets the substantive goals of a persuasive speech because it identifies and maintains the proposition as the central idea, offers claims and evidence to support the proposition, and evaluates the quality of the argument(s) presented. The main substantive difference between the forum and a persuasive speech offered by a single speaker is that the contending perspectives on the proposition are expressed independently from those that support it.
Throughout the forum documented above, the host’s speech acts operate as a policy claim concerning the audience. From the host’s point of view, the reason for the forum is to “urge” the audience “to make a difference.” In Monroe’s terms, the host motivates the audience to see their role as crucial to the praxis of the forum. In terms of the Joker System, then, the host “dedicates” the forum to the audience, suggesting that it is their analysis of the issue and subsequent action that is of value here.

In the “explanation” that follows, the host specifies the issue and its relevance to the audience, ending with a clear articulation of the proposition that will be debated by the panelists. Thereby, the host prompts the audience to see the issue as “needful” of their deliberation and thus his explanation justifies his dedication. In our discussion of the forum in class, audience members remarked that the host’s introduction indeed “grabbed their attention.” As one student put it, she felt “responsible” for not necessarily solving the problem but giving it some careful thought. “Casey [the host] made me listen.”

In the “scenes” that follow, the five panelists appeal to the audience from diverse pro and con perspectives. While the complex of different arguments justifies the host’s proposal to the audience, each speech operates on its own terms as well.

As discussed above, Theresa Hall speaks in favor of the proposition, expressing an argument driven by pathos and substantiated by eye-witness claims of fact and value. By means of her personal narrative and concluding poem, she advances an ethical question to the audience. Namely, how fair is a judicial system that probates a murderer in six months? While similar in strategy, Billie Chadwick’s argument opposes that of
Hall’s and articulates a second ethical question for the audience to consider. In sum, she asks how humane is a judicial system that utilizes a death penalty and thereby punishes not only the perpetrator but his family and friends? Having posed this question, Chadwick offers preventive policies as ways to redress drunk driving.

While Hall’s testimony created the intended effect on the audience, and to the point where a few were in tears, Chadwick’s argument proved to counter-balance the effect. Chadwick’s movement from value claims and evidence to “what if” policies tempered the emotional mood. As many students expressed later, they found themselves torn between two arguments that they found equally persuasive in terms of pathos and ethos. While some audience members questioned the feasibility of the policies Chadwick proposed, many expressed appreciated for her inclusion of them. One student remarked that he was ready for the “intense emotion” to be interrupted by an appeal to his reason.

In the third scene, Vince Rabil draws on his expertise as an assistant district attorney to support the proposition, framing it with actual “legislation” or policy he has proposed to Congress. For the most part, Rabil attempts to persuade the audience by highlighting his expertise, or ethos, and his sound reasoning as based in fact claims and evidence. Near the end of his argument, however, Rabil integrates personal discourse in a value based appeal to the common man and woman. He offers, “I wouldn’t be advocating this resolution if I didn’t sincerely believe it would be beneficial to all of our nation’s families.”

David Freedman also calls on his expertise as an attorney to argue against the proposition. Drawing consistently on quantifiable evidence, Freedman attempts to
demonstrate to the audience the effects that the death penalty will have on the legal system and society in general. Freedman’s cause-effect argument is composed so as to narrow the audience’s focus to the three main effects he pin-points at the end of the speech. Thereby, he implies that the proposition will adversely impact the audience.

In the fifth scene, Brian Henniger opens his argument with rationale that is similar to Freedman’s. He then integrates an appeal to the audience’s sense of “human decency,” offering vivid descriptions of different modes of execution. In closing, he attempts to counter what might be understood as a subjective value claim by arguing that he is “not alone in [his] convictions!” For support, he draws on evidence from public opinion polls.

In the “interview” and “exhortation” section that followed Henniger’s speech, the audience questioned Henniger’s credibility. They found his fact based appeal to be a tricky disguise for what they saw to be largely pathos. When I questioned them as to why then they were persuaded by the pathos driven arguments of the two women, one student offered that the women were “straightforward. They admitted to how they were looking at things” without qualifying their viewpoints. With some irony, another student stated, “it was because they were women.” And a few students countered my assumption, claiming they were not persuaded by the women’s emotional appeals. They found Hall’s argument to be based in revenge and Chadwick’s poorly argued.

In response to the host’s bank of questions, the audience tended to call on Rabil’s and Freedman’s arguments to support their mutual (i.e., majority) feeling that the death penalty should not be used to penalize drunk drivers who unintentionally kill while it should be an option for penalizing those who murder with intent. Drawing on Rabil’s
statement that “the most heinous crimes…deserve the harshest punishment,” some argued that those who abuse children should be considered for capital punishment too, along with those who deliberately murder. Freedman’s argument was persuasive to the audience for the exact reasons he intended: the deficits outweigh the benefits of prosecuting drunk drivers who unintentionally kill others.

It was then by means of the interview and exhortation sections that the students evaluated the panelists’ use of persuasive principles and strategies in this and most forums. While I could implement such discussion myself, I find that by integrating the evaluation into the assignment format, the students take command of it. Within the frame of the forum, they become the evaluative experts and, generally, their questions and answers are as complex and intriguing as any I might offer. Also due to the integration, the students seem to listen to the arguments very carefully, in anticipation of the host’s questioning them directly. In Boal’s terms, their role as spect-actors, engaged in analyzing the arguments, is activated from the start and, in this particular case, such activation was greatly motivated by the Joker-host and his bank of questions.

As I noted earlier in the chapter, my main reason for applying the Joker System was to take advantage of the Joker figure who, by means of his framing commentary and interviews, insures that the audience involve themselves actively and critically. In my design and in the students’ execution of the assignment, I believe this objective is realized in most cases. The one drawback I have encountered is that some students, cast in the Joker-host role, are uncomfortable enacting it. As a result, they resort to “planting”
respondents in the audience or they only take questions from their friends, fearful of a question that might challenge their authority or expertise.

In an effort to ease the discomfort of those who play the Joker-host, I have integrated a short exercise into the process. I meet with each group when they are just beginning to develop their narratives and ask them to improvise a “mock” forum. During the improvisation, the Joker-host may interrupt her peers at any time to question their arguments, taking care to imply or state why she has intervened. I encourage the group members who are listening to help the Joker-host articulate her reasons and, also, to offer suggestions to the speaker as to how he might clarify or alter his argument in light of the questions. This exercise allows the Joker-host and the panelists to “try on” and test their roles and arguments before they develop them more fully. It also serves as a rehearsal for the spect-actor interaction they will face in the forum proper.

In addition to the operations of the Joker-host, I find that the embodied enactment of the multiple arguments at work within and upon an issue is advantageous to the students’ comprehension of the persuasive principles. As compared to a persuasive speech delivered by a single speaker, the separation of the various arguments into distinct characters allows each its full and committed expression. The social network of people who have a stake in the issue is represented rather than their perspectives being tailored to fit a single point of view. Further, due to the multiple roles and arguments, diverse sources and modes of discourse are able to be accommodated and represented in the forum. My aim here is not to suggest that a pathos-laden poem, such as that used by Theresa Hall in the above forum, is a savvy persuasive strategy. Rather, my aims are to
clarify that diverse discursive modes and materials are used in our cultural expressions to persuade others; to activate that diversity; and to allow the students to evaluate the relative merits and drawbacks of each, as used in the forum. The forum operates then as a problem-posing exercise, encouraging the audience to form their own opinions and as based on the multiple arguments, claims and evidence they hear.

While the group’s initial division of roles and arguments is pedestrian—the members identifying one role as “pathos” and another as “logos” for example—by means of the process, most students learn how to apply the persuasion principles in a more sophisticated and integrated way. Given more class time, it would be extremely beneficial, I think, for each student to develop their own persuasive speech, on the same issue, following the forum process. The latter would encourage the student to develop a speech that is complex in substance and form while it also would sensitize the student to the other voices and viewpoints at work within and against the argument she advances.

As the assignment currently stands, the main drawback is the talk show context I implemented. On the one hand, it provides the students with a physical context that is familiar to them and, as aligned with the Joker System, it permits them easy access to it as well. On the other hand, my request that students use a talk show model that is fairly uniform in style has proven to be interpreted in ways that are not conducive to the aims of the assignment and course. In brief, some groups have contexted their forum in terms of the spectacular and prurient content common on The Jerry Springer Show or they have directed all their arguments toward solving the problem and from a single “self-help” perspective, such as is the case on Oprah or Jenny Jones. While discussing the
persuasive strategies of such shows is useful, it seems to me that the students who enact
them are imitating familiar models more so than applying the persuasive principles in
comprehensive and inventive ways. To address this problem, I might mandate that the
students use a “hard” news talk show as their context, or try out other contexts such as a
court room or town hall meeting, or I might forego the idea completely and simply teach
the Joker System in more detailed manner.

A second concern arises from the students’ tendency to interpret their peers’
enactment of character as representative of distinct individuals rather than individuals
who also represent social groups with similar problems, agendas, perspectives, and
discursive strategies and modes. While this interpretive tendency is commonplace in our
culture, the problem in this case is that by aligning character to a single individual the
students might individualize the persuasive strategies as well; failing to comprehend them
as implicit, flexible, and beneficial parts of public speech. While most of the students’
oral and written evaluations of their peers’ work suggest otherwise, I am troubled by the
potential effect in the aftermath of the class. Will the students remember and retain the
principles and strategies of persuasion or will the individual characters pervade their
memories? While I could teach the students how to defamiliarize character by developing
social gists, such a pursuit is but tertiary (if that) to the course aims. Perhaps my
solution to the problem is the very common one I mentioned early in the chapter. I might
express my concerns to the students and see what they think. I might “just” talk to them.
Notes

1 In The Art of Public Speaking, Lucas uses “questions” of fact, value and policy rather than “claims” so as to substantiate the interrogatory aspect of persuasive processes and speeches (373-82). I use “claims” in the study for reasons of clarity and because such claims/questions are most often expressed by means of declarative statements.

2 In the Joker System proper, the purpose of stylistic eclecticism is to “create chaos,” critique the stylistic unity of highbrow forms, and effect “comic relief as a form of stimulus” (Boal, Theatre of the Oppressed 170). In other words, the different styles are to interrupt or defamiliarize each other by means of contrast. Thereby, they simultaneously represent and critique different perspectives on the text.

3 Scott delineates four categories of talk shows: news and information shows such as Good Morning America and Larry King Live; variety, comedy, and “light” interview shows such as David Letterman’s The Late Show; self-help and everyday living shows such as Oprah and Jenny Jones; and specialty shows that offer advice on financial matters or pet care, for example (273-76).

4 TOPS is an acronym for Tuition Opportunity Program for Students which is a state subsidized program in Louisiana that waives tuition for in-state students who maintain a 2.00 grade point average while attending Louisiana State universities.

5 Khannh Le actually developed a composite personal narrative, attaching a poem at the end of the “single voice” narrative I document here. Le’s entire text is included in the example of a student forum I provide later in the chapter. I use the front-end of Le’s narrative here because Le does not interweave the two sources, it offers a good example of the particular format, and because I wanted to retain consistency in the examples I use here and in the forum later.

6 The student quotes are excerpted from video tape documentation I undertake when students present their projects in class.

7 While, in oral discussion, not all students are able to call on the actual “terms” of persuasion to express themselves, their direct use and application are expected in the peer critique they are required to write for me. In sum, I evaluate each student’s comprehension and application of persuasive principles and strategies in terms of the speech they deliver orally in the forum, the character profile they include in the group’s script, and the peer critique they write regarding one of the forums we see in class.

8 See note five above.
CHAPTER FOUR  
BOAL’S PRACTICES IN  
THE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION CLASSROOM

[T]he theatre itself, the play, the process itself, guarantees nothing. It’s the people who use it that guarantee. We develop techniques, but the important thing is who is going to use that technique and how strong is the desire to find something by the people. If you have a strong desire, if you have not given up and you still believe, things can be changed.  
--Augusto Boal, “Interview”

...Maybe in the grand scheme of things the only difference we make is that we change how we view the problem or even help out a fellow class member in that situation. Regardless it is making a difference to someone and we [the students] did it.  
--A Student, IPC Paper

As Boal and the student quoted above help me articulate, my purposes for applying Boal’s TO techniques in the IPC classroom are not to effect individual and social change. Rather, it is my hope that by means of the TO based assignments the students decide for themselves whether change or “making a difference” is desired and, if so, whether the TO tools as applied to the IPC concepts are helpful to them. I offer this introduction because the fusion of Boal’s practices and IPC objectives can potentially result in a “self-help” curriculum. While I have no problems with students helping themselves to improve their self-concept or conflict management skills, I prefer not to assume to do that myself. I “guarantee nothing” in these terms. What I do guarantee is the teaching of IPC terms, concepts and principles and a few TO tools that activate them. In this chapter, I discuss three TO based assignments that address IPC course material. In the first assignment, IPC concepts of selfhood are explored through Boal’s Image Theatre technique in an assignment called Communicating Self in Shadow Box Imagery. In the second
assignment, Testing Norms by Invisible Role Playing, IPC norms of nonverbal communication are investigated. A fusion of Boal’s Joker System and Forum Theatre is used in the third assignment, Adapting to Others, to investigate interpersonal conflicts in intimate, familial and professional relationships and friendships. In the discussion of each assignment, I identify the relevant IPC terms and concepts, summarize the Boal technique, document the steps the students take to process the assignment and call on the students’ work to assess the merits of the assignment in the IPC classroom. Before I discuss the assignments, I relate my conceptual processing of IPC course objectives, performance and play, and critical pedagogy.

According to a Department of Communication Studies undergraduate course handout, the introductory IPC course is designed “to develop students' abilities to recognize different communication situations” by expanding the students’ “understanding of how interpersonal communication operates….An equally important function of the class is to foster students’ insight into their own communication behavior and to develop [the] students' repertoire of behavioral choices so that students are able to apply course-related concepts to their own experience[s] and relationships” (1).

With these basic goals in mind, I ventured forth to teach my first class in IPC in the fall of 1998. My venturing, as it turned out, was a complete failure. Uncomfortable with discussing the students’ “own communication behavior…experience[s] and relationships,” I taught the class from a hyper-clinical distance, largely using examples from films and likewise basing the assignments on film analysis. In sum, I taught the students how to analyze the communicative behavior of cinematic characters rather than teach them how they might apply IPC concepts and principles to their own lives.

Prior to teaching the course again, I researched IPC more thoroughly than I had in the past. In addition to the course text used in the introductory course at LSU, Trenholm and
Jensen’s *Interpersonal Communication*, I studied other IPC textbooks and manuals, discovering that many authors suggest that the instructor use role playing and improvisation to teach IPC concepts. Generally, the authors observe that role playing encourages students to learn about “real” life situations and behavior by, in effect, imitating them. Thereby, they realize the challenges of interpersonal communication in diverse situations and also exercise possible strategies to address the challenges. Further, the improvisatory nature of the exercises imitates the same in everyday life in that we are constantly required to “think on our feet,” assess and adapt to situations and others in the very moment of the interaction. Improvisation then is not only an analogue for how we communicate in everyday life situations but, potentially, a way to “rehearse” for them too.

In the Instructor’s Manual of *Let’s Talk About Relationships: Cases in Study*, the authors argue that role playing or “experiential learning” is an “appropriate, valuable, and practical” way to engage IPC concepts and skills. They claim,

> Students want to know how to make their relationships work effectively. If we as teachers can help them to understand various interpersonal communication strategies and skills through an experiential learning approach, they not only enjoy what they are learning, but they figure out how to “make effective use” of the strategies and skills they have learned….They are NOT memorizing the terms, they are NOT regurgitating the concepts, and they are NOT telling you what they think you want to hear. What they ARE doing is learning through a higher form of learning-application. (Veenendall et al. 7; emphasis in original)

While I would offer that experiential learning is not a “higher” but rather a different form of applied learning, the authors’ point here is significant. By means of experiential enactment, students learn to apply interpersonal communication concepts to “real” life experiences. The operative term here is “apply” in so far as a student’s experiential application can be as much a “memorization” and “regurgitation” of concepts as any other sort of (mis-)applied educational method. The difference, it seems, is in the student’s learning the foundational ideas and practices
well enough that she is able to apply them in diverse ways. In Veenendall et al.’s terms, this ability means we learn to “make effective use” of the IPC “terms and concepts” to redress our “daily communication problems easily and appropriately” (vii). In the tradition of rhetoric, the ability to apply knowledge in flexible ways is often termed “invention” while, in the tradition of performance studies, “play” becomes a cogent term.

In Theatre Games and Beyond: A Creative Approach for Performers, Amiel Schotz writes,

Play is an essential activity….We explore our environment, discover ourselves, develop our capabilities and our imagination, test our strengths and form relationships with one another, all through the medium of play. (1)

In his seminal essay on work, play and leisure in tribal-agrarian and industrialized societies, Victor Turner confirms Schotz’s notion that play is an “essential activity” of human beings and, in light of his social scientific background, further connects play to our concerns in communication studies. Turner writes,

In people’s social structural relationships they are by various abstract processes generalized and segmentalized [sic] into roles, statuses, classes, cultural sexes, conventional age-divisions, ethnic affiliations, etc. In different types of social situations they have been conditioned to play specific social roles. It does not matter how well or badly as long as they “make like” they are obedient to the norm-sets that control different compartments of the complex model known as the “social structure.” So far this has been almost the entire subject matter of the social sciences—people playing roles and maintaining or achieving status….And, to some extent, the authentic human essence gets involved here, for every role-definition takes into account some basic human attribute or capacity, and willy-nilly, human beings play their roles in human ways. But full human capacity is locked out of these somewhat narrow, stuffy rooms. Even though when we say a person plays his role well, we often mean that he plays it with flexibility and imagination. (46; emphasis in original)

Turner’s point here is that play permeates human processes. And, while “pressed into the service” of maintaining a social system (32), it also is by means of play, of “playing well,” that flexible and imaginative alternatives to and within the social structure of relationships are realized. For Turner, “playing well” or the power of play lies in “people ‘play[ing]’ with the
elements of the familiar and defamiliariz[ing] them. Novelty emerges from unprecedented combinations of familiar elements” (27).

Boal is of a like, though more radical, mind when he observes that “All societies have systems of social regulation” or a “social code” that “dictates the norms of conduct” (Games 183; emphasis in original). While “a society without any form of social code would be unthinkable…when a social code does not answer the needs and desires of the people,” it becomes “a code which…is authoritarian, useless, or, at worst, necessary as a vehicle for some form of oppression” (Games 184: emphasis in original). Boal proceeds to differentiate between useful and useless codes by telling a story about an actor. At first, the actor is inventive in his “obeisance” to the social codes of theatre but, after a time, “repeats the same words…executes the same movements…devoid of life” (184). Like Turner, Boal distinguishes here between two different kinds of play or performance. Recalling Veenendall et al. to the discussion, there is play, performance, and experiential learning that imitates and regurgitates norms without reflection and there is play, performance, and experiential learning that is inventive within (for Boal, sometimes against) social codes and norms. The latter may or may not effect alterations in the social system precisely because it is grounded in analysis and the analysis may suggest that alterations are not needed or desired. For Turner, and Boal, such analysis entails taking familiar elements and defamiliarizing them in order to better understand their operations or, as Boal simply states, we must “discover” the familiar norms, “bring them to light and study them” (Games 182).

In the above discussion, my aim is to support that play, performance and experiential learning are integral to interpersonal communication processes in everyday life. By activating the same in the classroom, we might better understand how these processes operate. The caveat is that the play-performance experience should not merely imitate or regurgitate the everyday
processes (or the terms and tools we use to study them); rather, the experience must be designed to encourage analysis of the processes, their benefit to us, and the ways we might adapt them so as to meet the needs of each individual.

With these aims in mind, I designed an IPC course curriculum that consists of three units. In the first, “Communicating Self,” I cover interpersonal relationships, culture and perception as they pertain to concepts of selfhood. In the second “Nonverbal” section, I examine nonverbal communication and listening skills. “Adapting to Others” is the focus of the third section where I focus on IPC concepts of attraction, power and conflict as they relate to intimate, family and professional relationships and friendships. As permitted by the course director, I use a course-pack consisting of excerpts from eleven IPC textbooks and manuals rather than the one course text noted above.

A Self-Concept Assignment: Communicating Self in Shadow Box Imagery

1shadow…n…1: partial darkness or obscurity…2: a reflected image…3: shelter from danger or observation 4 a: an imperfect and faint representation b: an imitation of something…6: PHANTOM…9: an attenuated form or a vestigial remnant 10 a: an inseparable companion or follower b: one (as a spy or detective) that shadows 11: a small degree or portion...

2shadow vt 1 archaic: SHELTER, PROTECT…5: to represent or indicate obscurely or faintly—often used with forth or out…

3shadow adj…2 a: having an indistinct pattern <= plaid>

shadow box…vi: to box with an imaginary opponent…

shadow box n: a shallow enclosing case…in which something is set for protection and display (Webster’s 1063-4)

The first graded assignment in the course asks the students to apply their understanding of IPC concepts of selfhood to a three-dimensional shadow box of their choice and crafting. The box protects and displays the self/image they arrange within while the images offer an imitation, a reflection, an imperfect representation, a companion piece, spy or, perhaps even, an imaginary opponent of the maker of the box. The student “invents” a self by constructing it.
Authors of IPC textbooks offer diverse models for comprehending selfhood which they commonly segment into concepts of self, self-image, and self-concept. Typically, I offer the students a number of the models and we discuss how the terminology implies different ways of viewing selfhood. For instance, Trenholm and Jenson define “self” as that “central inner force, common to all human beings and yet unique in each, which is the deep source of growth” (42), while Carl Rogers attempts a more systematic rendering. For Rogers, five factors determined self. It is “organized and consistent.” It includes “one's perceptions of all that comprise ‘I’ or ‘me’” and it entails the relationship between I, me and other people and aspects of life. The self is “available to consciousness…but it is not always conscious at any given moment” and, lastly, “the shape of the self is constantly changing, yet always recognizable” (67-89). Alder et al. and Beebe et al. categorize multiple selves. The former authors articulate an “ideal self” or the person we wish to be, a “perceived self” or the person we believe ourselves to be in actuality, and a “presenting self” or the image we create and present to others so as to be socially accepted (Alder et al. 123). Beebe et al. theorize a three part self also. There is the “material self” which is the total of all the tangible things one owns, the “social self” which is variable given one’s interactions with others in different situations, and the “spiritual self” which is constituted by one’s internal feelings, thoughts and values (40-41). As the students quickly point out, common to these definitions of self is an internal sense or state of being, an understanding that self is constituted by others, and that a self, innately or by will, changes, grows, or imagines an ideal future for itself.

The internal and external comprehensions of self correspond to how some IPC scholars theorize self-concept and self-image. In sum, self-image is constituted by the ways that we perceive others see us. It is based on external signs and codes. Self-concept is an integration of our self-image with our internal thoughts, feelings, and values. Joseph DeVito explains,
[Self-concept] is how you perceive yourself: your feelings and thoughts about your strengths and weaknesses and your abilities and limitations. A self-concept develops from images that others have of you; the comparisons you draw between your self and others; your cultural experiences in realms of race, ethnicity, gender, and gender roles; and your evaluation of your own thoughts and behaviors. (Messages, 3rd Edition 41)

Likewise, Taylor et al. define self-concept as “a combination of many factors which includes: what you think you look like; your name; your perceptions of the important things you do and have done; how you feel about yourself; your attitudes toward yourself; others attitudes toward you and; and how others perceive you” (36).

Involved in the development of a self-concept is an understanding of our personality or personalities. Drawing on Carl Jung’s archetypes, IPC scholars distinguish between introverted and extroverted personalities as determined by the direction of a person’s attention and energy. Sensing and intuitive personalities reflect how people gather information. While a sense based person trusts the certainties derived from using her senses, an intuitive person is comfortable with probable or possible knowledge and theoretical processes. Thinking and feeling types refer to how people make decisions and, respectively, correspond to objective and subjective perspectives. As regards ways of being in the world, an organizing personality prefers orderly plans and systems while an adapting type prefers open-ended and flexible patterns. A tense personality is pessimistic and nervous while a calm personality is generally optimistic and confident. While the former worries about how others view him, the latter is not concerned (“Emotionalogic Personal Assessment”).

As noted above, self-image is constituted by the ways that we perceive others see us. Of key importance here is the corporeal surface of the body and how we shape, decorate and display it in order to cast an image of “self” that others will interpret as we intend. In U.S. culture, we are obsessed with our self-images as evidenced by the constant sculpting and redecorating of our corporeal surface so as to express ourselves and signify our class and cultural affiliations. From
nose jobs to face lifts to tummy tucks to breast augmentation to liposuction to collagen implants to hair color to clothing, shoes and contact lenses, we strive to realize an “ideal” body image while yet expressing our own unique personality. In addition to the irony of the goal, the downside of this practice is that many people experience low self-esteem and self-worth when their self-image does not match the “ideal.” The problem lies in our accepting and perpetuating a singular or limited ideal, such as those proposed by the fashion industry. Once we distinguish between the real and the ideal, we realize that there is no ideal, or that there are multiple ideals, or that what we understand to be our real self-image is ideal.

In light of IPC concepts of self, self-concept and self-image, I felt that an exercise that encouraged students to explore how these concepts are signified through visual means might be a productive way to comprehend them. In other words, I was looking for a method that would allow the students to turn the abstract concepts into sensual representations; icons, metonyms, metaphors and other tangible imagery.

As I discuss in Chapter Two, Boal positions Image Theatre in the third stage of his poetics, where participants come to understand theatre as language or a system of signs and codes that communicates meanings. In image theatre, participants speak through the nonverbal images (signs and codes) they make with each others’ bodies. Generally, the image-making exercises and games are designed to highlight how the participants view a selected subject by analyzing how they construct it through embodied imagery. As I describe in Chapter Two, the more structured Image Theatre game involves the group in a cooperative sculpting of “real,” “ideal,” and “transitional” images, a conceptual process I integrate in the shadow box assignment.

As conceived by Boal, Image Theatre allows participants to show their understanding of a problem or oppression without having to rely on the spoken word. The nonverbal emphasis reflects Boal’s understanding that the body is an essential component of theatrical language; that
power is maintained and subverted by means of how the body is used; that nonverbal imagery resonates in a more immediate and flexible way than does its verbal equivalent; that many people are reluctant to express their opinions verbally because they lack confidence in their verbal skills; and that visual imagery is able to transcend barriers of spoken languages and dialects (Boal, *Hamlet and the Baker’s Son* 310).

In my application of Boal’s Image Theatre, I draw on the conceptual more so than practical aspects of the technique. Rather than ask the IPC students to embody imagery, I ask them to craft and display imagery in shadow boxes. My rationale is that embodied imagery often entails using the body in unfamiliar ways in order to express the intended idea, thought or feeling. As Bernice Fisher points out, the unfamiliar use and display of the body and the probable physical contact with others in Image Theatre are threatening to many women and, I would add, men too (193). To avoid such risks, I chose the shadow box format.

In conceptual terms, I am interested in having the students understand and apply visual imagery as a language they can compose so as to communicate meanings: specifically, their understanding of selfhood. By means of the visual icons, metonyms and metaphors they select and arrange in their shadow box, it is my intention that the students realize in sensate and specific terms the abstract concepts and principles of selfhood as expressed in IPC textbooks. It also is my intent that students discover that, just like spoken or print language, visual language is a flexible system of signs and codes that they can play with in inventive ways while, in return, the visual message they send can be interpreted in many ways. This understanding of language affects the students’ communication of selfhood in this assignment (and generally) in two key ways. First, while a student may be relatively assured of her self-concept, when it is presented in public, its meanings become variable due to the different ways people interpret the signs used to represent the concept. In other words, one cannot “fix” one’s self in the social sphere because
the self entails others. Second, by means of the assignment, the students literally craft a self by creative means. In conceptual terms, this crafting translates to the understanding that we construct a self and, in turn, we can construct a self in inventive and creative ways. In Victor Turner’s terms, we can learn to “play well” (27).

In the assignment, Communicating Self in Shadow Box Imagery, the students are asked to show their comprehension and application of IPC concepts of selfhood in a shadow box of their own crafting. The assignment has four parts. First, the student is asked to complete a questionnaire that is designed to help her articulate a self-concept in IPC terms and collect possible images to represent the same. Second, the student constructs a shadow box. Third, the student writes a concept paper in which she describes and analyzes the items in her shadow box vis-à-vis IPC concepts and principles of selfhood. Fourth, the student displays her shadow box in class alongside the shadow boxes of others. Fifth, the student writes a brief reflection paper in which she expresses her experience displaying her shadow box. (See Appendix F for examples of students’ shadow boxes and papers.)

In the first step, the student answers the following questions in written form. (See Appendix E for the complete questionnaire.) The questions are based on IPC concepts and principles of selfhood as drawn from multiple sources. The “Part One” questions address certainties regarding the self and also perceptions of one’s self-image. The questions in “Part Two” direct attention toward conceptual understandings of the self.

**Part One: WHO ARE YOU?**
1. Your name and its connotations
2. Your heritage or cultural background
3. Your self-schemata (e.g., masculinity, femininity; dependent, independent)
4. Your moods or feelings (e.g., happy, sad)
5. Your appearance (e.g., good-looking, unattractive)
6. Your social traits (e.g., friendly, shy)
7. Talents/skills you possess or lack (e.g., musical, tone-deaf)
8. Your intellectual capacity (e.g., smart, stupid)
9. Your beliefs (e.g., religious, environmentalist)
10. Your social roles (e.g., parent, child, spouse)
11. Your physical condition (e.g., healthy, unhealthy)

Part Two: HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR SELF?
1. What are some visions of your self you dream of becoming?
2. What are some visions of your self you fear becoming?
3. How would you define your perceived self, ideal self, and presenting self.
4. How would you define your material self, social self, and spiritual self?
5. How would you define the relationship between your real and ideal self-image?

The third part of the questionnaire, “The Way We See Me,” is a form the student copies and asks two or three acquaintances to complete. Once completed, the forms provide the student with multiple views of himself and are used by the student to answer the three questions in the last part of the questionnaire. In sum, the questions ask the student to compare and contrast the various responses and to express what he learned about himself by means of the activity.

