Effective Practices for Establishing an Interactive Theatre Program in a University Community

Benjamin Saypol

University of Colorado at Boulder, bsaypol@gmail.com

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EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR ESTABLISHING
AN INTERACTIVE THEATRE PROGRAM
IN A UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

by

BENJAMIN SAYPOL

B.A. Northwestern University, 1994
M.M. University of Colorado at Boulder, 2004

A dissertation submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Colorado in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Theatre and Dance

2011
This dissertation entitled:

Effective Practices for Establishing an Interactive Theatre Program in a University Community
written by Benjamin Saypol
has been approved for the Department of Theatre and Dance

__________________________________________
Dr. Beth Osnes

__________________________________________
Dr. Oliver Gerland

Date: April 15, 2011

The final copy of this dissertation has been examined by the signatories, and we find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline

IRB Protocol #: 0410.5
How should one go about establishing a viable Interactive Theatre ensemble that can provide quality programming to communities on university campuses? This dissertation infers effective practices for doing so based on a study of Interactive Theatre and a comparative analysis of five representative Interactive Theatre programs in universities across the country: Theatre for Dialogue at the University of Texas at Austin, Cornell Interactive Theatre Ensemble, InterAct at The Ohio State University, the Interactive Theatre Project at the University of Colorado at Boulder, and Interactive Theatre Carolina at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The data sources are threefold: interviews with ensemble leaders, funders and actors; evaluation data and other documents from the programs; and scholarship both inside and outside the field of Interactive Theatre. Effective practices are defined as those which, according to the three sources of data, have proven to be successful in maximizing the efficacy and impact of the work. The methodology is a form of qualitative social science research called “Case Study,” specifically an “Instrumental Study” and “Collective Case Study.” The study focuses on a broad set of issues and skill sets within Interactive Theatre divided up into four categories as follows: “Program Foundations,” including Genesis Stories, Funding/Sustainability/Growth, Goals, Theory/Influences, Issues, Audiences, Marketing, Space, and Allies/Advocates; “Structure and Methods,” including Services/Format/Techniques, Ensemble Structure, Recruiting/Auditioning, Student Commitment, Academic Courses on Interactive Theatre, Scene/Script Creation, and Rehearsal/Training; “Facilitation,” including Roles and Techniques
of the Facilitator, Engagement of Audience Members, Creating a Safe Space, Encouraging Quieter Voices to Speak Up, Managing and Deepening the Conversation, Negotiating Conflict/Dealing with Resistance, Facilitating Social Justice Education, the Role of Identity, Co-facilitation, Hegemony/Master Narratives/Dominant Ideologies; and “Evaluation/Impact,” including Current Evaluation Practices, Evaluation Results, Scholarship on Evaluation, Effective Practices for Evaluation, and the Impact on Student Ensemble Members. Finally, the study draws additional conclusions in the form of ethical, theoretical, and practical implications and outlines the next steps for future and current practitioners. Despite the dissertation’s narrow focus on the university setting, the conclusions can be easily applied to other settings, including high schools and community organizations.
This Dissertation is dedicated

In memory of my father Bruce Saypol, J.D., LL.M.,

Who always wanted to call me “Doctor.”

And in honor of my mother Judye Groner,

Who always wanted me “to just finish it already!”
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee members, who contributed significantly to this Dissertation: Dr. Beth Osnes (Advisor), Dr. Oliver Gerland (Second Reader), Dr. Merrill Lessley, Rebecca Brown Adelman (my first Interactive Theatre mentor), and Michael Rohd (my role model for Interactive Theatre facilitation). I would also like to thank everyone I interviewed who gave of their time, most importantly the Interactive Theatre leaders: Trent Norman of the Interactive Theatre Project (my other first Interactive Theatre mentor), Lynn Hoare of Theatre for Dialogue, Robin Post of InterAct, and Dane Cruz of the Cornell Interactive Theatre Ensemble. Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family for their consistent support.
## CONTENTS

Chapter I: Introduction .................................................................................................................... 1  
  Dissertation Topic ....................................................................................................................... 1  
  Definition of Terms and History of the Field .............................................................................. 1  
  Literature Review and Rationale for the Study of Interactive Theatre ..................................... 10  
  Methodology ............................................................................................................................. 14  
  Full Disclosure .......................................................................................................................... 24  

Chapter II: Foundations ................................................................................................................. 27  
  Genesis Stories .......................................................................................................................... 27  
  Funding/Sustainability/Growth ................................................................................................. 34  
  Goals .......................................................................................................................................... 40  
  Theory/Influences ....................................................................................................................... 43  
  Issues ......................................................................................................................................... 53  
  Audiences .................................................................................................................................. 56  
  Marketing .................................................................................................................................. 62  
  Space ......................................................................................................................................... 66  
  Allies/Advocates ....................................................................................................................... 67  
  Conclusion .................................................................................................................................. 70  

Chapter III: Structure and Methods ............................................................................................... 74  
  Services, Format, and Techniques .............................................................................................. 74  
  Interactive Theatre Performances ............................................................................................. 74  
  New Script/Performance Development ..................................................................................... 86  
  Performance Based Workshop .................................................................................................. 86
Conclusion............................................................................................................................... 143

Chapter V: Evaluation/Impact..................................................................................................... 145

Current Interactive Theatre Evaluation Practices........................................................................... 146

Interactive Theatre Evaluation Results .......................................................................................... 154

UT-TFD............................................................................................................................... 155

UNC-ITC............................................................................................................................. 162

CU-ITP ................................................................................................................................ 172

Anecdotal Evidence..................................................................................................................... 176

Scholarship on Interactive Theatre/Forum Theatre Evaluation ...................................................... 178

Effective Practices for Evaluation................................................................................................ 190

Impact on Student Actors in the Ensemble .................................................................................... 192

CU-ITP................................................................................................................................ 192

UNC-ITC............................................................................................................................. 197

UT-TFD............................................................................................................................... 199

A Compelling Argument............................................................................................................... 206

Chapter VI: Conclusion – Interactive Theatre as “Theatre of the Oppressor:” Ethical, Theoretical,
and Practical Implications ............................................................................................................. 208

Ethical Implications.................................................................................................................. 208

Theoretical and Practical Implications........................................................................................ 216

Recent Events.......................................................................................................................... 227

Next Steps ............................................................................................................................... 230

Works Cited................................................................................................................................. 235
## TABLES

Table

1. Case Study Procedural Steps……………………………………………………………………15
2. Funding Structures for Interactive Theatre Programs…………………………………………34
3. Additional Potential Sources of Funding………………………………………………………….40
4. Theatrical Influences of Interactive Theatre Practice…………………………………………43
5. Social Issues Addressed by the Five Interactive Theatre Programs…………………………55
6. Audiences of the Five Interactive Theatre Programs…………………………………………56
7. Campus Allies of Interactive Theatre Ensembles………………………………………………68
8. Ensemble Structures………………………………………………………………………………87
9. Role and Techniques for the Interactive Theatre Facilitator…………………………………119
10. Themes and Statements from the Five Program’s Evaluation Forms………………………146
FIGURES

Figure

1. Interactive Theatre exists in the overlap between applied theatre and community based theatre………………………………………………………………………………………………..5

2. Definitions of Interactive Theatre…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………8

3. Questionnaire used during phone interviews with Interactive Theatre Leaders…………22

4. Questionnaire used during phone interviews with Interactive Theatre funders…………22

5. Questionnaire used during phone interviews with Interactive Theatre actors…………23

6. Format of Interactive Theatre Performances…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………76

7. Common Ground Rules for Interactive Theatre Performances…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………123

8. Voices Against Violence Evaluation: Sociology of Gender – November 2010…………158

9. Voices Against Violence Evaluation: Athletics (combined) – November 2010…………161

10. UNC-ITC Evaluation Summary 2008-2009…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………170

11. Evaluation Results of CU-ITP’s “Just Another Party”………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………174

12. Themes and Findings from CU-ITP’s “Assessment of how the Interactive Theatre Project at CU Boulder Supports Student Development in Student Actors.”…………………………196


14. ATHE Interactive Theatre Subcommittee Ethics Statement……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………216
Chapter I: Introduction

Dissertation Topic

The goal of this dissertation is to infer effective practices for establishing Interactive Theatre Programs in university communities based on a study of Interactive Theatre and a comparative analysis of five representative Interactive Theatre programs in universities across the country. My data sources are threefold: interviews with various members of the programs themselves, evaluation data and other documents from the programs, and scholarship both inside and outside the field of Interactive Theatre. I define effective practices as those practices which, according to the three sources of data, have proven to be successful in maximizing the efficacy and impact of the work.

Definition of Terms and History of the Field

As Tim Prentki and Sheila Preston explain, the practices of applied theatre “have progressively gained currency throughout the second half of the 20th century,” in conjunction with “an upsurge of interest in the social sciences” at both the macro level of “national political organization … and at the micro levels of personal fulfillment and community engagement” (Prentki and Preston 11-12). Applied theatre practice began in earnest in the 1960s, when Bertolt Brecht’s theory and practice of using theatre for social change, as inspired by the politics of Karl Marx, sparked a period of social activism and theatrical experimentation. Soon thereafter, Augusto Boal, influenced by the educational philosophies of Paolo Freire – and Brecht as well – developed a broad array of theatrical tools, among which was a subset that he called Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) in homage to Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Due to Boal’s prolific
publication and practice across the globe, he has had a significant impact on the field (Prentki and Preston 11-13).

Other key applied theatre movements include Theatre in Education, which started in Great Britain in the 1960’s and spread to North America, Australia, and New Zealand and Theatre for Development (TfD), which emerged in the mid-1990’s and includes a broad scope of work devised by non-government agencies (NGOs) in developing nations. TfD projects seek to change attitudes and behaviors in areas such as health, gender oppression, and local governance (Prentki and Preston 13).

Prentki and Preston define applied theatre as “describing a broad set of theatrical practices and creative processes that take participants and audiences … into a realm of theatre that is responsive to ordinary people and their stories, local settings and priorities” (Prentki and Preston 9). They explain that it often happens in informal settings and non-theatre venues that are significant to the community, such as schools, community gathering places, public spaces, and prisons. They go onto say that:

Frequently those who engage in applied theatre are motivated by the belief that theatre experienced both as participant and audience, might make some difference to the way in which people interact with each other and the wider world. For both practitioners and participants there may often be an overt political desire to use the process of theatre in the service of social and community change. For other practitioners and participants the intention is less overt (but potentially no less political in its effect) and concerned with using theatre to draw attention to or reveal hidden stories of a community. (Prentki and Preston 9)
They also explain that the “community” is the central focus of applied theatre and distinguish three different relationships: theatre “for” a community (e.g. a touring show), theatre “with” a community (e.g. a workshop or process of creative exploration), and theatre “by” a community (e.g. a community making and performing theatre itself) (Prentki and Preston 10).

The authors list many other practices under the umbrella of applied theatre including: “community theatre … theatre for social change, popular theatre, interventionist theatre … process drama/theatre, prison theatre” and others, noting that these terms “evolved in responses to social conditions or as attempts to articulate the essence of the work” (Prentki and Preston 10).

Though the authors identify “Community Theatre” as a branch of applied theatre, it is important to acknowledge that many practitioners in the field use “community based theatre” as an alternate umbrella term for these models.

Robert Leonard defines community based theatre as follows:

The national field of grassroots, community-based theatre includes theater organizations and artists who center their artistic life in specific communities for the purpose of using theater to express the values, interests and concerns of those communities … In addition to these grassroots theater organizations, there is an untold number of individual theater artists who create in the context of community-building and political activism, some who work alone, some in partnership with theater companies and some in partnership with community agencies or activist groups. The multitude of theaters and theater artists in this field represent as many different approaches, philosophies and artistic visions as there are organizations and people. These are not replicated efforts, producing common plays or working in commonly shared styles. The artistic intentions of
community-based theaters and the works they produce are immediately local, most often entirely unique … The communities shape the style of theater the companies create as well as the stories they tell and social contexts they bring to the stage (Leonard 1).

Like Prentki and Preston do for applied theatre, Leonard defines community based theatre as a theatre of the people, by the people and/or for the people – on many unique local levels. And given the large number and types of practitioners and communities engaged, community based theatre, too, is known by many different names. Sometimes, it seems as though there are as many terms and definitions as there are practitioners.

Helen Nicholson highlights the difference between the two umbrella terms in her book *Applied Drama* when she focuses on the meaning of “applied.” Merriam-Webster defines “applied” as “put to practical use” or “applying general principles to solve definite problems” (Applied). Applied theatre, then, uses a theatrical medium to solve a specific and concrete problem in the community, for example actively rehearsing strategies to empower oppressed peoples in Brazil (TO), or the reduction of the incidence rate of HIV in an African country (TfD).

In other words, applied theatre places practical function – a specific concrete goal – as the priority and chooses the specific performance form and tools to best achieve that goal. Community based theatre, by contrast, focuses on creating art to have a general positive impact on the local community, but any specific practical impact is ancillary to that creative and expressive process. To put it another way, applied theatre focuses more on usage and tools than on genres and forms. One could even set up a continuum with “Art for art’s sake” on the left, “Raising awareness about community/social issues in the middle” and “Enacting specific human
attitude and behavior change” on the right. While community based theatre would hover around the middle, applied theatre would be located more toward the right.

For the purposes of this study, I will create a Venn diagram (figure 1) with “Theatre” as the outer box, with two overlapping, smaller circles inside: “applied theatre” and “community based theatre.” “Interactive Theatre,” as it will be defined below, exists in that overlap between applied and community based theatre, as it necessarily exists in communities, seeking to serve the “values interests and concern of those communities,” but it also exists to achieve tangible social goals.

![Venn Diagram](image)

**Figure 1.** Interactive Theatre exists in the overlap between applied theatre and community based theatre.
Here in the United States, one specific form of applied/community based theatre, Interactive Theatre, is rapidly increasing in popularity on American university campuses. To be sure, “Interactive Theatre” is a broad term which includes a wide variety of styles. First, I will define the term as it is defined within the broader field of theatre; then, I will explain how the term has been appropriated by people in higher education to mean something more specific.

In his book *Interactive Acting: Acting and Improvisation for Audience Participatory Theatre*, Jeff Wirth explains that while all theatre is interactive, there is one primary difference between traditional theatre and interactive theatre:

> In traditional theatre the audience assumes a reactive role, responding to the performance in a passive fashion, Interactive theatre expands the experience of the audience by offering them a proactive role, in which they are invited to join as a collaborator in the creation of the performance ... Interactive Theatre combines the richness of rehearsed material, the spontaneity of improvisation, and the empowerment of participation.” (Wirth 1)

In other words, the defining convention of Interactive Theatre is real time participation of the audience in the drama on stage; audience members have full-fledged interpersonal interactions with the actor/characters during the course of the performance which, in turn, impact the course of action on stage.

Wirth goes onto explain that there are a wide variety of styles of Interactive Theatre: “environmental,” which takes advantage of realistic settings (e.g. *Tony and Tina’s Wedding* and murder mystery shows); “psychodrama” (e.g. Playback Theatre); “Socio-political” (e.g. Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed); and theatrical freestyle, “in which audience members join actors on stage to play roles in full-length shows” (Wirth 5).
In the last ten years, one of the socio-political forms of Interactive Theatre has been utilized with greater frequency on university campuses; and practitioners, funders, and audience members involved in Institutions of Higher Education have appropriated the term “Interactive Theatre” to represent this specific form. In 2006, the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) hosted Jeffrey Steiger and the CRLT Players from the University of Michigan at their annual conference to showcase their work, using Interactive Theatre for faculty development and social justice education on college campuses. As the form enjoyed more and more exposure and respect, ATHE, in the spring of 2007, created the “Interactive Theatre Task Force” (ITTF) to explore how to promote and enhance the use of Interactive Theatre on college campuses and in local communities.

In September of 2007, ITTF held its first one-day symposium “Using Interactive Theatre for Social Change: An Interdisciplinary Symposium” at the University of Missouri, Columbia. I was a member of the committee at the time and now serve as co-chair. One of our many tasks was to establish a working definition of what we were calling “Interactive Theatre.” As a note in the symposium program explains, “Online discussions of definitions of Interactive Theatre brought to the surface some agreements and questions about the meaning of the terms. The task force decided to share with symposium participants our individual definitions” (Interactive Theatre Task Force 3). Page three of the symposium program (figure 2) includes all eight definitions.
Figure 2. Definitions of Interactive Theatre (Interactive Theatre Task Force 3)
For the purposes of this study, I am choosing to include a version of my definition from the above list. I feel justified in doing so, because, when crafting my definition for the symposium, and when revising it for this study, I carefully reviewed and analyzed all of the other definitions during the online discussions among committee members, and I tried to include most aspects of the other definitions in my own definition. In addition, I sought a definition that would strike the optimal balance of comprehensive and concise and would include the what, how, why, and context of Interactive Theatre. I decided upon the following definition:

Interactive Theatre is a theatrical form in which the audience participates, in varying degrees, in the creation of the drama on stage in real time, resulting in a combination of scripted and improvisational performance, with the goal of fostering critical dialogue designed to challenge attitudes and behaviors around a variety of social issues. These issues include social justice, health and wellness, faculty development, as well as myriad site specific community issues based on the needs of the audience requesting the performance.

As of January 2009, ITTF had evolved into the Interactive Theatre Subcommittee (ITS), a standing subcommittee under ATHE’s Advocacy division, and ATHE has since dedicated featured space on the home page of its website to “Interactive Theatre Resources” (Interactive Theatre Subcommittee, “Interactive”). Furthermore, ITS is planning an Interactive Theatre Pre-conference in advance of the main ATHE conference in the summer of 2012.

As an important side note, Theatre of the Oppressed, Interactive Theatre’s closet theatrical relative, recently received much deserved recognition both in the theatre field and outside of it. In 2008, the ATHE conference featured Augusto Boal as their keynote speaker. Later that year, Boal was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in bringing his
participatory theatre to local communities to promote critical dialogue and fight oppression. Less than eight months later, on May 2, 2009, Boal passed away of respiratory failure. These events confirm that Interactive Theatre is both an important and a timely topic for continued scholarly research.

**Literature Review and Rationale for the Study of Interactive Theatre**

There is little scholarship on Interactive Theatre, especially as specifically defined in this study. Thus I broadened my scope to include Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed, the major theatrical influence on the development of Interactive Theatre. A comprehensive literature review of these two fields reveals that much of the research falls into four categories. The first category is case studies and theoretical analyses of Interactive Theatre and iterations and evolutions of Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed projects, exploring how they deal with specific issues, populations, or disciplines. The second is “How to” books, which lay out one or more methods of Interactive Theatre/Theatre of the Oppressed practice. The third category contains a few articles and dissertations which seek to critically examine the role of the facilitator in Interactive Theatre/Theatre of the Oppressed, and the fourth is evaluation of Interactive Theatre/Theatre of the Oppressed projects.

There are three articles that focus on Interactive Theatre used for faculty and graduate student instructor development in the academy (Kaplan, Cook, and Steiger, 2006; Burgoyne, 2008; Agogino, Ng, and Trujillo, 2001). One of them will be explored in depth in chapter five on evaluation.

Several texts deal with how Theatre of Oppressed has evolved – practically and theoretically – in the last 25 years. In Jan Cohen-Cruz and Mady Schutzman’s, *Playing Boal: Theatre, Therapy, Activism* (Routledge, 1993), the first set of essays include case studies of site
and population specific applications of Boal’s work around the world, for example with indigenous populations in Canada, youth in the United Kingdom, and older adults in the United Kingdom. Other essays are more theoretical and dissect how the work relates to aesthetics, politics, social justice, and post-colonialism.

Cohen-Cruz also edited *A Boal Companion: Dialogues on Theatre and Cultural Politics* (Taylor & Francis, 2007), which contains additional essays on the theoretical issues that arise when TO methodology intersects with politics, activism, therapy, and legislation. One other book in this family is *Working Without Boal: Digressions and Developments in the Theatre of the Oppressed* (Routledge, 1995), a special 1995 issue of *Contemporary Theatre Review*, edited by Frances Babbage. Finally, Bruce McConachie analyzes his experience teaching “Empowerment Through Theatre,” a course that utilized some of Boal’s methods at William and Mary in his “Theatre of the Oppressed with Students of Privilege: Practicing Boal in the American College Classroom.” (McConachie, 2002).

A recent text that deals specifically with Interactive Theatre, as broadly defined by Wirth, is *Interactive and Improvisational Drama: Varieties of Applied Theatre and Performance* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, Inc., 2007) edited by Adam Blatner and Daniel J Weiner. It includes over 30 case studies of this type of work, and is valuable in its ability to help practitioners understand how diverse interactive forms operate in myriad environments. It also sheds light on many of the forms that will be shown to have influenced the practitioners of the five Interactive Theatre programs in this study.

As for the “How to” books, the books by Augusto Boal and Michael Rohd are the ones most often utilized by the Interactive Theatre practitioners interviewed. The strength of Boal’s *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, Second Edition (Routledge, 2002) is that it is the most direct
route to Boal’s original TO toolbox. The disadvantages are that the descriptions are rudimentary; in addition, he includes literally hundreds of exercises without any evaluation of their effectiveness, making it incumbent upon the reader to try them out and decide which might work best.

Michael Rohd’s *Community Conflict and Dialogue: The Hope Is Vital Training Manual* (Heinemann Drama, 1998) provides a clear, concise, linear, and logical model for the creation and facilitation of Interactive Theatre scenes. It is the book that has served me the most since I started doing this work in 2005, and it is the first one I recommend to people. The only downside to the text is that it teaches just the one method that he developed and implemented in communities nationwide in the 10 years before he founded the Sojourn Theatre in Portland, and Rohd will be the first to tell you that his methods have evolved exponentially in the thirteen years since it was published. The field is ready for another contribution from him.

David Diamond’s *Theatre For Living: The Art and Science of Community-Based Dialogue* (Trafford, 2006) provides an excellent overview of his utilization of a wide range of Boal techniques through his work with the Headlines Theatre in Vancouver, Canada. It explains both his methods as well as case studies of their applications in local communities. It is a valuable resource for the TO practitioner.

Wirth’s book, while it applies to all forms of Interactive Theatre, does provide some frameworks and techniques for creating and negotiating this spontaneous and unpredictable type of theatre; and most can be applied to this specific type as well. Finally Mario Cossa’s *Acting Out: The Workbook: A Guide to the Development and Presentation of Issue-Oriented, Audience-Interactive, Improvisational Theatre* (Taylor and Francis, 1996) is helpful, but less sophisticated and thought-provoking that Rohd’s book.
In the third category, which explores the role of the facilitator, Paul Dwyer has written an article which asks questions as to the optimal roles for the Joker/facilitator during Forum Theatre performances (Dwyer 199-210). This article will be reviewed in chapter four on facilitation. In addition, Charles D. Banaszewski, in his 2006 dissertation at Arizona State, gathers the perspectives of six practicing TO Jokers, to draw conclusions as to the proper conduct of adult facilitators, given the specific dynamics when using TO with adolescent participants. Leslie Obermire Bently also interviewed six Theatre of the Oppressed practitioners in her 2001 Dissertation from Bowling Green State University, and she juxtaposes their responses against critical pedagogy theory to inform the work of the TO facilitator.

I will hold off on a discussion of the scholarship focusing on the evaluation of Interactive Theatre and Forum Theatre projects due to the fact that there are so few sources and I discuss them in chapter five.

This research is invaluable as it digests the theory of Interactive and Forum Theatre, documents numerous applications, and outlines several methods for creating and evaluating it. That being said, no one has stepped forward to research and analyze the ways one might go about creating an Interactive Theatre program on a university campus or how one might seek to sustain or improve an existing university program. How should one go about establishing and/or sustaining a viable ensemble that can provide quality Interactive Theatre programming to communities on university campuses? As more and more people in higher education recognize the value of this type of pedagogy, there is more and more demand to learn how to create a structure on campus to do this type of work.

In sum, this dissertation, like applied theatre, has a concrete practical goal: to provide the theatre community, university communities, and other communities, with information, ideas,
techniques, and tools that have led to the growth and success of Interactive Theatre programs on American university campuses. My hope is to encourage and motivate practitioners who are new to the work to establish new programs and to help current practitioners of Interactive Theatre to discover ways to improve their work. Finally, despite the dissertation’s narrow focus, I believe that my conclusions can easily apply to other settings, including high schools and community non-profit organizations.

**Methodology**

The methodology for this dissertation will be a form of qualitative research called “Case Study.” A definition of terms is merited. In his *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Traditions*, John W. Creswell defines Qualitative Research in the social sciences as “an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem” (Creswell 15). He points out many reasons for conducting qualitative research, but the ones that apply best to this study include:

- A particular topic, in this study Interactive Theatre, needs to be explored due to the fact that variables cannot be easily identified and theories are not readily available to explain the actions/choices of the population of study.
- There is need to present a detailed view of the topic; a bird’s eye view will not help the researcher draw conclusions.
- The research questions often starts with a how or a what; in this study the questions is “What are the effective practices?” or “How should one go about practicing Interactive Theatre?”
- The researcher at times has to write in a literary style, sometimes using the personal pronoun “I.”
• There is sufficient time and resources to spend on extensive data collection in the field and detailed data analysis of the information gathered. (Creswell 16-17)

Creswell explains that with strong qualitative research, the researcher starts with a single idea or problem that s/he seeks to understand. The researcher proceeds to engage in rigorous data collection, using multiple forms of data, thorough analysis, and superior summary. Specifically, data is analyzed using multiple levels of abstraction. The researcher starts with particulars and moves to a more general level of abstraction. In the end, the findings are supported, believable, and realistic, as well as accurately representative of the complexities that exist (Creswell 20-21).

Of the five major traditions in qualitative social science research, I will be conducting a combination of two types of case study, an “Instrumental Study” and a “Collective Case Study.”

Creswell defines a case study as an exploration of a “bounded system” (a case or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context. The system is bound by time and place, and the case being studied is often a program, an event, an activity, or individuals (Creswell 61-62). The following table illustrates the procedure of a Case Study and how it is implemented in this study.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study Procedural Step</th>
<th>How Task is Fulfilled in this Study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The researcher situates the case(s) in a context or setting.</td>
<td>Interactive Theatre Programs on university campuses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The researcher identifies the type(s) of case study</td>
<td>• Set of Issues: Effective practices for establishing and sustaining an</td>
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| Instrumental study – Focusing on a set of issues with the case(s) used to illustrate the issues | Interactive Theatre program
- Multiple cases: Five representative Interactive Theatre programs based on a set of criteria (see below) |
| Collective case study – involving more than one case |

| The researcher conducts extensive data collection, drawing on multiple sources | • 14 phone interviews with Interactive Theatre stakeholders (defined below) from 5 programs
• Results of evaluation data and additional documents from 5 programs
• Academic Scholarship |

| Themes or issues are formulated and then the researcher makes interpretations and/or assertions about the cases | Body of Study is divided up into 4 chapters, including Program Foundations, Structure/Methods, Facilitation, and Evaluation, each of which is broken down into sub-issues. |

| When multiple cases are chosen: |
| • A format is chosen to provide a detailed description of each case and the themes within the case |
| • And then a thematic analysis is conducted across all the cases | • Body of Study is divided up into 4 chapters, including Program Foundations, Structure/Methods, Facilitation, and Evaluation, each of which is broken down into sub-issues. |
Finally the researcher reports what they have learned from the cases

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<table>
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<tr>
<td>For each sub-issue I conduct a thematic analysis in search of</td>
<td>Effective Practices are deduced from the data issue by issue and</td>
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<tr>
<td>ideas/themes/practices that emerge across the 5 programs and the</td>
<td>chapter by chapter</td>
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<td>scholarship</td>
<td>Broader conclusions are listed in chapter six: Ethical, Theoretical,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>and Practical Implications and Next Steps</td>
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When choosing the specific cases for this study, in order to ensure an optimal data set, I chose to interview the stakeholders (defined below) and to collect evaluation data and additional documents from five established, successful Interactive Theatre Programs nationwide (fewer than 30 exist), My criteria for established, successful programs follow, and the programs I picked have at least three out of four of them, if not all. Programs:

- Have existed for at least 2+ years
- Generate an annual output of 15+ performances and/or 750+ audience members
- Actively evaluate their own work
- Enjoy a strong national reputation (Their ensemble/leaders have performed/presented at major conferences. Their ensembles/leaders have traveled to and performed/presented at
other universities/venues. Their leaders have facilitated/consulted with programs other than their own. Their leaders hold leadership positions with national organizations around Interactive Theatre.)

Finally, when choosing the five programs, I wanted to ensure that the data set included:

• A variety of Interactive Theatre methods and techniques (scripted work, improvisation, question and answer, Forum Theatre, image theatre, techniques for facilitating dialogue, etc.)

• A wide variety of issues (social justice, health, faculty development, etc.)

• A variety of higher-education settings (public and private universities), and programs based in a variety of campus agencies (Student Affairs, Counseling Center, Theatre Department)

The programs that best met these criteria were:

• Theatre for Dialogue, University of Texas at Austin (UT-TFD)

• The Interactive Theatre Project, University of Colorado at Boulder (CU-ITP)

• Cornell Interactive Theatre Ensemble, Cornell University (CITE)

• InterACT, The Ohio State University (OSU-I)

• Interactive Theatre Carolina, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-ITC)

By “stakeholders,” I mean the ensemble leaders (program directors/coordinators), representatives or supervisors from funding departments/agencies (those who provide the financial support for the program), and actors (student or otherwise) in each program. I conducted phone interviews with one leader, one funder, and one actor from each program for a total of 14 phone interviews (The funder/supervisor was not available at Cornell and the program in Colorado has two Co-Directors). I started by interviewing the leaders, and then asked each one
to refer me to the person who is responsible for program’s funding and to one actor in their
ensemble who could best reflect on the work with a critical eye. Phone interviews with leaders
lasted approximately two hours over one or more calls. Phone interviews with funders and actors
lasted about a half hour each.

I used a different list of questions for the interviews with leaders, funders, and actors.
(figures 3, 4, and 5). To generate them, I made an exhaustive list of all apparent aspects of
Interactive Theatre. This list was based not only on my six years experience in the field, but also
on my experience serving as co-chair of the Interactive Theatre Subcommittee for ATHE, the
only national group explicitly devoted to this new and burgeoning field. As a result of our
initiatives to promote the work nationally over the last two years, there is broad agreement about
the various areas of Interactive Theatre that require attention, knowledge, and skills. In order to
frame the interview discussion, I organized this laundry list into four categories: Program
Foundations, Structure/Methods, Facilitation/Ethics, and Evaluation. I also added a preliminary
section to gather demographics. Finally, I formulated open questions which allowed the
interviewees to share their particular idea, method, or point of view on each of the topics and
subtopics. In cases of multiple questions, I usually led with the first question or two and then
followed up with the others as needed.