As noted above, the purposes of the questionnaire are to help the student develop a self-concept in terms of IPC principles and to collect images that represent the same—e.g., by drawing on any descriptive words and imagery used in the answers or by making associations between abstract words and the ways they are or might be signified visually. The activity generates analytical thinking in that IPC terms and principles constitute the content of the questions and hence the student has to understand them in order to answer the questions. The third and fourth parts of the questionnaire further stimulate critical thinking in so far as the student is asked to analyze multiple perspectives regarding himself which, thereby, potentially problematize the student’s self-concept or, at least, suggest that the self is perceived and can be configured in different ways.

In the next step of the assignment, the student constructs her shadow box, drawing on the responses to the questionnaire and guided by the following requirements and suggestions. (See Appendix E for the complete handout.)
The imagery you include in your shadow box should address the following factors:

- It should represent your perceived self, ideal self, presenting self, material self, social self and spiritual self.
- It should illustrate the relationship between your real (or perceived self) and ideal self.
- It should illustrate a transitional image that connects your real and ideal self. This image can be structural or visual.
- It should represent your group association and how you see yourself in that group—e.g., center of attention, on the margins, just one of the gang.
- It should represent the key or major roles you assume and how those roles interact or are balanced.
- It should represent your world perspective—e.g., your focus on your career, family, self, marriage, and so forth.
- It should show your desire or need for inclusion, control, and affection.
- It should suggest whether you are an extrovert or an introvert; a person of intuition or sense; a thinking or feeling type; a structured or adaptable type; and a tense or calm personality type.

Composition Guidelines

- You should arrange your images in a collage sequence. A collage interweaves and juxtaposes different images in a single frame, in this case your container.
- Your container should not be smaller than a shoebox.
- You may not use more than two photographs of yourself and/or others.
- Exaggerate differences (conflicts) by working extreme contrasts in the size, color, style and texture of the items or imagery.
- Exaggerate similarities by using repetitive images, shapes, colors and textures.
- Exaggerate the size and style of the imagery.
- Do not explain how the images relate or relate to you and your self-concept.
- Have Fun!!! Be Creative!!!

In the construction of the shadow box, the student may use any kind of container, such as a craft box, pot, chest, bag, decorative hat box, ice chest or lunch box, as long as the container is as big as a shoebox. The student is urged to consider how the container might reflect some of the factors of selfhood she is required to address in the project.

In the third step, the student writes a concept paper of two to three pages in which he describes and analyzes all the items in his shadow box. I use the paper as an assessment tool to evaluate the student’s comprehension and ability to apply the IPC concepts and principles of selfhood.
The students display their shadow boxes in the fourth step. Typically, ten to twelve students display their boxes on one of two days. I try to schedule the presentations in the department’s Black Box theatre since its large size facilitates the set-up, display, and movement between the many boxes. If the theatre is unavailable, I arrange a regular classroom in the manner of an art gallery. Once set-up, the class tours the shadow box displays and then we gather to discuss them. In the exchange, the students offer their interpretations of the boxes, drawing on IPC concepts and principles to articulate what they saw and what sense they made of it. While grounded in the particularities, the discussion often extends to broader concerns the students have regarding religion, class and cultural affiliations, individuality, international events or anxieties regarding the future. For instance, in many of the shadow boxes, Boal’s “image of transition” (between the real and ideal self), is represented by means of maps, images of roads and walkways, open and closed doors and windows, stairways, mazes and dead-ends and also locks, knots, and keys. Most students are quick to pick up on the recurring imagery and, in discussion, it sparks fervent debate regarding the employment options and opportunities “open” or “closed” to their generation in the future.

In the final step of the assignment, the student writes a short, one page reflection paper in which he discusses his experience displaying and hearing his shadow box discussed in class. Also, the student is asked to express what he learned about himself by doing the assignment and how he would feel if the instructor were to give one of the shadow boxes a first place ribbon. The point of the last question is to access how the student has conceptualized the assignment. If he takes it seriously and advocates a winner, then I know I mis-communicated the point of the assignment to him. If, on the other hand, the student explains that ranking different “selves” runs contrary to the aims of the assignment, then I take heart in the efficacy of the assignment.
The reflection paper also allows the student to reclaim ownership of his shadow box-self since, when it is displayed in public, I do not allow the student to express the intent behind his choices. As one student, Brittany, and many others express, this “gag” order is “a little disappointing because I wanted everyone to learn more about me. I wanted to describe everything in my box for a full understanding” (Appendix F 196). As I mention above, my point here is to activate the understanding that one cannot control how their self or a representation of their self is perceived by others; the self alters in light of other selves and vice-versa.

Below, I discuss examples of students’ shadow boxes as they describe them in their concept and reflection papers. My aims are to acknowledge and celebrate their work and also use it as a tool to assess the merits of the assignment. Per the student’s consent, I identify the student by name or use the generic “student” referent.

In the selection or crafting of their shadow box containers, students represent components of their self-concept. Quite often, open and closed containers are used by the students to show their perceptions of themselves as introverted or extroverted types while the details of the container specify traits of the perceived self. One student used “an outside border or frame that has an old splintery look” to represent “how old fashion [sic] I can be at times. I [also] can be stubborn or scornful at times, so that is what the splinters or the pieces of wood sticking out [represent.” To show that she allows “people [to] see the outside of me, but not the whole picture,” the student covered her shadow box with a transparent shirt because “the shirt has a type of foggy or unclear…[texture] to it” (Appendix F 191).

Group affiliations and the student’s world perspective are also expressed by means of the container. Angela explains that she “chose to build my box out of natural materials. The wood, leaves and flowers show the part of me that is dedicated to the environment” (Appendix F 210).
Joel also uses his container to reflect his group affiliation and world view which are embedded with family stories and crafts.

My box is constructed out of cedar wood scraps left over from the "bathroom project." This project is one my mother directed my father to undertake over a year ago. Thirteen months, several thousand dollars, and one correspondence carpenter's course later, my father is still not through. He is now aiming for Mother's Day for completion….I used my mom's old quilt scraps to cover my box. For as long as I can remember, mom has been quilting. Each of her quilts has names that reflect what is going on in [our] household. (Appendix F 206)

Craig’s container represents multiple components. While his race affiliation is embraced and extended to reflect his spiritual self and world perspective, the same signifier, “black,” is defined as “empty” and “vast” which, in terms of selfhood, might be interpreted as self-ambivalence or great possibility.

The first thing that is probably noticed about my shadow box is its color. It is wrapped in black poster board. The choice of black symbolizes a couple things. One, that I like the color black….Secondly, black can be a very empty color. The color of deep space, the vastness between the stars is found in the color black. (Appendix F 198).

In the following excerpt Ryan, who constructed his shadow box out of wood because “it reflect[ed] my strong and solid character,” identifies and analyzes the imagery in his box.

My most personal and important items in my box are also the only two pictures in my box. One is a picture of my dog. I do not consider my dog to be a pet, rather, I treat my dog as though she was my daughter and she is no less of a responsibility to me. The other picture is of my wife Mary. My wife is very important to me and is a large part of who I am….The cross that is mounted in my box is also an important aspect of me. It symbolizes my Christian beliefs and shows my beliefs to be in the center of my personality….

I also possess a strong work ethic as presented by the small tools in my box. These tools are a symbol of my desire to work and to help others. They also show my determination and meticulous attention to detail. Because I could not find any suitable tools to display in my box, I carved and painted my own tools. I would consider myself to have a green thumb. I enjoy plants and the plant in my box expresses that well….Finally, there are my restrictions. In my box is a stack of money that is padlocked and chained to the box. This shows that I am very conservative with my money. I do not spend money, except on my wife. Across the front of my box is a strand of barbed wire. The barbed wire symbolizes my guarded personality. Although I am a fairly open and outgoing person, there are still some barriers to cross before I will truly disclose my feelings and beliefs to others. The last item in my box is a door that states, "Keep Out!"
This represents that part of me that I am not willing to disclose. As with all people, there are parts of me that I do keep to myself. (Appendix F 213-214)

Since Ryan interprets his choices in terms of IPC concepts in a thorough manner, I will not reinterpret them here. Instead, I will address a few points I found compelling. First, it appears Ryan integrates rather than separates the IPC concepts of self. The perceived self is a spiritual self which is also the social self in Ryan’s analysis. Likewise, although highly organized and meticulous, his “green thumb” and the inclusion of a plant suggest an adaptable personality, one willing to be flexible in light of the contingencies of nature and time. This fusion of the structured/adaptable binary is substantiated by Ryan’s choice to extend the tendrils of the plant outside and on top of the wooden box. While “rooted” in the orderly image of self that Ryan composes in his box, his open-ended and flexible side proves to play outside the prevailing order of the box.

Second, Ryan’s observations in the last paragraph express a point that concerns me. Namely, that the assignment implies to the students that self-disclosure is healthy and required. While many students view their selection and display of items as “true” representations of themselves and find the self-disclosure satisfying, I also would like students to comprehend that, at the meta-level of the display, they are “presenting self” in Adler et al.’s terms; i.e., creating and displaying certain self-representations for and in terms of the social context of the classroom. One way I might highlight the contextual imperative is by urging the students to write down of what their boxes would consist if they were not to be publicly displayed and, on their own, analyze the differences and similarities between the self they “present” in class and the self they do not.

In the following excerpt, Katie demonstrates her firm grasp of the IPC concepts of selfhood and the “world perspective” she constructs.
The way my box is set up relates to how I see myself: tall and strong, as if I were standing above everyone's head, looking down to "check things out." I like to be an observer of the world around me. I tend to learn more about myself by watching others. My box is open for all to see, because I am a very open person. At the top rests a sky and at the bottom lies an ocean. I see this as a balance. Like Earth, I am always focused on trying to maintain balance.

The inside of my box is lined with a collage of road maps. I believe that on Earth, I am on a journey. The maps symbolize this journey, not quite knowing exactly where you are going, just taking one street at a time. On the maps are smiley faces. I am an upbeat, happy person. The clouds at the top represent my belief in God. I believe in eternal life in heaven.

The ladder represents my corporate ladder. I used the ladder because realistically, you can't get to the next step without taking the first. Right now, my first step is to finish college. I know that I want a successful career, and I want to be respected in the corporate world. The watch is significant, not only in what it represents, but also in how it is positioned in the box. I struggle with the idea of time. I am a planner, which is both positive and negative. It is good because it allows me to be able to get things done. However, the restrictions placed on me because of time discourage me. This is why the watch leans against the ladder, and drapes into the cup. (Appendix F 202-203)

Katie’s shadow box and analysis are striking to me because, in Boal’s terms, she is “the protagonist of [her] own life” and world (Boal, Games xxii). Further, as constructed by Katie, this/her world is operatic: extending from the heavens to the sea, well-balanced, and open for all to view with ease. Indeed, rather than a disorderly collage, Katie creates a “box set” that depicts a well-ordered, verisimilitude world in the placement, color and texture of the sea, sky, and roads between. Even the smiley faces “fit in,” as sunflowers on a field of green perhaps or, maybe, they are a Katie’s chorus, cheering the protagonist as she climbs the ladder to the heavens of success. In fact, I have trouble believing that Katie doesn’t “quite know…exactly where [she] is going” until my eyes fasten on the watch floating in the sea: a surreal image that interrupts the seamless fusion of selves and, as Katie observes, “dis-courages” the uniform world she has conceived and created for herself and us.

In the reflection papers, the students express their opinions regarding the display and in-class discussion of their shadow boxes. As noted above, in many cases, students take the opportunity to reclaim authority of their self-representation and its meanings. Typically, students
clarify the intent behind items which, in their view, were mis-interpreted by their classmates in discussion. Like Brittany, whom I quoted above, Angela recounts, “the whole time it was being looked at I was wishing that I could explain my box. I wanted to tell people…what everything meant” (Appendix F 211).

The students’ desire to clarify meaning gives rise to a paradox, in theoretical terms. While the tradition of scientific rationalism has taught us to believe in the facticity of material visuals (“seeing is believing”), this exercise suggests otherwise or, just as significant, it suggests to us that the truth of visual constructs is variable; it depends on who is doing the “seeing.” In a sense, then, the assignment places the student in the shadowy space between quantitative and qualitative epistemologies. On the one hand, the student understands that the items she puts in the box represent her, truthfully and factually. On the other hand, the presentation of the box in public interrogates the facticity of her message or, more precisely, its agencies. That the design of the assignment is a fusion of IPC content (concepts and principles of selfhood) and a performance method is not insignificant here but, as I argued earlier, in the chapter, the fusion is not new either. Play, performance and experiential learning processes are innate to interpersonal communication in everyday life. As Turner contends, “Human beings play their roles in human ways” (46; emphasis in original). If, then, at the theoretical level, the assignment highlights the fact/fictive effect of the integrated disciplines, I believe it can only benefit our study of human communication. If, at the practical level, the shadow box assignment leaves the student pondering as to the “partial” and “imperfect” effect of all self-representations, I believe this is beneficial too.

A related topic that arises in the students’ reflection papers concerns self-disclosure and their anxieties regarding it. As I discussed above, the students’ discomfort troubles me to the extent that the “presenting self” does not appear to be a component in many students’
understanding of their self-concept and self-image. The lack of comprehension is less their fault than my own in so far as I could take more time in class to explain this aspect of selfhood and its pertinence to the assignment. Above, I note one way I might address the limitation—e.g., by prompting the students to compare and contrast the self they “present” in class and the self they do not, on their own and hence without risk of disclosure. Meanwhile, many students are proving inventive in devising ways to mark the difference on their own. Ryan, for instance, used barbed wire and a “Keep Out!” sign while the first student I quoted in this section used a semi-transparent shirt to cover her box. In her reflection paper, the student wrote, “I felt like my privacy was invaded in some ways. When they had to look hard or move the shirt I felt relieved because it served its purpose as hiding the true me” (Appendix F 192). The student’s creative solution did not go unnoticed by others, as Katie implies in an excerpt from her reflection paper,

> When I first began to work on my assignment, I perceived myself as being "an open book." Once I put my project on display, I began to feel uncomfortable with the idea of people knowing too much information about me….If I had it to do over, I would probably have placed a sheer cloth over the box to only allow the class to see a "glimpse" of who I am. (Appendix F 204)

It is the students’ discovery of creative and inventive ways to represent their self-concept that signals the benefits and success of the assignment for me. I believe most students learn to “play well,” reveling in the “novelty” that “emerges from [their] unprecedented combination…of familiar elements (Turner 27). I cannot say if the students comprehend the theoretical ramifications of their discovery. Namely, by literally constructing a self by creative means, they demonstrate our capability to do the same in our everyday lives. Nonetheless, many students appear to understand the self-constructing process as one that engages their imaginative and creative abilities which, for Ryan, includes his power tools. In his reflection paper, he offers,

> My shadow box displayed my personality, my likes and dislikes, and an overall view of who I am. Disclosing this information was not difficult nor was it embarrassing, but it did allow me to look at myself from a different perspective, as well as make me use
my imagination and creativity…. [At first] I thought that a collage or shadow box was a weird idea, but knowing I had to do it I continued to brainstorm. When I finally came up with an idea and began to develop it I actually began to enjoy the project. I do not need much of an excuse to use power tools and this was a good reason. I began to think of more and more things I could display and different ways of displaying [them]. (Appendix F 215)

While, in his papers, Ryan presents a self that funds his creativity with sound reasoning, just as valuable are those students who discover an identity in the chance factors of life and experience. Craig relates,

If I'd had the chance to redo the box I'm not sure I would get the same thing. It was a very spontaneous process. Items would sort of present themselves to me….A handful of marbles would scream to be added. I would look at the screaming marbles wondering why I would want to put them in the box. I'm not a kid, I'd think. Eureka! That's the perfect reason to put them in the box. (Appendix F 200; emphasis in original)

Whatever the case, the shadow box assignment reminds us that the representation of self in public life is always a “shadowy” affair; a partial and imperfect but nonetheless an inseparable companion of who we are.

A Nonverbal Norms Assignment: Testing Norms by Invisible Role Playing

The second assignment in the IPC course asks the students to test nonverbal norms as identified in IPC textbooks by means of Boal’s Invisible Theatre technique or an alternative method. That is, students have an option as regards the method they use to complete the assignment.

Defined simply, nonverbal communication is communication without words or “messages expressed by other than linguistic means” (Adler et al. 466). To manage the broad and diverse range of nonverbal messages, IPC scholars categorize them. Adler et al. identify eleven categories: kinesics or body movement and gestures; the face and eyes; smell; touch; physical appearance or attractiveness; clothing; proxemics; the physical environment; territoriality; time; and the paralinguistic features of the voice (242-266). Within each category,
sub-categories are required to articulate the immense number and complexity of meanings a nonverbal sign can convey. For instance, DeVito explains that a person’s clothing can convey at least ten types of messages. They are one’s economic level and background, one’s educational level and background, one’s social position and background, one’s level of success and sophistication, and one’s moral character and trustworthiness (Messages, 3rd Edition 258).

To establish the basic function of nonverbal (et al.) messages, a social scientific discourse of normative values or standards is used. While there is some debate regarding the essential or social and culturally determined nature of norms, scholars agree that people enact, interpret and evaluate norms in terms of a code of appropriateness. For example, DeVito tells us that lower-status individuals, such as secretaries, court clerks and hotel janitorial staff, do not initiate touching behavior with higher-status persons, such as corporate bosses, judges and hotel guests, because such behavior is understood as inappropriate. As regards appearance, it has become a proven norm that women who are physically attractive go out on more dates, receive higher grades in college, persuade males with greater ease and receive lighter court sentences (Messages, 3rd Edition 258).

Given the questionable appropriateness of some norms, such as that related directly above, I initially thought that Boal’s Invisible Theatre technique might be a useful tool to investigate norms since it involves the “subversion of ‘normal’ behavior within…society” (Games xx; emphasis in original). In other words, Invisible Theatre actors interrogate normative behavior they find inappropriate in their particular society or culture. To do so, the performers enact an arresting scene in public that highlights the norm and which bystanders take to be “real.” Ideally, the enactment elicits discussion or debate on the part of the bystanders, hence rendering them spect-actors in Boal’s terms.
As I noted in Chapter Two, Invisible Theatre is highly controversial within as well as outside TO circles. The debate centers on whether covert play-acting in public is ethical or, to broaden the issue, whether it is appropriate to “experiment…on people without their consent” (McConachie 250). The concern entails a paradox in so far as liberal activists may use Invisible Theatre to manipulate others for what they “consider the greater good” and thereby they “violate liberal norms of individual freedom and choice” (McConachie 251). Boal’s response to such concerns is that Invisible Theatre is acceptable because it has the potential to provoke responses that cannot be attained by even the most realistic or radical of stage performances. Further, it is able to reach audiences who do not or cannot attend “visible” theater. It also is an important tool in countries where the level of oppression is such that open discussion on issues is impossible. Finally, according to Boal, Invisible Theatre “never places itself in an illegal position because it does not intend to violate the law. Rather, it intends to question the legitimacy of the law, which is a very different matter altogether” (Hamlet and the Baker’s Son 234).

While the political ethics of Invisible Theatre concern me, I continue to be intrigued by the potential benefits of students questioning the “legitimacy” of nonverbal norms they feel are inappropriate in our society or a particular cultural group. To exercise their covert interrogation, the students have to identify and analyze the norm, the social codes that inform it, and how, where and by whom it is commonly enacted. Similar questions need to be pursued to develop the scene they enact. However, just as problematic norms can be interrogated by means of Invisible Theatre, so too can norms deemed valuable by students. In other words, Invisible Theatre can be used to test the validity or significance of a social or cultural norm and thereby the students potentially gain a better understanding of its importance to us and our social system. While I personally waver on the question of ethics (what ethics and whom do they serve), I
continue to use Invisible Theatre—taking care to discuss the issue of ethics with the students and giving them an option whether to use the method or not.

In the assignment, Testing Norms by Invisible Role Playing, the students are required to either interrogate a nonverbal norm they find problematic or test one that interests them. To do so, they may opt to use invisible role playing or they may conduct a social scientific survey in which they collect data from subjects with their full and voluntary consent. My assessment of the students’ work is based on a paper they write. In the paper, they identify the nonverbal norm they tested or interrogated, provide a rationale for conducting the experiment, detail the enactment (or, in the case of the survey, their method of collection), and analyze the results. I also evaluate the students in terms of a short oral prospectus they offer prior to conducting the experiment. Below, I draw on students’ papers to document and analyze the assignment and its merits and drawbacks. Per the student’s consent, I identify the student by name or use the generic “student” referent.

In the introductory IPC class I taught in the summer of 2000, the students selected a range of nonverbal norms to test, and their rationale varied. Laura was intrigued by DeVito’s observations regarding appearance norms, wondering whether we “‘judge a book by its cover’” or not. Laura explains,

The goal of my experiment was to see what role physical attractiveness and clothing play in the area of nonverbal communication. Are people really judged on the way they look? Do people really treat you different based on what you’re wearing? These were all questions that I was interested in finding answers to. (Appendix G 221).

Gina also was interested in appearance and clothing norms. She wanted to test if inappropriate clothing would “cause a reaction on observers and what kind of reaction” it would be. “Would they pretend not to see anything? Would they say something?” (Appendix G 228). While Lindsey based her experiment in relational norms as established through conversation, she
integrated nonverbal norms of touch and proxemics. She queries, “How would you react if some random person were to come up to you and carry on a normal conversation as if you were someone else? Would you inform that person...or play along?” Later, Lindsey states, “I also wanted to test the nonverbal touch. I was looking to see how many people would actually let a stranger touch them, maybe even go as far as to hug them” (Appendix G 228).

Kyle and Katherine were interested in kinesics norms. Kyle’s focus was relational. He thought a “great” test would be to “constantly” fall asleep while on a date since “people do not fall asleep randomly in public or on a date” (Appendix G 226). Katherine’s kinesics norm concerned the behavior we expect of pregnant women. She felt that “dressing up as a pregnant woman and going out to a bar to drink beer and smoke cigarettes” was offensive and hence worth testing (Appendix G 219). Likewise, Tate’s rationale was that “breaking a social norm should be just plain gross” and so he decided to test kinesics etiquette in a restaurant by eating the food that other diners left on their plates (Appendix G 224). Another student’s experiment was to try to hitchhike in a relatively deserted area because he thought it would be “fun.” A few other students offered similar rationale and while I appreciate the impulse to have “fun” and use the assignment to expand one’s own “normative” limits, the students’ choices did not meet the aims of the assignment. Below, I summarize the details of two of the experiments I introduced above and then offer the students’ findings in all cases.

To test whether people judge others based on their appearance, Laura “decided to go to the mall dressed two different ways to see how the salespeople and shoppers treated me.” Laura also decided to try on clothing that was clearly too small for her and test how salesclerks and other customers, men and women, reacted to her appearance. “The process took about three hours over two days and covered five different stores” (Appendix G 221).
On the first day, Laura dressed in a “very tasteful” manner and, in all the shops she visited, the salespeople were polite and eager to help her. In the upscale Lerner of New York, Laura tried on a shirt that she “could barely get…over my head.” Upon emerging from the dressing room, “the saleswoman’s eyes got very large…. [And] she didn’t say anything. However, soon she tilted her head to the side and said that it wasn’t that bad.” The other customers in the dressing area “told me right away that it was too small.” Laura found that the clerks and customers in the other stores reacted similarly except for in The Gap where the salesgirl “almost burst out into laughter” and the salesman “licked his lips” and smirked when she emerged from the dressing room in a very tight purple dress. When Laura asked him what he thought of her appearance, he was “tactful” while the “other people in the store were more honest” (Appendix G 221).

On the second day of her experiment, Laura dressed in “a pair of Wal-Mart sandals… men’s boxers, a ripped Metallica T-shirt, and black leggings.” She teased her hair and “wore bright blue eye shadow and pink lipstick.” In Lerner of New York, the saleswomen first stared at Laura “with big eyes” and then ignored her. In response to her donning a very small outfit, a “saleslady immediately said that it was too tight.” At JCPenny, the clerks “were more tolerable” because the store has a “wider variety of customers.” At The Gap, the customers smirked or whispered to each other about her appearance while “the saleslady was more tactful” though “also more honest. She didn’t even seem surprised that I had chosen such a horrible outfit. It was as if she assumed someone dressed in the way that I was would naturally have bad taste.” In the upscale Georgiou, the clerks were similarly “honest.” One saleswoman told Laura that the dress “was way too tight and that it didn’t suit me. She was never rude, but she did seem relieved that I finally left….I could tell this because she rolled her eyes after I told her that I didn’t want [to buy] anything” (Appendix G 221-222).
To initiate her experiment, Lindsey adopted the role of “a bouncy schoolgirl” with an “enthusiasm that would make most people nauseated.” Her first “victim” was a woman in her thirties….I practically ran over to her and skidded to a halt two feet from her face and exclaimed ‘ANGELA?!’” Lindsey continued to “babble” and the woman let her “carry on.” Lindsey then writes,

I leaned over and touched her arm and then before she could move I gave a hug. The woman then told me that I was not who I thought she was and she apologized. I thought that was odd that she felt sorry for me. That was just my first case but there were several similar to this woman’s reaction. (Appendix G 228)

The men, on the other hand, “were different.” Lindsey recounts,

Several guys interrupted me before I got through half of my speech and bluntly said you have the wrong person. One guy laughed and walked away from me. Then there was a man who asked me out and another who told me he remembered me and started asking about others we had supposedly gone to school with. I played along…and then without warning he leaned over and gave me a peck on the cheek. The funny part would be to see my reaction to that nonverbal response. The most interesting result was the old man who I acted as though he were my uncle Robert….The old man coughed…looked around…chuckled a little…and said “sweetheart, I am not your uncle.” He was so precious I felt bad for tricking him. So I told him about my experiment and he laughed and said he hoped he was of some help. (Appendix G 228-229)

In all, Lindsey approached twenty-five people and discovered that “most of the females tended to feel sorry for me and the males were somewhat flattered to be approached.” Lindsey found no other recurring patterns. While Lindsey’s experiment tells us little about nonverbal norms, it highlights two recurring norms regarding the use of invisible role playing in the assignment. Namely, the student revealing the artifice of the enactment at some point in the experiment and, as Lindsay termed them, the “victims” of the experiment “playing along” with the performer. I discuss both points below.

As regards nonverbal norms, Laura “concluded that when she dressed more tastefully, she found that the clerks were less forthcoming in telling her that the outfits she tried on were too tight while, when she dressed “casually,” they were “more honest.” Laura speculates that, in the
former case, the clerks “thought I might actually buy the outfit” whereas, in the latter case, they did not. Laura also came to the conclusion that “men are more honest than women are when dealing with clothing” and “customers… more honest than salespeople….However, in the end… all people treated me fairly rude when [I] dressed down….Before the experiment, I really thought everyone would treat me pretty much the same, but that was not the result.” In closing, Laura reflects that the experiment, “taught me to think twice when I see someone dressed differently than myself and not to always jump to conclusions about that person’s life or situation. It just goes to show that you can’t judge a book by its cover” (Appendix G 222-223).

To test appearance and clothing norms, Gina dressed in heavy snow duds and, in the midst of the summer heat, went to sunbathe at pool in her apartment complex. Gina discovered that, in response to her inappropriate clothing, people avoided eye contact with her although they would stare at her whenever possible. They also proved to move away from her so as to “be accepted by others” and not associated with “the strange person.” When Gina struck up conversations with the bathers, they did not comment on her clothing because, Gina speculates, “we try to avoid confrontations and awkward experiences.” In sum, the “experiment… confirmed to me once again that clothing tells people a lot about someone and that there is appropriate clothing for every occasion” (Appendix G 218).

Kyle’s test of a relational kinesics norm confirmed the norm. His date “could not handle the way I was acting; it did not fit her perception of a normal date. When things do not fit a certain pattern, most people would rather get rid of what is unusual than adapt to the situation” (Appendix G 227). In testing the kinesics norms regarding the behavior of pregnant women, Katherine found “that ALL the people in the restaurant were conscious of what I [the pregnant woman] was doing and that it was wrong. It was all really disturbing, it bothered me a whole lot, and was very socially unacceptable…. [The] experiment was absolutely horrible, I hated it, and I
will never do it again” (Appendix G 220). Tate’s test of kinesics etiquette in two restaurants taught him that “young persons have a slightly higher tolerance for the disgusting” than the older people “but are more expressive in that disgust.” Also, as regards “ethical matters,” Tate felt that he misrepresented the homeless because, as he saw it, many diners associated his behavior with the assumed behavior of people who are poor, hungry and without homes (Appendix G 225).

As the above examples suggest, by means of invisible role playing, the students conducted experiments that tested more so than interrogated nonverbal and other social-cultural norms. Generally, the selected norms were broad while the experiments were localized and specific, e.g., Gina donning winter garb in the midst of summer to test appearance and clothing norms. As a result, most of the students’ experiments do not shed new light on our understanding of the norm although, in most cases, they do confirm it. Significantly, in the conclusions of their papers, many students prove to abstract the norm to a social code that they express in more political and active terms than the code of “appropriateness.” For instance, Kyle and Gina reflect on how people “get rid of” or avoid those who appear unusual, strange or awkward and I believe Tate’s experiment, as a whole, is similarly oriented. In Laura’s experiment and paper, she deals directly with the social and economic class codes of clothing norms which, she concludes, are intact and problematic to her. By means of the assignment, then, the students do learn about and analyze nonverbal norms. They also “try them on,” entering not only the field of their study but also the bodies of those who enact or, in some cases, receive the brunt of “appropriate” behavior. In Boal’s terms, the students become spect-actors, simultaneously enacting and analyzing their own and other people’s behavior.

For many of the students, the experiential testing of norms is enlightening; for others, a confirmation of knowledge; for many, fun; and for a good handful, an experience that is “absolutely horrible” (Katherine, Appendix G 220). Katherine’s horror was due, it appears, to
her conflating the role she was enacting with herself. “Forgetting momentarily that [she] was performing an experiment,” Katherine felt that the “very mean stares” were directed at her and, as she relates, “I just couldn’t handle all [those] people thinking such horrible things about ME!” (Appendix G 220; emphasis in original). To ease her anxiety, Katherine revealed her “true” identity to one of the waiters who agreed to keep her “secret and also to stir up the others in hope of a confrontation” (Appendix G 220). Katherine’s decision to alter her “invisible” role to an “opaque” or “translucent” alternative (McConachie 252) is a common strategy among the students I have taught. In the group I discussed above only Laura retained the invisibility of her role. While I would like to say that students subvert the invisible role playing for ethical reasons, based on their papers, it appears their reasons are more like that of Katherine’s. They want someone to know they are not inappropriate. Laura aside, Lindsey was the only student who revealed her role because she “felt bad for tricking” the “old man” (Appendix G 228). In all cases, the person who acquired the unexpected role of confidant played along, becoming an “agent provocateur” in Katherine’s and Tate’s cases, a bemused supporter in Gina’s and Lindsay’s experiment, or, as in Kyle’s scenario, a “deus ex machina” who promised to tell all once the experiment was over.