I. Questionnaire for Interactive Theatre Leaders

Demographics

1) How many years has your ensemble been in existence?

2) Where are you located in your college/university? To whom do you report?

3) How many performances do you do a year? For how many audience members?
4) How many members are there in your ensemble or working group? What is their status? (undergraduate, graduate student, professional, etc.)

Foundation/Program Basics

1) Genesis Stories: How was your program created?

2) Theory: Does your work have (a) theoretical foundation(s)? If so, what are they? If not, what do you consider to be the influences that shape your ensemble’s Interactive Theatre Practice?

3) Goals: Does your ensemble have a mission statement? If so, what is it? What are you goals for doing this work?

4) Issues: What issues do your Interactive Theatre pieces address? Do you have a repertoire and/or a list of that repertoire? Do you have active and dormant scripts? Who decides on which issues to address?

5) Audiences: Who are the target audiences for your ensemble? Whom do you hope to serve? Do you charge for your services? Under what circumstances? If so, how much?

6) Space: Where do you find space to rehearse? Where do you find space to perform?

7) Marketing: How do you market your services? How do you market individual events?

8) Funding/Sustainability/Growth: How is your ensemble funded? In which university department is your program located? How do you sustain yourselves over time? Do you search for and gain additional funding for continued development and growth?

9) Collaborators/Allies/Advocates: With whom do you collaborate on projects? And, who are your allies and advocates for your ensemble on campus?

Structure and Methods

1) Services: What services do you offer?
2) Format and Techniques: What is the format of your services? What do they look like in practice? What theatre and Interactive Theatre techniques do you use?

3) Ensemble Structure: What is the structure of your ensembles? How many members do you have? How many leaders do you have? How many actors do you have? Who are your actors? Do you have staff? If so, how much and what are their job descriptions?

4) Recruitment/Auditions: How do you recruit actors? How do you audition actors?

5) Commitment: What time commitment do you require of your members? How do you encourage the commitment of your members? Do you provide any type of rewards?

6) Academic Courses: Do you have a college course affiliated with the work of your ensemble? If so, how is this course created? Would you be willing to share a syllabus?

7) Scene Creation/Creative Process: What is your process for creating scenes?

8) Training/Rehearsal: What is your training/rehearsal process?

Facilitation/Ethics

1) Who facilitates your Interactive Theatre performances and the conversations that are generated as part of the performances? Do you have one or several facilitators? Do you ever co-facilitate?

2) What are the different roles/core tasks of the facilitator in Interactive Theatre? What techniques do they use? Do they follow a formal guide of any sort?

3) What makes effective Interactive Theatre Facilitation? What should it look/sound like?

4) How are your facilitators trained?

5) To what extent should facilitator be – or purport to be – neutral? How do you reconcile that with the goals of your ensemble?
6) What role do the identities of the facilitator or facilitators, personal and perceived, play in the facilitation? Does it have impact? What is the nature of this impact?

7) Ethics/Responsibility: Do you think about the ethics of Interactive Theatre practice on your campus? What do you consider your responsibility in the process? Are you concerned about your performances having a negative impact on certain audience members? If so, why? And if so, how do you minimize that negative impact?

8) Do you all have an ethics statement of any sort?

Evaluation

1) Evaluation: How do you evaluate the efficacy of your Interactive Theatre performances? How do you gauge impact on audience members? Do you have a questionnaire? What does it ask? How do you document and analyze your data?

2) Data: What does the data reveal about the efficacy/impact of your program?

3) Would you be willing to share summaries or reports of this data?

Figure 3. Questionnaire used during phone interviews with Interactive Theatre Leaders

II. Questionnaire for Interactive Theatre Funders

1) Did you create this program? If so, why and how? If you did not create it, how did it come about that you fund it? Why do you fund and support this program?

2) What are the strengths of your program? What do you feel the ensemble does particularly well? Which of the practices, in particular, are most effective?

3) What areas of your program would you like to see improved? How does your ensemble seem to be going about it?

Figure 4. Questionnaire used during phone interviews with Interactive Theatre funders
III. Questionnaire for Interactive Theatre Actors

1) What are the strengths of your Interactive Theatre program? What do you feel you do particularly well? Which of your practices are most effective?

2) What areas of your program would you like to see improved? How does your ensemble seem to be going about it?

3) How has being a member of this Interactive Theatre ensemble impacted you?

Figure 5. Questionnaire used during phone interviews with Interactive Theatre actors

In addition to conducting phone interviews with the stakeholders of the programs, I also sought to access the perspective of each program’s audience base by requesting the results of their evaluation data and/or annual reports. Three out of five programs provided this data. While OSU-I and CITE actively evaluate their work, at the time of publication, they had accumulated data that had not been analyzed and therefore had nothing ready to submit. In addition to evaluation data, two programs, CU-ITP and UNC-ITC, had commissioned studies to measure the impact of the Interactive Theatre ensemble experience on their actors and I have included an analysis of this evaluation data in chapter five. Finally, I analyze syllabi from academic courses associated with the Interactive Theatre Programs at UT-TFD, OSU-I, and UNC-ITC. These are examined in chapter three.

I approach each of the four categories according to the steps dictated by the Case Study qualitative research method. For each area, I present the data from all the programs and add the applicable data from the literature. I then conduct a thematic analysis of ideas, themes, or practices that have emerged. Finally, for each section and/or chapter, I infer effective practices
based on the analysis. For categories such as Issues, Audiences, and Allies, I provide a comprehensive list of all of the options/practices, as this gives the reader a sense of the breadth of and possibilities for the work. But for categories such as roles/techniques in Facilitation and current practices for Evaluation, I synthesize the data for the reader to determine which practices were repeated with success. In all cases, I quote extensively from the interviews with the stakeholders, and introduce relevant scholarship. Most of the research that I found focuses on facilitation and evaluation. In the final chapter, I draw broader conclusions based on the ethical, theoretical, and practical implications of the study, and outline the next steps for future and current practitioners.

**Full Disclosure**

I want to acknowledge that my former program, Interactive Theatre Carolina (UNC-ITC), is included as the fifth program in the data set. I established and sustained Interactive Theatre Carolina at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from its inception in July of 2007 until I left in May of 2010.¹ I also acknowledge that I worked part time as a Graduate Student Assistant Director for the Interactive Theatre Project (CU-ITP), another program in my data set, from September 2005 until June 2007. I do not think the inclusion of these two programs compromises the validity of this exercise; rather I believe it enhances it.

CU-ITP is one of the oldest and most established Interactive Theatre programs in the nation. Founded in 1999, its output in terms of number of annual performances and number of scripts/issues is among the largest in the nation. The program was well established when I joined it in 2005, and, while I feel I worked hard and added value to the program, I did not have a

¹ In May of 2010, I moved on from UNC to focus on Theater Delta, my own Interactive Theatre company in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, which serves clients regionally, nationally and internationally. I also accepted a one year Visiting Professor position at Loyola University, where I am helping them establish the Loyola Interactive Theatre Ensemble (L.I.T.E) in their Theatre Department.
significant impact on its daily practices in any of the four categories. I was too busy learning the trade, fulfilling my doctoral course requirements, and studying for my comprehensive exams.

As for UNC-ITC, it meets the established criteria for inclusion in this study more so than the vast majority of the programs in the United States. In its first three years, with the support of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the invaluable contributions of my student actors, ITC held over 100 performances and workshops for over 10,000 audience members. In addition, data from systematic evaluation supports the claim that ITC provided quality programming. Moreover, for the last three years, I have in essence been experiencing the exact exercise of this dissertation. Charged with building an Interactive Theatre program from the ground up, I reached out to anyone and everyone I could in this new and emerging field, asking them to explain what was successful and how they did it. On the basis of this information, I determined what would work best for my program on the UNC campus, added my own ideas and intuition, and moved forward. I gained a great deal of knowledge and many skills. To exclude my experiences and the data from UNC-ITC would significantly diminish the quality of the results. Furthermore, as a successful practitioner, I am able to bring a depth of perspective to the data and analysis that I would have been unable to glean as an outsider.

That being said, this dissertation is not simply a recap of what I learned at CU and later implemented at UNC. Rather it is truly, as stated, a comparative analysis of Interactive Theatre programs in universities across the country” designed to “infer effective practices.” I did not favor any one program over another.

Finally, I feel particularly well situated to research and write on this topic. In addition to my experiences with UNC-ITC and CU-ITP, I was one of the original members appointed to ATHE’s Interactive Theatre Task Force in 2007, and I was appointed co-chair in 2008. Under
my leadership, the task force became a permanent standing subcommittee under ATHE’s Advocacy division. My experience as a scholar, practitioner, and emerging leader in the field make me well suited for the task at hand, and I am honored to have the opportunity to contribute to the field in this way.
Chapter II: Foundations

How does one go about establishing the infrastructure of a sustainable Interactive Theatre program? What are the essential components of a program, and how have successful practitioners developed them? This chapter on foundations will review and analyze the five case study programs with regard to the following aspects: genesis stories, funding/sustainability/growth, goals, theory/influences, issues, audiences, marketing, space, and allies/advocates. My data for this chapter relies heavily on interviews with leaders and funders of the five programs. In addition, when appropriate, I introduce scholarship from both inside and outside the field of Interactive Theatre.

**Genesis Stories**

As the goal of this study is to determine effective practices for establishing an Interactive Theatre program on a university campus, a brief overview of each program’s genesis and original funding source is in order.

University of Texas at Austin. In 2000, Dr. Jane Bost, Associate Director of the Counseling and Mental Health Center at the university, along with other campus groups, received a Department of Justice grant to reduce violence against women. She hired a Program Coordinator to administer the grant, a counseling specialist who saw clients, and an Education Director, Geeta Cowlagi, charged with searching for the best methods to engage the campus in dialogue around issues of Interpersonal Violence. Cowlagi attended a conference in the Midwest and witnessed a performance by SAVE (Students Against a Violent Environment) Forum Actors from Northern Iowa University. Bost, herself, had seen the SCREAM (Students Challenging Reality and Educating Against Myths) Theatre from Rutgers University. Impressed with this
form of communication, they decided to pursue the model, which they initially called the Voices Against Violence Peer Theatre Program. To start, they secured the sponsorship of the Psychology Department (Educational Psychology) and offered a course for college credit called “Theatre for Social Change” to teach the student peer educators about the issues. Although one of the psychology professors served as Instructor of Record, the course was taught primarily by Cowlagi and Dr. Joni Jones (who also uses the name Omi Osun Olomo), who was versed in Theatre of the Oppressed techniques. Cowlagi and Jones taught the course for two years, 2002-2004. At that point, Cowlagi recommended Lynn Hoare as her replacement. Hoare worked on a contract basis for two years and then, in 2006, became full time. In 2008, Hoare changed the name of the program and course to Theatre for Dialogue (UT-TFD). Hoare’s title is “Theatre for Dialogue Specialist.”

The Interactive Theatre Project (CU-ITP) at the University of Colorado at Boulder started in the spring of 1999 under the aegis of the Wardenberg Health Center. It was the brainchild of Rebecca Brown Adelman who, at the time, was working there in sexual assault and gender education and victim assistance. Motivated by her background in Drama Therapy and influenced by the work of Augusto Boal, she wanted to incorporate some of those techniques to enhance the Health Center’s campus outreach. Brown Adelman submitted a proposal to the university to establish an Interactive Theatre program. The proposal defined the mission and goals of the program, issues to be addressed, audiences to be served, format of performances, organization overview, funding, potential benefits, and synopses of three scenes on race, sexual assault, and homophobia. In terms of funding, Brown Adelman requested that her current position as Professional Coordinator of the CU Rape and Gender Education program be increased from a 65% position to a 100% position. She also asked for $1000 for training
materials, advertising, and food for rehearsals and performances. The proposal was accepted. Soon thereafter, she met Trent Norman of Housing and Dining Services, who displayed equal passion for the work, and the two brainstormed a strategy for using Interactive Theatre in New Student Orientation. Ultimately Housing and Dining Services agreed to supplement funding and Trent and Rebecca became co-directors. Their formal collaboration started soon after with Wardenberg Health Center and Housing and Dining Services each supplying half the funding. Two years later, their colleagues in the Office of Victim’s Assistance applied for and received a Department of Justice grant to reduce violence against women on campus, and a portion of those funds helped support the theatre program. In the last few years, for reasons of stability and visibility, they sought to merge program funding under a single organization, a goal that was achieved in 2009, under CU’s Student Government. The program is now located in Student Affairs and reports to the Assistant Dean of Students. Rebecca and Trent both have the title “Student Affairs Director.” In 2003, CU-ITP received the Chancellor’s Committee on Minority Affairs Diversity Award; and in 2008, CU-ITP received The Colorado Creed Award for Inclusion.

The Cornell Interactive Theatre Ensemble (CITE) started informally in late 1980’s in the Theatre Department when a Human Resources staff member approached the department about developing scripts for Interactive Theatre diversity training. It became a formal entity in 1992 under the direction of the late Martha Dewey, who later became Artistic Director and program visionary until her death in 2009. The program remained part of the Theatre department until 2000, when it faced a strong risk of getting cut. The program then had a brief residency in Continuing Education and again faced extinction, until the Vice President of Human Resources, Mary Opperman, recognized the value of the organization, helped save it, and established a
permanent home for it in HR. While CITE works with many departments on campus, it also does considerable work for corporations and other academic institutions to sustain itself financially. The program is located in the Office of Organizational Development for Faculty and Staff. The head of the program is Dane Cruz who carries the title Administrative/Artistic Director. In April 2001, CITE received Cornell University’s James A. Perkins Prize for Interracial Understanding and Harmony.

The Ohio State University’s InterACT program (OSU-I) started in the fall of 2006 in the Theatre Department. At the time, the department Chair Mark Shanda arranged a meeting with a few Vice Provosts to communicate his vision for the creation of an Interactive Theatre ensemble of undergraduate students who could serve the campus community by addressing issues of social change. As a result of the meeting, he garnered financial support from the Office of Academic Affairs, the Graduate School, and the Dean of Undergraduate Education to match support from the College of the Arts and the Department of Theatre. The combined support funds a fulltime lecturer, whose job is to work with an ensemble that creates scripts that deal with the issues relevant to those departments. Robin Post, who had just graduated from Ohio State with an MFA in Acting, and was passionate about using theatre for social change, was offered the one-year position. The position has remained a one-year position but has been renewed every year since 2007. Her title is Lecturer in the Theatre Department. In its first two years of existence, OSU-I received a Multicultural Center Diversity Award and an award from Ohio State's Office of University Outreach & Engagement.

In 2006, two agencies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Counseling and Psychological Services and Center for Health Student Behaviors, merged to form Counseling and Wellness Services (CWS) a division of Campus Health Services, which is, in turn, part of
Student Affairs. CWS hired a new director with many new ideas, one of which was to create an Interactive Theatre Program that could promote student health in a new and engaging way. She had been exposed to the work attending conferences. This director did not remain at UNC, but her innovative idea did, and CWS proceeded with a national search to find a Program Coordinator for this new entity. I was hired in July of 2007, titled the program Interactive Theatre Carolina (UNC-ITC), and my students and I built and sustained the program from July 2007 – May 2010. At that point, I moved on to establish my own Interactive Theatre company in Chapel Hill, called Theater Delta, and accepted a one year Visiting Professor position at Loyola University New Orleans. I helped CWS through the transition period, further training my Graduate Student Assistant and helping them with the search for my successor. Amy Burtaine, a close colleague, is the new Program Coordinator.