In some classes, students have chosen to acknowledge the “invisible” illusion deliberately by integrating a Joker figure who, at some point in the scene, informs the bystanders of the experiment. Thereby, the Joker provokes discussion regarding the content of the depicted scene or the game playing itself. Typically, bystanders enjoy the “joke,” as long as it is not aimed directly at them. Other students have acknowledged the illusion by defamiliarizing the scene. For instance, in spring 2002, a group of male students set up a camp site, at noon, in the middle of the quadrangle which is a large commons area in the middle of campus. Their set consisted of a tent, sleeping bags, lounge chairs, hunting gear, ice chest, flashlights, a fake fire and
marshmallows on sticks to roast over it. The scene they enacted “cited” action and lines from the popular cult film, *The Blair Witch Project*. Some of the campers went in search of a lost friend while another held vigil at the campsite. In short order, a good part of the audience was involved too, singing camp songs and roasting marshmallows around the fake fire. Due to the “strange” physical context in which the scene was set and the group’s citation of the popular film, the invisible illusion was made vividly apparent.

The group’s objective was to interrogate territorial norms regarding the use of public space and, while intriguing, the issue was overwhelmed by the “citation” of the film’s action and lines. Nevertheless, the group’s “failure” is significant; it taught me the potential value of using “opaque” rather than invisible role playing techniques in the classroom. By clearly signaling the artifice of the event and making the “rules” for audience interaction simple and easy to access, the group proved to incite the audience to play with them. The bystanders did not avoid the strange and inappropriate behavior of the campers in the quad because the rules for playing were clear; the game was fair. In a democratic society where free speech and assembly are allowed and individual rights are a treasured ethical norm, perhaps such an “opaque” frame will encourage audience participation in novel events that, with some savvy crafting, are ethical, fun and have a critical point that the audience engages in and analyzes. Perhaps, then, we can all play well.

**A Conflict Awareness Assignment: Adapting to Others**

Interpersonal conflicts and their management are the focus of the last unit I cover in the IPC course. In this section, I document and describe how I applied a fusion of Boal’s Forum Theatre and the Joker System to an assignment I call Adapting to Others.

To initiate the process, the class is divided into groups and each group is given a short dramatic script that depicts a conflict in an intimate, familial, or professional relationship or
friendship. (See Appendix H for script examples.) Based on the script, the students are to develop a presentation in which they investigate the conflict or an aspect of it in multiple ways. As in Forum Theatre, the assignment asks the participants to stage and “rehearse” possible solutions to a conflict while, in the manner of the Joker System, an eclectic mix of scenes is required, over which a Joker-host presides. The students’ presentation is to include the following "scenes": a dedication; a scene that shows the conflict; a scene in which all the characters express their particular point of view; a scene that encapsulates all the viewpoints into a single visual image; a series of short scenes that show various resolutions to the conflict such as a win-win solution, lose-lose solution, a compromise solution, and a win-lose solution; a commercial; audience interaction in which the audience offers possible solutions to the conflict; and host commentary, interview, and concluding remarks.

Below I document the process drawing on the work of a single student group which consisted of Carolyn, Jeff, Lisa, Monica, and Vaughn. The members were students in the IPC class I taught in spring 2001. The group received a script that depicted the conflicts of the Hatch Family. In the script, the characters are the husband, Pete, the wife, Marge, a son, Brad, and Jenny, the daughter. The main conflicts in the family concern the gendered roles and expectations Pete and Marge enact, household and work responsibilities prevailing over productive family interactions, generational rifts between the parents and children and, generally, ineffective conflict management abilities.

The first step in the students’ processing of the assignment is to identify the “conflict starters” and the “conflict management strategies” the characters enact. Conflict starters are questions we ask others that tend to initiate conflict, such as, “Why are you always so late?” Conflict management strategies are the negative and positive ways we attempt to resolve
conflict. According to DeVito, most individuals fail to manage conflict successfully (Messages, 3rd Edition 278).

Based on the script, the students discovered that the wife and mother, Marge, instigates the most conflicts. Her edgy questions and comments include, “Pete, can we talk about it some other time? I mean, I can't worry about some uncertain future right now." "Well, we don't really have a choice, do we?" "You know we have to go, Pete." "What do you mean, Pete, that I'll work it out somehow? We'll work it out." "Great, so why am I cooking dinner?" And, "We're having your parents over for dinner on Sunday. It's your mother's birthday, remember? And I've got to cook dinner." The group felt that Marge’s instigation of conflicts was understandable since she is the domestic glue that holds the family and home together. Everything concerns or is made to concern her. In addition to raising the children and running the home, she also works full time and, hence, her harried questions and responses are due less to some innate trait than to lack of time.

The group decided that Pete’s conflict “starters” are reactive to Marge. While he is busy too, with his job and managing the household finances, he would like to spend some intimate time with his wife. In short, the group felt Pete was frustrated. His conflict starters include, “I’m sure you can work it out somehow” and “Forget the proposal. They can wait. I can’t.”

The group found that the son, Brad, initiates conflict with his harried mother when he asks, "Did you get a present, Mom?" And the group understood that the daughter, Jenny, feels ignored and hence she pouts, "What about me? Don't I count?"

To identify and analyze the conflict management strategies in the Hatch Family script, the students drew on IPC concepts regarding conflict. One widely accepted approach to studying conflict behavior identifies three basic strategies or tactics. The first is nonconfrontational behavior which is characterized by avoidance, withdrawal, and being indirect. The second is
confrontational and involves a person asserting his or her authority or perspective over others in order to control and manipulate the problem, its solution and outcomes. The third basic type of conflict behavior is cooperative and involves the parties in seeking a solution they all find acceptable (Beebe et al. 252). Within these broad categories, scholars identify particular strategies. Adler et al. specify “avoidance” as a nonassertive (or nonconfrontational) response to conflict in which a person ignores or evades the problems that are contributing to his or her sense of lack and unhappiness. An “avoider” refuses to fight, making it difficult for others to express their anger or frustration to him (463). “Blame” can be a confrontational or nonconfrontational strategy as it is characterized by a person who attributes the causes of a problem to others or devotes his energies to finding someone to blame and hence avoids tackling the issues head on (DeVito, Messages, 3rd Edition 380). A merger of nonconfrontational and confrontational behavior is found in the tactic DeVito identifies as “gunnysacking.” In this case, a person stores up grievances over time and then unloads them at a critical moment to instigate or perpetuate a conflict (Messages 3rd Edition 303).

With these concepts in mind, the students found that the Hatch Family is largely a family of avoiders, although Marge will unload her gunnysack of grievances when it gets too full. Signs of avoidance in Marge’s dialogue include, "Pete, can we talk about it some other time?" which elicits an avoidance response from Pete, "Okay! We'll save it." Marge also enacts avoidance tactics when she suggests, "Why don't you and Brad take a walk down to Baskin-Robbins and buy some ice cream for dessert tonight, and you and I will have a private chat after dinner," and "Let's ignore it. It's after six and we should start supper." Marge unloads her gunnysack when she reminds Pete, "We're having your parents over for dinner on Saturday. It's your mother's birthday, remember? And I've got to cook dinner." Seeking attention, blame is cast by Jenny when she pipes up, "All you guys ever do is talk to each other. What about me? Don't I count?"
In the second step of the process, the students assign roles and each writes a point of view narrative for the character they will enact. The students are to take care that, by means of the narrative, the character identifies what she or he sees to be the conflict(s) and whom it entails. Also, the character should imply the kind of relationship she or he has with the other parties. For instance, she may be in contact or involved with one person, intimate with another while trying to repair her relationship with a third. Or, her relationship with one or more may be at a stage of deterioration or dissolution. Further, each character should express what they desire from the other party or parties involved in the conflict as they see it and what they plan to do to resolve it.

Below are the point of view narratives of the Hatch Family as written by the student group.

Marge: All I ever do around here is work, clean, cook, run errands for the children, and help take care of our financial status. When I get home at night, I don't feel like dealing with everyone's problems. I have enough of my own problems to deal with. Most of the problems can wait until another time so I can relax after a hard day at work. I know the kids need me for things, but I just wish Pete would help with some of these chores also. I mean they are his children too. Just because I am the mother doesn't mean I have to do all the housework. I work too, and Pete doesn't realize how much I hold this family together. I just need a break from everybody. I mean Jenny thinks that the entire world revolves around her and thinks I can just stop everything I am doing to take care of her every need. And poor Brad, I know he doesn't mean to aggravate me but he always needs something and he waits until the last minute to ask me. I am so frustrated.

Pete: I am trying to be a caring husband and father, and I do thoroughly love my wife and kids, but it is hard sometimes to balance everything at one time. Marge wants me to put everything off for some other time, and that's fine, but doesn't she realize that we're going to have to deal with things, such as my job sooner or later? Every time I try to bring up the topic to Marge, she dismisses it as if it were unimportant. No one wants to deal with the subject of me possibly losing my job. But I have to deal with all the financial aspects of the household, especially when Marge overdraws the account. These things need to be dealt with. Also, I shouldn't have to deal with stupid things like this trashcan ordeal; I have more pressing things on my mind. It seems like Marge is more interested in everything else than in our marriage. It is really starting to upset me that she doesn't have time for us. I understand that she has work to do sometimes, but can't that wait every now and then?

Brad: My mom forgot about the present and the party. Nobody ever remembers me; everybody always thinks that the things in my life are not important. No one pays any attention to the things I say. I want my mom to start paying more attentions to me. I don't like being ignored. I wish my dad wouldn't cut me off when I am talking to mom. I
wish people would do things I want them to instead of acting like I wasn't there. The only person I can really talk to is Jenny and even she forgets me sometimes. I feel like Mom and Dad have so many other problems and they don't help me. Aren't I more important? Why can't my parents be like Chris's parents? They always do what he tells them to. Instead of asking mom to do things, I will leave notes around for her to see. Maybe she won't get so mad at me when I need something.

Jenny: I have all kinds of problems in my life. I have to deal with issues such as school, my friends, and boys. I feel like mom and dad don't listen to me at all. It is hard trying to their perfect little daughter when they don't even listen to anything I say. Brad says I am a crybaby but if mom and dad wouldn't ignore me maybe I wouldn't cry so much. Like the other day, I really needed to talk to mom. My boyfriend, Jason, cheated on me with my friend Lucy and I was totally heartbroken. I needed a shoulder to cry on so I went downstairs and asked mom to help me and she totally blew me off. She said to wait until after dinner, but I couldn't. It needed to be talked about now. Of course I cried, she doesn't even care about me. All she cares about is her work.

In the students’ narratives, the internal subtext of each character is revealed. Marge’s point of view centers on her endless responsibilities to her family, job and home. She feels that she cannot meet all the responsibilities on her own and needs the help and support of her family. Her major point of contention is that she feels her husband is lax in helping to raise the children and manage the household. If he would involve himself more, she would have the time and be willing to repair their deteriorating relationship.

Pete’s point of view is focused toward the frustration he feels toward his wife. As he sees it, his wife does not show support for him, particularly in light of his failing career. While he would like to spend more intimate time with Marge, she is not interested. He feels that “things need to be dealt with” but does not offer any suggestions as to how the problems might be handled.

Brad’s point of view is directed toward the failings of his parents. His mother forgets important events in his life, his father silences him, and they both ignore him. He feels that his only confidant is his sister and she often ignores him too. As he sees it, the solution to his problems rests with his mother. Like Brad, Jenny feels that her parents ignore her, although she
is particularly desirous of her mother’s attention and nurturing. For the most part, her point of view is directed inward, toward herself.

In the third step of the process, the students conceive of and write a number of possible solutions to the family conflict. To do so, they draw on conflict solution formats as articulated by DeVito in his textbook *Messages*. The formats are a win-win solution, a lose-lose solution, a compromise solution, and a win-lose solution. According to DeVito, conflicting parties should avoid a win-lose solution since only one person achieves what she needs or desires and the other does not. Likewise, lose-lose solutions should be avoided because no one’s needs or desires are realized. DeVito advocates solutions that involve compromise because both parties will benefit in some way although sacrifice on all parts is necessary too. The ideal situation is when everyone realizes what they need or desire: a win-win solution (3rd Edition 321). In light of DeVito’s solution formats, the Hatch Family student group wrote the following scenes of resolution.

**Win-Win Solution:**

Pete: Okay guys, I have an idea that might solve a lot of our problems.  
Brad: Well daddy, tell us what your idea is.  
Pete: Let's have a family meeting every Sunday night so that we can put our thoughts together concerning the week to make things go smoother around here.  
Marge: Yes, that sounds great, normally during the week we don't really get to discuss a lot of things.  
Jenny: Good, now I can get a word in.

**Lose-Lose Solution:**

Pete: Honey, it’s a possibility I could get fired soon.  
Marge: Pete, I don’t have time to discuss this, I have too much on my mind.  
Brad: Mom, I really need to get my friends present for his party tomorrow.  
Marge: Brad, I can’t deal with you right now.  
Jenny: Shut up! I am trying to watch television.

**Compromise Solution:**

Jenny: Oh my gosh, Mom, I really need to talk to you now. Please, I have a major problem.  
Marge: Honey, I understand, but I am in the middle of talking with your father. After dinner you and I can go into your room and talk.
Pete: Marge, if you and Jenny are going to talk after dinner, I will take Brad to get Chris's present.
Brad: Thanks daddy.

Win-Lose Solution for Pete:
Pete: Marge, what about us? I want to spend some quiet time with you, alone.
Marge: No, honey, I don't have time. I've got a lot of work to catch up on. Not tonight!
Pete: Okay, Marge.

Win-Lose Solution for Jenny:
Jenny: Mom, we really need to talk, I have a major problem.
Brad: But mom I need to get Chris's present. His party is tomorrow.
Marge: Jenny, I don't have time to talk to you tonight. I have to get Brad's present for Chris.

Win-Lose Solution for Marge:
Pete: Marge, I really want some quiet time with you tonight, alone.
Marge: I really have a lot of work to do.
Pete: No, do it tomorrow. I wear the pants around here.
Marge: All right, Pete, whatever you say.

Win-Lose Solution for Brad:
Brad: Mom I need to get Chris's present. His party is tomorrow.
Jenny: But Mom, we really need to talk, I have a major problem.
Marge: Brad, I don't have time to get Chris's present for you tonight. I have to talk to Jenny tonight.

The win-win solution that the students wrote is deliberately “magical.” The solution relies on Marge and Pete finding time for the family to meet and, if time is found, on the meeting being productive. In short, the solution rests on the assumption that the time and communication issues of the family have been resolved. The compromise solution the students wrote might have addressed exactly these issues by showing the family members discussing what each is willing to “sacrifice” in order to make more time for the others. Although the students show the family negotiating time, the compromise comes easily, without struggle and debate. In short, it too is “magical.” The lose-lose solution depicts the deterioration of the family since none of them care enough to listen to each other. Each is maintaining their own isolated little world. The win-lose solutions highlight the drawbacks of this format in that the needs or desires of the “losing” party
are not addressed. As in the gunnysacking strategy, the loser’s repressed needs or desires will erupt again in time and, hence, the win-lose solution is an illusion.

In the fourth step of the process, the students write a dedication, the host’s commentary and concluding remarks. The dedication should explain the relevance of the topic to society in general, and more specifically to the audience at hand.

The Hatch Family Dedication:
Family relationships are one of the strongest bonds that we can ever develop. Yet, in today's society, we are often so busy that we do not make enough time to talk to our family members. Each person in the family has other social roles to fulfill—for example, being an employee, a neighbor, an activist, or a student. Thus, they leave their role as a family member for last. This can cause family bonds to begin to disintegrate. Today our group will observe several scenarios dealing with common family issues and we will discuss resolutions that can help to strengthen and nurture family ties.

I ask that the host’s commentary urge the audience to become aware of the ways in which conflicts can be resolved and to comment on the broader significance of the conflict. The commentary can be written in any style, such as an editorial, poem, song, or manifesto. Also involved here is the students writing questions that the host might ask the audience so as to stimulate their interaction at the end of the piece.

Host’s Commentary:
You've just seen the resolutions to the disagreements at hand. What we have shown you are only a few ways to deal with family issues. There are many other ways to resolve these types of conflicts. Now we will ask you, the audience, to suggest other ways to deal with these conflicts.

Host’s Question Bank:
1. Has anyone ever been in any of these situations? What is a different way to deal with them?
2. What is another way that Jenny, the disgruntled teen, can be dealt with to get her needs met?
3. How can the father, Pete, find other ways to talk to his wife about important issues?
4. What can Marge do to reduce the stress at home, while still getting all of her own things done, and also take care of the kids?
5. What is another way that Brad, the son, can get his parents’ attention without disturbing them during important conversations?
6. Has anybody been in the role of Jenny and figured out a way to get your parents to listen to you right when you needed them?
7. How might Brad's “present” problem and Jenny's trauma be settled other than the ways we’ve shown you?

In writing their concluding remarks, the students’ objective is to urge the audience to act in light of what they learned from the examples offered in the presentation. They also should acknowledge that, in their project, they depicted just a few of the many possible solutions to the conflict.

The Hatch Family Concluding Remarks:
What we have just presented are various solutions to conflicts among family members. We hope that everyone will consider these solutions, their merits and drawbacks, when they confront conflicts in their own family relationships. One must remember that these solutions can be modified according to individual family needs. With a little bit of effort, we can all do our part.

The fifth step involves the group in writing a commercial that reflects society’s “quick fix” attitude towards resolving (or solving) problems.

The Hatch Family Commercial: Love Potion #9

SCENE: Scott walks in the door from work. Susan is cooking at the stove.
Scott: Hey honey, I'm home.
Susan: Hi, how was your day?
Scott: It was terrible, but I am so glad to see you. (He starts massaging her shoulders.)
Susan: Oh, not right now Scott, I'm not in the mood. (Scott continues to massage her shoulders.) No, get away! I have other things to do.
Narrator: Ever had something as embarrassing as this happen to you? Maybe you should take some advice from Dr. Love.

SCENE: Dr. Love sitting in his recliner.
Dr. Love: Are you missing intimacy in your life? Do you need some spice to light that fire for you and your mate? Well Dr. Love has got the thing for you. It is called Love Potion #9. It is all you need! It has been rated the best on the market to fulfill anyone's intimate desires. Forget Viagra all you need is Love Potion #9!"

SCENE: (Repeat.) Scott walks in the door from work. Susan is cooking at the stove.
Scott: Hey honey.
Susan: Hey, how was your day?
Scott: It was terrible. But I am so glad to see you. I have been longing for you all day. (At the sound of Scott's voice, Susan turns and gazes into his
eyes. They both turn and look at the bedroom door. Scott picks Susan up off her feet and proceeds to carry her away.) Come on!

Narrator: Now that's what I'm talking about!

SCENE: Couple is sitting close together on a sofa.
Wife: We've used Love Potion #9 and it works! Right honey?
Husband: Right honey!

SCENE: Dr. Love, again, is sitting in his recliner.
Dr. Love: As you can see, Love Potion #9 works for them and it can work for you too. You can get it at 1-800-DR-LOVE. Call within ten minutes and you can get your second bottle for free!

The students’ commercial offers an excellent illustration of the “quick fix” mentality that pervades our culture. With just one dose of “Love Potion #9,” the couple has resolved their interpersonal issues and their sex life too. The commercial then mimics the typical marketing strategies of quick fix cures which depict the problem and, immediately thereafter, depict the product as the solution, erasing entirely the time, energy, and labor required to use, apply, test, adapt, retry, transform, replace the product in order for it to work for the individual. The students’ commercial then serves as comic caution to the audience that resolving interpersonal conflicts is not quick or easy; it requires the time “in between” the identification of the problem and its resolution.

In the sixth step of the process, the students develop a single visual image that contains all the characters and, by means of their kinesics, proxemics, appearance and props, implies their points of view. The props often serve as helpful icons, metonyms or metaphors for the characters’ roles and responsibilities and also their internal states of mind.

The Hatch Family Visual Image:
Marge is standing with a briefcase in one hand and a laundry basket in the other. All the members of the family will be placing more things on her heavy load. This signifies the many burdens Marge carries for the family.
Pete will be sitting at a desk with bills and financial papers spread all over. He will have his hand over his head in a stressed-out manner. This shows how Pete is left to deal with the financial stress without any support from Marge.
Jenny will have a book sack on her back with the word "problems" written on it.
The rest of the family will be standing with their backs facing her as if they are ignoring her. This signifies all the things she must deal with as a teenager and how she feels that her parents ignore her.

Brad will stand in the middle of his family with his hand tapping his mother's shoulder. Her back will be towards him and the rest of the family will have their fingers in their ears. This symbolizes how Brad feels he is dismissed by his mother, and not listened to by his father, and how his sister just doesn't care about anything he has to say.

In the final step of the process, the group compiles the sections they have developed into a single piece which they memorize and rehearse and, then, present before their peers in class.

Over the years, I have seen over fifty Adapting to Other projects and in general substance, form and sophistication they are not unlike the Hatch Family project documented above. The merits of the assignment are that by means of the process and enactment the students learn and activate the IPC concepts and formats of conflict management. While the actual enactment offers them one kind of knowledge, they are unable to take that action without applying the IPC knowledge first. In fact, the first step demands an understanding of what “conflict starters” and “conflict management strategies” are, in applied as well as abstract terms. Likewise, the writing and enactment of the characters’ points of view section and the solutions section require the students to connect conceptual and actual experience.

The fusion of elements from Boal’s Forum Theatre and the Joker System enhances the IPC material in that multiple solutions (Forum Theatre) are tested in multiple ways (Joker System). The format highlights the IPC prompting that interpersonal conflicts are not solved “magically” and that the concepts and formats must be applied and tested specifically. While solutions to, for example, the Hatch Family conflict may be posed by the students, the multiple scenes and means of address over the short expanse of time continually defamiliarize any illusion that the family’s problem has been solved by the group. Rather, the format poses “what is” representations of the conflict and “what if” ways it might be redressed, leaving the solution in the hands of the audience.
However, the students do experience the satisfaction of “problem-solving” in the successful completion of the project. By means of the seven-step process, they apply, produce, and publicize their knowledge—i.e., their understanding of the IPC material, their inventive solutions to the challenges of the assignment, and their live performance. The aesthetics of the format also provide the students with a sense of satisfaction. Accessible, flexible and well-organized, the aesthetic framework offers the students a place to “hang,” arrange and focus their ideas. Thereby, they learn that being “artistic” is not an innate talent; rather, people can learn to be creative by applying a few simple tools and following a few basic steps. Indeed, because most of the IPC students are not “performance” students they worry less about creating a polished product and expend their energy and creativity on their substantive choices instead. As a result, their performances in class exhibit a spontaneous and lively quality that facilitates the audience’s involvement. Because the “seams” of the piece show (in format and its presentation), the piece implies that it is incomplete, open-ended, and that the audience should “play” along too. And, typically, they do.

One of my favorite stories regarding this assignment concerns an Asian student who told us earlier in the semester that he always felt second best to his twin brother who was born but three minutes before him. The student related that his mother and father treated him differently than his older brother. As a result, he was a shy young man, reluctant to engage others in fear they would think him “second-best” too. In the Adapting to Others project, the young man played an obnoxious “self-help” doctor who gave bad advice to his patients and frequently interrupted them in an effort to market his new book. The doctor was very loud, very rude, and very funny. Later in the class period, another group was presenting their piece and the host was just at the point in the format when he elicits audience interaction. When the host asked if anyone in the class could “help these poor individuals“ (in the story), the students responded by
chanting the Asian student’s name saying, “We want the doctor back.” The “doctor” returned to the stage and proved to steal the show. I can not say if the “doctor” resolved any of the conflicts in the group’s piece; perhaps, however he resolved, or temporarily forgot, some of his own.

At the beginning of this chapter, I mentioned that my reasons for applying Boal’s TO techniques in the IPC classroom are not to effect individual and social change. I guarantee nothing in these terms, preferring to leave the choice for change to the students. In response, the students have shown me they desire change, in the grand scheme of things and in the day to day interactions that make us human.

Our generation is always challenged to make a difference, and most of us think that we can. But what do we have to add or who will listen to us?...This assignment asked us to step up to that challenge because the assignment is about our ideas and our problems and how we might try to fix them. Maybe in the grand scheme of things the only difference we make is that we change how we view the problem or even help out a fellow class member in that situation. Regardless it is making a difference to someone and we did it. (A student, IPC Paper)

Notes

1 See Chapter One, Note Ten.

2 I modeled the three units after similar units in Alder et al., Looking In/Looking Out, an introductory IPC textbook. In Part One, the authors discuss interpersonal relationships, communication and the self, perception, and emotions. In Part Two, they examine language, nonverbal communication and listening. In Part Three, communication climax and managing interpersonal conflicts are the focus.

3 I draw excerpts from Alder et al., Beebe et al., DeVito, 3rd and 5th editions, Guerro et al., Taylor et al., Trenholm and Jensen, Veenendall et al., Let’s Talk About Relationships, Veenendall et al., Instructor’s Manual, Walker and Brokaw, and Wood.
A story is not a story until it is told, it is not told until it’s heard. Once it is heard, it changes and becomes open to the beauties and frailties of more change. Or, a story is not a story, until it changes—indeed, until it changes someone else—until it becomes part of the vital histories of the change, it recounts.

--Della Pollock, “Remembering Desegregation: Performance, Memory and History of Change”

Biographies smack of the end, the final utterances. Mission accomplished. I, by contrast, am always at the start of some new path or other. I want more. More, more. I am given to excess. It would be awkward to talk about myself: in what I do, the important thing is the deed, not the doer. When all is said and done, who am I? What use am I?

--Augusto Boal, Hamlet and the Baker’s Son

When I was a little kid I loved to hear people read stories out loud. The telling of a story was far better, I thought, than having to read it myself. I kept this thought to myself though because at the time I was hiding one of my biggest secrets. I couldn’t read. I would pay close attention to the stories as they were read aloud (matching the pictures and pages to what I heard) so I could repeat the story out loud as if I were reading it myself. One day, while “reading” aloud to my mother, I missed an important detail on the page and my mother asked me to re-read the section. I made the same mistake. She asked me to turn the book over, open it from the last page, and read her the story, backwards. I was flabbergasted. I had never heard the story in reverse and wasn’t sure which parts went with what pages; thus, the gig was up and my mother realized that I could not read.

What followed was what I like to refer to as my “Progressive Reading Program” which was instituted by my father who thought the best way to conquer my “problem” was by having me write reports on certain books of his choosing, such as War and Peace, The Good Earth, and
what at the time I referred to as the “wolf stories” by Jack London. My father’s reading program did not inspire me to read; in fact, I would have gladly led a book burning demonstration if it would have resulted in my never having to read a book again. Seeing me struggle, my mother took me to the library one day and told me to pick out a book I liked. When we left the library I had my first library card and a copy of Charlotte’s Web by E. B. White. Slowly, an interest in reading was kindled.

However, it was not until I was in fifth grade and had Ms. Colwell as a teacher that I fell in love with reading. Ms. Colwell was considered to be a “progressive teacher” who used “untraditional” methods in her classroom, one of which focused on reading. Ms. Colwell said she wanted her students to experience what she called the “adventure of reading” and one of the “adventures” was giving students options as regards their written and oral book reports. For instance, a student might report on a book by creating an interactive game that highlighted the characters and plot of the story while another might create drawings to illustrate the story. Another option allowed the student to adapt her favorite section of the book and present it as a play, television show or radio broadcast.

I remember my awe as I looked at the list of ideas Ms. Colwell provided the class. Eager to show the list to my mother, I raced from school, to the bus to our house through the door waving the list and reading the guidelines out loud to my mother. That evening my mother and I checked-off all the options that interested me and, with ideas whirling around in my head, I stayed awake long into the night, planning how I was going to write the best book report ever.

The book I selected was Pippi Longstocking by Astrid Ericsson Lindgren. Upon reading the story, I couldn’t decide which report option to choose, so I asked my mother for advice. In response, she asked me why I had chosen the book in the first place. In a flash, I answered, “because of the character!” and in a rush proceeded to describe Pippi to my mother. As I recall,
my description went something like this: Her real name is Pippilotta Delicatessa Windowshade Mackrelmint Efraim's Daughter Longstocking, but everyone calls her Pippi. She lives in a house with her monkey named Mr. Nilsson and her horse named Horse in a town called Villa Villekulla. She has hair the color of a carrot, which is braided in two tight braids that stick straight out. She has freckles and she makes her own clothes. She wears a pair of long stockings, one brown and the other black, and a pair of black shoes that are exactly twice as long as her feet. She’s strong, she’s smart, and she’s funny. She is a person everybody wants to be.

Then it hit me, I knew what I wanted to do. I would give my report AS Pippi! I wrote my script in which I included the song, “I am Pippi Longstocking,” from the television adaptation of the story. I learned my lines, practiced my singing, collected my props and, on the day of my report, I outfitted myself in a costume my mother had made and she fixed my hair in the lopsided fashion of Pippi’s.

I arrived to school early that day and could hardly sit still as Ms. Colwell taught us our Math then History then English then finally the moment came: It was time for our book reports. When Ms. Colwell announced my name, I raced to the front of the room, tossed my two lopsided pigtails and, in a loud enthusiastic voice, broke out in song, “I am Pippi Longstocking.”

My performance of Pippi helped me to learn. Specifically, it helped me to learn that reading could be fun, instructive, and entertaining. In my case, performance became a way of knowing, an empowering agency making reading as learning accessible and enjoyable. Performance then embraces education for me. It is knowledge, a form of knowledge that when applied with care offers unique insights in diverse educational contexts. Over the years, my experiences as a student and educator have strengthened my resolve to use performance to conceptualize and, in practical terms, activate the material in the classes I teach, ever aware of the prevailing perspective and aim of the course. In this light, performance is a conceptual
method, a tool of praxis that encourages students to activate their “critical consciousness” and become “producers” of the knowledge they will use in their lives (Freire 96; and Pineau 41).

While many critical pedagogues embrace performance as a paradigm for conceptualizing what they mean by experiential learning or a democratic praxis, over the course of this study, it has become increasingly apparent to me that, in the field of communication studies, we have known of and applied the paradigm for centuries in and throughout the various areas. Scholars and students of communication theory investigate the performance of everyday life communication and in many cases through experiential enactment, while rhetoricians are informed by a rich tradition and praxis of people speaking up and thereby claiming agency in the public sphere. Since I respect how terminology substantiates a discipline, its perspectives and aims, I do not intend to claim these related activities as “performance.” However, I do intend to claim that they are related in a profound and deeply human way. At their best, these activities (and our study of them) are about people coming together and expressing what they believe, what they desire, what they have done—who they are, and by means of an expressive repertoire that revels in its breadth and depth. At base level, then, this is what my study is about. United in our interest in how human beings communicate with each other in diverse ways, performance studies, communication theory, and rhetoric share and continually cross the boundaries that both connect and protect us, as related and distinct areas in the academy. Calling on Victor Turner, we each play well alone certainly. But, in this study, I have tried to suggest a few of the many ways we play well together too.

Below, I summarize the assignments I discussed in Chapters Three and Four, applying myself to the merits, drawbacks and future possibilities of the applications. I then proceed to discuss the role and function of the educator as a Joker figure in the classroom and in terms of
critical performative pedagogy. I conclude with a story from by past which in this context becomes my future too.

In Chapter Three, I offered a brief history as to how and why I decided to use Boal’s techniques in the introductory Public Speaking course. My personal-pedagogical history is refracted in the first assignment I discuss in which I apply Boal’s newspaper theater exercises and his (and others’) views regarding personal expression to a self-introductory speech assignment I call the Chance, Choice, or Fate Speech. As I explain in the chapter, my concept for the assignment draws on Boal’s understanding of social and personal histories and Gregory Ulmer’s “mystory.” Boal’s newspaper theatre techniques and the mystery tracking of professional, popular and personal discourses help me specify a method the students can use.

One merit of the assignment is that, like most self-introductory speech assignments, it allows students to draw on subject matter they know well and in which they have an invested interest (i.e., their own personal history). As a result, most students are willing and eager to pursue the additional elements I require which in turn substantiate the importance of research and critical analysis in the public speaking course. By generating, and including in their speeches, Birth Month and Birth Date Profiles, the students pursue research and also make interpretive connections between the past and their present history. By including professional, popular and personal discourses in their speeches, the students realize that personal and social discourses influence and are often embedded in each other. The assignment then urges students to talk about themselves but in terms of the social discourses that arise in their application of the required process and format. The self is deliberately inflected in and through a past history, other subjects, sources, and perspectives. The self wears a “social mask” which, at the conceptual level, prepares the students for the challenges of crafting a persuasive ethos in the upcoming speech assignments.
In the second section of Chapter Three, I document and discuss my application of Boal’s Joker System to a persuasive speech assignment I call The Persuasive Speech Forum. Overall, the design of the assignment emphasizes collaborative group processes. The steps that guide the students’ work involve them in group decision making and problem-solving, while each group’s presentation of their forum is a problem-posing event.

The conceptual and practical foundations of the assignment are based in Boal’s Joker System, although I also call on his “cop in the head” technique. I use the latter to highlight the multifarious roles, perspectives and arguments that are typically at work within and upon a social issue. This idea is activated by the students in their identification and assignment of roles and arguments that are relevant to their selected issue and proposition. As I explain in the chapter, while their initial approach to this activity is elementary (e.g., one role and argument is delineated as “pathos” while another becomes a “policy” claim), their use becomes more sophisticated over the course of the assignment due to their more extensive application of persuasion principles and due to the Joker System format.

My main reason for applying the Joker System is to benefit from the Joker figure who, in the forum, becomes a host who introduces, connects and offers commentary regarding the different panelists. Also, by means of the interview section, the host actively involves the audience in the forum, seeking their “expert” advice regarding the merits and drawbacks of the arguments they heard. In this way, the students take temporary charge of the classroom, using criteria that they determine to evaluate their work.

The Joker System also is valuable because it offers the students an accessible and flexible format in which to place and sequence the various panelists who speak on the issue. Due to the multiple arguments that are expressed and, in turn, the multiple questions, answers and opinions that arise in the interview section, the forum rarely results in advancing a single perspective on
the issue, although such claims are made by the individual panelists. As such, the forum operates as a problem-posing event, in terms of the specific proposition and in terms of critical-analytical thought processes.

As I mention in the chapter, I believe it would be extremely beneficial for each student to develop their own persuasive speech, based on the same issue they pursued with their group, following the forum process. I speculate the latter would enhance the complexity and sophistication of the student’s substantive and formal crafting of a speech, and encourage an awareness of the other perspectives at work within and against the argument that the student claims. I also feel that it would be beneficial for introductory public speaking students to realize the relationship between Aristotle’s ethos and social discourses and roles or “masks.” As I mentioned at the end of Chapter Three, due to the emphasis on character in the forum, I sometimes fear that students equate the roles and arguments they hear to a single individual. While distinct individuals certainly have stakes in issues of all kinds, upon speaking in public they come to represent and, I believe, become responsible for others who hold similar views. Given that, I would like students to experience the characters they see and hear in the forum as representatives of larger social bodies, perspectives and discourses as well as representations of distinct individuals. As I describe it in the study, I might use Boal’s “cop in the head” exercises to help students identify the social roles embedded within an individual’s speech act, and also his Image Theatre exercises aimed at highlighting social gests. I would not ask the students to implement these tools in the speeches they give; rather, I would use them informally, as an in-class exercise, that then informs how the students view “character” in the forum and in the other speeches the students deliver over the course of the semester. In short, these exercises would inform a perspective for interpreting character in social terms.
In Chapter Four, I document and discuss my application of Boal’s TO techniques to three assignments I designed for the introductory IPC course. The first, Communicating Self in Shadow Box Imagery, asks the students to apply their understanding of IPC concepts of selfhood to a shadow box they create. The assignment draws on Boal’s conceptualization of Image Theatre as an event where the participants use visual imagery as a language; a communicative means to express their thoughts, feelings, and opinions. Understanding that developing a self-concept entails one’s self-image, I felt that the shadow box medium would offer the students a “protective” place in which to show various aspects of their self-concept and self-image. Further, just as descriptive verbal or print language can evoke a sensate and specific understanding of abstract ideas and feelings, so too can visual language and its imagery. In this case, the abstract terms and concepts of selfhood are translated by the student into visual signs they select to show their comprehension of the IPC material and their own self-concept.

As I offer in the chapter, one of the intriguing ramifications of the assignment is that once the student presents his shadow box in class, the self as represented in the box becomes socialized and destabilized due to the different ways people interpret the imagery. The “shadow” aspect of the “shadow box” asserts itself, insisting that all representations are but partial and incomplete. Some students are understandably frustrated when they discover that they cannot control how others interpret their self imagery while others embrace the mutability of self/meanings heartedly.

For me, the most significant aspect of the assignment is that students quite literally construct a self by creative means and thereby they demonstrate our capability to do the same in our everyday lives. In short, a performative spin on IPC concepts of selfhood inform the design and aims of the assignment. My purpose being to highlight IPC notions of perception as they relate to selfhood.
In the second IPC assignment I developed, students are asked to test nonverbal norms as identified in IPC textbooks by means of Boal’s Invisible Theatre technique. The conceptual link I make between the two, concerns normative values and standards. In IPC, a social scientific discourse of norms, informed by a social code of “appropriateness,” is used to determine how nonverbal messages function. In direct response, Boal’s Invisible Theatre is often used to investigate norms since it involves the “subversion of ‘normal’ behavior within…society” ([Games xx; emphasis in original]). While I am of the opinion that interrogating certain norms by means of subversive role playing can be a valuable means of political inquiry for students, I also feel that students should not be pressed into interrogation or subversion in a classroom. Further, just as Invisible Theatre can be used to interrogate what an individual or group deems to be an “inappropriate” norm, so too it can be used to test the validity and significance of a norm an individual or group values. As a result of this conceptual process, I developed the assignment Testing Norms by Invisible Role Playing in which students may opt to interrogate or test a nonverbal norm of their choice.

One ramification of my students’ work I found extremely valuable was their deliberate and sometimes contingent decision to reveal their “invisible” role to others during their enactment of it. In most cases, this “opaque” or “translucent” (McConachie 252) alternative to invisible role playing resulted in the confidant(s) playing along with the student(s). As I discussed at the end of the section, perhaps an “opaque” role playing tool is a beneficial way to encourage audience participation in experiments such as my students pursued. While the everyday “real life” context and style of role-playing remain intact, the breakage of the illusion (the signaling of “performance”) creates a novel event for the audience. Further, because the rules for running the experiment are shared with the bystanders, they perceive the game to be fair and are more likely to play along.
In the Adapting to Others assignment, I address IPC conflict management strategies, by fusing elements of Boal’s Forum Theatre and the Joker System. The format enhances the IPC material in that multiple “what if” solutions are posed to redress the “what is” realities of interpersonal conflicts. As in Forum Theatre, the assignment asks the students to stage and “rehearse” possible solutions to a conflict while, in the manner of the Joker System, an eclectic mix of scenes is required. In the students’ presentation of their projects, the latter functions to defamiliarize any tendency to interpret the enactment of relational conflicts as “real life” and hence encourages critical analysis on the audience’s part. Further, the multiplicity of possible solutions and by diverse means operate to imply that, while there are many ways we might redress our interpersonal problems, the solution does not come easily. As Boal says of Forum Theatre, the event shows us "how difficult it is to change reality" (Games 20).

By means of this process, I have learned that there is more to being a teacher than knowing your subject matter. In “Critical Performative Pedagogy,” Elyse Pineau supports this conclusion when she writes,

Critical educators solidify their convictions into concrete commitments in the public as well as the educational sphere. Within the classroom, this commitment to action might mean developing inclusive curricula, encouraging critical thinking, decentering teacher authority, facilitating interactive and peer-oriented learning, and ensuring that all students have equal access to instructional resources. (43)

The traits Pineau aligns with critical educators are the same traits that Boal’s Joker figure assumes in the Joker System and Forum Theatre techniques. The Joker-educator is committed to action and, specifically, to encouraging his students to “act”; to take engaged and thoughtful action, always mindful of the social reality and community of which they are a part.

The Joker-educator is inclusive by designing curricula that addresses not only the background and interests of the students but also the aims of the course, since it represents a long
and on-going history of people, educators and scholars, who are invested in and committed to the
course and the framing discipline(s).

The Joker-educator also encourages critical thinking by posing rather than solving the
problems and issues pertinent to the course material. Further, she devises assignments that insist
that the students draw on the course material so as to clearly identify the issues, their
relationships to it, and its various complexities before they take charge of it by means of
inventive play (Salverson 158). In the educational context, the Joker-educator is a “difficultator”
urging a serious and playful engagement of the material (Turner 35). In a similar manner, the
Joker-educator decenters teacher authority by designing assignments that entrust the students
with their education. One way to do this is by involving the students in collaborative group
processes where students work together to address an issue and, thereby, also learn to negotiate
the multiplicity of views that are common to social systems and processes.

I began this study with an anecdote regarding my participation in a TO workshop
sponsored by the University of Nebraska at Omaha. I return there now. I went to the workshop
with a friend of mine, Gabby, and, as I mentioned, Boal taught the workshop. During one of the
breaks, my friend and I stepped outside for a breath of fresh air, though Gabby needed a smoke
too. We were talking about what we had learned from the workshop, what fascinated us,
frustrated us, and what techniques we wanted to pirate to use in our own classrooms. While
chatting, I noticed that Boal had stepped outside too. I turned to Gabby and whispered, “I want
to meet him. I really want to meet him.” Gabby said, “So go meet him.” My pulse stopped for a
moment. My knees trembled. I was going to meet Augusto Boal. My heart raced as I crossed
the short distance to Boal and, as I lifted my hand to shake his, I thought, “This is a crucial
moment in my life.” To be honest, I don’t recall what I said to him. What I do recall is his
shock of gray hair, huge smile, and the sparkle of his eyes as they met mine. It was sort of like
meeting merlin…the magician. And, though, but a few moments before I had analyzed his
workshop, I now found myself thoroughly engaged. In and out. A spect-actor. This moment
marked the beginning of a long and invigorating journey that has taken me seven years, forty-
eight classes, twelve thousand students, and it is still is going strong.

In *Lonely on the Mountain*, Louis L’Amour writes, “There will come a time when
you believe everything is finished. That will be the beginning” (16).
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The students who participated in this study were enrolled in three different courses that I taught in the Department of Communication Studies at Louisiana State University between fall 1998 and spring 2002. The courses and number of sections were four sections of SPCM 1061: Fundamentals of Public Speaking, twenty-two sections of SPCM 2060: Public Speaking and twelve sections of SPCM 2010: Interpersonal Communication.

In all, nine hundred and twenty-eight students participated in the study. Their ages ranged from sixteen to fifty-nine. Most were unmarried and without children. The majority of the participants were born and raised in Louisiana. Most were white European Americans, about a tenth were African American and, in all, there were about sixty international students from different countries.

The majority of students were majors in the College of Business Administration, the College for Advising and Counseling, and the College Center for Freshman Year. A substantial number were majors in the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Agriculture, and the General College. A few students were majors in the College of Engineering, the College of Art and Design, and the College of Basic Science.

(As I noted in Chapter One, due to a departmental name change in spring 2003, the rubric SPCM is now CMST. Also, since the two public speaking courses are identical, I do not differentiate between them in the body of the study although here, in the Appendices, I uphold the distinction in certain documents.)
APPENDIX B

PROJECT CONSENT FORMS

Enclosed here are the Project Consent Forms I distributed to all the students in all
the sections of the three courses I taught: SPCM 1061: Fundamentals of Public Speaking,
Permission from the Student to Use Written Work from SPCM 1061: Fundamentals of Public Speaking

I, _____________________________________________________, give permission to
Ms. Burleson to use the written work I produce in SPCM 1061: Fundamentals of Public
Speaking for her research. I understand that Ms. Burleson will use my work as an
example of how Boal based assignments can be used in SPCM 1061. I also understand
that Ms. Burleson will use my work for her research and educational purposes only.

____________________________________ (signature)

____________________________________ (social security number)

____________________________________ (date)

Ms. Burleson may use my name in her study. __________ (please initial)

Ms. Burleson may NOT use my name in her study. __________ (please initial)
Permission from the Student to Use Written Work from SPCM 2060: Public Speaking

I, _____________________________________________________, give permission to Ms. Burleson to use the written work I produce in SPCM 2060: Public Speaking for her research. I understand that Ms. Burleson will use my work as an example of how Boal based assignments can be used in SPCM 2060. I also understand that Ms. Burleson will use my work for her research and educational purposes only.

____________________________________ (signature)

____________________________________ (social security number)

____________________________________ (date)

Ms. Burleson may use my name in her study. __________ (please initial)

Ms. Burleson may NOT use my name in her study. __________ (please initial)
Permission from the Student to Use Written Work from SPCM 2010: Interpersonal Communication

I, _____________________________________________________, give permission to Ms. Burleson to use the written work I produce in SPCM 2010: Interpersonal Communication for her research. I understand that Ms. Burleson will use my work as an example of how Boal based assignments can be used in SPCM 2010. I also understand that Ms. Burleson will use my work for her research and educational purposes only.

____________________________________ (signature)

____________________________________ (social security number)

____________________________________ (date)

Ms. Burleson may use my name in her study. __________ (please initial)

Ms. Burleson may NOT use my name in her study. __________ (please initial)
Enclosed here are the assignment handouts that the students in the Public Speaking courses received.

For the Choice, Chance, or Fate Speech assignment, the students received a handout detailing the criteria of the assignment and the steps of the process.

For The Persuasive Speech Forum assignment, the students received a questionnaire to complete, titled Topic Brainstorming and Audience Analysis.
Chance, Choice, or Fate Speech Assignment Handout

The Choice, Chance, or Fate Speech assignment consists of six steps. In the first step, you are to go to the library and trace the social, political, and cultural news events that occurred during the month in which you were born. When you have completed your research, compile a Birth Month Profile. For example, born in December 1968, my compilation might include:

December 11
The unemployment rate, at 3.3 percent, is the lowest in fifteen years.

December 12
Robert and Ethel Kennedy's daughter, Rory, their eleventh child is born.

December 17
12:52 a.m., I, Jacqueline Denise Burleson, was born with my umbilical cord wrapped around my neck. I weighed seven and a half pounds, was eighteen inches long and a lovely shade of blue.

December 21
The launch of Apollo 8 begins the first U.S. mission to orbit the Moon.

In the second step of the assignment, you will gather in groups according to your birth years and share your Birth Month Profiles. In your group, you are to discuss content similarities and differences, what each profile suggests about the compiler and what, as a whole, the profiles tell you about the year in which you were born.

For the third step, you need to compile a more specific Birth Date Profile, drawing on a newspaper or magazine published on the day or during the week you were born. Remember, the headlines, news items, advertisements, editorials, cartoons and advice bits should represent your unique personality or personalities.

In the fourth step of the assignment, you are to compile and adapt your findings to a speech of self introduction. I ask that you draw on your Birth Month and Birth Date Profiles and include professional, popular, and personal materials in your crafting of the speech. You also may include information you collected from your peers in step two.

In the fifth step, you will deliver your speeches in class. Your speech should be between four and six minutes long and may be extemporaneous in the style of delivery. The use of presentational aids is optional.

In the sixth step, we will discuss the speeches and it is in this step that the title of the assignment becomes clear. That is, we will discuss the degree to which you and your classmates feel choice, chance and fate inform the histories the speaker drew on and composed in the speech.
Topic Brainstorming and Audience Analysis Questionnaire.

1. I have problems with_________________________
   I believe that my fellow classmates share my view points or would disagree with my view points
   a. As a student because….
   b. As a woman or man because….
   c. As a southerner because….
   d. As a United States citizen because….
   e. As a Catholic, Baptist, Protestant, Jew, Muslim (other) because….
   f. As a married, single, dating person because….
   g. As a democrat, republican, independent (other) because….
   h. As a mother, father, son, daughter or pet owner because….

2. I am concerned with_________________________
   I believe that my fellow classmates share my view points or would disagree with my view points
   a. As a student because….
   b. As a woman or man because….
   c. As a southerner because….
   d. As a United States citizen because….
   e. As a Catholic, Baptist, Protestant, Jew, Muslim (other) because….
   f. As a married, single, dating person because….
   g. As a democrat, republican, independent (other) because….
   h. As a mother, father, son, daughter or pet owner because….

3. I have issue with_________________________
   I believe that my fellow classmates share my view points or would disagree with my view points
   a. As a student because….
   b. As a woman or man because….
   c. As a southerner because….
   d. As a United States citizen because….
   e. As a Catholic, Baptist, Protestant, Jew, Muslim (other) because….
   f. As a married, single, dating person because….
   g. As a democrat, republican, independent (other) because….
   h. As a mother, father, son, daughter or pet owner because….

4. I feel that_________________________
   I believe that my fellow classmates share my view points or would disagree with my view points
   a. As a student because….
   b. As a woman or man because….
   c. As a southerner because….
   d. As a United States citizen because….
   e. As a Catholic, Baptist, Protestant, Jew, Muslim (other) because….
f. As a married, single, dating person because…
g. As a democrat, republican, independent (other) because…
h. As a mother, father, son, daughter or pet owner because…

5. It is my opinion that _______________________
   I believe that my fellow classmates share my viewpoints or would disagree
   with my viewpoints
   a. As a student because…
   b. As a woman or man because…
   c. As a southerner because…
   d. As a United States citizen because…
   e. As a Catholic, Baptist, Protestant, Jew, Muslim (other) because…
   f. As a married, single, dating person because…
   g. As a democrat, republican, independent (other) because…
   h. As a mother, father, son, daughter or pet owner because…

6. I have been raised to believe that ________________________ but I ________
   I believe that my fellow classmates share my viewpoints or would disagree
   with my viewpoints
   a. As a student because…
   b. As a woman or man because…
   c. As a southerner because…
   d. As a United States citizen because…
   e. As a Catholic, Baptist, Protestant, Jew, Muslim (other) because…
   f. As a married, single, dating person because…
   g. As a democrat, republican, independent (other) because…
   h. As a mother, father, son, daughter or pet owner because…
Enclosed here are two scripts compiled by students for The Persuasive Speech Forum assignment.

The title and proposition of the first script is “There should be a mandatory helmet law for all motorcyclists nationwide.” Per their consent, Colleen Coulon, Ramona Farbes, Bethany Anastasio, Julie Comeaux, and Callie Anselmo compiled the script. They were students in a SPCM 2060: Public Speaking course I taught in summer 2001.

The title and proposition of the second script is “Emergency contraception is merely abortion in disguise.” Per their consent, Natalie Armstrong, Casey Carr, Ryan Gautreau, Kirav Koradia, Michelle Moss, and Jennifer Taylor compiled the script. They were students in a SPCM 2060: Public Speaking class I taught in spring 2002.

Each script is prefaced with the character profiles that the students were required to write. Each profile includes the name of the character, his or her position, the narrative format, any identity traits pertinent to the issue, a summary of his or her argument, and a source listing.

The script proper follows the character profiles. The students’ use of Boal’s Joker System is indicated in brackets throughout the script.
Proposition:
There should be a mandatory helmet law for all motorcyclists nationwide.

Mary Haley
A. Position: Pro
B. Identity: Composite personal and expert narrative
   1. Son killed in motorcycle accident
   2. Supports mandatory helmet laws nationwide
C. Arguments
   1. Son died from head trauma that doctors say could have been prevented if he were wearing a helmet
   2. More than twenty-two hundred deaths occur annually as a result of motorcycle accidents
   3. Should not leave the decision to the riders
D. Sources

Lucy Leather
A. Position: Con
B. Identity: Composite expert narrative
   1. Motorcycle rider
   2. Believes motorcyclists should decide about helmets
C. Arguments
   1. States should leave the choice of wearing a helmet up to the rider
   2. Statistics show mandatory helmet laws had 12.5% more accidents and 2.3% more fatalities than free-choice states
   3. A reasonably foreseeable impact is only 14 mph
   4. A helmet cannot prevent an accident, only education can
D. Sources
Joyce Riley
A. Position: Con
B. Identity: Composite expert narrative
   1. Chairperson of the Public Interest Research Group
   2. This group was established by Ralph Nader to explore issues such as education, campaign finance reform, the environment, and the rights of all citizens
C. Arguments
   1. The decision whether to wear helmets is the people’s right, not the government’s
   2. The insurance clause in the No Helmet Law is another way of violating rights
   3. A safety program such as the one in California should be set up in every state
D. Sources

Ashley Smith
A. Position: Pro
B. Identity: Composite personal and expert narrative
C. Arguments
   1. All states should have helmet laws
   2. Statistics show that when helmet laws were repealed in twenty-four of twenty-six states, there was an average 25% increase in accidents
   3. Helmets saved 7,940 lives from 1984-1996. If the helmet laws were enacted there would have been an estimated 14,505 lives saved
   4. A helmet or education can prevent an accident, but a helmet can save a life
D. Sources
The Persuasive Speech Forum
Proposition: There should be a mandatory helmet law for all motorcyclists nationwide.

[Joker Dedication and Explanation]
Host
Hello. And welcome to Our World Today. I am your host, Kathleen King. As you know, this show discusses important topics in our world today. Today’s topic is the motorcycle helmet. Should motorcyclists be able to choose if they want to wear a helmet? Or should the government choose? This show believes that everyone should wear a helmet. It is better to be safe than sorry.

Before I introduce my guests, I would like to share with you the facts about helmet laws here in the United States. Four states have no helmet laws. Twenty states have a mandatory helmet law. Twenty-five states have an age requirement helmet law that ranges from fifteen to twenty-one years old. And the other three states have age requirements and mandatory insurance coverage laws.

Now that you know a little bit about helmet laws, let’s meet our guests. My first guest is a mother of three who lost her son to a motorcycle accident. Her son JT was not wearing a helmet. Today she would like to share her story with us. Please welcome Mrs. Mary Haley.

[Scene One: Composite Personal and Expert Narrative]
Mary Haley
Thank you Mrs. King. On September 4, 2000 my nineteen year old son James Thomas Haley, JT, was killed in a motorcycle accident because he was not wearing a helmet. JT died from head trauma that doctors agree could have been prevented had he been wearing his helmet.

JT was riding his motorcycle on campus late one night after a night out with is buddies. He collided with a tow truck on the University of Arizona campus where he was enrolled as an aerospace engineering freshman. JT was involved in the Naval ROTC program and had dreams of becoming a naval aviator.

JT was always making people laugh, full of energy and also known as a thrill seeker. Even as a young child he was always the first in line for the fastest roller coaster as he dragged his scared sisters behind.

We awakened at about four a.m. that September morning when the telephone rang. My husband answered the phone and I could tell by the tone of his voice that something terrible had happened. My heart seemed to fall to the floor. My husband hung up the phone and turned to me with tears in his eyes. I didn’t know what he was going to say but I knew I wasn’t ready to hear it. Two days later I said my final goodbyes to my son.

We were shocked to learn that JT wasn’t wearing his helmet that morning. He was always very adamant about wearing it! We later learned from some of JT’s friends at the university, that JT had a habit of not wearing his helmet when riding on campus. Apparently, he had a false sense of security when riding his motorcycle on the campus.

The accident is a tragedy in every sense of the word, but what makes it even more difficult for us to deal with is that James’ death might have been prevented had he been wearing a helmet. JT had a choice and unfortunately he made the wrong decision. His
tragedy has made us realize how precious life really is and how it can change drastically in the blink of an eye.

In this month’s issue of *Sports Illustrated*, there is a story of another tragic end to a promising University of South Florida football player, Patrick Payton, who lost his life in a motorcycle accident. Just as JT, doctors feel Patrick could have survived the accident if he had been wearing a helmet. My question to legislators around the country is how many parents are we going to let bury their children as a result of a motorcycle accident before we put a stop to this madness?

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, more than twenty-two hundred motorcyclists are killed each year in bike accidents. Considering this statistic alone, it just doesn’t make sense that motorcyclists have a choice whether or not to use a helmet regardless of their age. Some rides may argue that they are extremely safe every time out and faithfully obey all traffic regulations to further ensure their well being. But what about the things they can’t control, like other motorists? Can they prevent other motorists from driving dangerously and endangering their lives? Of course not. There are some decisions that a society as a whole should not allow our children, spouses, loved ones to make and riding a motorcycle without a helmet is one of them.

Finding something positive to take away from JT’s death has been a difficult task for me but I simply...at every opportunity I can to tell JT’s story but I simply refuse to let my son die in vain and that’s why I speak at every opportunity I can to tell JT’s story. There is one thing that everyone of us can learn today: no matter how short the ride or how well you may know the route you’ve ridden one hundred times, wear a helmet. If you don’t have one, buy one and wear it religiously. It might save your life.

I’d like to leave you with one final thought. Here is a picture of my son James with his sisters at his high school graduation. He had all of his hopes, dreams and life ahead of him. It ended tragically that September Monday morning when he climbed onto his motorcycle without his helmet. If Arizona would have had a mandatory helmet law, my precious son, James Thomas Haley, may still be with us today.

[Scene Two: Composite Expert Narrative]  
Lucy Leather  
Thank you Mrs. King. First off, I would like to say that I’m delighted to be here and at this time I would like to reinforce my personal favorite slogan, “Let Those Who Ride Decide.” I have been riding motorcycles for years. Heck, my first car was a bike! I would like to think that I represent the majority of all bike riders out there in America, when I say and support that, “I ought to be one the making the choices about my own safety.” I support that Louisiana has repealed its mandatory helmet law and I believe that all the other states that have helmet laws should remove them and leave the choice of wearing a helmet up to the rider. I’ve done some research and would like to share some of what I found interesting with you today.
Does anyone remember when people used to say that you shouldn’t be afraid to fly in an airplane because you were more likely to die in an automobile accident than in a plane crash? Well, let’s apply this logic to riding motorcycles. Your chances of having an accident in an automobile are one hundred and ten times more than on a motorcycle and you are ten times more likely to die of a head injury in an automobile. To take this a little further, you better forget about walking too because well over two times as many pedestrians were killed in accidents as motorcyclists. Besides, if you are on your feet, you are also four times more likely to trip and die in a fall. So it seems that people should be ditching their cars and walking in favor of the relative safety of a motorcycle. This little scenario came from statistics back in 1990 on the web page home.tampabay.rr.com.

More recent and even today’s statistics reveal much the same information. From the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) in 1991, relative to the number of registered motorcycles, states with mandatory helmet laws had 12.5% more accidents and 2.3% more fatalities than free-choice states for the fourteen year period from 1977-1990. Now, today’s topic deals with the purpose of a helmet is to help the rider survive an accident. But according to Forbes.com, the numbers indicated otherwise. During the seven year period from 1987 to 1993, states with no helmet laws suffered fewer deaths: 2.89 per hundred accidents compared with the full helmet laws 2.93. How can this be? Is she lying to us? If at least one of these questions is running through your mind right now, well let me tell you about a test study that I’m sure you didn’t know about.

On some motorcycle helmets a warning label reads: “Some reasonably foreseeable impacts may exceed the helmet’s capability to protect against severe injury or death.” Now what is a “reasonably foreseeable impact?” According to Forbes.com, this is any impact that is 14 mph or greater. Motorcycle helmets are tested by dropping on an anvil from a height of six feet, which—equals, roughly, a 14 mph impact. So, if you ride at speeds less than 14 mph and hit a stationary object, then you’re golden! But, a typical motorcycle accident would be a biker traveling around 30 mph and being struck by a car making a left hand turn at let’s say 15 mph. This is a cumulative 45 mph impact. Now, if you assume that the biker is wearing a helmet, and he/she is struck directly on the head, the helmet only slows the force of the impact to 31 mph. This is still enough force to kill the biker. So, you could be wearing a suit of armor, but if you T-bone a car around 50 mph, you’ve pretty much had it.

Now, earlier, Mrs. Haley provided a strong story and some evidence as pertaining to mandatory helmet laws. I am sorry to hear that her son passed away, and don’t get me wrong when I say this, but Mrs. Haley failed to mention JT’s riding experience, whether or not if it was known if he was showing off the night of his death or if her son had been drinking that night. I don’t mean to sound heartless, but I have done my research and numerous studies have shown that these three possible causes – inexperience, showing off, or driving drunk – are the top three causes of motorcycle accidents today.