Two of the four original funders/supervisors still work with their respective programs, Dr. Jane Bost, of UT Austin, wrote the first Department of Justice grant and included in it a peer education program. She commented:

We were really taken with seeing Interactive Theatre approaches. We loved the interactivity of it. It was not just seeing theatre, but the hot seat techniques as well, where the audience got to ask the characters questions. And the programs reported that they had had success on their campuses, so we began to pursue it with intentionality.

Mark Shanda, now Interim Dean of Arts and Humanities at OSU, was the chair of the Theatre Department when InterAct was formed. He explains:

I have long believed in the power of live theatre – people coming to sit in a dark space and have something presented them as they sit passively. But I am also
extremely drawn to the idea that Theatre can pose ideas and push people to explore new territory. I had been intrigued for several years with the CITE program at Cornell, using Interactive Theatre to work with academic departments and corporations on a contract basis around discrimination and other issues. Some of the real strengths are the Q & A while the actors stay in character, and the “do overs,” replacing of characters on stage. Plus the challenge for the student actors to have to do research to really know their characters and the issues. All of these provide strong teachable moments. Meanwhile, an upper level administrator had just returned from Michigan, having witnessed the CRLT Players, and asked me “Why are we not doing something like this at OSU?” So I was able to wrestle out of that administration half the funding for staff position, and the other half came from the department, and we hired Robin.

We formed Interact for three reasons. One, we were moving in a new direction without MFA Acting program – toward an emphasis on the devising/generation of new works and community outreach and engagement. So it was natural to include InterAct in that vision. Then when I took over as Chair of the Theatre Department, I concluded that having students participate in the Interactive Theatre ensemble would be one of the most valuable training pieces for them. Students would have to engage collaboratively with each other -- and with an issue, they would learn to improvise and to think quickly on their feet, and finally they would have an opportunity to self-reflect where they stand on certain social issues. Finally, I recognize the power of this type of theatre to expose individuals to
issues, ideas, and information in an essentially risk free but emotionally connected environment. It is a true linkage between process and product.

A thematic analysis of these genesis stories and funders’ comments reveal some important patterns. First and foremost, all programs were driven to inception by a motivated individual who believed not only in the goals of their program, but also by the idea of using Interactive Theatre to address those goals. Most could be considered funders, including Dr. Jane Bost of UT Austin’s Counseling and Mental Health Center, Mark Shanda of OSU’s Theatre Department, the former Director of UNC-Chapel Hill’s Counseling and Wellness Services, and the person in Human Resources at Cornell. At CU Boulder, it was the practitioner Rebecca Brown Adelman of Health Services, who drove the creation of the program.

Next, all programs required an initial source of support to fund the leader of the program. At UT Austin that came, in part, in the form of a grant to reduce gender violence on campus; this same grant helped CU Boulder some as well. In three other cases, a single department or agency took on the financial responsibility for the position. At Cornell it was Human Resources, at CU Boulder it was Wardenberg Health Services, and at UNC-Chapel Hill it was Counseling and Wellness Services. Last, at OSU, the financial burden was initially shared between upper administration and the Theatre Department, but now draws from several departments and agencies on campus.

Finally, in most cases, one other factor contributed to the creation of the program and that is people who had experienced the work itself. It appears that bearing witness to the alternative pedagogy of Interactive Theatre has an impact. The opportunity to interact with the characters – to question them and/or to replace them and try out different solutions – is a powerful hook. The
obvious conclusion for those who want to build program is to find a way for funders to experience an Interactive Theatre performance.

**Funding/Sustainability/Growth**

While facilitation of the performances is the biggest intellectual and ethical challenge faced by leaders of in Interactive Theatre programs, securing and maintaining funding is the challenge with the highest stakes. Without funding, the work could not happen. The ensembles are funded by the organizations that house them unless otherwise noted. Below is a table summarizing the funding structures, current staff and operating budget, and output.

Table 2

Funding Structures for Interactive Theatre Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Location/Funding Source</th>
<th>Staff/Operating Budget</th>
<th>Output</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UT-TFD</td>
<td>Counseling and Mental Health Center (student fee funded)</td>
<td>Salary of 1 full time Theatre for Dialogue Specialist, 1 Graduate Teaching Assistant, and a small operating budget</td>
<td>Approx. 30 performances per year for 1500 audience members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU-ITP</td>
<td>Originally, Wardenburg Health Services, then 50% Wardenberg and 50% Housing and Dining Services, now 50% Student Government and 50%</td>
<td>Salary of 2 full-time Program Directors, 2 Graduate Student Assistants, and 14 Undergraduate Student Actors, and a small operating budget</td>
<td>Approx. 85 performances for 8,000 audience members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing (student fee funded)</td>
<td>operating budget</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITE</td>
<td>Core team of 2 members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location: Human Resources: Office of Organizational Development for Faculty and Staff.</td>
<td>(Was 3 members until June 2010 when one of their members tragically passed away. This position was not immediately replaced. Through the shifting of duties and work with adjunct actors, the program’s needs were fulfilled. Also works with adjunct actors (pool of 4-5).</td>
<td>Approx 45-60 performances per year to 1500-4000 audience members. Output and project development has been sustained</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSU-I Theatre Department</td>
<td>Salary of 1 full-time Lecturer/Program Head</td>
<td>Approx 10 performances per year for 700 audience members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNC-ITC Counseling and Wellness Services, part of Campus Health Services (student fee funded)</td>
<td>Salary of 1 full time Program Coordinator, 1 part-time Graduate Student Assistant, and 10-15 student actors, and a small operating budget</td>
<td>Approx. 40 performances and 10 workshops for 5,000 audience members</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Two of the funder/supervisors explained their reasons for starting their programs in the previous section on genesis stories. Here, we shall explore the reasons that the other two funders/supervisors continue to support their programs (Note: There was no available/applicable funder/supervisor at Cornell. CITE self-generates most of its income and is largely autonomous.)

Gardiner Tucker, Dean of Students at CU Boulder, and supervisor of Rebecca Brown Adelman and Trent Norman, explains:

> The reason we continue to support ITP is because of the extensive positive effect it has had on student development and campus climate. The purpose of student affairs to is to create conditions to accelerate student development on campus so that students can succeed academically and personally. ITP plays an important role in this development, as its pedagogy is able to get past the defenses of the minds of student audience members so they are able to learn at a deeper level. It presents threatening issues in a way that is not threatening. Both anecdotal and a more systemic evaluation of program is showing significant impact. Students are learning about the issues, what is fair and what is not fair, and they are recognizing what to watch out for so they can take care of themselves and others.
Dr. Allen O’Barr, Director of Counseling and Wellness Services, who supervised me when I established UNC-ITC and now works with Amy Burtaine says:

Interactive Theatre Carolina is a highly effective way of engaging students around issues of health and social justice. Its moves students from a passive learning position to an experiential learning position. I am impressed with the way it places students in provocative situations and also provides the guidance for them to help find their way out. I still vividly remember the performance where people from the audience could get up, step into the bystander role, and try to intervene on behalf of the LGBTQ character. It was compelling – one of the most effective things I have ever seen. It taught us not just to be bystanders, but to actually intervene. Additionally, it has been the most effective tool we have had thus far to create interdepartmental bridges across different groups in the university. It has especially helped build bridges where none had existed before.

The comments of the funders also provide insight into the aspects of Interactive Theatre that are most important to them. This information is valuable, as it suggest what one might emphasize if pitching a new Interactive Theatre program to potential funders. The three benefits to stress would be: engaging programming which promotes thought-provoking conversations, student development at a sophisticated level, and collaboration between campus entities.

Despite the continued public support of the funder/supervisors, there is less certainty among the leaders as to the stability of their individual programs. Each campus and each program is impacted by a unique set of circumstances, which include budget cuts, varying impressions of how their program is valued on campus, and campus politics. Leaders, naturally, choose not to discuss these things for fear of rocking the boat. The overall sentiment among
practitioners is that they will continue to work to the best of their ability and they hope that their jobs and ensembles will remain intact.

To acquire more funding some of the programs make their services available for off campus groups and charge accordingly. As mentioned, CITE performs to predominantly corporate clients and academic department on other campuses and uses this income to sustain itself. CU-ITP, UNC-ITC, OSU-I, and UT-TFD perform on occasion for local non-profits and other academic institutions, and while the income helps a little, it does not provide a significant source of funding. These latter four programs charge from $150-$2000 depending on the client and the services.

Potential growth is another issue. All five programs explained that they were operating at capacity. Aside from increasing efficiency, then, the only way to grow a program is to add leaders or graduate students. Production values are low (minimal to no sets, lights, costumes, etc.) and overhead costs are small, so labor is the only major expense. To say that Interactive Theatre is labor intensive is an understatement. Labor is required to, among other things, research issues and write scripts, coordinate logistics of rehearsals and performances, direct and perform in scenes, facilitate the post performance discussion, and to enter, analyze, and publish data.

CU-ITP and UNC-ITC were explicit in their desire to pursue funding to grow their programs. CU-ITP has started to fundraise independently. When I began UNC-ITC, the only budget items were my salary and a nominal operating budget. I aggressively sought grant funding – from internal and external sources. Over three years, I was able to secure $56,000 in internal grant money for the program, the majority from an organization called the Parents
Council. The next step would have been external grants. My successor, Amy Burtaine, in her first year, is continuing to pursue internal grants but has yet to pursue outside funding.

OSU-I expressed a desire to expand into working with the local community. A few years down the road, they plan to apply for funding to pursue a theatre project with youth in the local Columbus area. UT-TFD would like to grow but lacks the time to devote to expanding.

Finally, CITE is in a period of transition. After losing long time Artistic Director, Martha Dewey to a tragic car accident, and having long time facilitator, Vivian Relta, take a position at another academic Institution, CITE is focused on how to continue to meet program goals and client needs, through the use of skilled adjuncts and creative collaborations both within Cornell and externally.

Since funding is a major issue, it is important to discuss potential sources of revenue. The list in table 3 has been generated from the four programs and my personal experience at UNC-ITC. It is also important to recognize that other campus entities could be potential funding sources. Identifying and developing these potential allies will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

Table 3
Additional Potential Sources of Funding

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<tr>
<th>Funding Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Arts grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Issue specific grants (see list of issues below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parent organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Alumni organizations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grants External

- Arts grants (National Endowment for the Arts, etc.)
- Issue specific grants (National Science Foundation, The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Department of Education, Public Health, local non-profit agencies, etc.)

Interactive Theatre services for hire (performances/workshops/script development)

- Corporate clients
- Other academic institutions
- Non-profit agencies, schools
- Others

Goals

In order to infer effective practices, it is critical to identify the goals of the work. The goals influence the choices that practitioners make in the various aspects of program development. This section will begin by highlighting each program’s mission statement and will conclude with a thematic analysis of these goals.

According to the CU-ITP website, since 1999, the Interactive Theatre Project:

has served CU-Boulder and the surrounding communities by providing professionally scripted/improvisational performances and facilitated discussions of social issues. These performances become a springboard for dialogue between the audience, characters, and facilitators. The conversation that evolves provides a unique opportunity for groups to explore complex issues while developing greater community strength, creativity and cultural competence … Immediately after the performance, the audience becomes part of the show by asking the characters
questions that lead to greater understanding and empathy … Forum Performances are designed to help individuals develop and strengthen ally skills. In these special events, audience members practice challenging and stopping acts of oppression in a safe and supportive environment (Interactive Theatre Project, “About”)

Voices Against Violence Theatre for Dialogue program, “uses trained Peer Theatre Educators to present realistic scenarios demonstrating situations of relationship violence, sexual violence and stalking … The goals of the program are to:

- Educate on issues of interpersonal violence
- Raise awareness
- Create dialogue
- Explore options, choices and consequences
- Examine different perspectives (Theatre for Dialogue, “VAV”)

At Cornell, the first part of CITE’s mission statement is in free verse:

To give voice and make visible,
through theatre and dialogue,
a variety of points of view within the human experience
in order to enable and facilitate a shift in culture
towards greater honesty, trust, respect, and human dignity (Cornell Interactive Theatre Ensemble, “Cornell”)

The website then elaborates:

CITE has a 19-year history of presenting programs to academic and corporate clients that showcase a contemporary dramatization of themes and relationships in
order to foster a dialogue from multiple points of view about some of the challenges of working and living together in a diverse world … Interactive theatre and facilitated dialogue from multiple points of view create a climate for participants that builds inclusion, fosters collaboration and gives participants knowledge and tools to take back to their own work environments (Cornell Interactive Theatre Ensemble, “Cornell”)

At Ohio State University,

InterACT produces workshops on a wide variety of topics and uses Interactive Theatre to engage participants in difficult discussions on diversity and inclusion … [InterAct seeks to] create and perform dramas that highlight hot–button social issues. Each student has enrolled in a service–learning theatre course, offered every quarter throughout Ohio State's academic year. The course is designed to hone students’ live performance skills including improvisation skills, introduce students to new work devising techniques and engage them in dialogue and analytical thinking specific to issues of social justice. (InterAct, “InterAct”)

Finally, at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill:

Interactive Theatre Carolina uses scripted and improvisational theatre to promote health, wellness, and social justice in the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill community. We believe that when audience members engage the characters and conflict on stage, they are more likely to explore and change their own attitudes and behaviors (Interactive Theatre Carolina, “Interactive”).

A thematic analysis reveals a lot of commonality between missions. All focus on using performance as a tool to promote dialogue around social issues. Most emphasize the realistic,
compelling nature of the scenarios that are designed to stimulate audience members to interact
with the characters in real time, which, in turn, fosters a dialogue around critical social issues in a
safe environment.

There are many larger goals of this interplay of performance, interaction, and dialogue. These include collective goals such as educating and raising awareness of complex issues, greater empathy for fellow human beings and their multiple perspectives, and changing attitudes and behavior, as well as transformative individual goals such as exploring choices and consequences and changing attitudes and behaviors.

Finally there are broad societal goals which include cultural competence, collaboration, and the promotion of an inclusive climate. One primary way to achieve these goals is to develop and strengthen the skills of being an ally in order to stop acts of oppression. An ally is someone who intervenes on behalf of marginalized groups when they are targeted. Finally, all point to the improvement of their community as their focus.

Theory/Influences

Ensemble leaders refer to a range of influences as they describe the theoretical foundation of their practice. The three major categories were theatrical influences, educational influences, and the influences of the organization which houses them.

Table 4 below lists all the theatrical influences and the number of mentions by the six leaders polled, including two from CU-ITP and myself from UNC-ITC.

Table 4
Theatrical Influences of Interactive Theatre Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theatrical Influences</th>
<th>Mentions out of 6 Ensemble Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Invariably, the first name that came up was Augusto Boal and his Theatre of the Oppressed (TO), specifically, the Forum Theatre technique he developed in Brazil in the last three decades of the 20th century. I will give only a brief overview of Boal since so many have done so before me.

Boal was heavily influenced by two people. First, he shared Berthold Brecht’s desire to use theatre as a tool to promote critical thought on the part of audience members that would lead to social change (Brecht). And second, he agreed with fellow countryman Paulo Freire’s revolutionary educational theories in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire). Freire advocated for a new education model that would empower oppressed people to develop knowledge and skills to overcome their conditions (Freire).