[Joker Enters Scene]
Host

Mrs. Haley, please hold any comments while Lucy is talking. Thank you.
Lucy Leather

Donning a helmet can give a rider a false sense of security. This can lead to excessive risk taking and dangerous riding habits, especially for someone who is a new rider. I believe that the best safety thing that you can do as a rider is to drive defensively. Always be aware of the traffic around you. The inexperienced risk takers are the one’s getting into many of the accidents reported. According to a close friend of mine, nicknamed Easyrider, studies have proven that over half of the motorcycle fatalities nationwide occur to riders who have less than three years of experience riding a motorcycle. This means that if society wants to reduce the number of motorcycle accident injuries or even deaths on our highways, a much better way to go about it would be to encourage and provide training and education, especially to new riders.

But what about he people that fly down the road weaving in and out of traffic, you might ask? Well, our lawmakers are never going to legislate intelligence. Motorcycles and stupidity just don’t mix. Either new riders quickly grow out of their foolish ways or they will become a part of next year’s statistics. You just don’t live long riding motorcycles that way. Wearing or not wearing a helmet has nothing to do with it. So, responsible adults should be trusted by the state to make certain personal safety decisions, and the right to decide to wear a helmet or not should be among those choices. Society’s role is not to mandate personal safety but rather to provide the education and experience necessary to aid us in making these decisions for ourselves. To wrap things up with you today, I would like to end with this statement from the ABATE of Arizona, “a helmet cannot prevent an accident, only education can.”

[Joker Interview]

Host

Thank you for sharing your view with us Lucy. Mrs. Haley do you have a comment?

Mary Haley

Ms. Lucy Leather, JT has been riding motorcycles with his father since he was five years old. His lack of experience was not a factor in his death. It was simply the lack of a helmet.

Lucy Leather

Well that may be true, but it still doesn’t affect me or how I feel about the issue.

Mary Haley

If this doesn’t affect you then how do you think your mother will feel when she receives that phone call at four in the morning.

[Joker Transition]

Host

Let us move on to our next guest. My next guest is the chairperson of the Public Interest Research Group who explores issues such as this one. Please welcome Mrs. Joyce Riley.
[Scene Three: Composite expert narrative]

Joyce Riley

Thank you Ms. King. I would like to first extend my deepest sympathy to Mrs. Haley and her family for the loss of her son. I agree JT should have been wearing a helmet. What I do not agree with is the government protecting me against myself. As long as my actions harm no one but myself the government has no right to impose a law requiring me to wear a helmet. According to the taxfoundation.org, four cents out of every tax dollar is spent on education. As an American, I receive an education that allows me to make such decisions as career choices, marriage choices, as well as presidential choices. I should also be allowed to weigh the evidence we have heard today and make, on my own, an educated decision whether or not to wear a helmet. The U.S. Government is trying to protest me from myself. Who is protecting us for our government? The U.S. made the decision to become involved in the Vietnam War. We all know what the outcome of that was. But I wonder how many of you know that our government used an herbicide called Agent Orange to kill the vegetation in the jungle to allow our troops to see the Viet-cong. According to the Landscaper.net, our troops were exposed to this deadly chemical which has been linked to the following health problems: respiratory cancer, prostate cancer, Hodgkin’s disease, bone cancer, leukemia and many more. The U.S. admits as many as three million U.S. Army troops were exposed to this herbicide. A decision our government made for us.

But here in Louisiana you are given the choice to not wear a helmet if you purchase a ten thousand dollars insurance policy even if you already have medical insurance. This is a classic case of discrimination. If a cancer or AIDS patient wanted to ride without a helmet, no insurance company will insure them for any amount of money. This clause also allows insurance companies to charge whatever price they deem acceptable for the healthy riders.

The state, which is a part of our government, wants us to believe that an insurance clause would state the responsibility of a head injury resulting from an un-helmeted rider is not the responsibility of the American public. But if you have insurance, that is already true. So, the only ones benefiting from this insurance clause are the insurance companies. And what about the cost for the Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange. The Bush administration plans to use four cents out of every American tax dollar to pay for veterans’ benefits. These benefits include the health problems due to this deadly chemical. Our tax dollars are still paying for a decision our government made over thirty years ago.

In the 1980s, Americans started to understand the risks associated with smoking cigarettes. This understanding developed through a series of public announcements made by the American Heart Association. In other words, we were educated. This knowledge caused millions of Americans to stop smoking. In 1987, California implemented a Motorcycle Safety Program. Riders learned how to make themselves more visible to others on the road as well as how to handle themselves on a bike. According to the program effectiveness report prepared for the CA Highway Patrol, over the nine years the program has been in affect, fatal motorcycle accidents in California has dropped by 95%. The total number of accidents also dropped 67% as in the graph.
Even if you are not a motorcycle rider, you should be concerned with the way in which this group of individuals is being made to feel like a burden to society. What if our government was attacking your choice of lifestyle? Let’s say you owned a convertible and were required to wear a helmet or purchase additional insurance. Maybe you had to purchase additional insurance if you wanted to water ski or snowboard. The next time you want to do something a little exciting or want to express your personality through an activity you love, think how it would feel if the government had already decided you couldn’t.

[Joker transition]

Host

Thank you for your comments on helmets. My next guest will speak personally about helmets. Her father was in a motorcycle accident. She believes that helmets are a good thing. Please welcome Mrs. Ashley Smith.

[Scene Four: Composite personal and expert narrative]

Ashley Smith

Thank you Mrs. King. On May 12th of 2000, a car hit my fifty year old dad while he was driving his motorcycle. He was only going 30-35 mph when he was hit. A lady pulled out in the intersection he was approaching and she just stopped. He thinks she was looking right to see if she could turn left. She just did not notice my dad coming straight for her. My dad hit his brakes and tried to steer out of the way the car and not into the on coming traffic. My dad then let off the brake and Hi-Sliding is it is basically when the bike turns from skidding on one side to skidding on the other side because the wheel is trying to catch up with the engine’s speed. The only reason my dad is still here today is because he was wearing his helmet. As you can see from this helmet, if he was not wearing it he would have died along with his ear torn off and most probably his nose because he slid face down. He had a huge bruise on his upper leg because of the force he was hit with and then from sliding, for about a month. His foot was torn open and had to be stitched up.

Some may argue that we need to educate riders more and that would cause the fatality rate to decrease. My dad was an experienced driver for ten years and took a Motorcycle Safety Foundation class. I don’t know how more educated you can be. This accident was not because he was not experienced or uneducated. It was because of the stupidity of the lady driving the vehicle. My dad wears his helmet because he knows that just because he is well educated in driving a motorcycle does not mean that protects him from others driving around him. Obviously, if he would have died it would have been the lady’s fault and should have to live knowing she killed my dad. My dad saved that lady’s life and his own by choosing the wear his helmet.

According to “Motorcycle Accident Cause Factors and Identification of Countermeasures,” the most deadly injuries to accident victims injuries to the chest and head. It also states that wearing a helmet is a critical factor in reducing head injuries. Some also argue that wearing a helmet reduces one’s ability to hear sounds and, in an accident it may also cause neck injuries. Those thoughts are proven wrong in Hurt’s Study. Riders that wore their helmets had less neck injuries than those who did not wear
their helmets. The only reason a helmet not prevent a head injury is if it is not properly fitted or made according to regulations.

According to the NHTSA, to reduce injuries a motorcyclist should wear protection such as jackets, shoes, eye protection, gloves and a helmet. A helmet is the most important because it protects your head and brain from being injured. According to more than 80% of motorcycle accidents end in injury or in the death of the motorcyclist. The leading cause of these injuries and deaths are due to head trauma. A helmet helps the impact to be distributed and protects against the skull from being injured. The cushion inside is the second piece that absorbs more energy preventing it from going to the head and brain.

The statement Lucy said, that mandatory helmet laws are not effective is not true. According to NHSTA, helmet laws increase the number of people who wear helmets and it also saves lives. This has been proven through state testing including tests before and after the helmet laws were repealed. The National Highway Traffic Safety Association estimated, from 1984 to 1996, helmets saved the lives of 7,940 motorcyclists. If the motorcyclists in all the states in the country had worn their helmets the lives saved would have nearly doubled, to an estimated number of 14,505. Another study that was conducted proved that twenty four out of twenty six states that repealed the helmet law had, 25% increases in motorcycle fatalities.

In conclusion, I would like to leave you with a few facts to think about. “Benefits of Safety Belts and Motorcycle Helmets” states that helmets are 67% effective in preventing brain injuries. It also confirms motorcyclists that do not wear their helmets are three times as likely to suffer from brain injury than those who wear their helmet. Would like to be responsible of killing someone or leaving them a vegetable for the rest of their life because they chose not to wear a helmet. A helmet cannot prevent an accident, but it can save a life.

[Joker Interview and Exhortation]

Host

I would like to open up the floor to our audience for any questions?

Host Question Bank for Audience

1. Now that you’ve heard all the facts, how many of you would wear a helmet?
2. Both Lucy and Ashley stated a helmet cannot save lives. Lucy stated education can and Ashley stated helmets prevent accidents. Whom do you agree with?

Host Question Bank for Panelists

1. (to Mary) You stated that you speak at every opportunity you can. Do you feel your voice has had an impact on the helmet laws across our nation?
2. (to Joyce) Have you ever ridden a motorcycle? If so, would you wear a helmet?
3. (to Lucy or to Ashley) Can you explain your contradicting statement toward Lucy or Ashley?
[Joker Commentary and conclusion]

Host

I would like to thank our guests for sharing their stories with us today. I would also like to thank the audience for their participation. I hope that we have helped you with the decision to wear a helmet or not if you ride a motorcycle. Please join us tomorrow when our topic will be violence in television. I am your host Kathleen King. Have a good day.
Proposition:

Emergency Conception is Merely Abortion in Disguise

Elizabeth Carter
A. Position: Con
B. Identity: Composite expert narrative
   1. Pharmaceutical Sales Representative
   2. Supporter of the sale and use of the morning after pill
C. Arguments
   1. The morning after pill is beneficial to society
   2. Believes that emergency contraception prevents unwanted pregnancies and abortions
D. Sources
   2. www.nottoolate.com
   3. www.morningafterpill.org

Faith Green
A. Position: Pro
B. Identity: Composite lay narrative
   1. A Christian pro-life individual
   2. Is against anything that harms a potential life
C. Arguments
   1. Pregnancy begins at fertilization
   2. The morning after pill is abortion
D. Sources
   1. “Pro-life Activities”
   2. “Catholic Information Network”
   3. The Bible
   4. “Christ Unlimited Ministries”

Doris Kalasky
A. Position: Con
B. Identity: Personal narrative
   1. A victim of incest; was raped by her father's and became pregnant
   2. Believes that the morning after pill is not a form of abortion
C. Arguments
   1. I was raped by my father when I was fifteen years old and was forced to abort my baby
   2. If I had the option of taking the morning after pill, my abortion could have been avoided
D. Sources
   1. The Elliot Institute, www.abortionfacts.com
Dr. Marsha Fieldstone
A. Position: Con
B. Identity: Composite expert narrative
   1. A medical doctor who specializes in obstetrics and gynecology
   2. Supports the morning after pill as another form of contraception
C. Arguments
   1. Emergency Contraception is a safe and effective drug to prevent pregnancy
   2. EC is not the same as RU-486 a.k.a. "the abortion pill"
   3. Believes EC prevents unwanted pregnancies and abortions
D. Sources
   2. Interview with Dr. Ralph Armstrong

V. Jesse Helms
A. Position: Pro
B. Identity: Composite expert narrative
   1. Republican Senator of North Carolina
   2. Does not support the idea of the morning after pill being used
C. Arguments
   1. The morning after pill is really abortion
   2. Lessens responsible attitude of sex
   3. There are side effects and dangers
   4. There are problems with over-the-counter selling
D. Sources
   1. www.salon.com
   2. www.morningafterpill.org
   3. www.spuc.org

The Persuasive Speech Forum
Proposition: Emergency contraception is merely abortion in disguise

[Joker Dedication and Explanation]

Host
Hello and good evening. Welcome to the Great Debate, the breaking news forum where controversy is our connection. I am your Ryan Gautreau and I am eager to get started.

Today we will address and analyze a hot topic on the medical front, emergency contraception. Is emergency contraception merely abortion in disguise? This is certainly a topic that involves the lives of many families, but also the lives of doctors and politicians around the world. This is why it is important for those watching and listening today to pay attention because you never know when a situation like this may affect you.

In discussing the topic at hand, we will get views from all sides. We have invited a panel of five persons, all of whom share this common situation in some way. We have a pharmaceutical sales representative who will give us background on some of the different types of emergency contraceptives and how they work. We have a practicing Christian who is very involved in her community who will give her views and her
interpretation of the Bible on the issue. We have a rape victim who will reveal her story for the first time and how things might have that will tell us how the pill works and some effects that it may have, whether it is safe or not. We also have a North Carolina Senator who will give his view on emergency contraception and how it faces the public today.

Our first guest today is a pharmaceutical sales representative who has been involved primarily with the new types of emergency contraception. She is here today to share with us some basic background information about these new types. She will also inform us about the accessibility and effectiveness of these new types. Please welcome to the show Elizabeth Carter.

[Scene One: Composite Expert Narrative]
Elizabeth Carter

Emergency contraception, also known as the morning after pill, is really just an extremely high dosage of birth control bills taken after sexual intercourse, when unwanted pregnancy may have occurred. Emergency contraception is considered the morning after pill, but you do not have to actually wait until the morning. ECP, as it is abbreviated, is effective for up to seventy-two hours after intercourse, but is more effective the earlier it is taken says nottoolate.com. Because ECPs have a three day window of effectiveness and require multiple doses of pills, the popular term “morning after pill” is misleading, according to the “Planned Parenthood” website. According to the National Organization for Women, “ECP is not an abortion pill but rather it prevents the implantation of the fertilized egg.”

The Federal Drug Administration and Planned Parenthood state that emergency contraception works to prevent ovulation. ECP is not effective in a woman who is pregnant. Before being given a prescription for the pills she must take a pregnancy test; if she is pregnant she will not get the pills. They will do absolutely nothing if she is already pregnant. Emergency contraceptive pills are taken in two doses: the first is taken within seventy-two hours of unprotected intercourse and the second dose twelve hours later. There are three ways in which ECP can work: 1) inhibiting ovulation; 2) delaying ovulation; and 3) irritating the lining of the uterus.

As of right now Planned Parenthood is the leading provider of ECP. According to plannedparenthood.org, in 1999, one hundred and thirteen thousand prescriptions were given out as compared to seventeen thousand in 1995. With a prescription from your doctor, some pharmacies will prescribe it but in the future it will be made available over the counter.

There are currently eleven brands of ECP available in the United States. The three most common are the Plant B, Preven, and Ovral. Plan B is the most effective and prevents 85% of unwanted pregnancies. It has the fewest side effects, and costs about thirty dollars a prescription. Preven is the most widely known on the market today but is also the most expensive. For about half the cost (about 15-30), you can get an almost identical pill called Ovral which is widely available.

Approximately 60-70% of voters and pharmacists, including Catholics, support the idea of over the counter ECPs, says plannedparenthood.org. The majority of pharmacists support adding ECPs to the protocol of drugs that they can prescribe directly for patients. In February of 1997, the FDA declared ECP to be safe and effective to use,
morningafterpill.org said. Currently, California and Washington are the only two states in the nation, which allow pharmacies to sell the pill without a prescription.

Emergency contraception pills are 85% effective in preventing potential unwanted pregnancies. It offers a safe, noninvasive way to prevent pregnancy in emergency situations. It serves a woman’s health needs and advances reproductive self-determination. About half of the three million unintended pregnancies and eight hundred thousand abortions each year could be prevented with ECP. I believe emergency contraception is a safe, noninvasive way to reduce the amount of unintended pregnancies and the need for abortions.

[Joker Transition]

Host

Thank you Elizabeth. Our next goal is an active practicing religious personality who has some strong opinions about emergency contraception. She is here today to convince us that from a religious viewpoint the morning after pill is in fact an abortion. Please welcome Faith Green.

[Scene Two: Composite Lay Narrative]

Faith Green

As Jennifer stated, the morning after pill prevents the implantation of a fertilized egg. By saying that, she is implying that pregnancy begins with implantation. “Pro-Life Activities” states, “To define pregnancy as beginning only at implantation… diminishes the vast majority of women who value the entire process of procreation.” The biggest controversy of the morning after pill is when pregnancy begins. If you believe that pregnancy begins only at implantation, the morning after pill, to you, is nothing more than a contraceptive. However, if you believe that pregnancy begins at fertilization, or conception, then the morning after pill, according to the Catholic Information Network, is a form of chemical abortion. An example of a chemical abortion method is the abortion pill, RU-486. Now I’m not saying emergency contraception is RU-486, but they are similar. The question here is when does pregnancy begin?

When God created man, he created them to love and populate the earth, not to kill. Genesis 1:27 reads, “God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.” God then proceeded to tell Adam and Eve, as they were so named, to “populate the earth”. Now no where in the Bible does it actually say that “abortion is bad” but it does make indirect references to abortion. Exodus 21:22 reads, “If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman’s husband demands and the court allows.” He even loves those who are not yet in the womb. In Jeremiah 1:5, God tells Jeremiah, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.” If Jeremiah’s mother had had access to the morning after pill, and taken it, then the entire book of Jeremiah would not exist today. I believe that just as abortion destroys an unknown future, a life, and so does the morning after pill.

As stated in Christ Unlimited Ministries, “life begins when God creates it, not at some later point in time when it has grown to look like a newborn.” In our country, when a person kills a pregnant woman it is called a double homicide, but the mother of the unborn can take its life and nothing is done to stop that. The sixth commandment,
Exodus 20:13, states that you shall not murder. And because life as God sees it begins at fertilization, then the morning after pill is abortion or murder.

As we all know, abortion is still a very controversial choice. Should it be the woman’s decision, the man’s and woman’s or nobody’s decision at all? I am not here to answer those questions. But I am here to say that if we pregnancy begins at conception or implantation, then how can we accept the morning after pill as a contraceptive? Let me leave you with this quote, also from Christ Unlimited Ministries. “We know when life begins because the test tube baby proves that life begins with the fertilization of an egg. What do you have in the dish? An egg and a sperm. What do you add to get a baby? Nothing.”

[Joker Interview: See Host’s Questions at the end of the script.]
Host
Thank you Faith. I’ve got a question or two for you.

[Joker Transition]
Host
Our next guest is a rape victim who will be revealing her story to the public for the very first time. So get a grip and get ready as she relates the possibilities of emergency contraception to her story. Please welcome to the show Doris Kalasky.

[Scene Three: Personal Narrative]
Doris Kalasky
I am a victim of incest, one of the “hard cases” for abortion. My father raped me when I was fifteen years old. It was not the first time, nor would it be the last. However, this time I became pregnant.

One night, I became very sick and my parents took me to the hospital. (I believe they knew I was pregnant since they took me to a different hospital than normal.) The emergency room doctor discovered that, along with a very bad case of the flu, I was nineteen weeks pregnant.

My father flew into a rage, accusing me of all sorts of things and demanding I have an abortion. The doctor informed me that I was pregnant and asked me what I wanted. I had seen the Silent Scream in a high school religion class and knew that abortion was murder. In spite of the pain and guilt that I felt, knowing who the father of the baby was, it was far better to have a baby than the alternative – to kill it. I refused to have an abortion.

My father flew into an uncontrollable rage and demanded that I consent to the abortion, or that the doctor do it with or without my permission. The doctor refused because of my wishes. My father demanded that an abortionist be found, regardless of the cost.

Within one hour this man arrived at the hospital, talked with my parents and decided to do the abortion without speaking to me. I refused and tried to jump off the examining table. He then asked the nurses to hold me while he strapped me to the bed and injected me with a muscle relaxant to keep me from struggling while he prepared to kill my baby. I continued to scream that I didn’t want an abortion. He told me, “Shut up
and quit that yelling!” Eventually, I was placed under general anesthesia and my child was brutally killed.

I was told that an abortion would solve my problem, when it was never the problem in the first place.

I was told, “Your parents know what’s best,” when they obviously were only concerned about their own reputations.

I was told “You made the right decision,” when I was never given a choice. More importantly, where was my baby’s choice?

I grieve every day for my daughter. I have struggled to forget the abuse and the abortion. I can do neither. All I think of is, “I should have done more, fought more, struggled more for the life of my child.”

My situation may not be common, but I know it’s not unique either. The emotions and problems I’ve had to deal with as a result of my abortion are common. The trauma of the rape and abuse were only intensified by the abortion. The guilt of knowing my baby is dead is something I will have to live with for the rest of my life.

I was violated and betrayed over and over by my father, who God created to love and protect me. I was humiliated, hurt and, yes, violated again by the abortionist.

The next time you hear of the “hard cases,” please remind people that every crisis pregnancy is difficult for the mother. If you believe these cases are hard, you’re correct. They are extremely hard for the mother. The mom needs love, support, and understanding, not the pain of allowing herself to be violated again by being forced to have an abortion.

My abortion was over five years ago. God is still healing me, but it has been a difficult fight. I hesitated to talk to you because, although I’m actively pro-life, very few people know my story. It’s still very difficult to share with people, however, I wanted to encourage you in your uncompromising stand for life. I just wish I had had another choice, other than abortion.

“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds” (Psalms 147:3). God bless you.

[Joker Interview]

Host

Thank you Doris. How would you feel if you were given the option of taking the morning after pill?

Doris Kalasky

I would have rather taken the morning after pill than the life of my child.

[Joker Commentary and Transition]

Host

Our next guest is Dr. Marsha Fieldstone, an OB/GYN. She will give us her take on emergency contraception. She will go further into detail about the effectiveness and explain why the ECP pill is not an abortion.
“Almost half of the six million pregnancies in the United States each year are unintended,” according to Princeton University’s ECP website. As Mrs. Carter said before, making emergency contraceptives available is the single most important step we can take to reduce unintended pregnancy and the need for induced abortion. “Emergency contraception has been available for more than twenty five years and could prevent 1.7 million of those unintended pregnancies and eight-hundred thousand abortions each year. It is a safe and effective method of contraception, and women who have used it report high levels of satisfaction.”

Studies have shown that ECPs prevent pregnancy by delaying ovulation and producing a lining around the uterine wall, making it inhospitable for pregnancy to take place.

Emergency contraception can prevent pregnancy. This is important because with the millions of women having unprotected sex, there has to be a way to reduce the risk of pregnancy. In every one hundred women that have unprotected sex eight will become pregnant with a 75% success rate. The need for this type of protection against pregnancy is needed if a condom breaks, no contraception is used, or in the case of rape or sexual assault.

The FDA approved ECPs as a safe, effective way to prevent pregnancy but like most drugs there are some side effect such as nausea and vomiting. These side effects can be controlled with medication prescribed by a doctor.

One commonly asked question among the concerned is if women will stop using regular forms of contraception and use ECPs instead? According to Princeton University website, “ECPs are not a logical choice for ongoing protection. Any method of ongoing contraception is more effective than ECPs. ECPs are more expensive than most other forms of contraceptives such as condoms. The nausea and vomiting associated with the use of combined ECPs would deter their regular routine use. Also, emergency contraceptives will not guard against sexually transmitted diseases. You see, most women should not want to use this form of protection repeatedly but only in the case of emergencies. Without the worry of this drug being abused, people should be educated and able to make their own decisions about the drug.

Emergency contraception is not a form of abortion. It, in fact, prevents pregnancy. According to Princeton University’s ECP website it says, “Medical science defines the beginning of pregnancy as the implantation of a fertilized egg in the lining of a women’s uterus. Implantation begins five to seven days after fertilization (and is completed several days later). “The abortion pill (RU-486) works differently because it can be taken up to two months into the pregnancy when a fetus is already growing. ECP prevents some women from going through that or having a surgical abortion.”

I feel that ECP is a safe and effective drug to prevent pregnancy. I do not condone casual sex but I will not refuse those seeking help because I do not think pregnancy should be a punishment but a gift.
Carolina. He is here today to give his opinion on how the public might react with the issuance of emergency contraception. Please welcome Jesse Helms.

[Scene Four: Composite Lay-Expert Narrative]

Jesse Helms

Thank you Ryan for inviting me to your show today to talk about this serious issue at hand. Let me start off with touching on a point already discussed by Faith. The morning after pill is really a form of abortion. According to morningafterpill.org, it does prevent ovulation or delay it; but if the pill doesn’t work and the woman becomes pregnant, the tiny baby will die before it can actually attach to the lining of the uterus. This is seen as a form of chemical abortion. So, if we allow the sale of this pill over the counter, we would be basically handing out abortions. The easier the pill is to obtain, the more the pill will be used and, given its failure rate, this can only mean the number of unwanted pregnancies or abortions will increase.

Now, let me move on to my next point. Emergency contraception will lessen the responsible attitude toward sex. The attitude towards sex is already very irresponsible as of now. According to spuc.org.uk/map/dangers one million packs of PC4, which is one of the two forms of the morning after pill in circulation, were supplied. Also casual sex is common in our community and very much accepted. There will be an increase in this lack of responsibility towards sexual activity and casual sex will become more and more common if we allow the sale of this drug without a prescription.

The morning after pill carries a lot of side effects and dangers with it. First of all, according to spuc.org.uk/map/briefing, “extended use of MAP is likely to cause a greater incidence of sexually transmitted diseases which are already rising at an alarming rate and are one of the main causes of infertility. MAP offers no protection against STDs.”

Spuc.org.uk/map/dangers states that there is certain side effects, which include nausea, vomiting, breast tenderness, change in bleeding patterns, dizziness, headaches, fatigue, infertility, and entopic pregnancy--the last of which can prove to be fatal to the mother. A female’s medical history if not checked can cause problems if it reacts with the pill negatively. These are some of the factors that we face if we let this pill be sold over the counter.

According to spuc.org.uk/map, with the approval of selling this drug without prescription we run the risk of women lying about when they had sex to try to get of the baby two to four weeks into their pregnancy. Incest or abuse can also be easily covered up if this pill is made more readily available. With all of these negative factors in place, if we can’t get rid of the pill completely let’s at least require a prescription so as to safeguard against these problems

[Joker Interview and Exhortation]]

Host

I would like to open up the floor to our audience for any questions?

Host Question Bank for Audience

1. Now that you’ve heard all the facts, how many of you would take the morning-after pill or recommend it to a female friend?
2. Do you agree with Ms. Green that the morning-after pill is abortion?
Host Question Bank for Panelists

1. (to Ms. Carter) Do you feel that you have a conflict of issues?

[Joker Commentary and conclusion]

Host

Thank you Jesse. In conclusion to the show, I would like to thank the panelist for joining today and discussing with us both sides of this controversial issue. I would especially like to think the audience for being attentive and participating. Is emergency contraception merely abortion in disguise? I think you are now more than capable of answering the questions yourself. Good evening and good-bye!
APPENDIX E

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION ASSIGNMENT HANDOUTS

Enclosed here are the assignment handouts that the students received in the Interpersonal Communication course.

For the Communicating Self in Shadow Box Imagery assignment, the students received a handout detailing the criteria of the assignment and the steps of the process.

For the Adapting to Others assignment, the students received a handout detailing the criteria of the assignment, the steps of the process and a point break down.
A Self-Concept Homework Assignment: Communicating Self in Shadow Box Imagery

Welcome to your journey of self-discovery. The only way that you can know yourself is by examining who you are. Below are questions that ask you specific things about yourself that you may or may not have thought about. THINK ABOUT the questions below and answer them as honestly as you can. Make sure you type your answers in full sentences.

Part One: WHO ARE YOU?
1. Your name and its connotations
2. Your heritage or cultural background
3. Your self-schemata (e.g., masculinity, femininity, dependent, independent)
4. Your moods or feelings (e.g., happy, sad)
5. Your appearance (e.g., good-looking, unattractive)
6. Your social traits (e.g., friendly, shy)
7. Talents/skills you possess or lack (e.g., musical, tone-deaf)
8. Your intellectual capacity (e.g., smart, or stupid)
9. Your religious beliefs (e.g., religious, environmentalist)
10. Your social roles (e.g., parent, child, spouse)
11. Your physical condition (e.g., healthy, overweight)

Part Two: HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR SELF?
1. What are some visions of your self you dream of becoming?
2. What are some visions of your self you fear becoming?
3. How would you define your perceived self, ideal self, and presenting self?
4. How would you define material self, social self, and spiritual self?
5. How would you define the relationship between your real and ideal image?

Part Three: HOW DO OTHER SEE YOU?
Give copies of the questionnaire (The Way We See Me) to some of your relatives and friends. Ask them to answer the questionnaire as honestly as they can. (Don’t watch them fill it out or ask them the questions orally.) After they have completed the questionnaire ask them to return it to you.

Part Four: IS HOW OTHERS SEE YOU DIFFERENT FROM YOUR SELF?
After your questionnaires are return to you, read them and answer the following questions:
1. What similarities did you notice among all questionnaire responses? Why?
2. What differences did you notice among all questionnaire responses? Why?
3. What did you learn about yourself from this activity?
As part of a class assignment, I am distributing this questionnaire to some of my relatives, friends and romantic partner. It is designed to give me your impressions of my personality. I am attempting to compare the way other people see me with the way I see myself. While it may be difficult for you to express your impressions exactly, I would appreciate as frank a rating as you can give me.

This questionnaire should not take long to complete. First, try to construct an overall view of your impressions about my personality before answering the specific questions. Consider each item briefly and indicate the first choice that occurs to you. If you come to an item which you feel unable to answer with certainty, place a question mark, instead of a check, in one of the spaces to indicate a guess. However, please do answer every question. If you have comments that will help explain any of your answers, please use the space provided or write in the margins.

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Please begin by considering my main strengths and weaknesses. Describe each as carefully as you can in the spaces below:

Main Strengths:

Main Weaknesses:

We all have different relationships with different people. Our relationship with our mother is different than our relationship with say our co-worker. In one paragraph describe your relationship with me.

Sometimes our friends, family members and/or romantic partners observe things about us that we don’t realize or perceive about ourselves. In one paragraph explains some things that I do that I DON’T realize.

How do the words in the questionnaire apply to me? Please checkmark the word/phrase that applies.

How accurately do these answers reflect your impression of me?

How well do you feel you know me?