Boal disliked the traditional theatre’s one-way communication from stage to audience, because it silenced and oppressed the people in the audience. He wanted to break down the separation between stage and audience and alter the model from a one way monologue to a two-way dialogue. Boal’s goal was to transform the passive spectator into a “spect-actor” (“Theatre”
The spec-actor can either go up on stage and interact with the drama on stage, witness a fellow community member do so, or actively imagine himself/herself doing so, and, in turn, begin to acquire the skills, experience, and courage to take action in his or her own life and community:

“Spectator is a bad word! The spectator is less than a man and it is necessary to humanize him, to restore to him his capacity of action in all its fullness. He too must be a subject [a protagonist] … All these experiments of a people's theatre have the same objective – the liberation of the spectator … the spectator no longer delegates power to the characters [on stage] either to think or to act in his place. The spectator frees himself; he thinks and acts for himself! Theatre is action! Perhaps the theatre is not revolutionary in itself; but have no doubts, it is a rehearsal of revolution” (Boal, “Theatre” 122).

While Theatre of the Oppressed is Boal’s theoretical book, his Games for Actors and Non-Actors provides the how-to for practitioners, specifically the sections of the “Arsenal of the Theatre of the Oppressed” (“Games” 48). In the traditional TO technique called Forum Theatre, actors create and present short scenes that depict problems in a community. After watching the scene once, a facilitator called the “Joker” leads an audience discussion. The audience members then have the opportunity to watch the scene again, but this time the Joker instructs them to call “Stop” when they want to see something change on stage. They can replace an actor and/or try out other solutions to the problem. These on-stage interventions lead to more dialogue between audience, actors, and the Joker (Boal, “Games” 241-244).

Most facilitators interviewed also point to Michael Rohd as a significant influence and utilize tools and techniques from his book Theatre for Community Conflict and Dialogue: The
Hope is Vital Training Manual. Rohd serves as Artistic Director of the Sojourn Theatre in Portland, Oregon, is a member of the theatre faculty at Northwestern University, and has conducted numerous theatre-based workshops nationally and internationally. In the introduction to his book, Rohd outlines its purpose and credits his own influences:

The purpose of this book is to give educators, community workers, artists, and youths, and others interested in community dialogue and problem solving a clear look at the process and specifics involved in Hope is Vital Interactive Theatre techniques. The activities come from a variety of sources: some from the arsenal of Theatre of the Oppressed, some from Living Stage, some from Viola Spolin, some from other curricula, and some are original.” (Rohd i)

The Sojourn Theatre focuses on devising new performance pieces that foster community engagement and dialogue (Sojourn Theatre) but are not interactive in the same way as Hope is Vital. Five out of the six practitioners had both read Rohd’s book and studied with him in a workshop setting, and so utilized many of his techniques and exercises. Evidence of his influence is discussed further in the chapters on structures and methods and facilitation.

Some ensemble leaders have also studied in a workshop setting with Marc Weinblatt of the Mandala Center for Change, which holds workshops and theatre performances “dedicated to community dialogue, social justice and societal transformation; they are also an “an international hub for the training and grassroots practice of Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed” (Mandala Center). As their website explains, the Mandala Center:

- Stimulates personal and societal transformation through experiential, kinesthetic (body-centered) education. People learn by doing.
• Encourages critical thinking through a popular education (student driven) approach and within an anti-oppression (systemic power) analysis.

• Facilitates honest, compassionate dialogue that allows for profound sharing and mutual learning.

• Empowers people to take action in their own lives as well as towards a more just and joyous world.

• Invites people towards a greater sense of consciousness and healing on both an individual and community level.

• Guides people through the process of finding and liberating their own inner wisdom.

• Addresses diverse and multi-cultural needs and approaches.

• Builds community by creating a safe container with a playful and celebratory atmosphere.

• Uses approaches which are gentle and supportive yet frequently fast and powerful (Mandala Center)

I can’t help but notice the similarities in Mandala’s goals and those of the five ensembles in this study. They all emphasize the ideas of personal and communal transformation, experiential learning, fostering critical thought, facilitated dialogue, and an appreciation of the need for diversity and multiculturalism.

Additionally, Viola Spolin was mentioned a few times. Spolin was a theatre educator who was best known for her use of improvisation and theatre games as a way to train actors and/or foster creativity in people. She developed a series of exercises that focused on individual and group creativity, using the idea of play to release the ability to express oneself. Her best
known book is *Improvisation for the Theatre*, which consists of over 200 games and exercises. Spolin writes that:

> Everyone can act. Everyone can improvise … Experiencing is penetration into the environment, total organic involvement with it … on all levels: intellectual, physical, and intuitive … The intuitive can only respond in immediacy – right now. It comes bearing gifts in the moment of spontaneity, the moment we are freed to relate and act, involving ourselves in the moving, changing world around us … Through Spontaneity we are reformed into ourselves.” (Spolin 3-4)

Spolin goes on to outline the “Seven Acts of Spontaneity,” which are: Games, Approval/Disapproval, Group Expression, Audience, Theatre Techniques, Carrying the Process into Daily Life, and Physicalization (4-17). Her techniques are invaluable in ensemble settings, as they promote not only performance skills of acting and improvisation, but also self-awareness and sensitivity, non-verbal communication, and interpersonal and group communication and collaboration.

Directors also mentioned the theatre and performance influences that they had been exposed to in their own development as practitioners. Rebecca Brown Adelman, Co-director of the CU-ITP, earned a Masters in Drama Therapy from New York University and is also an practitioner of Playback Theatre; both of these forms shape her practice.

Drama Therapy “is the intentional use of theatre techniques to facilitate personal growth and promote health, thus treating individuals with a range of mental health, cognitive and developmental disorders” (Welcome to Drama Therapy). And Playback Theatre is created through a unique collaboration between performers and audience:
[It] creates a ritual space where any story - however ordinary, extraordinary, hidden or difficult - might be told, and immediately made into theatre. And where each person's uniqueness is honoured and affirmed while at the same time building and strengthening our connections to each other as a community of people (About Playback Theatre).

Interactive Theatre has the potential to utilize the Playback techniques, which focus on hearing the story of another, embodying it for an audience and encouraging a creative exchange and dialogue between audience member and performer.

Lynn Hoare, Theatre for Dialogue Specialist for The University of Texas’s Voices Against Violence Program (UT-TFD), calls upon her experiences with Theatre-in-Education (TIE). She describes TIE as an adapted form of theatre which seeks to create intervention moments in the stage action for the audience, searching for a way to involve them in discussion throughout the event.

Robin Post, lecturer in Ohio State University’s Theatre Department and Director of InterACT (OSU-I), was also influenced by Sheila Kerrigan and her book The Performer’s Guide to the Collaborative Process. A performer, director and teacher, Kerrigan exposes student artist to the tools of drama and mime “to teach communication, creativity, conflict resolution and collaboration” (About Sheila). Her book leads readers through a process of generating and developing ideas for a piece while maximizing group dynamics and collaborative processes (The Peformer’s Guide).

As Interactive Theatre seeks to raise awareness among audience members, it is influenced by educational theories as well. All five programs pointed to the tenets of Social Justice education theory as the core of their practice. As this framework is so integral to the
work, most specifically to the facilitation of dialogue discussed in chapter four, an overview will prove helpful. Four of the five programs mentioned that they rely on the wealth of valuable theory, ideas, and information in the text *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice* edited by Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, as well as the companion text *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*. Bell writes,

> We believe that social justice education is both a process and a goal … [of] full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. We envision a society in which individuals are both self determining (able to develop their full capacities), and interdependent (capable of interacting democratically with others). Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others and the society as a whole (Bell 3).

This definition focuses on the goals of promoting equity and inclusion in society; equity calls for providing equal access to resources to all regardless of social identities, and inclusion insists that no one be excluded from day-to-day activities and interactions based on social identities.

Bell goes onto say that social justice education “needs” a Theory of Oppression because theory informs practice. Before elucidating the theory, she starts by outlining the specific practices educators should implement in classroom settings (Bell 4). To reiterate, these four practices are crucial to understanding the role of the facilitator during Interactive Theatre performances and workshops:
Think clearly about intentions and means in the classroom.

Make choices about what is done and how.

Question, challenge, and improve educational practice.

Stay conscious of their position as historical subjects, learning from the past as they try to influence the future in more innovative and effective ways. (Bell 4)

If one sets a goal to combat oppression by stopping oppressive acts, as our Interactive Theatre programs have done, then it is necessary to explore the theory and understand the many features of oppression. The authors define them as follows:

- **Pervasiveness:** discrimination, bias, prejudice, and bigotry are woven into the fabric of social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. It is institutional, systemic, personal, and social, and saturates most aspects of our society.

- **Restricting:** Oppression restricts self-development and self-determination. It impacts aspirations and the power to act to fulfill them.

- **Hierarchical:** Dominant or privileged groups benefit, often in unconscious ways, from the disempowerment of subordinated or targeted groups.

- **Complex, multiple, cross-cutting relationships:** As individuals possess multiple identities as part of both dominant and subordinate groups, they can be privileged in some ways and targets in others.

- **Internalized:** Oppression also resides in the human psyche. Oppressive beliefs are internalized by victims as well as the privileged.

- **“Isms”**: Shared and Distinctive Characteristics: It is important to identify both unique characteristics of each of the Isms (e.g. Racism, Ableism) and the patterns of
characteristics across the “Isms” and how they connect and mutually reinforce each other in an overarching system of oppression. (Bell 4-5)

From these characteristics, we observe that oppression is woven into the fabric of society and into an individual’s consciousness.

There are two primary roles in oppression -- targets and agents. Targets are members of social groups that are historically and systematically disenfranchised, exploited, and/or victimized in a variety of ways by institutions and society as a whole (e.g. women, people of Color, homosexuals). Agents are members of social groups that are dominant and possess unearned power, privilege, and access within institutions and society as a whole (e.g. White, male, heterosexual). Agents often are not conscious of possessing these powers, privilege, and access because society socializes them to think it is normal to have them.

Bell concludes that a historical and contextual process is necessary in order to “avoid the danger of reifying systems of oppression as static, or treating individuals as uni-dimensional and unchanging” (Bell 14). Systems of oppression are “tenacious,” and the solution is to be “dynamic and creative” to meet the challenges of combating them (Bell 14). In other words, specific oppressions develop in communities in direct relation to historical events and social context which have shaped the nature and impact of the oppression on members of its population. Thus, educators, such as Interactive Theatre practitioners, must have a command and understanding of the events and the environment which has shaped the unique oppressions in their respective communities. They also must be open-minded to think of a variety of ways to fight it.

While most ensemble leaders mention having participated in training that focuses on the development of multicultural competencies, the leaders from CU-ITP mentioned two in particular: The Social Justice Training Institute and The National Coalition Building Institute.
These are examples of organizations that provide training to allow people to increase their understanding of the dynamics of oppression, to explore their own intersecting identities in both dominant and subordinate groups, and to improve the ability to dialogue around these issues and foster change.

Not surprisingly, the final set of influences on each program involved the mission of the particular department or agency that houses it. The UT-TFD program operates within the larger Voices Against Violence initiative, which is housed in the University of Texas Counseling and Mental Health Center. This initiative seeks to reduce relationship violence, sexual assault, stalking, and related behaviors. CU-ITP lives within Students Affairs, and Co-director Trent Norman explains that some of their methods are influenced by student development theory. OSU-I is co-sponsored by the Commitment to Success Program, a collaboration between the University Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Ohio State's Office of Minority Affairs, and so it emphasizes culturally competent teaching. CITE is housed in Human Resources and is heavily influenced by the concepts of diversity and inclusion as it applies to corporate and academic work environments. UNC-ITC is a program of Counseling and Wellness Services which is part of Campus Health. In its effort to use theatre to promote “Health, Wellness, and Social Justice,” it relies upon evidenced-based health promotion practices (Interactive Theatre Carolina, “Interactive”).

**Issues**

Much like all of the arts, Interactive Theatre has the potential to address seemingly limitless issues in many different contexts. If a conflict occurs in real life, then Interactive Theatre can represent it on stage, and explore the circumstances, ideas, and actions that fuel them. It also can solicit interaction and potential solutions from audience members.
A comprehensive review of the subjects these programs are addressing reveals that Interactive Theatre programs are exploring myriad issues. I have tried to categorize them, but recognize that the categories are not mutually exclusive; they are often inextricably linked. For example eating disorders relate to issues of gender; and depression can relates to sexual orientation, and/or race. Many Interactive Theatre scenes, in fact, tackle several issues across several categories. The following (table 5) portrays both the scope of the work and the possibilities. This list includes all issues covered in performances by the five programs.

Table 5

Social Issues Addressed by the Five Interactive Theatre Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health/Wellness</th>
<th>Social Justice</th>
<th>Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault</td>
<td>Race/Racism</td>
<td>Teaching And Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol and Drug abuse (including marijuana, narcotics, and/or prescription drug abuse)</td>
<td>Class (socio-economic status)</td>
<td>management skills for Faculty, Graduate Student Instructors, and TAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Image/Eating Disorders</td>
<td>Gender/Sexism</td>
<td>Ethical behavior in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>Gender identity/Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress,</td>
<td>Expression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook/electronic communication</td>
<td>Intersex/Transsexual issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalking/Cyberstalking</td>
<td>Heterosexism/Homophobia</td>
<td>Academic Rights and Responsibilities –political and religious views in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal violence</td>
<td>Religious Diversity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Anti-Semitism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anti-Islamic Sentiment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Ability/Disability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University’s disability policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cognitive Ability/Disability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching And Classroom management skills for Faculty, Graduate Student Instructors, and TAs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In most cases, Interactive Theatre programs have developed in response to a specific need on campus. But this table can also easily serve as inspiration. A campus or Interactive Theatre leader can use this list to find something that strikes a chord in a particular campus. Also, it is important to note that this list does not specify the contexts or environments in which the issues are raised. For example, racism can occur in an undergraduate residence hall or by the water cooler in the office of a Fortune 500 company. And homophobia can rear its ugly head in the classroom or at an off-campus party. As will be explained in the section on script development in chapter three, one strength of Interactive Theatre is its ability to explore social issues in the specific situations where they arise.
Audiences

There are several aspects to be considered when analyzing the audience base for Interactive Theatre programs on college campuses: who is in the audience, whether or not it is a public performance or a private one for a certain group, the size of the audience, and whether or not they are attending voluntarily or are “captives,” meaning required to attend for a course or other reasons.

Once, when presenting at a conference on “How to Establish and Sustain an Interactive Theatre program in a College Counseling Center,” I asked the question: “Who do you think are your target audiences for Interactive Theatre? Whom do you hope to serve?” One woman answered immediately: “Students, faculty, and staff,” and the man sitting next to her added, “and community members.” So I said, “Okay let’s move on.” As it was clear that I was joking, and that we had only scratched the surface, they laughed.

When we continued to brainstorm all of the sub-communities of people within these four categories, we had a sense not only of the communities being served, but also of the communities who might benefit from the program.

This list of audiences (table 6) being served by the five Interactive Theatre programs represents great possibilities. New Interactive Theatre practitioners could review it and decide on whom they want to focus, while current practitioners could use it to determine to which new audiences they want to reach. Other potential audiences will be listed along with potential allies and funding sources toward the end of this chapter.