Additional Comments:

Respondents Name: ____________________

(please check one)   ___ Friend
                   ___ Relative
                   ___ Romantic Partner
A Self-Concept Assignment: Communicating Self in Shadow Box Imagery

Your first project asks you to create your self-concept and self-image by means of visual imagery. You might think of yourself as an image-maker; a visual artist who composes vivid, layered pictures or images that express a certain feeling, emotion, thought or inspired theme. The content of the imagery must focus on your self-concept and your self-image.

Content: Examine, analyze and evaluate your answer to the following question from your Homework#1 assignment and think about what type of visual/pictorial image would illustrate your verbal answer.

1. Who are you?
2. How do you see your self?
3. How do others see you?
4. Is how others see you different for how you see your self?

The Shadow Box:
The imagery you should include in your shadow box should address the following factors:

- It should represent your perceived self, ideal self, presenting self, material self, social self and spiritual self.
- It should illustrate the relationship between your real (or perceived self) and ideal self.
- It should illustrate a transitional image that connects your real and ideal self. This image can be structural or visual.
- It should represent your group association and how you see your self in that group—e.g., center of attention, on the margins, just one of the gang.
- It should represent the key or major roles you assume and how those roles interact or are balanced.
- It should represent your world perspective—e.g., your focus on career, family, self, marriage, and so forth.
- It should show your need for inclusion, need for control, and need for affection.
- It should represent whether you are an extrovert or introvert; a person of intuition or sense; a thinking or feeling type; a structured or adaptable type; a structured or adaptable; and a tense or calm personality type.

Composition Guidelines:

- You should arrange your images in a collage sequence. A collage interweaves and juxtaposes different image in a single frame, in this case your container.
- Your container should not be smaller than a shoebox.
- You may not use more than two photographs of yourself and/or others.
- Exaggerate differences (conflicts) by working extreme contrasts in size, color, style and texture of the items or imagery.
• Exaggerate similarities by using repetitive images, shapes, colors and texture.
• Exaggerate the size and style of imagery.
• Do not explain how the images relate or relate to you and your-concept.
• Have Fun!!! Be Creative !!!!
A Conflict Awareness Assignment: Adapting to Others

Your third project asks you to stage a conflict and some solutions to that conflict. Your presentation should have the following:

1. Dedication
2. Stage and act out the original conflict (attached)
3. Stage and act out the points of view of all characters in the conflict
4. Stage a visual representation (via body imagery) of the points of view of all characters in the conflict
5. Stage and act out (1) win-win solution, (1) lose-lose solution, (1) compromise solution that includes all characters involved in the conflict, and (2-5) win-lose solutions for all characters involved in the conflict.
6. Commercial (live or taped but performed by group members)
7. Host Commentary with Q/A (open audience participation)
8. Improvisation of the original conflict using the suggestions from the audience to depicted a REALISTIC, BELIEVABLE AND PRACTICAL solution that can possibly resolve the problem
9. Concluding Remarks

Each group presentation should be 25-30 minutes. (Set up should be quick no more than 2-3 minutes). All group members MUST have a MAJOR SPEAKING part in the presentation. The presentation should be MEMORIZED, PRACTICED and POLISHED. A typed paper (one per group) must be turned in to the instructor on the day of the presentation.

PAPER FORMAT (typed, single spaced)
Group Members Names
Group Topic
Cast of Characters

I. A. Conflict Starters--Write out the conflict starters
   B. Conflict Management Strategies--Write out the examples and identify the strategies being used

II. Dedication--Write out (approximately 100-130 words)

III. Points of View of Characters
    (depending on the size of the conflict the number of POVs will vary)

   A. POINT OF VIEW OF CHARACTER 1
      -- Write out (approximately 150-175 words)

   B. POINT OF VIEW OF CHARACTER 2
      -- Write out (approximately 150-175 words)

   C. POINT OF VIEW OF CHARACTER 3
      -- Write out (approximately 150-175 words)
D. POINT OF VIEW OF CHARACTER 4
   -- Write out (approximately 150-175 words)
E. POINT OF VIEW OF CHARACTER 5
   -- Write out (approximately 150-175 words)

IV. A. WIN-WIN SOLUTION--Write out in Dialogue Form
   B. LOSE-LOSE SOLUTION--Write out in Dialogue Form
   C. COMPRISE SOLUTION--Write out in Dialogue Form
   D. WIN-LOSE SOLUTION FOR CHARACTER 1--Write out in Dialogue Form
   E. WIN-LOSE SOLUTION FOR CHARACTER 2--Write out in Dialogue Form
   F. WIN-LOSE SOLUTION FOR CHARACTER 3--Write out in Dialogue Form
   G. WIN-LOSE SOLUTION FOR CHARACTER 4--Write out in Dialogue Form
   H. WIN-LOSE SOLUTION FOR CHARACTER 5--Write out in Dialogue Form

V. Commercial--Write out in Dialogue Form

VI. Host Commentary with Q/A
   A. Commentary --Write out (approximately 50-60 words)
   B. List of potential Questions (at least 7)

VII. CONCLUDING REMARKS--Write out (approximately 50-60 words)

IN-CLASS WORK PROCEDURE

STEP ONE:
Identify the Conflict Starters and The Conflict Management Strategies.

STEP TWO:
Write out the points of view of all the characters in the conflict (approximately 150-175 words). Make sure each character identifies what he or she thinks is the conflict both on the content and relational level. Each character also should include information that shows the exact stage of the relationship (contact, involvement, intimacy, deterioration, repair, or dissolution) they see themselves at. Each character should explain what they desire from the other characters in the conflict. They also should state what they will do to resolve the conflict. *Note: The point of view of the character should match the conflict management strategies being used in step one.

STEP THREE:
Write and stage alternative solutions (1) win-win solution, (1) lose-lose solution, (1) compromise solution that includes all characters involved in the conflict and (2-5) win-lose solutions for all characters involved in the conflict (depending on the number of characters you have in your conflict). All alternative solutions must be written in dialogue form.
STEP FOUR:
Write Dedication (approximately 100-130 words), Concluding Remarks (approximately 50-60 words), and Host’s Commentary (approximately 50-60 words) with Q/A (at least 7).

Your dedication should (1) explain the relevance of your topic to society in general, and more specifically to your audience at hand and (2) the cast should dedicate your presentation to a person or event. Your Concluding Remarks should (1) urge the audience to act according to the presentation’s examples and (2) acknowledge that your group presented “only” some of the possible solutions to your conflict. Finally, the Host’s Commentary should make the audience aware of the possible changes needed to be taken to solve the problem or the host may offer information that connects the problem to the grand scheme of things. The Host’s Commentary can be written as a reflection, an editorial, an advice column or even as a song.

STEP FIVE:
Write and stage a commercial. Your commercial should show society’s “quick fix” attitude toward resolving personal or individual problems. For example, the drug “Paxil” gives people who suffer from social anxiety a “quick confident booster” but doesn’t address the psychological social phobias. Write out in dialogue form.

STEP SIX:
Stage visual movement and practice possible improvisations that audience members might suggest.

STEP SEVEN:
Practice, Practice, Practice.

STEP EIGHT:
Present project and paper on FINAL DATE.
Enclosed here are photographs of shadow boxes made by students in the SPCM 2010: Interpersonal Communication classes I taught. Below is a listing of the shadow boxes in the order they appear here. Per each student’s consent I list is a listing of the students name.

The students listed in Figures 1.1 through 1.4 were enrolled in SPCM 2010 in the spring of 2001. Figure 1.1a and Figure 1.1b (veiled covered picture frame) created by a female student; Figure 1.2a and Figure 1.2b (purple, pink and blue floral hat box) created by Brittany; Figure 1.3 (black covered box with rocks and marbles) created by Craig; and, Figure 1.4 (gold gilded box with doves and latter) created by Katie.

The students listed in Figures 1.5 through 1.7 were enrolled in SPCM 2010 through the Evening School in the spring of 2001. Figure 1.5 (quilted covered box with boot) created by Joel; Figure 1.6 (wooden box trimmed with foliage and drafting triangle and stencil) created by Angela; and, Figure 1.7 (wooden box with barbed wire front trimmed in ivy) created by Ryan.
Shadow Box Project created by Female Student  
SPCM 2010 spring 001

Figure 1.1a

Figure 1.1b
The outside border or frame of my shadow box has an old splintery look. I thought about painting the outside of the frame, but as I looked at it, I realized it represented me. The frame represents how old fashion I can be at times. I can be stubborn or scornful at times, so that is what the splinters or the pieces of wood sticking out. My shadow box is covered with a see-through shirt. There are glimpses of things that you can see, but the shirt has a type of foggy or unclearness to it. This represents me because I let people see the outside of me, but not the whole picture.

Background: My box is covered with a background of clouds and crosses. The clouds represent the serenity of the sky. The crosses represent how religion is with me no matter where I go. The crosses surround all of my pictures.

In the top left hand corner is a picture of my Aunt Anne. She died suddenly from a stroke last year. She had a stroke on March 30, and her grandson was born on the 31st. She stayed in a comma for a week and then passed on. Her death is the first family death to really affect me. I lost three relatives in a span of three weeks last year. Also in the corner is a picture of a beer bottle. I had a friend to die of a drunk driving accident. He died three days before his graduation. I used to drink with him. It's funny how things that you share with someone are the very things that kill them. I don't drink anymore.

In the bottom left hand corner is Toy vs. Toy. This represents the person who I am and the person that I want to be. The first Toy represents the bold, stubborn, and big person that I see myself as now. The smaller Toy is rather bold, but she has a more feminine color to her appearance, and she is also smaller. Right next to that is a couch, represents the fact that I am a good listener. Some times I think that my major should have been psychiatry. I really enjoy talking to people and coming up with solutions to problems. Beside the couch are cd's, tapes, and candles. By listing to soft music and having candles lit is peaceful to me. I don't own any fast tapes or cd's. I only buy slow, love songs. I like words that really come from the heart and soul.

In the center of the picture is my family. The picture has my mother and all of my natural sisters and brothers. We all have the same mother and father. Daddy was at a church meeting during the time of the picture. Above that picture is a picture of a tractor. When I was a freshman in high school I was ran over by a tractor. My cousin did it. This was a dramatic time for me I underwent two surgeries and had staples in my leg. Not to mention in a "boot"

Moving over to the right is a set of stairs. The stairs represent the progress and struggle of my life. The first step is small with a one small book. The book and step are small because they represent high school. The second step is larger because it has a lot books on the step. Between the second and third step is a man struggling and is falling off the step. It's been a struggle through college. The third step is a diploma and graduation cap. This represents when I will finally make it and graduate. The fourth step is money. Money is what I plan to be making. I will have a business career. The fifth step is my ultimate step. Regardless of what I may accomplish my life won't be complete without a husband and child. The Young Man at the top of the photo is the man that I would like to marry.
As the class was looking at my project, I felt like my privacy was invaded in some ways. When they had to look hard or move the shirt I felt relieve because it served its purpose as hiding the true me. If I had received a first price on my project, I would have been proud of myself. I worked hard on my project. At first I was reluctant to do this because I am not artistically incline. As I was doing the process and organization it became fun.

If I had received a second place price on my project, I would be proud, but a little disappointed. One of the reasons why the judge would give me second price would maybe because of the stairs. It's kind of hard to interpret what they are because they aren't distinctly outlined. I was surprised that the class didn't ask me any questions about it. This is due to my inartistic ability.

If I had received a third price I would be disappointed, because I feel like my shadow box was first or second price project. I thought that it was well organized. The images that I conveyed were a representation of me. Third price to me is like failure so I would take it kind of hard. Eventually I would get over the defeat.
Shadow Box Project created by Brittany
SPCM 2010 spring 001

Figure 2.1a

Figure 2.1b
This was such a fun project, it helped me define my self-concept and to become aware of myself. The box I choose was circular, purple, and floral in appearance. I am extremely feminine that is why I picked a flowery box, and it is purple because that is my favorite color. It is circular because my schedule is always going in circles. Every week it seems like my schedule is the same; I have cheerleading, school, and errands everyday. My life never changes; it is very repetitious. This can be a good or bad thing.

In the center of my box is a white cross. I think God should be first then family. I try to attend church but I do not go every Sunday. The cross is white because I believe it portrays purity. Touching my cross is the word family. I am very family oriented and enjoy spending time with everyone. We all get together for family night even with our busy schedules.

On the right side of my box is my fashion sense side. I have displayed a purple dress outfit. I love wearing dresses; it gives me a sense of femininity. I go shopping at least twice a week; this always makes me feel better. It gives me a sense of control. My favorite stores are BeBe and Express because they have very fashionable clothes. I have two walk-in closets filled with clothes, buying clothes has sort of become of hobby for me.

Next, I have a picture of a BeBe shoe. I love shoes I own about sixty pairs of shoes. I just have to get a cute pair of shoes to match me outfit; it's a must!

The left side of my box is thing in my life that I enjoy and really describe me. The cheerleader doll is my love for cheerleading. I cheer almost everyday because of games and functions. The letter P stands for perfection. I like organization, I always write in my planner, and I like cleanliness. The letter is decorated with rhinestones because my love for glamour. The scented candle is there because I love a room to be smell good and I like the relaxation feeling when it is lit. The red racecar is the representation of my driving skills and my schedule. I drive too fast and as far as my schedule, it is very fast paced. I am never home. The Hallmark sticker is there because I am a very emotional person, I cry in movies and at Hallmark cards. The small crown pin is something very few people really know about me. I do pageants and I do not like to tell people this because of the stereotype that goes along with pageant girls. I am not like most of those girls.

On the sides in the box are a heart with a key, a picture, a Precious Moments stickers, and a pair of ballet slippers these are things I enjoy and love. First, my picture of my dog, Duchess, my significant other bought her for me on my birthday. She is a spoiled, six month old Pomeranian. This is my little girl. Second I collect Precious Moments figurines, I just started my collection I have about thirty. Third, the ballet shoes are to represent my love for dancing. I took ballet for fifteen and I use to teach. I cheer now but dancing is where my heart belongs. The last item in that section is my red heart with a key, it is to portray my emotional side and the key is there because my boyfriend of three years has the key to my heart.

Hiding at the bottom of my box is my pageant life. I have a modeling picture from when I used to model for Maison Blanche. The Miss Louisiana USA Pageant is a pageant
that I compete in every year; this is also a goal of mine to be Miss Louisiana. It is under
the box hiding from the world because I am not always a pageant girl I do like to wear
tennis shoes and wear my hair in a ponytail.

In closing, I do have goal competence on the inside of the lid. The only goal right
know that I have is to obtain a degree from LSU in Psychology. I want to get married,
relational competence, and have children someday, but I do not know what God has in
store for me.
After presenting my project, I was surprised I was not asked more questions. Someone asked me what the crown pin meant and what the letter "P" represented. I thought someone would have asked about the red car, which means I drive fast and that my life is fast-paced, or the Hallmark sticker, which describes my emotional side because I cry at Hallmark cards, but no one did. I was a little disappointed because I wanted everyone to learn more about me. I wanted to describe everything in my box for a full understanding.

If you had to give a prize to the first place winner it would not make me feel nervous. I think that I properly organized and described my self-image in an acceptable manner. This was such a fun project, I learned more about myself and things I enjoy.
Shadow Box Project created by Craig
SPCM 2010 spring 001

Figure 1.3
The first thing that is probably noticed about my shadow box is its color. It is wrapped in black poster board. The choice of black symbolizes a couple things. One, that I like the color black. Without the color black the brighter colors couldn't stand out, they'd be drab compared to themselves. Secondly, black can be a very empty color. The color of deep space, the vastness between the stars is found in the color black. After noticing the very blackness of the box one would most likely notice the tape holding the poster board to the box. The tape was left deliberately. It symbolizes to me the bonds that hold my psyche together, encapsulating all the other items within.

On the front of the box is a clock cut in two and separated the length of the box. This is my personal problem with time, namely my ability to oversleep. I sleep like a champion. The clock face has a sunrise. Waking up in the morning is one of my biggest problems for me.

Inside the box, the bottom is filled with rocks. This is because my name comes from Celtic/Gaelic origins and means basically rock. Scattered among the rocks are marbles. The marbles are my childhood and the desire to cling to it as long as possible. Also on the rocks are an unnamed book, a Pentium processor, a pewter statuette, a CD-Rom and two matches: one burnt and one not. The book has a couple different meanings. The first is that I'm an avid reader, I always have a book or three that I'm reading. The second is a little deeper. The book has 16 pages. All the pages with the exception of the last one share common traits, they all have been drawn on in white crayon and have a page number at the bottom. The last page has been drawn on in red crayon and in place of a page number has 1/16. This symbolizes the fact that I am 1/16th Tsi-la-gi or Cherokee. The processor also has a couple different meanings. Firstly that I'm a very technically oriented person. Secondly, it symbolizes my brain at the center of the rest of the items in the box. The statuette is an Andorran from Star Trek. This is my interest in science fiction. Sci-fi books have always made up a large portion of my reading. The CD-Rom symbolizes my sometimes thoughts on technology. It lurks there mostly obscured and only partially accessible. The matches are representative of change in myself, the rock in which they're buried. The burnt match is the past. It is burnt and nothing can change that, accept it and move on. The unburned is the future, potential encapsulated in red phosphorous.

On the left panel of the box are the people that bring or have brought me emotional pleasure. They're my friends and family. They're who I define myself by. On the center panel are the physical and cultural representations of me. The large blue symbol in the middle is also tattooed on my right arm. It's a binding rune in seax-wica runes for my name. The flaming circle, rather badly done in the box, is the world around me. There is a tiger to the upper left of my symbol. It represents me as a student as a Tiger. The three symbols to the upper right of the main symbol are they letters in the Cherokee alphabet for Tsi-la-gi the name that the nation calls itself. I put this here because while I don't know a great deal about the Cherokee nation I'm proud of sharing that bloodline. The flag in the lower right corner is of course my cultural persona as an American citizen. Lastly to the lower left is how I typically view myself, just a happy human. Not as part of any race or culture but as part of a species.
On the right panel of the box are the things that bring me pleasure. A very old Ethernet card takes up the largest section of the panel. This card symbolizes my passion for computers. Above the card is Einstein's famous equation $E=mc^2$. This symbolizes my joy of learning, especially the joy of learning scientific knowledge. On the top panel of the box are a bunch of yellow stars and a little planet earth. This is my feeling of the vastness of the universe and how small we are compared to it. Lastly on the outside of the box on the right side, are two pennies. These fall in with the things that bring me pleasure but they don't bring me pleasure directly so don't deserve a spot inside the box. Money is not trivial but is not the most important thing for myself.
Shadow Box Project: Reflection Paper --Craig
SPCM 2010 spring 2001

I feel pretty good about my self-concept construction. I was worried at first. I thought maybe there was too much construction paper and not enough real objects. Comparing it to the others, I think it was actually pretty damn good.

I spent probably eight hours total working on the shadow box. It was obvious that some of the other people spent a very minimal amount of time working on their shadow boxes. Hopefully, if prize ribbons were given out I would have gotten one. If not, then I would hope that one of the boxes which had little to no time investment would not have scored above mine. This comes not so much from a competitive attitude but more from a sense of fair play.

If I'd had the chance to redo the box I'm not sure I would get the same thing. It was a very spontaneous process. Items would sort of present themselves to me. They would practically beg to be put in the shadow box. A handful of marbles would scream to be added. I would look at the screaming marbles wondering why I would want to put them in the box. I'm not a kid, I'd think. Eureka! That's the perfect reason to put them in the box.
My shadow box is an interpretation of myself, and the images that come to mind when I think of who I am, and how I value my ideas. I think that self-image is a vital part of life. Many people search their entire lives trying to figure out who they are. By having to collaborate on what makes up my self-image, I was able to realize important details of my life. With my shadow box, I plan to demonstrate various aspects including: spatial orientation, colors, textures, symbols, and pictures.

The way my box is set up relates to how I see myself-tall and strong, as if I were standing above everyone's head, looking down to "check things out." I like to be an observer of the world around me. I tend to learn more about myself by watching others. My box is open for all to see, because I am a very open person. At the top of rests a sky and the bottom lies an ocean. I see this as a balance. Like Earth, I am always focused on trying to maintain balance.

The box is covered with a white and gold paper. This is used to show the importance of the way I dress. I like to dress up more than not. I feel better about myself when I am wearing clothes that I think look good. You can always tell when I am having a bad day, because I am not dressed as nice. On the left side of by box, I have placed several red hearts. This symbolizes my sensitivity. I really do wear my heart on my sleeve, and sometimes I do take things personally.

The inside of my box is lined with a collage of road maps. I believe that on Earth, I am on a journey. The maps symbolize this journey, not quite knowing exactly where you are going, just taking one street at a time. On the maps are smiley faces. I am an upbeat, happy person. The clouds at the top represent my belief in God. I believe in eternal life in heaven. My visual interpretation of this is clouds.

From the sky hangs two doves. The doves represent three values for me- love, happiness, and peace. These are things that I value as the real thing. This is why I am here on Earth. My dream is to find these three values along my journey. The other piece hanging from the sky is a heart held by string along with a pair of angel wings. This represents my biggest fear. I fear that those I love the most will be taken from me by death. I believe that today could be anyone's last day. I try to live by this belief I am not afraid to die, but I am afraid to lose others.

The bottom of my box represents an ocean. To me an ocean is tranquility. When things are hectic, if I think about a beach or ocean, I am calmed. The pebbles resemble the idea that life can get hectic. Ever since I started college, I have had many "rocks to climb." Sometimes life is smooth and sometimes it is bumpy! The rocks are simply the struggles in my life. I have placed a cup halfway filled with water. The cup symbolizes how I view the world. Half full!

The ladder represents my corporate ladder. I used the ladder because realistically, you can't get to the next step without taking the first. Right now, my first step is to finish college. I know that I want a successful career, and I want to be respected in the corporate world. The watch is significant, not only in what it represents, but also in how it is positioned in the box. I struggle with the idea of time. I am a planner, which is both positive and negative. It is good because it allows me to be able to get things done.
However, the restrictions placed on me because of time discourage me. This is why the watch leans against the ladder, and drapes into the cup.

An important aspect of my box and my life are the pink and red rose petals. They symbolize the roles that I am looking forward to. I have used red petals to symbolize the importance of my mother in my life. The red rose shows the mature mother (my mom), and the pink rose is the child (me). I hope that my hues will deepen when I become a wife and mother.

Finally, I have the picture of my boyfriend and me. This is an extremely important aspect of my life. I am amazed at the idea of love. In a short nine months, I have found the person that I am supposed to spend the rest of my life with. I have discovered how wonderful it feels to love and be loved. John has given me a realization of how special I am that someone could choose to love me so much. He has given so many wonderful memories and I love him more each day.
When I first began to work on my assignment, I perceived myself as being "an open book." Once I put my project on display, I began to feel uncomfortable with the idea of people knowing too much information about me. I am the kind of person who has no problem sharing my feelings and ideas, that is why I displayed my box opened. I think that maybe my own misconception about who I am comes from the fact that I really only share myself with the people that I have personal relationships with, rather than class peers. If I had it to do over, I would probably have placed a sheer cloth over the box to only allow the class to see a "glimpse" of who I am.

The questions the class asked were not the most important elements of the box, and I wish that I would have been able to talk about the rose petals and the picture of my boyfriend and me. These are really the most important aspects of box.

I did not think that I would get emotional when I was asked about the symbol that represented my fear of losing someone. I really wanted to explain in a little more detail, but I felt like I would lose my composure if I had said anymore. I think that I may have portrayed to the class that I am weak and over emotional, which is not truly my character. The nonverbal message that I sent was not what I intended. This project, however, did teach me a great deal about myself, and has taught me what I want to communicate and with whom I want to share myself.
Shadow Box Project created by Joel
SPCM 2010 spring 2001

Figure 1.5
I decided early on that, with this assignment, I was going to focus on the one constant that always seems to permeate my world-view. No matter what is going on in my life and no matter where it is going, I have always been "chasing" my two big brothers. In the midst of this chase, I have learned some things about myself, my family, and my God. In my box, I have placed a baseball, a boot, two train cars, a stopwatch, some quilt scraps, and a replica of some stairs. These symbols represent different stages and thinking patterns in my life and something I learned from experiencing them.

My box is constructed out of cedar wood scraps left over from the "bathroom project." This project is one my mother directed my father to undertake over a year ago. Thirteen months, several thousand dollars, and one correspondence carpenter's course later, my father is still not through. He is now aiming for Mother's Day for completion. However, the end is not in sight; Mom has already had a crew lay a new concrete slab in the back yard for Dad to build a shop that matches the house. Neither she, nor anyone else around her, can remain still for any long length of time. One thing is for certain: I came by my obsessive-compulsive personality honestly.

I used my mom's old quilt scraps to cover my box. For as long as I can remember, mom has been quilting. Each of her quilts has names that reflect what is going on in the Dickerson household. These names range from "The Reading Quilt" to "The Leminal Quilt." Our reading assignments in school were completed in the quilting room with my mother quilting as we read. This worked out well for my two older brothers and I as well as for Mom. We got the meaning to all long words, and she got to hear all different types of stories.

At the center of the box is a quilt piece made up of some of my old clothes as a baby. I used it specifically to show each viewer how important it is to me to hold on to the teachings of my childhood. Although my life seems at times to be one long leminal phase made up of many different themes, I can always come back to the teachings and beliefs that were instilled in me from birth. This foundation holds my life together.

The small worn leather boot was worn first by John, my oldest brother, then Ryan, the middle son, and finally by me, the baby. My parents framed a picture of these boots that now hangs on the wall in our den. We all have several pictures that show us wearing these boots. I wanted to place one of these boots in my box to help each viewer understand the pressure I have always felt to keep up with John and Ryan. Keeping up has always been tough and often times very disappointing. John is now a Neuro-Surgeon and Ryan is in his third year of medical school.

Most all of the things I achieved growing up had already been achieved. My accomplishments were re-runs. Knowing this, I always sought out something I could do better. I have always looked for something that only I could do well. I needed something that would define who I was and allow me to walk in my own shoes.

The baseball is inscribed, "Home Run -Joel- All Star -6/30/88." I have several just like it. My mom kept all of my home run balls and inscribed the dates on them. Baseball defined who I was for several years. I could play baseball better than both of my brothers and most of the kids in my town. Baseball set me apart from my brothers and helped me break free from their shadows and step out of their boots.
As I found out later, my athletic success also hindered my ability to develop an accurate view of myself. In my early college years, when I was no longer able to play baseball I struggled to figure out who I was again. This loss exported me back in time and shackled me once again to my brother's successes. After twenty years, I was still chasing John and Ryan. I was unable to be happy just being me.

The train cars symbolize what I currently do for a living. They make it possible for me to go to school and continue to reach for my goals. My work life has kept my head held high during the past few years. No matter what struggles I am dealing with, I have always continued to perform well at work. In just three years of work experience, I have moved from a warehouse worker to the manager over 65 employees. At this point in time, I am the youngest person in International Paper, Co. to reach my current management level. Through my work, I began to develop the confidence baseball used to give me.

The stopwatch symbolizes the time constraints I continue to place on myself. I remind myself daily that I am running out of time to accomplish my goals. I work full time and I take a full load in school. I want to get in to law school and complete it by the time I am 28. Next, I want to earn six figures by the time I am 35. This seems to be a never-ending cycle in my life. Often times, I miss out on the present because I am too worried about the future. I feel I have to hurry because I have already wasted enough time and I will never be able to catch up to John and Ryan unless I hurry.

The steps are covered with a clip of a map. Inside of the steps is a cross with a red background. This symbol signifies several aspects of my life today. The steps allude to fact that I continue to focus on my goals. I will never be happy remaining in the same place. I must continue to advance no matter what I am doing. The map covering the steps depicts the different paths that I have available to me. Although I still intend to go to law school, I know that I am going to have different options open to me. I know that each day I must choose which path to take and these choices will determine the quality of my life. The cross symbolizes my belief that God is willing to guide my paths if I let Him. Not only will He guide them, but He also knows which path is best for me. He is so willing to show me happiness that He sacrificed His Son many years ago. This sacrifice is depicted in the red background of the cross. All together, this symbol appears in my box to remind myself to slow down, focus on today, and let God direct my paths. With this philosophy, it does not matter what John and Ryan are doing. My self-worth will not come from the material possessions I accumulate. And, who cares how long it takes me to "make it." I will always be special just because I'm me.

My shadow box takes viewers through many different stages in my life. My journey through each stage has molded me into who I am today. Each stage taught me something about myself. Each lesson has helped me find value in my life and meaning in my pursuits. This shadow box serves as a reminder for me to continue to evaluate my choices and my motives. Finally, I must always learn from my mistakes and move forward with God's guidance.
I thoroughly enjoyed the shadow-box assignment! This exercise gave me an opportunity to reflect and attempt to quantify what makes me the person I am. Too often, in my life, I forget that I actually stand on the shoulders of my parent's hard work and careful planning. Although my parents have their faults, as do all people born into this world, they instilled in me a firm grasp on reality. This grasp gives me the tools to evaluate my life choices and make adjustments to the course I set for myself. I used my shadow-box to display my family's influence on my life, depict some choices I have made, and give hints to adjustments that were necessary to maintain the quality of life I expect for myself and my future family.

In summary, I used this exercise to evaluate where I am today. Through this process, I find that I am still on track to accomplishing my goals. The road ahead of me remains long and full of future trials, but with God's help and my focus on self-evaluation, I will continue to achieve my goals. Therefore, I find that this type of assignment is not only a good tool to teach communication, but an essential tool for me to remain focused on my goals and willing to make adjustments when needed.

I was apprehensive at the idea of other people viewing intimate details of my life. I have never been a fan of admitting that I am not perfect and I need help. Also, the thought of "strangers" evaluating the representations I choose to define who I am makes me nervous. Furthermore, my relationship with God is a personal and private relationship. When I included across in my box, I exposed this relationship for people to see. I have a very definite respect for God and the importance He has in my life. Often times, I feel that I cannot measure up to His standards. Knowing this, I am always hesitant of letting people know that I am a Christian. I do not ever want to be in the position where my actions hinder someone else's chance at developing a relationship with God. Too often, I see people profess their love for God in one breath and obscene cruelties to another person in their next. I call this types hypocrisy.

However, I was happy with how it turned out. When asked about the cross, I responded with the fact that I placed it in my box as a reminder to use God to help guide my paths. I did not presume to be perfect. On the contrary, I am a person that needs the guidance that God provides when asked.