Table 6
Audiences of the Five Interactive Theatre Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Staff/Administration</th>
<th>Community Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Year Experience</th>
<th>Groups of usually self-selecting faculty members from a variety of departments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students (Orientation)</td>
<td>Faculty members attending in-service and/or diversity trainings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus Activities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Board</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Organizations (undergrad and graduate)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Classes (undergrad and graduate)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Academic Programs (Honors, Fellows, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Student Instructors and TAs receiving training</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Residence Halls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities (part of Residential Life)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident Assistants (RAs)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fraternities and</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Affairs</td>
<td>Student Affairs Professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Office of Minority Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women’s Center</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LGBTQ Center</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Office of Disability Services</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University Outreach and Engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Counseling Center</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wellness/Health</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotion Center</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Office of International Affairs (International Students)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Campus Police</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Admissions (Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintenance workers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents’ organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religious</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizations (e.g.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle and High Schools</td>
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<td></td>
<td>After-school programs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-profit community organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other academic institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conferences for professional organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corporations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community at large (open to public)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sororities</td>
<td>Hillel, Intervarsity, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletes (Varsity and Club)</td>
<td>Athletic Coaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offices on campus with student staff (e.g. Campus Rec., Student Union, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Law School</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus-wide events (on race, or gender, or sexual orientation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Admissions (Prospective Students)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Summer programs (e.g. SummerBridge)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the ensembles polled have one specific subset of audiences as their central focus, but they all perform outside their center as well. CU-ITP, UT-TFD, and UNC-ITC largely serve undergraduate students, though they occasionally perform for graduate students and staff on campus. OSU-I performs often for a wide range of Faculty, TAs, undergraduates, and graduate students. In addition, all four perform for groups outside of their center for a fee, but this income
is nominal and does not represent a significant percentage of their operating budget. CU-ITP, UT-TFD, and UNC-ITC charge between $150-$2000 for a performance, depending on the client and the nature of the services provided. When they perform outside their center, OSU-I generally deals with a new issue, so they charge $2500 for both the script development and performance. They have done this for Cardinal Health, The Wellness Center, the colleges of Pharmacy, Nursing, and Dentistry, and several other on-campus and off-campus entities.

In this time of meager resources, reaching out to audiences off-campus has the potential to generate income to sustain an ensemble or to help it grow, and the funding organizations generally encourage this practice. When I first explored performing for outside groups to generate income for UNC-ITC, the administration was wary, citing concerns that this could potentially divert resources away from the student body we were charged with serving. When I explained that the extra resources would eventually allow us to hire more staff and thus increase output, they agreed to allow it and see how it went. When the economy plunged in 2008, any lingering concerns vanished.

In contrast to the other four programs, over three-fourths of CITE’s performances are fee-for-service. CITE travels off campus to perform for corporations and in academic departments at other higher-ed institutions, and the revenue collected helps sustain the program. CITE asked me not to publish their fees as they depend on the client and services provided; but I can say they are higher than the other four programs and closer to what the University of Michigan’s CRLT Players charge. When not performing off campus, CITE serves academic departments on campus, which justifies the overhead and funding provided by Human Resources.

There are basically two types of Interactive Theatre performances: public performance and private performances. Public performances are “Come one, come all” and are marketed
widely to attract as many people and as diverse an audience as possible. Private performances, on the other hand, are conducted for groups that want a closed, contained space with only their members in the room. Most ensembles hold both types of performances. Whether or not a performance is public or private can impact the size of an audience, but there is no consistent relationship between the two. Private performances can be small if the requesting group is small and large if the group is large. Public performance can be large if many people attend, but can be small if few people show up. For private performances, the ensemble has some idea in advance of what they audience size will be, while public performance tend to be unpredictable.

As a direct indicator of how many people are being served by the program, audience size is sometimes an important barometer for funders. CITE mostly performs off campus for a fee, so they are not concerned about this issue. In terms of minimums, CU-ITP has an informal rule that “There needs to be more of them than there are of us” (Brown Adelman), i.e. if there are three actors and two facilitators, then there must be at least six people in the audience. Though CU-ITP strives for a larger audience, the group has performed for that minimum number of people, especially in private performances such as training interns at the CU Counseling Center. UNC-ITC has an audience minimum of 50, to make best use of our limited resources. But we were only able to achieve that after the first year and a half when demand increased.

OSU-I’s quarterly performances for The University Center for Teaching and Learning (UCAT) serve a maximum of 60 audience members. Other OSU-I performances occasionally had upwards of 200. The group does not have an audience minimum and has not had issues with too few people. UT-TFD’s will not book a performance for fewer than 15 people, though they have performed for fewer when no-shows have occurred. Hoare explains that they have to go ahead with their performance, because her students perform for credit and need to fulfill that
assignment. Hoare believes that between 20-50 students is the ideal size for participation and requires groups requesting performances to provide that many.

The idea of a maximum audience size came up more often. CITE caps their audience at 125 people, but most audiences are between 25-75 people. Dane Cruz mentioned that early on they used to work with larger groups, but they began to sense that the broader conversations were limited in their effectiveness. UT-TFD will not typically book a performance for over 150 people. UNC-ITC has an informal audience maximum of 450, but this is based on a performance every year for 450 people who take the very popular course on HIV/AIDS. The size was overwhelming, but I felt we could not turn down the opportunity to explore the intersection of sexual assault and HIV for 450 UNC students, so we did the best we could.

CU-ITP has done performances for upwards of 800 students during new student orientation for all out-of-state first year students. Trent Norman of CU-ITP has acknowledged that this is too many and they are exploring ways to split that group.

I did not have the opportunity to discuss with Interactive Theatre leaders the pros and cons of bigger and smaller audiences” or “voluntary vs. captive” audiences. But the comments from Norman and Cruz, informal discussions with colleagues in the field, and my experience seem to indicate that the bigger the audience the more energy there is in the room, the more students participate, and, of course, the more people are being served. At a certain point, however, practitioners talk about the room feeling too big. They sense that there must be audience members who are holding back due to the intimidating number of people in the room. Small audiences can feel more intimate, which is a good thing. But small audiences tend to have lower energy levels, which impacts the enthusiasm in the room for engaging the scene and the
issues. Of course, this is also dependent on the makeup of the audience, which groups are there and why. Further research and discussion is needed.

Informal conversations have also led to the conclusion that voluntary, or self-selecting, audiences tend to bring more enthusiasm into the room and want to delve into the issues more deeply. They also tend to mount less resistance to many of the ideas introduced in line with the learning outcomes. Sometimes, practitioners complain in these cases that they are “Preaching to the choir” – but they are quick to point out that “The choir needs practice.” Captive audiences generally bring less energy into the room and participate less. They also bring in the most resistance to new ideas, such as those focusing on privilege and internalized oppression. While practitioners feel challenged by these groups, they recognize that these are the people they want and need to reach.

**Marketing**

According to Philip Kotler, author of *Marketing Strategies*, marketing is a “social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering, and exchanging products of value with others” (Kotler 6). Toward this end, groups should engage in Marketing Management, defined by the American Marketing Association, as the “the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives” (Harrel 31).

Without exception, all five programs view marketing as one of their lowest priorities, – not because it is deemed unimportant but because they lack the time, people-power, and/or expertise to do it. All five also acknowledge that word of mouth is their most powerful form of
marketing. Most engage in some basic marketing efforts but then focus their energies elsewhere by necessity. Two types of marketing emerged:

- Marketing to campus groups (or off-campus groups for CITE) to generate requests for performances or requests for new scripts/projects
- Marketing to general audiences to increase attendance at individual public performances once they are booked

First, I will look at what ensembles are currently doing and then I will outline basic marketing theory and strategies that groups might call upon in the future.

The following are the most typical strategies employed by the five programs for marketing to campus groups (or off-campus groups for CITE) to generate requests for performances or requests for new scripts/projects. They are listed in order of prevalence among the five programs:

- Word of mouth generated by people’s positive experiences with the program
- Face-to face marketing to the warm market (i.e. people you know) of colleagues, peers, current clients, and new acquaintances on campus
- Email posts to the main university listserv, as well as individual listservs of campus departments, agencies, and organizations
- Personal or general emails to department contacts – faculty, staff, and graduate students
- Personal or general emails to student organization contacts – undergraduate and graduate
- Post available services on program website and create mechanism for establishing contact

The following are the most typical strategies for marketing to general audiences to increase attendance at individual public performances once they are booked. They are also listed in order of prevalence:
• Word of mouth generated by people’s positive experiences with the program
• Email posts to the main university listserv for that purpose, as well as individual listservs of campus departments, agencies, and organizations
• Social marketing – most popular is creating a Facebook group or fan page and then creating an event for the performance
• Personal or general emails to department contacts – faculty, staff, and graduate students – to encourage their students’ attendance
• Face-to-face marketing to the warm market of peers, colleagues, and new acquaintances on campus
• Post event on program website
• Post to university events calendar or student events calendar
• Occasionally flyer and/or chalk the campus

As one would expect, programs rely heavily on the host group and partnering groups to bring in audience members. Providing food, either paid for by the sponsoring groups or the program itself, is a common and somewhat effective draw. Undergraduate students are often hungry; and they like pizza.

Small audiences are a common challenge faced by the programs. Occasionally, performances are scheduled, the ensemble works hard to prepare, and then only a handful of people show up. Much like in the conventional theatre, it is hard to perform for small audiences in Interactive Theatre. In most cases, there is not sufficient energy in the room to generate the electricity and interaction for an optimal performance and dialogue.

At UNC-ITC, I was working to increase audience numbers, particularly at public performances. I identified an opportunity to create a hybrid model which I called “Private-
Public” performances. I would ask groups sponsoring private performances if they would be willing to open them up to the public. I used the audience minimum as leverage. If groups said they could not provide 50 people, I asked if they could provide 40 and then allow me to open the performance to the public. This was a popular solution. Another solution was to solicit multiple host sponsors for one performance. This had the added benefit of giving groups who ordinarily did not interact on campus the opportunity to do so. One other strategy I employed was to encourage professors and graduate student instructors to make attending a UNC-ITC performance extra credit for their students.

I will close this section with a definition of basic marketing strategy. Understanding fundamental concepts can help jumpstart activity in that direction. Basic marketing strategy consists of three steps:

- Identify the target market and prospects consisting of all the potential customers who might be willing to desire your product
- Communicate your product and its offerings to these prospects, specifically the value of the product. Value is defined as the consumer’s estimate of the product’s capacity to satisfy his/her needs.
- Toward this end, make the product appropriate, attractive, affordable, and easily available to these target consumers (Kotler).

Interactive Theatre ensembles would do well to peruse the list of audiences defined in this study and create their own two lists: 1) whom they want to target and 2) who would most likely desire its services. Groups that are on both lists provide a good short list for a target market. The next step would be to communicate their product and its value to audiences. The product would consist of a theatre performance or workshop that can offer an engaging,
educational, and transformative experience to audience members. Finally, they should do everything they can to make the product appropriate, attractive, and easily available to potential customers, for example choosing an issue pertinent to a specific group and scheduling performances days and times convenient to them.

**Space**

Securing and holding onto space in which to rehearse and perform has been a challenge across the board. Ensembles have found solutions slightly beyond “beg, borrow, and steal” by forging partnerships with other groups on campus with similar interests, and relying on the audiences that request and host the performance to provide space. There are two categories to consider: space for rehearsal and space for performance.

For their academic course, UT-TFD meets weekly in the conference room of the Counseling and Mental Health Center where they are housed. For their rehearsals, they have acquired space in the Theatre and Social Work buildings. Performances are largely held in the classroom of the course that hosts them. UT-TFD has designed performances not only to be portable but to fit into most spaces.

CU-ITP has a partnership with the Dennis Small Cultural Center, a small gallery space located in the Student Union. They use this space for their weekly rehearsals, as well as their monthly public performances, which are co-sponsored and co-publicized by both groups. They used to have an office space with a large common room which they used for rehearsals and as a lounge space for students, but when the program was subsumed under Student Affairs, they were moved to office space on the ground floor a residence hall. While it was on the periphery of campus, the space was large and adequate. CU-ITP also performs in classrooms that can provide a suitable performance space.
OSU-I, based in the Theatre Department, has space in the Theatre Building for their rehearsals and relies on their audiences to provide performance space. For CITE, the client provides the space, though Cruz guides their choices. The space must accommodate their 125 person maximum.

UNC-ITC, housed in Counseling and Wellness Services, developed an alliance with the Theatre Department, and hold their weekly rehearsals in one of the acting studios in their building. They hold smaller scene rehearsals in a variety of places: the Student Union, the Theatre building, and the conference room in Counseling and Wellness Services. One challenge at UNC was that all of these spaces needed to be signed out each time they were used, a time-consuming task. Performances are generally held in a public space on campus recommended by UNC-ITC but secured by the host of the performance; these spaces have included performances spaces in the Union, the large lounge in the Campus Y Building (the hub for student social justice organizations on campus), and an auditorium style classroom.

Based on this brief analysis, suitable performance space is a necessity. The physical performance space impacts the reception of a performance, particularly in Interactive Theatre where practitioners are asking audience members to abandon the security of their typically role as passive spectator in favor of an active participant in the drama. But practitioners who are forced to host performances in less than optimal spaces, such as a classroom, might also view that as a challenge: how can Interactive Theatre leaders write and direct their performances so that they are adaptable for almost any space?

**Allies/Advocates**

Because Interactive Theatre is such a new field, leaders agree that it is critical to have a reliable set of allies on campus who can argue for the value of a program and advocate for its
continued existence on campus. More is definitely better in this regard. The more people who laud the program, employ it, and advocate on its behalf, the more likely it will be sustained.

Many of the allies also have been audiences, but allies do more for the program than just attend. Their advocacy can take many forms:

- Recruiting students
- Marketing performances
- Encouraging the commission of new scripts with new collaborators
- Generating buzz about the program
- Providing and/or encouraging additional resources to be dedicated to the program

Table 7 lists the allies of the five Interactive Theatre programs, followed by the number of mentions out of the five programs.

Table 7
Campus Allies of Interactive Theatre Ensembles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Allies</th>
<th>Administrative Allies</th>
<th>Ally Centers on Campus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-selecting faculty from the</td>
<td>Health Center - 4/5</td>
<td>LGBTQ Center - 5/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>following departments:</td>
<td>Counseling Services - 4/5</td>
<td>Women’s Center - 5/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre – 5/5</td>
<td>Residential Life (Housing) - 4/5</td>
<td>Center for Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication or</td>
<td></td>
<td>Disability Services - 4/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Studies – 3/5</td>
<td>Vice Chancellor for Student</td>
<td>Development - 3/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Social Work – 2/5</td>
<td>Affairs - 4/5</td>
<td>The Service Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology – 2/5</td>
<td>Office of Multicultural</td>
<td>Organization - 1/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology - 3/5</td>
<td>Affairs/Chief Diversity Officer</td>
<td>Campus Recreation - 1/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Studies - 2/5</td>
<td>- 4/5</td>
<td>Religious Centers (e.g.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Department</td>
<td>Office</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy - 1/5</td>
<td>Dean of Students Office - 4/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Studies - 1/5</td>
<td>New Student Orientation - 3/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Studies - 1/5</td>
<td>Head of Athletics or Athlete Development - 3/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Public Health - 1/5</td>
<td>Office for International Affairs - 2/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism - 1/5</td>
<td>Human Resources - 2/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business School - 1/5</td>
<td>Administrator for Greek Life - 1/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Nursing - 1/5</td>
<td>Director of Student Organizations - 1/5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Campus Recreation Center - 1/5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents Organization - 1/5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hillel, Intervarsity, etc.) - 1/5</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The list of Academic Departments seems incomplete. One could argue that most departments could be allies to the program. The key is finding those individuals within the departments with a passion for the work.

It is important to mention one ally – and potential funder – in particular: the University Center for the Advancement of Teaching (this organization can go by different names, such as the Center for Faculty Excellence). There are several reasons for this group’s interest in Interactive Theatre. The first reason is the engaging pedagogy of Interactive Theatre, which has helped graduate students and professors improve their teaching – specifically teaching in a
culturally competent manner. The second reason is the existence of the ADVANCE grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF), which has historically funded Interactive Theatre performances addressing unconscious bias in the hiring of women and minority faculty in the STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). CITE, OSU-I, and CU-ITP have all been involved with the ADVANCE grant to varying degrees. While I was at UNC-Chapel Hill, the Provost’s office applied for one of these NSF grants and included an Interactive Theatre component. While it was turned down due to lower scoring, it is important to note that inclusion of Interactive Theatre in the proposal received positive feedback from NSF reviewers.

One of the most successful Interactive Theatre programs nationwide is the CRLT Players, at the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. They have brought national recognition to the potential of Interactive Theatre to tackle social justice issues, which they present in the context of faculty and graduate student development. As I learned when they presented at the Association for Theatre in Higher Education conference in 2006, they travel to campuses nationwide and charge upwards of $5000 per performance depending on the client and service provided.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to gather and synthesize information to help current and future Interactive Theatre practitioners construct a solid foundation on which to build a viable Interactive Theatre ensemble. The programs’ genesis stories revealed that the major key to garnering support for the work is to have key stakeholders witness live performances. When this has occurred, programs have founding funding from a wide variety of sources on campus, including Counseling and Health centers, Residential Life, Student Affairs, centers that promote
culturally competent teaching, Theatre departments, and even Human Resources. It is not one specific subset of campus that supports – or has the potential to support – this work.

There are, however, a few potential allies/funding sources that were not mentioned by the ensemble leaders. As evidenced by the work of my own Interactive Theatre company, Theater Delta, hospitals are often interested in interactive performances on Doctor-Patient Communication, or at least in what is known as Standardized Patient work (actors do role-plays as simulated patients with real doctors). In addition, I have surmised that Alumni Associations are often looking for stimulating programs that link active alumni back with their campus. Finally, I think that Offices of Development, the fundraising arm of the university, offers an untapped source of support.

I imagine a situation where development leadership and Interactive Theatre leadership collaborate to host a private performance for potential donors, who would be wowed by the program’s engaging programming around critical issues, envision and grasp the impact on the students of the university, and open up their checkbooks. Donors could even donate directly to the Interactive Theatre program. While this might be a romantic notion on my part, I can at least confidently argue that checkbooks would be more likely to open at a fundraising event with an Interactive Theatre performance than without it.

CITE remains unique among the five groups, as it is largely self-sustaining, relying on outside engagements from corporations and other universities. While the other four programs engage in these types of activities on a smaller scale, in these lean economic times, it could be argued that this model merits closer attention.

Once funding is secured, programmatic goals have shaped the choosing of issues and audiences for performances. Practitioners have called upon wide array of established theories
and influences which drive their work – not only from fields of applied/community based theatre, but also from those of the funding organization(s), and from social justice education. As a result of this confluence of theories, Interactive Theatre, as Dr. O’Barr of UNC-ITC points out, indeed builds bridges that bring together parties which have not typically interacted or lived in conversation with one another. In this case, Interactive Theatre brings together different fields. It not only brings fields like health, business, and teaching together with the field theatre arts and performance, but it also brings social justice ideals and into the conversation. Interactive Theatre provides a palpable opportunity for cross-pollination of ideas between theatre, social justice education, and other mainstream fields.

Marketing has revealed itself to be an area which could benefit from more attention. The idea of program utilizing business practices, such as marketing and strategic planning, will be revisited in the conclusion of this document. In the meantime, programs have relied upon a whole host of allies on campus, who consistently advocate on its behalf. As table 7 illustrates, the campus allies identified by the five programs fall into the categories of academic, administrative, and campus center allies. What struck me about this table, however, was the absence of student bodies and organizations on that list. While students were identified heavily in terms of an audience base, they did not come up in terms of campus-wide networking and program advocacy.

This realization reminded me of a personal anecdote. At UNC-ITC, I had a stalwart ally in Terri Houston, the Director of the Office for Multicultural Affairs. She is not only a top notch administrator, but also a talented Jazz singer and a soulful human being. During one of our meetings, as we discussed strategies to grow the program, she looked me in the eye and gave me a very valuable piece of advice which served me well. She said, and I am paraphrasing here, that
if you get the students believing in and bragging about your program, then your program not only won’t disappear but it will gradually attract more resources. I am fortunate that this was the case at UNC.

Perhaps, then, an effective practice for Interactive Theatre programs, would be to reach out to students groups and organizations, not only as potential audience members, but also as allies looking to improve campus life and climate. Meetings between the organizations should occur, and the questions like the following should be asked: What can we all do, using theatre and even other methods, to improve our campus? What can we all do to help each other achieve our goals?
Chapter III: Structure and Methods

As illustrated in the last chapter, securing funding for a program leader position can be a monumental task. And once that is accomplished, this person must network extensively and work hard to establish the infrastructure necessary to provide a sound foundation for the program. The good news is that, once these two tasks are accomplished, practitioners are free to engage in those activities which motivated them in the first place; they can dive in to creating the work itself, which, while challenging and time consuming, is a fulfilling and rewarding professional experience.

Services, Format, and Techniques

Interactive Theatre, like its relative Theatre of the Oppressed, is far from static and formulaic. Everyone does it somewhat differently. That being said, it is possible to frame the techniques, allowing for the examination of both the patterns common to all programs as well as unique aspects of each program. Ensembles offer a fairly consistent set of services, including Interactive Theatre performances, new scripts/performance development, and performance-based workshops. As the Interactive Theatre performance is the primary and best known product of ensembles, this chapter will focus on it.

Interactive Theatre Performances

As figure 6 illustrates, Interactive Theatre performances generally have five different parts. Performances length varies by program, issue, and/or audience, but the general range is 50-120 minutes. I will outline the basic form, describe its various components, and then discuss some of the variations used by the ensembles.
Format of Interactive Theatre Performances

1) Introduction
   a. Audience is introduced to facilitators and format of the performance.
   b. Facilitators review ground rules for discussion.

2) Scripted Scene/Structured Improvisation/Case Study
   a. Audience watches a scripted scene, a structured improvisation, or reads a case study, which consists of a realistic situation where characters experience a conflict or series of conflicts.
   b. The scene or case usually ends in a crisis for all the characters, priming the stage for the audience interaction.

3) Audience Interaction (Options)
   a. Question and Answer (a.k.a. hot-seat technique): Audience members can ask the characters questions about what they did in the scene and why.
   b. On-stage Interventions: Audience members can go up on stage and intervene with action on stage and so change the outcome of the scene and/or attitudes and behavior of the characters.
   c. Image Theatre: Facilitators ask characters to strike specific images from the scene or improvisation and allow audiences to respond to them.

4) Dialogue
   a. Audience members engage in a conversation, led by facilitators, where they are encouraged to share their reactions, perspectives, and solutions to the action they have witnessed.
b. Facilitators ask questions, highlight key ideas/themes, and share relevant information.

c. While this dialogue is often conducted with the whole group, some ensembles also include breakouts into small group conversations.

5) Closing

a. Facilitators seek to create closure to the event.

b. Audience is sometimes educated as to the available campus and community resources around the issues.

Figure 6. Format of Interactive Theatre Performances

All five ensembles present an introduction to the performance which establishes who they are and explains what the audience will experience. Then they review the ground rules for discussion. In the case of CU-ITP and UNC-ITC, facilitators conduct an on-your-feet warm up for the audience. Ground rules and warm ups will be explored in the chapter on facilitation.

Next comes the more fixed part of the performance, either a scripted scene (CU-ITP, UNC-ITC, OSU-I and sometimes CITE), a structured improvisation performed with consistency from performance to performance (UT-TFD and sometimes CITE), or the reading of a case study (CITE). While script development will be explored later in this chapter, the scene consists of a realistic situation where characters experience a series of conflicts. The action usually ends in a situation where one or more characters are experiencing major dissonance.

After this fixed scenario, actors remain in their assigned roles and interact with audience members in character. There are three major techniques used to structure the audience
interaction. The first is the question and answer technique, the second is on-stage interventions, and the third is image theatre.

In the question and answer technique, also known as the “hot seat” technique, audience members can ask the characters questions about what they did in the scene and why. This technique has its roots in the “Arsenal of the Theatre of the Oppressed,” in Boal’s Games for Actors and Non-Actors (Boal, “Games” 48). It is important to note that Boal discusses this technique in the section on “Rehearsal Exercises for Any Kind of Play” (Boal, “Games” 217), but that in Interactive Theatre, this technique has not only moved out of rehearsal and into performance, but it is one of the most often utilized technique for interacting with the audience.

Under the sub-section called “Exercises for the preparation of a Forum Theatre model or for the rehearsal of other kinds of theatre,” Boal calls the exercise “Interrogation”:

Each actor in turn goes to sit “in the dock” in front of the rest of the group. In character, they are interrogated by the group (also in character) about what they think of the other characters, what they think about the events in the play, anything. The exercise is conducted like court proceedings. (Boal, “Games” 227)

Boal also has two variations of this technique:

Hanover Variation: The same exercise but it is conducted while the scene is playing. So at any point an actor can be questioned mid-action – the scene freezes, the actor answers the questions, the scene picks up immediately where it left off.

Variation: As above, except that the scene does not stop for the questions. The actor has to answer as best he can while continuing to play the scene. (Boal, “Games” 228)
In direct audience on-stage interventions (sometimes – but not always – referred to as “Forum Theatre” from Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed), audience members can actually get up on stage, interact with the characters in real time, and try to challenge/change their attitudes/behaviors and/or impact the outcome of the action on stage. This can be done in many ways, which will be addressed in the forthcoming section. But first I will explain how Boal intended the Forum Theatre technique to work.

Boal outlines Forum Theatre in three short sections. In “The Rules of the Game,” he explains that Forum Theatre is a “sort of fight or game” which requires rules so that “all the players are involved in the same enterprise, and to facilitate the generation of serious and fruitful discussion” (Boal, “Games” 242). The next section is called “Dramaturgy” and will be discussed in the section on Script Development. Boal starts the final section “The performance game” by saying that “The performance is an artistic and intellectual game played between actors and spect-actors” (Boal, “Games” 243). He summarizes the basic structure as follows:

1) The show is performed as if it were a conventional play. A certain image of the world is presented.

2) The spect-actors are asked if they agree with the solutions advanced by the protagonist; the will probably say no. The audience is then told that the play is going to be done a second time, exactly as it was done the first time … and the spect-actors are to try to change it, showing that new solutions are possible and valid … It is vital to generate a degree of tension among the spect-actors. If no one changes the play it will come to same end as before.

3) The audience is informed that, in this rerunning of the play, the first step is to take the protagonists place whenever he or she is making a mistake, in order to try to
bring about a better solution. All they have to do is shout, “Stop!” the actors must immediately stop where they are, without changing position. With the minimum delay, the spect-actor must say where he or she wants the scene taken from … The actors then start the scene from the prescribed point, with the spect-actor who has intervened as the protagonist.

5) From the moment at which the spect-actor replaces the protagonist and begins to put forward and new solution, all the other actors … intensify their oppression, to show the spect-actor how difficult it is to change reality. The game is spec-actors – trying to find a new solution, trying to change the world – against actors – trying to hold them back. But of course the aim of the Forum is not to win, but to learn and train

6) If the spect-actor gives in, he or she drops out of the game, the actors takes up the role again and the piece rapidly heads back toward the already known ending. Another spec-actor can then approach the stage, shout, “Stop!” and say where he or she wants the play to be taken from, and the play will start again from that point.” (Boal, “Games” 244)

This original basic form of Forum Theatre wielded tremendous influence on later practitioners of Theatre of the Oppressed and Interactive Theatre. It will prove helpful when variations are explored below.

The final technique used to engage the audience around the issues is the image theatre technique, which allows facilitators to present still images from the scene to the audience and ask
them to interpret and analyze what they see. Boal, in his *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, explains:

> Images reflect the memories, imaginations, emotions of each observer who looks at them. This means that images are polysemic – they can have many meanings and we should never reduce those meanings to the ‘correct’ one …we can only learn by the multiplicity of feelings, opinions, evocations of the participants.

(Boal, “Games” 139)

Before, during, or after the audience interaction, comes the facilitated dialogue among audience members and the facilitator(s). Sometimes actors come out of their roles and can even join in; other times they remain in character and are either part of or separate from the dialogue. While this dialogue is often conducted with the whole group, some ensembles mix in small group conversations as well. Analyzing the facilitation of this dialogue will be discussed in depth in chapter four.

Finally, facilitators usually proffer some sort of statement of closure, which in most cases calls for the dialogue to continue within the community, suggesting that more consideration and communication needs to occur around the issues raised. They also outline resources for the audience to seek support or further education around the issues.

Pat Griffin in his chapter on “Facilitating Social Justice Education Courses,” explains, “When drawing a discussion to a close, it is important for facilitators to help students achieve some degree of closure. The goal is not to reach agreement among all participants … but to bring participants to a place from which they are ready to make a transition to … end the class session” (286). Toward that end, facilitators can “identify themes that emerged, unresolved questions asked, divergent perspectives addressed, or other important points made” (Griffin 286).
As mentioned, there are many variations on the above framework, most of which revolve around the techniques are used for audience interaction and where/when these techniques are used within the larger performance experience. First I will examine each program for the specific variations they use when doing the question and answer technique and the audience interventions. Then I will briefly talk about variations of image theatre.

CU-ITP, though they occasionally use the on-stage intervention technique, primarily utilizes the “question and answer technique” to allow the audience to interact with the scene. For most of their performances, they start with a scripted scene, move into the questions and answer session, and end with the post-performance dialogue. When they do bring audience members on stage, they sometimes use Boal’s Forum Theatre model, but they also have developed a variation which they call the “empty chair technique.” In this case, when they replay the scene, they add an empty chair to the stage, and explain that any audience member can stop the scene at any point, sit in that chair, become an additional character, and impact the action as they see fit. This can be helpful because it releases audience members from having to adhere to the established relationships on stage, which sometimes deters them from taking the risk to participate.

When I served as Program Coordinator, UNC-ITC’s format resembled that of CU-ITP, as I trained for two years with Rebecca Brown Adelman and Trent Norman as their first Assistant Director from 2005-2007. UNC-ITC, too, relied heavily on the question and answer technique. And we, too, occasionally did on-stage interventions. While we used the Boal Forum on rare occasions, more often, we used a variation that I created which I simply call “Interventions.” After the question and answer, I put the characters in a “Time Out,” where for all intents and purposes they cannot hear the audience dialogue. Toward the end of the dialogue, when the conversation switched to possible solutions, audience members would invariably say that one of
the characters onstage needs to have a conversation with another. At that point we would encourage the audience member to come up on stage, replace one of the characters, and carry on that next conversation that should occur. We even had a variation that if they did not want to replace one of the characters, the audience member, could come up as a “concerned friend,” a blending of our intervention and CU-ITP’s empty chair technique.

OSU-I moves right from the scene itself into a dialogue focusing on audience reactions to the scene. The facilitator asks for their judgment as to problematic moments requiring intervention. They start doing this with actors remaining in role but then they make the characters “invisible,” meaning that the characters are not present and listening despite the fact that they can be seen. This is similar to UNC-ITC’s time out. Post describes her method as fluid, moving from technique to technique as appropriate. She allows for questions to the characters, but will shift the focus to the audience reactions and perspectives if there are too many questions. She explains that when the dialogue moves toward solutions to the problems, facilitators will occasionally offer audience members the opportunity to replace a role and engage in an onstage intervention through Boal-like Forum Theatre.