I am glad that projects were not singled out for first, second, or third place. I will know how my project ranks in the instructor's eyes by the grade I receive. This type of self-revealing is tough for a group of people that have no other connecting bonds. To reward some and omit others publicly has the potential to hinder any growth that may have occurred. Sure, I was disappointed with some projects. But, hard work or lack there of, will be assessed in the end. Personally, I think that my project was one of the better ones. I know that I put more time into creating my shadow-box than some other students. But, as long as I know and the instructor knows, that is enough for me.
Shadow Box Project created by Angela
SPCM 2010 spring 2001

Figure 1.6
Shadow Box Concept Paper--Angela
SPCM 2010 spring 2001

I chose to build my box out of natural materials. The wood, leaves and flowers show the part of me that is dedicated to the environment. My major and my favorite topic is landscape architecture. I put a drafting triangle and stencil on the outside also because I think that drafting is my best talent. The inside of my box is lined with pictures of my favorite things. The picture of me in the lower left corner is how I see myself, young and happy. My dad, Don, is on the right side. He recently cut off all of his long hair, but this is how I will always think of him. The picture is of him doing what he loves most, flying model airplanes. When I think of my Dad those are the two things that come to mind. In the top left corner there is my sister, Sarah and her husband, Brad. The three of us have gotten to be pretty good friends now that we are older. The picture with the crawfish means a few things to me: my sense of family and culture, and my Grandma. I consider my family to very close. We can always have a good time together without any conflicts. I was raised as Cajun as could be so the crawfish on the table is a part of who I am. Grandma is the glue that holds the family and the culture together.

In the background I also have pictures of my pets. They are very important to me. They are my silent best friends. My oldest dog, Zack, is the one with the cardboard role in his mouth. He died about a month ago but is still my favorite. The other black dog is Zee Zee. She is very playful and a little crazy. She has a problem with licking everyone that comes into the house. The small, big-eared dog is the newest. LeLu is mostly Chihuahua. She thinks she is a big mean dog and tries to attack everything and everybody. There are a few pictures of my lizards, Mr. Lizard and Herman. They are my very own dinosaurs. At the bottom there is a ferret that I used to have. His name is Phil. I once had three ferrets but had to give them up. They were perhaps my most entertaining pets.

The objects in my box are symbolic for everything that is important to me. At the bottom there's a Bible. My spirituality comes first in my life. The Bible also stands for my Mom. She was the one that first brought me to church and is very spiritual her self. She is my best friend and the best mom anyone could ask for. She is a very, very important figure in my life. The little opaline butterfly stands for my Grandma. She is the only grandparent that I have had a chance to really know. She is so good at putting up with all of her kids. I used the butterfly because she gave me her favorite ring when I graduated high school. The ring is a butterfly with four opals for the wings. It is my most prized possession. The small sculpture is one of my pieces of artwork. I think that my artistic ability is one of my best features. I enjoy creating things with my hands. It is my special way of expressing myself. The LSU ponytail holder stands for the pride I have for my school. The pill bottle is one of the many pills that I had to take when I got really sick last year. It also stands for the pills that I will have to take everyday for the rest of my life in order to regulate my thyroid. My sickness isn't a good part of my life but it is a part of me nonetheless. The rock symbolizes my boyfriend, Devin. It came from his family's land, Spillman, near St. Francisville. We love to go up to the camp there and work in the garden and hunt. The can is also connected to Devin. It has one of my first target shots in it, dead center! He taught me how to shoot. It is now my newest and favorite pastime.
Shadow Box Reflection Paper--Angela  
SPCM 2010 spring 2001

I think that the shadow box project was a very unique and special one. In gathering the things that I used spent most of my time recollecting past events. It was fun to go though the things that I have collected over the years. Making the box gave me an overall nostalgic feeling. Some of the pictures I came across made me laugh and some made me sad. While putting the box together it was exciting to me to think of how others would react.

I was a little nervous while watching everyone look at and examine my box. Being in an art field I should be used to people judging my creations, but it still makes me get butterflies. The whole time it was being looked at I was wishing that I could explain my box. I wanted to tell people, while they were looking for the first time, what everything meant.

If ribbons were to be placed on the boxes I would be very nervous. It is one thing to have your work looked at but to have it judged is far different. If I got first place I would be flabbergasted. I would take my winnings proudly and not be boastful. But on the inside I would have such a big head that I wouldn't fit though the door. I love to win but rarely do I strive just for that. If I got first place I would say it is because of all my years in art. If I got second or even third place I would feel pretty much the same as if I got first. To me, to get in the top three of a group that large is a remarkable accomplishment. If I did not receive any ribbon I would be a little sad. I think my box was very good when compared to the others in the class. To be in the top five or so would be very acceptable, anything lower I would probably feel cheated. I get a little too competitive with my creations sometimes.
Shadow Box Project created by Ryan
SPCM 2010 spring 2001

Figure 1.7
For my shadow box, I decided to construct my own box from wood. I could say that cardboard was too flimsy and that it did not reflect my strong, solid character, but that is not entirely true. Honestly, I did not have a box available to me and rather than buy one, I made one out of scrap wood material that I already had. There is no true significance to my box's material or its appearance, although I do prefer the stability that wood offers when attaching objects to my box. My box is comprised of many materials and objects that symbolize my beliefs, feelings, likes, and talents, and my overall individuality that makes me who I am.

My most personal and important items in my box are also the only two pictures in my box. One is a picture of my dog. I do not consider my dog to be a pet, rather, I treat my dog as though she was my daughter and she is no less of a responsibility to me. The other picture is of my wife Mary. My wife is very important to me and is a large part of who I am. The size of her picture or its placement in the box is not a reflection of how I feel about my wife. The cross that is mounted in my box is also an important aspect of me. It symbolizes my Christian beliefs and shows my beliefs to be in the center of my personality.

There are several items in the box that portray my talents and abilities. There is a paintbrush attached to a wall painted with various colors. This is my artistic ability. I believe that I possess the talent to paint and draw well, but I tend to find little time to use it. I do not think I am Rembrandt, but the talent that I do have, I take for granted. I also possess a strong work ethic as presented by the small tools in my box. These tools are a symbol of my desire to work and to help others. They also show my determination and meticulous attention to detail. Because I could not find any suitable tools to display in my box, I carved and painted my own tools. I would consider myself to have a green thumb. I enjoy plants and the plant in my box expresses that well. The plant in my box appears to be outgrowing its environment and overtaking the box, which shows that though I love plants, I often have more plants than I can maintain.

There are many things that I enjoy doing, one of those is eating. The Barbecue grill and picnic table, represent my love of food. I can eat anytime, all the time. Although I love to grill my food, the Barbecue grill is more of a statement of my desire for 'common', basic meals. I cannot stand to eat fancy, "fru-fru" food.

I also enjoy working and playing outdoors. In my box is a four-wheel drive truck sitting in the mud and a tractor at a garden. I have always liked big trucks and I drive a truck very similar to the one displayed in my box. I love to climb in my truck and drive anywhere, except when my wife is with me ("slow down, be careful, let me out! !"). The tractor and garden show how I was raised and how I still enjoy gardening and farm-work. I have two tractors, and I would rather be driving one of them through a field in the middle of July, than to be watching television. I have always grown fruits and vegetables on the farm. I will plant, grow, harvest, and cook just about any vegetable, but I will not eat them. My love for food does not apply to vegetables.

Finally, there are my restrictions. In my box is a stack of money that is padlocked and chained to the box. This shows that I am very conservative with my money. I do not spend money-except on my wife. Across the front of my box is a strand of barbed wire.
The barbed wire symbolizes my guarded personality. Although I am a fairly open and outgoing person, there are still some barriers to cross before I will truly disclose my feelings and beliefs to others. The last item in my box is a door that states, "Keep Out!". This represents that part of me that I am not willing to disclose. As with all people, there are parts of me that I do keep to myself.

In general, I think my box is a fairly accurate presentation of who I believe I am. I feel that I am a strong-minded person, in control of my actions. I have restrictions and passions for various things, but they do not control me, rather I control them. My box shows a willingness to allow others into my life, but hints at my individualist attitude and independence. To summarize my personality as it is represented in my box, I am a country boy who works hard and lives by respect.
My shadow box displayed my personality, my likes and dislikes, and an overall view of who I am. Disclosing this information was not difficult nor was it embarrassing, but it did allow me to look at myself from a different perspective, as well as make me use my imagination and creativity. While I was in the process of developing my ideas on how I would display a box, my first thoughts were of displeasure. I thought that a collage or shadow box was a weird idea, but knowing I had to do it I continued to brainstorm. When I finally came up with an idea and began to develop it I actually began to enjoy the project. I do not need much of an excuse to use power tools and this was a good reason. I began to think of more and more things I could display and different ways of displaying my thoughts and ideas. I thoroughly enjoyed working on my box and I found myself looking for more things that I could use in my box everywhere I went. My feelings about actually disclosing intimate and personal feelings about myself were never an issue while making my box. I am very sure of myself and I am not going to worry about what some student thinks of my box. Although I want people to notice and like the construction and detail of my box, I am not concerned with whether they like my personal choices, hobbies, or personality. That concept is who I believe I am, that is what my box represents, not who people want me to be.

Presenting my box to the class was also enjoyable. I was happy with the results of my work and I thought that my box reflected my efforts well. Having others look at my box did not affect me, after all, I built this box with the intent of showing it to others. I did not see anyone touching my box or its objects, but if I had it would not have mattered because I built and attached the objects so that they would be sturdy. Showing the box to others was by far the easiest task involved in the entire project.

If you were to award ribbons to three projects and my project was not one of the three; that would not bother me as long as the recipients of the awards seemed worthy. I think it is impossible to fairly judge and grade a project based on a person's opinion of what their personality is. It is possible however to judge a project based on the amount of effort that was placed into it and the detail and imagination of the person who created the box. If this was the criteria that you used to judge the boxes then I would have no problem with others receiving the awards. I saw many boxes that showed the effort and time of their creators. I think many of them could have won an award. I also saw several boxes that I do not think showed much effort in creating, nor did their ideas seem very well thought out. If one of these boxes would have received an award I would have indeed been upset. To judge boxes and label a few as better because of quality, thought, and effort is acceptable, but to do so with out a plausible, logical system of judging would not get much respect from me.

In all, I am happy with my box and its completion. This dreaded assignment became an enjoyable project that I can be proud of. Sharing my box with the class was entertaining and allowed the class to learn more about me, and allowed me to learn more about my classmates in the process.
Enclosed here are six students sample papers for the Testing Norms by Invisible Role Playing assignment. Per their consent, Gina, Katherine, Laura, Tate, Kyle and Lindsey wrote papers. They were students in a SPCM 2010: Interpersonal Communication course I taught in the summer of 2000.
I have always wondered for the longest time what would happen if people suddenly broke norms by doing something completely unexpected. How would people around react to this? Would they pretend not to see anything? Would they say something? I would also like to see if physical appearance such as clothing cause a reaction on observers and what kind of reaction. So I took it upon myself to find an uncommon thing that involved breaking a norm and at the same time had something to do with clothing. After long thought I wondered what would happen if I went to our apartment complex pool with a friend and just laid out for about an hour. However, I would be wearing winter clothes and it just happened to be the hottest day during the summer (about 98 degrees). Of course, the pool would be full of people because it is so hot. Would they stare at me the whole time? Or would they actually come over and talk to me? Well I was about to find out.

On Wednesday, my roommate and I decided to drag out the clearance hooded yellow jackets we bought at Express at the end of winter. At least they would be put to some use, a few months after the purchase we began to realize why the coats were so cheap. Could it be the single fact that anyone wearing them for more than five minutes looks like an Eskimo. Okay, so the top of our body was taken care of, now what for our other halves. Some basic black jogging pants and rain boots did the trick. We don't need to make ourselves a fashion emergency as well as the Eskimo on the beach scene that we were getting ourselves into. The next thing we needed was courage, lots and lots of courage. When we started down the walkway we noticed that of all days “the Perfects of the World” must have had the day off because it was perfect body thong city at the pool. When we creaked the gate door open, we knew that everyone would glance up from their sunbathing and confirm that their body was indeed better than the newcomers. Pop, pop, pop. It was so obvious. We could almost hear the heads popping up. Of course everyone had to have their initial look then I noticed that the people who were alone had no problem continuing their stare, but the couples and groups acted as if they didn't really notice and began conversations so they would have to look up at each other and maybe casually glance to the Eskimos.

We finished our big entrance by dragging two of the beach chairs so they were placed on each side of “little miss can't get my eyes off you.” We greeted her with a huge, "hi, how've ya been?" I have never seen someone so speechless in my whole life. She looked around still not believing that us unrefined ones were actually talking to her holiness. Then she managed to squeeze out a shit eatin’ grin while glancing around to see what everyone else was doing. My roommate and I continued to lay back and relax. Then a couple of minutes later I jumped up, "SHIT! I forgot my sunscreen!" My roommate, Jennifer, immediately completes my thoughts with, "Ya want me to go back and get it for you?" I yelled back, "No, ya know there are so many people here that already have theirs with them I don't think someone would mind letting me use some." I looked and just about everyone was squirming in his or her chair making sure that they were not the one to make eye contact with me. I decided the lucky ones would be a couple of guys across the pool.
These guys looked like they really wanted and needed some chick attention, and who was I to deny them of it. I asked them for some sunscreen and they handed over a white bottle. Then I decided to play with them for a little while. So I purposely stayed there and just stood there, gave them a sexy look and waited to see what they would do. I have no words to describe the look on their faces. They started to look around (guess they were wishing no one would see that the weird Eskimo was talking to them).

They were so uncomfortable they proceeded to tell me that they had to go as quick as possible. I must say it was terribly difficult to keep a straight face through that one. So I walked back to my beach chair were my roommate was. We continued to lie out. We noticed that when we arrived there were many perfect bodies lying out next to us, but it seemed we were the only ones on that side of the pool and the other side seemed to get more and more crowded. I wonder why. As we lay out I smiled to everyone who (to their misfortune) caught eye contact with us. It was funny to see their reactions. They would pretend that they were not looking at us (right, like I didn't see them staring).

Then my worst fear came true. A girl I know came up to the pool. I immediately wanted to leave but Jennifer convinced me otherwise, so I stayed. After a while of her trying to look over the pool and figure out if it really was me under all that clothing. I saw her staring so I smiled and she came over. She said hi, I asked how she'd been and had a normal conversation and at the same time I could see that both of us were struggling to keep a straight face through all this. Finally, both of us burst out laughing and she finally asked me, "Why are you dressed like this?" I thought of giving her a lame excuse but I knew she wouldn't buy it so I told her it was an experiment for class. Her face showed big relief, a smile and said "Oh ok" and said "OK bye, see ya later." By this time we had soaked some heat instead of rays for over an hour and Jennifer and I were about to pass out so we decided to call it quits and head back to our apartment and cool off.

In conclusion, I realized that people who have the (shall I say unpleasant) experience to witness others break a norm, feel somewhat uncomfortable. They do their best to avoid eye contact even though they love to stare but hope you won't catch them staring at you. And if you actually talk to people they will try real hard to not say anything is wrong with what you're wearing. Most of us do this because we try to avoid confrontations and awkward experiences as much as possible. People will also casually move away as to let everyone know that they are not with the strange people. I think this happens because people want to be accepted by others and by sitting or just being close to bizarre people will tell everyone else they are odd too. This experiment also confirmed to me once again that clothing tells people a lot about someone and that there is appropriate clothing for every occasion. Winter Eskimo jackets are definitely not for laying out on the pool! ! Nonverbal communication is in our everyday life more than we seem to notice, so keep your eyes peeled for Eskimos in bright yellow jackets on a hot summer day!!!
For this project, I decided to break a social norm. I chose to break a social norm purely because I thought it would be a lot of fun. After listening to all the crazy stories in class I was sure this was the one for me. Ms. Burleson told a story about dressing up as a nun with a couple friends and then going to Hooter's to eat dinner. Now, as soon as I heard this, the wheels in my head started turning. My thinking went from listening to the Hooter's story to recalling a story my mom once told me about a Halloween costume she saw a few years ago. I will never forget the Halloween my mother came home and told me about the young couple at the haunted house that were dressed up as a priest and a PREGNANT nun. From there I started thinking about what would offend me the most, in terms of breaking a social norm. The first thought that popped into my head was dressing up as a pregnant woman and going out to a bar to drink beer and smoke cigarettes.

This was the beginning of the end. I made all kinds of plans as to how exactly to dress up, where I would go, and who would go with me for emotional support. My goal in breaking a social norm was to simply offend and then revel in all the horrid gasps, oohs, and aaahs. I wanted to get as many reactions as I could. Isn't that the whole point of breaking a social norm? I planned to get dressed up in my "pregnant" costume and go to a bar where I would then drink and smoke. I thought for sure that I would at least get a few people gutsy enough to confront my incredible selfishness and me. These confrontations and arguments would be the perfect makings of an interesting paper.

The initial plan was to stay in the bar for at least an hour, longer if I could stand it. It was equally as important to me to make sure I went somewhere I never planned on returning. In the end, I could hardly stand it for an hour and am absolutely positive I will never go back to that restaurant.

So what happened? Well, first I had to concoct a pregnant belly for myself. I went to Party Paradise and found a handsome, plastic, one-piece made especially for Mardi Gras. It was a huge belly with equally huge plastic breasts. I cut off the top half and fastened the bottom half to my waist area. The plastic was too flimsy so I had to stuff the underneath with a few shirts to make it heavy and full. Then I donned a summer dress, pulled on a cardigan, and laced up a pair of white tennis shoes. I was believably pregnant.

Once I had gotten dressed I immediately wanted to take that silly outfit off. I quickly changed the plans to include a milder trip to a restaurant before the actual event just to test things out. I really and truly looked pregnant. I hated feeling like I was about to embark on this great adventure, in the name of school, of completely lying to the whole world. I decided to go to Bennigan's on Airline, I figured I could live a fairly normal life without ever stepping foot into that place again.

My boyfriend made me drive (with my huge stomach. I think he just wanted a good laugh.) It was a Saturday night at 10:15 p.m. Once I psyched myself out enough to step foot out of the car I walked up to the hostess stand and asked for a table. The hostess asked if we wanted "smoking or non," purely out of protocol, to which I piped up, "Smoking please." And that's when the looks began. It was a very obvious stare at the stomach, then back up to my face, then an attempt to hide the horror. She couldn't have been much over 17 but that didn't stop the disrespectful, mean glances. The hostess
turned out to be the worst one of them all by the end of the short-lived night. We sat down, my boyfriend ordered a Bud Light and I ordered water. I just couldn't help it! I hated those stares and was ready to go home. At that point I had no problem whatsoever making up the entire event for my paper (which I assure you, I didn't do). So I worked up enough nerve to eventually ask the waiter for a Bud Light too. His face revealed nothing, but I did notice that he was having trouble looking me in the eye. He brought my beer, we ordered fajitas and chicken fingers, and I lit up a cigarette. Every table that emptied around us meant that a patron had to walk by me, which meant more very mean stares. But I wanted this reaction, right? I felt just horrible about the entire situation and myself. I really wanted to go home and cry.

But I didn't. The waiter soon brought out our food. However, it was missing a few of the key ingredients. The fajitas had no fixings, no tortillas, no silverware, and no dipping sauce for the chicken fingers. We realized it was time to let the waiter in on our little prank. I just couldn't handle all these people thinking such horrible things about ME! So I told him and he confessed to being extremely rattled by my beer and cigarette. Further, he'd already discussed me, in the 15 minutes we had been there, with all the other servers in the restaurant. He agreed to keep my secret and also to stir up the others in hopes of a confrontation.

Most of the passerby's looked at me, but the women were much bolder than the men were. My impression was that the women were disgusted and felt it was their duty for the sake of all womanhood to give me a good stare down. The men, on the other hand, were more shocked and just curious about this weird pregnant girl. The waiter came back after a little while and asked us if anyone had come over to talk to me. "No, no one has been over," I said. He said a waitress was going to come over and talk to me if she got a chance before I left. I certainly didn't want to give her that chance.

This experiment was absolutely horrible, I hated it, and I will never do it again. I hated feeling like all these people were after me. It would have bothered me a lot if I had seen a pregnant girl drinking and smoking. I might even have given those same looks. The hostess was the last to get her point across to me. I stood up to leave, she saw me, quit talking to her buddy, and gave the biggest fake smile you could ever imagine. At that I immediately switched into Bitch mode. I felt like she was personally attacking me, forgetting momentarily that I was performing an experiment. I gave her a dirty look and left the restaurant. I had had enough.

The implications of this experiment are for the most part ethical. It is unethically sound to carry a baby in your stomach, drink beer, and smoke cigarettes all at the same time. It seemed to me that ALL the people in the restaurant were conscious of what I was doing and that it was wrong. It was all really disturbing, it bothered me a whole lot, and was very socially unacceptable. I didn't really have any problems with deceiving people like I thought I would. Apparently, I did a good job of looking and acting pregnant. Should I be happy that the experiment went off without a hitch? Or should I be worried that I may, someday in the future, run into someone who saw me as the pregnant, beer drinking, smoking, crazy girl? I am not quite sure.
We've all heard the saying, "Don't judge a book by its cover," but do we really live by that rule? Well, judging from my experiment, most of us do not. The goal of my experiment was to see what role physical attractiveness and clothing play in the area of nonverbal communication. Are people really judged on the way they look? Do people really treat you differently based on what you're wearing? These were all questions that I was interested in finding the answers to.

In order to find these answers, I decided to go to the mall dressed two different ways to see how the salespeople and shoppers treated me. In addition to this, I decided to try on outfits that were non-flattering to me and see how people would react based on my appearance. I also thought I would see what nonverbal signals people would send as they were telling me what they thought of the outfit. I chose to set my experiment within the mall so that I could choose from many different stores. The process took about three hours over two days and covered five different stores.

To begin with, I went to five stores dressed very nicely. I wore a beige silk skirt and a burgundy blouse. My hair was fixed nicely and my makeup was very tasteful. I also wore silver earrings, rings, and a silver watch. The first store I entered was Lerner of New York. Within one minute of entering, the saleswoman eagerly approached me and politely asked if I needed anything. I said, "no thank you," and continued along my way. I then proceeded to go to the dressing room and tried on one outfit that was a size extra small. Now the fact that I usually wear a large is just an indication of how horrible this looked. I could barely get the shirt over my head. When I came out of the dressing room, the saleswoman's eyes got very large. I asked how it looked and at first, she didn't say anything. However, soon she tilted her head to the side and said that it wasn't that bad. After minutes of fidgeting, she told me that it probably was a little too tight and that maybe I should try a small. However, the other people in the store were more honest. One woman told me that it looked way too tight and that I looked poured into it. Another young guy that looked about twenty-five said that it was sexy but a little too revealing. Overall, the customers were more honest.

The next day I went to JCPenny and performed the same experiment. The reactions were basically the same as the first store with a little less eye contact. The woman could hardly look at me when she was lying to me about the outfit. Most of the other stores were similar except for one, The Gap. The entrance was the same, but when I tried on an outfit that didn't flatter me, the reaction was quite different. I went into the dressing room and tried on a light purple dress that was a size small. When I exited the dressing room the girl almost burst out into laughter. She couldn't control herself and had to leave the dressing area. The other salesman licked his lips and got a huge smirk on his face. It looked as though he thought I was joking. When I asked him what he thought, he broke the news to me in a tactful manner. As usual though, the other people in the store were more honest. One woman told me that it looked way too tight and that I looked poured into it. Another young guy that looked about twenty-five said that it was sexy but a little too revealing. Overall, the customers were more honest.
I had a pair of big plastic orange hoop earrings and a Mickey Mouse watch that I wore in 1989.

When I entered Lerner of New York, the salespeople and the customers stared at me with big eyes. However, they didn't make it noticeable. Also, it took the saleslady almost three minutes to come and talk to me. It was as if she was trying to ignore me. When I went to try on the outfit, the reaction was a little different than I expected. When I asked how it looked on me, one saleslady immediately said that it was too tight and that I should try something else. At JCPenny, the reaction was the same in the dressing room, but when I first entered, there was not as much staring. I concluded that this was because this store had a wider variety of customers and were more tolerable of people who looked differently from themselves.

At The Gap, when I entered the store, the customers stared at me with smirks on their faces. One girl and guy that were in their early twenties looked at me and started to whisper to each other. However, the saleslady was more tactful. I presumed that she had been coached on how to deal with customers. However, she was also more honest about the outfit. She didn't even seem surprised that I had chosen such a horrible outfit. It was as if she assumed someone dressed in the way that I was would naturally have bad taste.

However, the most interesting reaction I received was from a store called Georgiou. This store is a very upscale women's shop with expensive clothes. When I entered the store, the saleswomen looked me up and down and then looked at each other. They then came over to me together and asked if I needed any help. I told them that I was just looking, but they continued to ask me. They even watched me as I shopped around. However, when I asked for a dressing room they were very nice. The younger woman acted very fake as she led me to the dressing room. She had a huge smile on her face and kept calling me darling and sweetheart although she seemed to be the same age as me. When I came out of the dressing room in an expensive dress that obviously didn't fit me, her eyes got very big and she started to fidget around as if she was scared that I was going to rip the dress. When I asked her if it looked all right, she was very honest. She said that it was way too tight and that it didn't suit me. It was almost as if she didn't want me to buy it. She was never rude, but she did seem relieved that I finally left. I could tell this because she rolled her eyes after I told her that I didn't want anything.

After thinking back on the experiment I really learned a lot. I concluded that most people are very polite when they lie to you about your appearance. I also concluded that on average, when I looked nicer when I entered the store, the salespeople were more tactful when telling me that the outfit was unattractive. I concluded this was because they thought I might actually buy the outfit. This is probably the reason why the people were more honest when I entered the store in my "casual" outfit and tried on an unflattering outfit. They probably assumed that I couldn't buy it anyway. I also came to the conclusion that men are more honest than women are when dealing with clothing. Every man or guy that I asked told me the truth almost immediately. It was very obvious that they thought it was horrible. I think though that this is merely because the men I saw were not very good at hiding their nonverbal reactions. Their eyes and facial expressions gave them away. In addition, I learned that as we all know, customers are more honest than salespeople are. However, in the end I concluded that all people treated me fairly rudely when dressed down. They stared more often and chuckled behind my back. It just
shows how shallow we all can be. Before the experiment, I really thought everyone would treat me pretty much the same, but that was not the result.

I thought everyone had seen Pretty Woman and learned not to judge based on appearance, especially in clothing stores. Apparently, though, not everyone has learned this. In regard to deception though, I didn't regret doing the experiment and deceiving people because what I was ultimately showing was their shallowness. I thought to myself, if I felt uncomfortable for a few hours, I can't imagine what it would be like to be treated that way every time I went out.

In conclusion, this experiment was quite embarrassing, but at the same time enriching. It taught me to think twice when I see someone dressed differently than myself and not to always jump to conclusions about that person's life or situation. It just goes to show that you can't judge a book by its cover.
Breaking a social norm should be just plain gross. The mere deviant act itself should have a gag reflex factor of at least 8 out of 10. Initially, ideas that come across one’s mind in thinking of a topic tend to be akin to matters of simple abandonment of convention. The ideas, to stay within the constraints of the assignment, must range from the benign to just barely legal. In fact, during the first few days of the contemplation of topics for this project, many ideas came to mind. But, none of the initial topics truly ever simmered up to something really smelly. Well, one finally did.

The experiment at hand is this: 1.) Enter a semi-busy restaurant or diner, 2.) Locate an available table next to persons that are half way through a large meal, 3.) Order whatever you wish, 4.) Upon receiving your food eat as though you have never eaten before, 5.) When the persons next to you leave, take the remaining food off of their plates and put into yours, (make sure you are seen by others) the more cigarette butts in the food the better! 6.) Bon Appetite, and finally 7.) Glow within the warming lamp of your dinner comrade's disgust!

Admittedly, on paper, the idea seems just mildly revolting. But have faith, when performed with passion, the situation takes on a revolting life of its own. This experiment was recently performed in two purposefully undisclosed restaurants in the Baton Rouge area. Reactions were observed from a total of six persons.

Trial or dinner number one was a learning experience. The diner was moderately filled with people around four p.m., meaning every other table was taken. Perfect. Strictly following the aforementioned guidelines for gore, a table was chosen next to a young lady (smoker) and a young gentleman (smoking preference unknown, but a chewing gum user for certain). Let me pause here to say that out of all the visual stimuli in the world, other than feces, the only thing that can make me gag is used chewing gum.

That said, after the persons had finished their meal, the waitress was about to come over to collect the minimal tip left and to clean the food remains. This was the moment of action. Reaching behind and over, I removed the plate of partially eaten hamburger off of the table in which the couple previously occupied. The left over food was scraped into my plate. All of this action witnessed by at least two persons other than my immediate party, the waitress and a gentleman at the bar (who seemed to be staring even before the shenanigans took place). Their nonverbal gestures could be best described as "uh, uh, what the...oh my God...I know he didn't...oh my God." Excellent feedback! This unfortunately is the part where I chicken out. Sorry, as said before, used gum makes me gag. Bad. Among the now pile of trash that exists in my plate, is an extremely large blob of nasty, gooey, pink, saliva drenched used gum. Gag, gag, and gag. I tried to overcome this lack of acting ability to no avail. I really have never come so close to hurling by the sight of nastiness alone. But, I suppose the nausea was augmented by the nervousness of conducting the experiment. Fear not reader, the digestive situation was contained to the best of my ability. Payment was hastily made for the meal in cash (left on the table with a large tip), and our exit was made.

Trial one was very valuable despite the weakness of my stomach. The reactions were incredible from the two definitely recorded observers. We did pick up residual
audience members around the gagging part but unfortunately the attention was focused on the surely stunning event that was close to occurring directly in my plate. Mostly the reactions of the scrapping of the plate qualified as disbelief, that someone would be so trashy was unbelievable to the audience. Certainly the questions asked in the minds of the waitress and the gentleman at the bar were something to the effect of, "Is this person sane?" "What is he thinking?" "Is he going to eat that?"

After the hasty getaway, several hours passed before trial number two at a different and yet still undisclosed restaurant was conducted. My confidence had returned to at least the 90% mark, good enough for another attempt. A larger and slightly younger crowd was present at this establishment. Being later in the evening at this point, a short wait was necessary to be seated. This wait was an excellent aid in summing up the crowd and predicting reactions. Because of the slightly younger crowd, reactions were predicted as being less grossed out but more outward. Being seated we ordered and followed the same guidelines. I was really not hungry, really, really not hungry. However, because of my sick passion for psychological experimentation, I ordered and ate a bit anyway. About ten minutes later, the people behind me get up and leave. This time the used treasure was void of cigarette butts or gum.

Whew! At no time did I attempt to eat any of this food. Improvisation was key in keeping the nasty stuff on one end, but making it seem as though I was eating it. Four observers were captured this time, they saw me scrape and seemingly eat the leftovers. Among them were two guys at the bar, one girl facing me at an opposite table, and the waitress. Same look, disgust and disbelief were on the faces and minds of all. Similar situation, and as predicted, more outward reactions occurred.

The waitress came up to the table and confronted me, quite unexpectedly on my part at that particular time. The gag was up, but a spin was put on the situation not of my own doing. The waitress asked me if everything was OK. Stunned at first I said, "uh, yeah fine." She still stood their staring right in front of the table. So, I motioned her to come closer, closer, closer. As one can imagine she was very reluctant to go any closer than absolutely necessary to hear what I was to whisper to her. I divulged the purpose of my actions. To my amazement, she didn't laugh. She cracked a small, almost undetectable smile and walked away. I was relieved. Back into character I pretended to continue to eat the nasty stuff and to my continued astonishment, to this very moment, the waitress brought to the table two half eaten plates from another table and said nothing, just a wink to show that she was contributing to our madness. What can you say? Incredible!

The meal ended after my party finished mixing and seemingly ate a good portion of the leftovers. People were almost sick. I guess at the very end they must have thought that we were starving, poor, and or homeless. Anyway, an incredible experience and a remarkable participation on the part of the diner's wait staff. Bravo.

What did I learn? Young persons have a slightly higher tolerance for the disgusting but are more expressive in that disgust. In this case, ethical matters are confined to the misrepresentation of the homeless. But, can reasonably be viewed as wonderful charity on the part of the diner (especially when the wait staff is so accommodating). All in all it was fun, and I must say that I will never do this again. Once again, Bon Appetite!
I decided for my third project that I would break a social norm. A couple of weeks ago I saw the movie Deuce Bigalow. There was one scene where Deuce (the main character) went out on a date with a young lady who fell asleep constantly on their date. I thought this would be a great way to break a social norm. Typically people do not fall asleep randomly in public or on a date.

Last week I went out on a date with one of my co-workers. We have been flirting with each other for some time and we both felt a date would be appropriate to test the waters. I decided that I would follow the pattern of the young lady in the movie and fall asleep constantly during our date. I would observe her reaction during the entire date focusing mainly on her attitude in the beginning of the experiment and at the conclusion. The experiment started around noon on Saturday and ended around eleven that night. I decided that I would take her to New Orleans for the day. We would take some tours around the city, visit some museums, walk the river walk, have a nice dinner, and maybe catch a movie.

As I stated, I picked up my date around noon on Saturday. I had decided that I would request that she drive for two reasons; one I couldn't necessarily fall asleep while driving and two she is from New Orleans and knows the city better than I. Once I was inside her apartment she needed a few more minutes to get ready. During my wait her roommate came in and that gave me an idea. I figured that by the time the date was over my date would be a little upset, so it would probably be a good idea to let her roommate know about the experiment. I told the roommate what my class project was and if she would explain it to my date when the experiment was over. She agreed happily and wished me success. Eventually my date was ready and the experiment began.

The date started out as any other normal date, we both tried to feel each other out and find a common ground. We had just existed the Gonzales city limits and I felt it would be a perfect time to start the experiment. She was telling me about her childhood and I suddenly leaned back and closed my eyes. She didn't notice at first but eventually she screamed out my name. I hesitated for a second than open my eyes. She asked, "Was I Okay?" and I replied, "Yes, why you ask?" She stated that I had fallen asleep while she was talking. I denied it and eventually the date continued.

We had just entered New Orleans and as she was answering a question I had asked. I closed my eyes again and she immediately noticed and physical touched me. She stated that I had fallen asleep again and to tell her what was wrong. I denied that I had fallen asleep and asked her did she have a problem. She looked at me for a few minutes (facial expression was of a curious state) asked was I having a good time with her and insisted on an answer. I told her everything was fine but I noticed that her attitude had changed. She didn't seem as pleasant as before and her tone had changed.

Our first activity was taking a tour around the old Voodoo landmarks. For some reason I didn't choose at that time to fall asleep. Immediately after the tour we took a walk along the river walk. Her attitude was favorable again and so I thought it might be a good time to continue the experiment. As we walked along the river I suddenly leaned in her direction and closed my eyes. She jumped away from me and began yell some
obscene language in my direction. I opened my eyes and asked why she had become hostile. In an angry voice she said I had fallen asleep again and did I want to end the date? I told her no and asked why she would propose we end the date? I told her that I hadn't fallen asleep and I wished she would stop bringing the subject up. As we discussed the future of our date I noticed many people staring at me, some had a concerned look on their faces, and others had a puzzled look. It was apparent that the attention wasn't focused on the argument between my date and I, but on why I had fallen asleep so suddenly. Eventually I convinced my date that we should continue our day and asked what she wanted to do next. She turned down most of my suggestions but finally accepted my invitation for dinner. On our way to the restaurant, my date never took her eyes of me. I could tell she was very upset and I knew the date would not last much longer.

We finally arrived at a restaurant and the mood seemed to change in my favor again. It was around six o'clock and I was surprised the date had lasted this long. We sat and began to eat, but I could observe that she was not calm anymore. Her facial expression had changed and she didn't appear to be comfortable around me. I tried to converse with her but she wasn't very talkative anymore. The meal was close to the end and I decided to close my eyes again. This time my date did not yell but softly called my name and stated that I had fallen asleep once again. When I opened my eyes I could feel the anger she was expressing and I became nervous. She said she was going to the bathroom and if I would close out the bill. Upon her return she told me that she wanted to return home. I asked why but she did not answer me and promptly left the table. On our way back to Baton Rouge I tried to calm her down but anger had set in and the communication had stopped. She did not speak to me at all on the way back home.

When we returned to her apartment we both got out the car and she said goodbye. I asked her for a kiss and she gave me the middle finger. I felt bad that I had used my date with her for a class experiment and hoped one day to make it up to her. On my way back home I get a phone call from my date. Her roommate told her about the class experiment and she wanted to see me immediately. We reconciled and I took her out again the next day.

This experiment taught me a lesson in deception and adaptation. During the first part of the date, my date appeared to be a perfect little angel. She was very soft spoken and gentle. She even told me that she did not use obscene language. This all changed when I broke a social norm. She could not handle the way I was acting; it did not fit her perception of a normal date. When things do not fit a certain pattern, most people would rather get rid of what is unusual than to adapt to the situation. My date did not understand what was going on so she ended the date. Her shield had disappeared and when tested her true colors came out. This date was a perfect example of deception on both sides, but it was fun.
Testing Norms by Role Playing
Lindsey
Summer 2000

How would you react if some random person were to come up to you and carry on a normal conversation as if you were someone else? Would you inform that person that you were not the person they thought you were, or would you play along maybe even toy with the person's head? My experiment produced both of these results. I walked into the mall of Louisiana and took a long observing look at my victims. I wanted to scope out the crowd and choose those people that I thought would cooperate.

First let me explain my theory and the reasoning of why I chose to do this particular experiment. Last summer I worked in a restaurant and at least three people told me I looked like their friend Anne. Then, one night a girl with extreme energy chatted with me for ten minutes about "old times" that she and I had in night school. She obviously thought I was someone else but because she was so excited to see me I didn't have the heart to tell her the truth. Besides she didn't let me get a word in the conversation. I thought this was extremely interesting considering every person looks different. It must have been the red hair; everyone seems to group us redheads in one look a like category. I always wondered what this Anne girl looked like. So taking this personal experience I decided to see how others in my position would react and so I became the exuberant girl who recognized everyone from the old days. I predicted that some people would give strange looks, maybe walk away, and some would humor me. I also wanted to test the nonverbal touch. I was looking to see how many people would actually let a stranger touch them, maybe even go as far as to hug them. I approached a total of twenty-five people.

At first I approached with a bouncy schoolgirl enthusiasm that would make most people nauseated. The first victim was a women in her thirties and I practically ran over to her and skidded to a halt two feet from her face and exclaimed "ANGELA?!" I continued to babble how I couldn't believe it was her and how much weight she had lost. The women's first reaction was to look around in embarrassment and then she had an annoyed took on her face but she let me finish. Her whole attitude changed when I mentioned the weight loss comment and she blushed and let me carry on. I leaned over and touched her arm and then before she could move I gave a hug. The woman then told me that she was not who I thought she was and she apologized. I thought that was odd that she felt sorry for me. That was just my first case there were several similar to this woman's reaction.

Now the males were different, several guys interrupted me before I got through half of my speech and bluntly said you have to wrong person. One guy laughed and walked away from me. Then there was a man who asked me out and another who told me he remembered me and started asking about others we had supposedly gone to school with. I played along with him and eventually gave him a fabricated e-mail address, to stay in touch, then without warning he leaned over and gave me a peck on the cheek. The funny part would to see my reaction to that nonverbal response. The most interesting result was the old man who I acted as though he was my uncle Robert. The old man coughed and uncomfortably looked around, he kind of chuckled a little and then finally placed his hand on his face and said "sweetheart I am not your uncle." He was so
precious I felt bad for tricking him. So I told him about my experiment and he laughed and said he hoped he was of some help.

I kind of migrated in the same area of the mall near the food court on the second level to make sure those I had already attacked didn't see me on my next prey. My favorite reaction was that of a teenage age girl who was both rude and obnoxious. She had her hair in a high ponytail and stood in front of me with one foot to the right and a hand on her hip. She popped her gum in my face and as I excitedly told her how wonderful it was to run into her and that I hadn't seen her since fifth grade when we had a gymnastics class together. The fifteen year old looked me up and down with condescending eyes and tossed her yellow hair behind her shoulder. All of her actions seemed to portray that she was bored out of her mind and that was bothering her. So I went to hug her and she jumped back and said I was a freak! Can you believe this? I was sure shocked. I never would have expected that reaction from any person, especially a child. That girl has no polite manners.

Overall I had lots of fun doing this project from the annoyed subjects to the delighted ones--everyone reacted different to my experiment. I didn't really have a pattern of responses. Most of the females tended to feel sorry for me and the males were somewhat flattered to be approached, they probably thought it was a pick up line. I didn't have anyone observe me, and that would have been my only change to the experiment. I think that this was a fun assignment but I wish I could have had more time to do it in other public areas. I would love to perform in a private well know restaurant and see how people react because I would most likely be disturbing them.
Enclosed here are five scripts, compiled and adapted for use by the students in their Adapting to Other projects. The short dramatic scripts depict conflicts in intimate, familial, and professional relationships and friendships. Three of the scripts were adapted or compiled from Joseph DeVito, Messages 3rd edition. The script titled, ‘Roommates,” was adapted from the Neil Simon play, The Odd Couple. Per their consent, Tate, Clarence, Ed, Sandra and Marilyn wrote the fifth script in the SPCM 2010: Interpersonal Communication course I taught in the summer of 2000.
FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS: THE HACKETTS

Adapted from Joseph DeVito, *Messages* 3rd edition, 310.

Brad: Mom, did you remember about Chris's birthday party? We need a present. Did you get a present, Mom?

Marge: No, I forgot completely about it. We'll have to run out later. Did anything else happen? How was school today?

Brad: Okay. Nothing special, except that we have to bring in food for the charity drive and I volunteered to bring Hamburger Helper. Can you get that, too, Mom, when you go shopping?

Pete: Enough, Brad. Your mother just got home.

Marge: How was your day, honey?

Pete: I'm not sure. There's talk going around the office about a reorganization in the company. I don't know what that's going to mean for me. There may be some promotions and transfers in the offering. It's all up in the air right now, of course, but I think we really ought to talk about what we would do if…

Marge: Pete, can we talk about it some other time? I mean, I can't worry about some uncertain future right now. It's after six, dinner isn't even started, and I have a brief case full of budget proposals to go over. Brad needs a present for Chris's party tomorrow, and...

Pete: Okay! We'll save it. Besides, I guess there are more immediate things to think about. Like the notice in the mail today about our checking account being overdrawn-again. Honestly, Marge, if we're both going to draw on the account we have to work out a better system of keeping track of things. Also, I called the service people about the washing machine. They can send someone out tomorrow morning, but it will mean paying overtime for service on Saturday.

Marge: Well, we don't really have a choice, do we? If they get here in the morning, that should give time to catch up on the laundry before the party tomorrow night.

Pete: The party?! I completely forgot. That dean of yours gives the worst parties. Why does he insist on trying so hard? This is the third one this semester, and I'm sure it will be as b-o-r-i-n-g as the first two. I suppose we have to go, though, huh?

Marge: Yes, I suppose. You know we have to go, Pete. We don't have to stay long, though. Or maybe Donna can come a little early and we can go out to dinner beforehand. I've always wanted to arrive at a party fashionably late.
At this point the phone rings and Marge goes to answer it. She returns grimacing.

Marge: That was Donna. She can't baby-sit tomorrow night at all, much less come early. Do you think we could leave the kids alone? It isn't as if we'll be that far away.

Pete glances at Brad, who is eagerly awaiting his parents' decision and doing a bad job of concealing his bias.

Pete: Oh, I don't think that's such a good idea. I'm sure you can work it out somehow.

Brad: Aw, Dad...  

Marge: That's enough, Brad. What do you mean, Pete that I'll work it out somehow? We'll work it out. I mean, really, Pete, it isn't all my responsibility. And what about Jenny? What's going on? I could hear her upstairs when I came in. I should go talk to her.

Jenny enters the living room, eyes red from crying, and regards her parents fiercely.

Jenny: All you guys ever do is talk to each other. What about me? Don’t I count? I have a life, too, you know, and it isn’t easy. I have problems, too.

Marge: Of course you do, Jenny. I’m sorry. Mother and Father have just had a bad day, that’s all. Why don’t you and Brad take a walk down to Baskin-Robbins and buy some ice cream for dessert tonight, and you and I will have a private chat after dinner. Okay?

Jenny and Brad exit, arguing about the flavor of ice cream to buy. Marge smiles and turns again to her husband.

Pete: There was something else in the mail today that’s bothering me. Someone sent a copy of the town rules about leaving trashcans by the street. It was unsigned. Who the hell would do that? The only time we left a trashcan was when the leaf bag broke. One damn time and we get a poison-pen letter. I have enough to worry about at work without trashcans creating a crisis.

Marge: Let’s ignore it. It’s after six and we should start supper. I’m surprised the kids didn’t complain about being hungry.

Pete: They both had two peanut-butter sandwiches.

Marge: Great, so why am I cooking dinner? Never mind.

Pete: Marge, what’s wrong?
Marge: Nothing. If you can stay here in the morning and wait for the service man, I can get Brad’s present for the party and do the grocery shopping for the week. Then we can get to the laundry in the afternoon.

Pete: But what about tonight? I like sometime to just relax and--you know just the two of us.

Marge: Well, if I can go over the budget proposals between nine and eleven, we could…

Pete: Forget the proposal. They can wait. I can’t.

Marge: Pete we’ve talked about my work.

Pete: Marge, what about us?

Marge: Pete, tonight is the only time. You know were going to be busy all Saturday. We’re having your parents over for dinner on Sunday. It’s your mother’s birthday, remember? And, I’ve got to cook dinner.

Pete: Marge . . .

Return of Jenny and Brad.

Jenny: We’re home.

Brad: And we got rocky road ice cream.
INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS: THE SPAT

Adapted from Joseph DeVito, Messages 5th edition, 218.

Pat: It's me. Just came in to get my papers for the meeting tonight.

Chris: You're not going to another meeting tonight, are you?

Pat: I told you last month that I had to give this lecture to the new managers on how to use some new research methods. What do you think I've been working on for the past two weeks? If you cared about what I do, you'd know that I was working on this lecture and that it was especially important that it go well.

Chris: What about shopping? We always do the shopping on Friday night.

Pat: The shopping will have to wait; this lecture is important.

Chris: Shopping is important, too, and so are the children and so is my job and so is the leak in the basement that's been driving me crazy for the past week and that I've asked you to look at every day since then.

Pat: Get off it. We can do the shopping anytime. Your job is fine and the children are fine and we'll get a plumber just as soon as I get his name from the Johnsons.

Chris: You always do that. You always think only you count, only you matter. Even when we were in school, your classes were the important ones, your papers, your tests were the important ones. Remember when I had that chemistry final and you had to have your history paper typed? We stayed up all night typing your paper. I failed chemistry, remember? That's not so good when you're premed! I suppose I should thank you for my not being a doctor? But you got your A in history. It's always been that way. You never give a damn what's important in my life.

Pat: I really don't want to talk about it. I'll only get upset and bomb out with the lecture. Forget it. I don't want to hear any more about it. So just shut up before I do something I should do more often.

Chris: You hit me and I'll call the cops. I'm not putting up with another black eye or another fat lip-never, never again.

Pat: Well, then, just shut up. I just don't want to talk about it anymore. Forget it. I have to give the lecture and that's that.

Chris: The children were looking forward to going shopping. Johnny wanted to get a new CD, and Jennifer needed to get a book for school. You promised them.

Pat: I didn't promise anyone anything. You promised them and now you want me to take the blame. You know, you promise too much. You should only promise what you can
deliver-like fidelity. Remember you promised to be faithful? Or did you forget that promise? Why don't you tell the kids that? Or do they already know? Were they here when you had your sordid affair? Did they see their loving parent loving some stranger?

Chris: I thought we agreed not to talk about that. You know how bad I feel about what happened. And anyway, that was six months ago. What has that got to do with tonight?

Pat: You're the one who brought up promises, not me. You're always bringing up the past. You live in the past.

Chris: Well, at least the kids would have seen me enjoying myself, one enjoyable experience in eight years isn't too much, is it?

Pat: I'm leaving. Don't wait up.
FRIENDSHIP RELATIONSHIPS: ROOMATES

Adapted from Neil Simon, *Odd Couple*, 37-54.

Felicia: (Pushing the spaghetti away) All right, how much longer is this gonna go on?

Olivia: (Drinking her coffee) Are you talking to me?

Felicia: That's right, I'm talking to you.

Olivia: What do you want to know?

Felicia: I want to know if you're going to spend the rest of your life not talking to me. (No reply) Well? (No reply) I see. You're not going to talk to me. (No reply) All right, two can play at this game. (Pause) If you're not going to talk to me, I'm not going to talk to you. (No reply) I can act childish too, you know. (No reply) I can go on without talking just as long as you can.

Olivia: Then why the hell don't you shut up?

Felicia: Are you talking to me?

Lisa: Hey, guys what's going on I can hear you from the back of the house.

Olivia: (Gets up, takes a key out of her pocket and slams it on the table) There's a key to the back door. If you stick to the hallway and your room, you won't get hurt. (She sits back down)

Felicia: I don't think I gather the entire meaning of that remark.

Olivia: Then I'll explain it to you. Stay out of my way.

Felicia: (Picks up the key) I think you're serious. I think you're really serious. Is she serious?

Lisa: Hell, I don't know. What's wrong with you guys?

Olivia: This is my apartment. Everything in my apartment is mine. The only thing here that's yours is you. Just stay in your room and speak softly.

Felicia: Yeah, you're serious. Well, let me remind you that I pay a third of the rent--three hundred and twenty dollars a month--and I'll go into any room I want. (She gets up angrily and starts toward the hallway)

Olivia: (With a pointing finger) I'm warning you. You want to live here, I don't want to see you, I don't want to hear you and I don't want to smell your cooking.
Lisa: All right, let's everybody just settle down, heh?

Felicia: All right, Olivia, I'd like to know what's happened? Why the attitude?

Olivia: What's happened?

Felicia: That's right. Something must have caused you to go off the deep end like this. What is it? Something I said? Something I did? Heh? What?

Olivia: (Pacing) It's nothing you said. It's nothing you did. It's you!

Felicia: I see. Well, that's plain enough.

Olivia: I could make it plainer but I don't want to hurt you.

Lisa: Come Olivia, don’t be such an ass.

Felicia: What is it, the cooking? The cleaning? The crying?

Olivia: (Moving toward her) I'll tell you exactly what it is. It's the cooking, cleaning and crying. It's the talking about BOB; it's the moose calls that open your ears at two o'clock in the morning. I can't take it any more, Felicia. Everything you do irritates me. And when you're not here, the things I know you're gonna do when you come in irritate me. You leave me little notes on my pillow. I told you a hundred times; I can't stand little notes on my pillow. "We're all out of Corn Flakes. F.U." It took me three hours to figure out that F.U. was Felicia Ungar.

Lisa: Yeah, that’s not her fault, Felicia. It's a rotten combination.

Felicia: I get the picture.

Olivia: That's just the frame. The picture I haven't even painted yet. I got a typewritten list in my office of the "Ten Most Aggravating Things You Do That Drive Me Berserk." But last night was the limit.

Lisa: What happen last night?

Olivia: You know that I had planned a dinner with Max.

Lisa: Yeah, and he was going to bring his single good-looking brother and we were going to hook up but we had an emergency at the hospital and I had to work late. I called you. Didn’t you get my message?

Olivia: Yes, I got your message ten minutes before Max showed up because Felicia forget to give me the message.

Lisa: So what happen?
Olivia: So, Max shows up with his brother and you weren’t here, and I did have time to call Susan so I ask Felicia to join us.

Lisa: That was a bad call.

Olivia: You’re telling me. We spent the whole night talking about why Bob left her.

Felicia: I’m sorry loused up your evening! I didn’t want to have dinner with Max but I was doing YOU a favor.

Olivia: You know how much I like Max and you promised you wouldn’t talk about Bob. For heaven sakes Felicia you know he’s Max’s best friend. But you wouldn’t shut up about it. I’m sorry Bob left you but I’m starting to understand why. You’re a pain in the ass.

Felicia: Olivia, how can you say that to me? I’m sorry I ruined your evening.

Olivia: Yeah you’re sorry alright.

Felicia: Olivia, you're the most unfeeling, inconsiderate, completely unreliable, undependable, irresponsible slob.

Lisa: All right, let's everybody just settle down, heh?

Felicia: Lisa your my best friend. I know you were trying to help me out by staying here. But, I can’t live with her attitude anymore. I’m moving out.

Lisa: Come on Felicia she didn’t mean it. Let’s talk about.

Felicia: I’ve had enough talk. I’m moving out.

Olivia: Good.
PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS: THE PROJECT


Scene: Ed is at the coffee shop by his self. Everyone else is late.

Ed: Well, it figures I'm the only one here on time! No one in this group has any responsibility and definitely no sense of time management. They know we have to get this project started. But once again, I’m here and they’re not. I wonder what’s keeping them this time. (Tapping pen) Oh, here comes Sandra and Marilyn and only twenty minutes late. God I hate group work.

(Sandra and Marilyn enter)

Sandra: I really hope that Tate doesn't show up today.

Marilyn: Are you crazy? Why not? He is such a hottie. Did you see the BUTT on him! Do you think he'd go out with me?

Sandra: I hope so! I think you both have forgotten that I'm engaged! At least I know he has. He's always flirting with me and it's getting pretty sickening. It makes me feel uncomfortable.

Marilyn: Oh, come on! You mean you wouldn't want to have one last fling with him? I know I would! I think I'm going to ask him by my place for dinner.

Sandra: Yeah right, dinner. Please do!

Marilyn: Oh my God! Here he comes now! How do I look?

Sandra: You look fine. I think Clarence is with him.

(Tate and Clarence enter)

Clarence: I hope we can finish this today. I can’t work this weekend because I want to go camping. I haven’t been in a while and that’s what I would prefer to do with my time this weekend.

Tate: I want to finish so I can see what Sandra is doing afterwards. Do you think she'd go out with me?

Clarence: Hmmm. Let me see. She's getting married and every time you try to talk to her, she gets grossed out. Yeah man, she’s just trying to cover it up. She wants you!

Tate: I knew it! I'm the man!
Clarence: You probably won't get a chance to ask her out because you know Ed is going to insist that everything goes his way. He's probably used to that at his big boardroom job but I'm going to put a stop to that!

Tate: Dude, I don't care what we do it on, I'll go along with whatever. Now do you think I should make the first date casual or dressed up?

Clarence: Maybe you didn't hear me the first time but..

Tate: Dude, engaged is not married! I've still got a chance.

(Everyone's seated at the table. Clarence is about to sit next to Tate but Marilyn bumps him out of the way)

Ed: Why were you late. I've been waiting for about 20-25 minutes for all of you to get here. I'm the only one that is taking this project serious?

Sandra: Ed. I'm sorry I was late but I have a legitimate excuse. You know that Ted and I are getting married.

Marilyn & Clarence: We KNOW!

Sandra: (giving them a look) Well, we were picking out place setting arrangements and the time just got away from us. You see we are going to rent the ballroom at the Hilton, my mom thinks that we should buy Waterford crystal with the gold lip trim but Ted and I want to use . . .

Ed: Okay, so you were late because you were at another meeting. What about the rest of you? Why were you late?

Clarence: Look man who made you time police. We're here so let's cut the crap and get this party started.

Ed: Look this is the fourth meeting where all of you have been late. I think we should take about your problems with time management.

Clarence: You know you're really starting to piss me off. Cut the lecture and let's work.

Ed: Fine, so now that everyone is here we can get started. I think we should do this project on...

Clarence: Camping! (Ed gets a disgusted look) We'd have an outdoors scene and we could argue over which direction we are going to go in like in the Blair Witch Project. Marilyn, you could say, "I'm so scared!"
Marilyn: Oh, I'm sure I'd be okay with Tate around.

Tate: So Sandra what have you been up to lately?

Sandra: My wedding plans! Weren’t you listening. (Tto Ed) I think it would nice if we had a wedding theme for our project. I bet nobody else is doing that.

Ed: With good reason. Now look, I was thinking of a boardroom setting where we have could. . .

Marilyn: I like the wedding idea. Tate and I could be the bride and groom.

Tate: Or, me and Sandra!

Sandra: NOT!

Ed: Now look! We need to get organized!

Clarence: Hey guy! We are not in your boardroom and we don't work for you okay. Besides, Tate hasn't said what he wants to do!

Ed: Yeah, but we know WHO he wants to do!

Tate: Dude!

Sandra: I can't believe you said that!

Marilyn: Hey, I’m not getting married.

Clarence: Man, I think you need to apologize to her.

Tate: Yeah, that wasn’t cool man. Why do you always try to put me down? I like her so what wrong with that.

Sandra: Tate! I'm sick of this, especially when you know I'm marrying one of your friends!

Clarence: Dude! That's foul! You didn't tell me that!

Marilyn: Yeah Tate, especially when there are available women around!

Tate: I can't take this anymore. I'm out of here, you guys just decide on whatever! (Tate exits)

Marilyn: Tate wait! See what you guys have done! Someone should make sure he's okay.

Sandra: I wonder who that's going to be?
Marilyn: I know, I'll go!

Clarence & Ed: Surprise.

Marilyn: Later guys! Just pick something, anything's okay with me. Tate wait!

(Marilyn exits)

Ed: Oh, God what a circus.
PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS: THE INTERVIEW

Adapted from Joseph DeVito, Messages 3rd edition, 206.

Ms. Bass: And you are?


Ms. Bass: So, Ms. Giddeon, what can I do for you?

Linda: I'm here for I mean I'm applying for that job, right?

Ms. Bass: So, you'd like a job with DATACOMM. Is that right?

Linda: Well, er, yes. I guess so. I think I'd like that.

Ms. Bass: Tell me what you know about computers.

Linda: Well, I didn't take that many courses. But I took some. Some good ones. Some were too time consuming, so I didn't take them.

Ms. Bass: Well, tell me what you did take.

Linda: Well, I guess, I mean I took the regular courses. Here's my transcript.

Ms. Bass: I can read your transcript. But I want to hear from you, exactly what you know about computers.

Linda: Well, I took courses in different aspects of computers. Programming I and II. And I took desktop publishing. Courses like that.

Ms. Bass: Instead of telling me your courses, tell me what you know.

Linda: Excuse me. I guess I'm a little nervous. I'm not very good at interviewing. In fact, this is my first interview and I really don't know what to say.

Ms. Bass: (Smiling) Are you sure you were a computer major?

Linda: Yes.

Ms. Bass: Okay, I know. Let me put it this way: do you think you can do anything for DATACOMM?

Linda: Oh. Yes. I mean, I may be wrong about this but I'm pretty sure, I could do a lot, really a lot for DATACOMM.
Ms. Bass: Okay, Ms. Giddeon, now exactly what can you do for DATACOMM that the next applicant can't do better?

Linda: Oh, well, I really don't know much about DATACOMM. I mean, I may be wrong about this but I thought I would assist someone and learn the job that way.

Ms. Bass: Right. What skills can you bring to DATACOMM? Why would you make such a good learner?

Linda: Gee, this isn't as easy as I thought it would be.

Ms. Bass: Ms. Giddeon, tell me what you are especially good at.

Linda: Well, I guess I'm kind of good at getting along with people—you know, working with people in groups.

Ms. Bass: No, I'm not sure I know what that means. Tell me.

Linda: Like, I mean I'm pretty good at just working with people. People think I'm kind of neat. You know like people like me. I don't know, I guess it's just my personality.

Ms. Bass: I don't doubt that Ms. Giddeon but do you have any other talents other than being "neat"?

Linda: I can run a desktop publishing program. Is that important?

Ms. Bass: Ms. Giddeon, everything is important.

Linda: Is there anything else?

Ms. Bass: I don't know, Ms. Giddeon, is there anything else?

Linda: I don't know.

Ms. Bass: I want to thank you for your time, Ms. Giddeon. We'll be in touch with you.

Linda: Oh, I got the job?

Ms. Bass: Not exactly. If we decide on you, we will call you.

Linda: O.K.
VITA

Jacqueline Denise Burleson was born in San Perdo, California, on December 17, 1968. She graduated from Hesperia High School in June of 1987 before enrolling at Dillard University in the Department of Mass Communication. She graduated with a double major in mass communication and drama & speech communication and received her bachelor of arts in May of 1991. In the fall of 1991, she entered the Performance Studies track of the master of arts program in the Department of Speech Communication at Louisiana State University. She completed the degree in August of 1994.

In the fall of 1994, she began coursework toward the doctoral degree in the Department of Speech Communication at Louisiana State University. In addition to her primary interest in performance studies, her coursework includes, cultural studies, theatre history, theatre design, and production management. She will receive the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy in August 2003 at Louisiana State University’s summer commencement exercises.