UT-TFD has perhaps the most unique variation. While Lynn Hoare calls her format an “Adapted Forum,” she is quick to explain that the technique is significantly influenced by Theatre-in-Education (TIE). First of all, this ensemble uses structured improvisations instead of scripted scenes. The improvisations are well rehearsed and remain fairly consistent from performance to performance. Lynn Hoare explains, “It is a creative outline and flow, but we improvise it enough times that the beats are pretty much set. It can change from cast to cast and year to year. We adapt the lines as needed.” She goes onto explain that they use these
improvisation methods because their goal is realism. “We want to make the scenarios so realistic students identify it as something they know” (Hoare, “Telephone”).

The audience is instructed from the beginning to loudly call out “Pause!” when they see something that “they are uncomfortable with, have a question about, or see as unhealthy or inappropriate” (Hoare, “Telephone”). When audiences call “Pause” facilitators shift into the audience dialogue. They ask questions such as “What is going on? What is problematic?” helping the audience unpack the moment. Then they shift back to the scene until the next pause. At the end of the scenario, audience members are afforded the opportunity to replace one of the ally characters who seemed interested in helping but did not have the tools to do so. The facilitator then helps the audience react to each intervention. At the end, facilitators employ the hot-seat technique allowing audience members to question characters as to how they are feeling after all that has happened.

One significant difference between UT-TFD and the other programs is that with this model, the audience can stop the scene/improvisation the first time around. As explained above, in typical Forum Theatre, the audience sees the scene first and discusses it, before seeing it again. Here the audience is encouraged to jump right in from the beginning. Obviously, what helps this technique succeed is that the stop in the action does not mean that someone immediately has to get up on stage to try something; rather the spectators can explore that particular moment in real time from the comfort of their seats.

Cruz of CITE explains, “CITE programs begin with an introduction from the client who asks: “Why are these issues important and why did we choose interactive theatre to address them?” Then they turn it over to the CITE facilitator who explains the format, and they then move into performance. CITE has several formats depending on the audience and the issues. The
first is a scripted scene, followed by the opportunity for the audience to question and converse with the characters from the scene, followed by dialogue. Another is the showing of a video – a filmed scenario – followed by the opportunity for the audience to question and converse with a character from the filmed scenario, followed by dialogue.

CITE also uses case studies as initial narratives to explore specific learning goals. In this case, audience members start by reading a case study that raises certain problems, and then work together in small groups to solve those problems. Then one member from each of the small groups has the opportunity to question and converse with the main character from the case study. Cruz elaborates,

This technique allows these volunteers to put into practice some of the principals they have just learned. In turn, the group can discuss what went well and what they might have done differently or share thoughts on another way to approach the situation from the case study. Through this format, participants can get as close to real life as possible without any potential consequences if something they try does not work.

CITE has also uses a combination of formats in which, after the audience reads the case study, they witness either a brief scene or a set of monologues that brings the case study to life. After watching the scene or monologues, “the audience has a conversation with each other about what they experienced and then watch the characters come to life” (Cruz).

The first obvious difference among the five programs is how they establish the initial narrative with which the audience will interact. The programs represent a full range of possibilities, from CITE’s case study in print, to UT-TFD’s structured improvisation, to the other three programs’ scripted scenes, to Cornell’s video vignette.
The next significant difference seems to be that some programs make a clear division between the audience interaction and the dialogue, while in the other others, the two occur more fluidly, moving back and forth from audience interaction to dialogue. CU-ITP and UNC-ITC more often than not have clearly defined steps, while the others operate more openly. CU-ITP, UNC-ITC, and CITE also include small group discussion among the larger group dialogue.

One trend I noticed when talking about the format of the Interactive Theatre performances is that, in contrast to Boal’s Forum Theatre, there is more actual interaction with audience members from their seats than on stage. Programs are using either some version of question and answer technique, or informal conversation between audience members and on-stage characters, rather than sticking to the traditional Boalian Forum Theatre techniques, where only a few self-selecting audience members get up on stage and interact with the characters. These question/answer and informal conversation techniques allow for more direct opportunities for participation and engagement among audience members, as opposed to vicarious experiences through the people who choose to go up on stage.

Even in programs that utilize Boal’s techniques, practitioners have modified his more traditional technique in at least in two ways. First, the structure is looser and more fluid, and includes other ways of interacting than the “stop, replace, and continue” method; second, some practitioners seem to be designing ways to free the audience member to improvise with less criteria/information from the scene.

The image theatre technique used most often in Interactive Theatre performance could be called the “Switch” technique. During this process, facilitators present one familiar image of the scene, call out “Switch,” have the actors exchange roles within the image, and then refreeze the image for the audience. As a result, the characters from the scene take on new identities, usually
race and gender identities, which become apparent to the audience. This is a powerful, thought-provoking technique which invariably generates a lot of dialogue around how individuals’ identities impact and inform the situations and issues. It is most often used toward the end of the dialogue before the closing. The “Switch” technique is utilized by UT-TFD, CU-ITP, and UNC-ITC.

In addition, UT-TFD uses a more straightforward image theatre technique, whereby when the audience calls, “pause,” they will not only stop the action, but freeze the characters in a still image. When dealing with issues of interpersonal violence, which focus on issues of power and control, physical positioning and posture can have a tremendous impact on the dynamics of the action.

New Script/Performance Development

An important service provided by ensembles is the creation of scripts and development of new performances. Often campus or community groups desire new scripts on specific topics or new variations or site specific manifestations of one of the existing topics. In this case, Interactive Theatre Programs can collaborate with the requesting group to create a new script for an Interactive Theatre performance. How this is done will be covered later in this chapter in the section on script development.

Performance Based Workshop

The last general category of service is the performance-based workshop, where ensembles provide 1-3 facilitators who lead participants in a variety of performance-based exercises. These, in turn, generate reactions and focus dialogue around a set of issues in a safe, collaborative environment. The issues are usually predetermined by the leadership of the
requesting group and the ensemble tailors the workshop to meet these specific needs. Exercises include team building games, theatre games to foster creativity, image theatre, and even basic improvisations. Image theatre techniques seem to be used most often. All five programs explain that they have conducted workshops from time to time, but that performances are their primary service. The structure, format, and exercises included in these workshops have such a range of possibility that they are well beyond the scope of this study, but facilitators draw from a wide variety of sources including but not limited to Interactive Theatre, Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed and Rainbow of Desire, Communication Studies, Performance Studies, Conflict Resolution, and other fields.

**Ensemble Structure**

Ensemble structures run the gamut from large to small, from long-term existing ensembles which meet weekly, to loosely-based ensembles with a pool of actors and facilitators who seldom meet as a whole. Some ensembles are built around a course that students take for college credit. Table 8 charts the ensemble structure of the five programs.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Assistant Leadership</th>
<th>Actors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CU-ITP</td>
<td>2 full time Student Affairs Directors</td>
<td>1-2 part time Graduate Student Assistant Directors</td>
<td>14 paid student actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT-TFD</td>
<td>1 full-time Theatre for Dialogue Specialist</td>
<td>1 part time Teaching Assistant</td>
<td>16 student actors enrolled in 2 semester course series;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
plus a handful of paid student actors who choose to continue in as Performance Ensemble members after completing course series.

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OSU-I</td>
<td>1 Lecturer</td>
<td>Some semesters 1</td>
<td>8-12 depending on the semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching Assistant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITE</td>
<td>2 full time positions:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Pool of 4-5 adjunct actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrative/Artistic Director (also serves as an Actor). Program Manager (also serves as an Actor)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNC-ITC</td>
<td>1 full time Program Coordinator</td>
<td>1 part time Graduate Student Assistant</td>
<td>20 student actors; some, volunteer, some enrolled in course, some paid (graduated structure)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All ensembles featured some form of leadership. Leadership roles require the broadest of skills sets. Duties include any and all of the following on this non-exhaustive list:

- Recruiting actors
- Planning/Conducting rehearsals
• Writing scripts
• Marketing, including but not limited to developing and maintaining website, listserv, and Facebook group
• Coordinating logistics of performances
• Rehearsing scenes
• Facilitating public performances
• Program evaluation, including designing the inventory, entering/analyzing data, writing reports
• Providing informal mentoring for student actors
• Looking to grow program, seeking additional resources/help
• Planning/teaching/maintaining ITC course for academic credit
• Participating in non-Interactive Theatre work in their home departments/agencies
  (meetings, committees, tasks, events)

The number of actors in the ensembles range in size from 5 (CITE) to 20 (UNC-ITC). Their size is dependent on the demand for actors and facilitators and, of course, on the day to day availability of these actors and facilitators. If ensemble members are readily available, there is less need for large numbers; but if ensemble members are often unavailable, then more are needed. In many cases, ensembles have a graduate student assistant who helps leaders with the above tasks. ITP in Boulder has two part time graduate assistants, and UT Austin and ITC have one each. OSU-I only occasionally has one graduate assistant. This does not apply to CITE which is consists of two professionals.

Other than CITE, ensembles are almost exclusively comprised of undergraduate students, though an occasional graduate student has participated. And four of these programs meet weekly.
CU-ITP meets once a week as an ensemble for two hours, and they schedule the rehearsals for performances at other times, with the actors being paid for all of their hours. UT-TFD and OSU-I meet weekly as part of a course. UT-TFD holds their class, once a week for two hours and fifty minutes, with an added lab in the spring of an additional two hours and fifty minutes. OSU-I meets twice a week for one hour and forty five minutes. UNC-ITC’s entire ensemble meets once a week for two hours, with those ensemble members who are earning course credit that semester coming an additional hour per week on another day. Like CU-ITP, the rehearsals for individual performances are scheduled at other times. There will be a more in depth discussion of Interactive Theatre courses later in this chapter. Finally, the CITE leaders meet and rehearse as needed.

The four programs that meet weekly, either as part of a course or not, do so for the purposes of creating a safe space for dialogue, issue exploration, and script material generation. Leaders hope that this dedicated time allows ensemble members to grow as individuals, as well as together as a cohesive unit. They also use this time to conduct trainings that build skills that inform performance or facilitation, such as acting exercises or modules on managing challenging conversations. Finally, the ensembles conduct rehearsals of specific Interactive Theatre scenes.

Trent Norman of CU-ITP explains that they use their weekly meetings to work on acting and improvisation fundamentals, as well as educating ensemble members about social justice ideals. Post of OSU-I expresses a similar sentiment:

A huge component of the class, those first few weeks, is to figure out how to communicate around these issues. We establish ground rules and take a lot of time for processing. If students are not able to talk about the issues, then they won’t be
able to create a piece with quality and depth. It requires a lot of emotional investment.

Whether or not ensembles meet weekly, there is a consistent need for carving out time for ensemble members to dialogue around the issues in advance of, during, and after the rehearsals and performances. Cruz explains that CITE talks about the issues and the learning goals with the actors to help them feel safe:

It takes longer with some than with others, but we know playing these roles can put one in a vulnerable place. So it is critical for us to work with actors individually on the issues and help them process where they stand, so that there is less of a risk feeling threatened during the work.

Practitioners across the five programs acknowledge that the work is difficult, complex, and sensitive. It strikes emotional chords in those who participate; and without dedicated time to unpack and discuss the issues, conflicts arise. Leaders are careful to put structures in place to work through these conflicts, and the result is learning and growth on the part of ensemble members. The positive impact that Interactive Theatre has on its ensemble members is discussed in chapter five.

Recruiting/Auditioning

The audition/interview process varied from ensemble to ensemble, with one of the central issues being the desired skill set needed. While all agreed that the desired skills were performing ability/stage presence, awareness of the issues and passion for exploring them, sensitivity to people and perspectives and, in some cases, the ability to facilitate performances and dialogues, the leaders prioritized these skills differently. In addition, most leaders consider the identities and personality traits of potential ensemble members in an effort to create a diverse group. Finally,
the leaders of the four undergraduate programs sought students from all schools and departments in the university – not just Theatre and Performance Studies.

CU-ITP has two parts to their audition, a two-minute creative performance and a live interview. The students have latitude with the creative performance, which can be a typical monologue or a creative piece of their choosing. The leaders are looking for students who have stage presence and acting ability, but who also have strong connections with the issues and awareness of their larger community. When I was at UNC-ITC we had a three-part interview. Auditioners had to perform a 1-2 minute monologue or, as an alternative, a prepared, organized personal story about his/her experience with a social justice issue. Then we conducted an interview, and finally we had students do an improvisation exercise to gauge his or her ability to improvise on stage and generate ideas and scenes in real time. OSU-I holds an audition and an interview. They are seeking people who can act, but also people who are passionate about the issues and service to the community. “We assess in the interview if we can go down this road together,” Post comments.

In contrast, Hoare was clear that UT-TFD recruits “students, not actors.” Some members of the ensemble have no performance background whatsoever. Hoare seeks out “ensemble members who are invested in learning about the issues … situated in an academic world.” As a result, there is an application and live interview process, but no audition with a performance component.

All ensembles emphasize the interview component as critical. They all seek students who are invested in the issues and in the idea of community. Examples of interview questions include: “What is the definition of community?” “What is your definition of social justice?” “Tell us about your experience advocating for social issues or volunteering in the community.”
Recruiting for the four programs is done by sending out calls over a variety of listservs, posting flyers in residence halls and public areas, and word of mouth. Leaders wisely rely on their allies, who know and can identify the right types of students, including academic advisors, Deans of Students, peer education programs, LGBTQ centers, and centers that focus on women’s issues. Reaching out to ensemble members’ warm market (their friends and acquaintances) has also proven very effective, as student ensemble members who invest time in Interactive Theatre have a good sense of what is involved and whom among their friends they should recruit.

Cruz of CITE describes Ithaca as a “tight theatre community” which draws from Cornell, Ithaca College, and two local theatres. CITE only has 4-5 adjunct actors, and they are local professional actors, performance faculty, alumni, and on occasion a graduate student or an advanced undergraduate student. Their casting is done through professional contacts and recommendations. Occasionally, CITE auditions for particular roles with actors reading from CITE scripts. All adjunct actors, facilitators and topic specialist are paid. Cruz preferred not to share the exact amounts.

**Student Commitment**

The four programs that consist largely of undergraduates recognize student commitment as an issue of prime importance to maintain the ensemble and its morale. There are three forms of “currency,” that serve to reward the students for their participation: the fulfillment of a stimulating extra curricular activity with opportunities to perform and engage social issues; college credit; and a monetary wage.

CU-ITP students are paid from the moment they are accepted into the troupe, but there is no option for college credit. OSU-I students are required to register for Th694 “InterACT: Theatre for Social Awareness,” and they can take the course up to three times. OSU-I is currently
exploring a more advanced course for students who want to continue being in the ensemble after that.

UT-TFD has created a two-tiered structure. In the first tier, students are required to register for a two-course sequence, one in the fall and one in the spring. Both courses are cross listed in the Theatre and Dance Department and the School of Social Work. The fall course is TD 357T/SW 360K “Theatre for Dialogue: Exploring Interpersonal Violence.” And the spring course is TD 357/SW360K “Performance of Theatre for Dialogue. Students who have completed the full year of coursework are eligible to move up to the second tier and join the UT-TFD performance ensemble, where they become paid ensemble members.

At UNC-ITC, I developed a three-tiered structure that utilizes all three currencies. During semester one, students volunteer for the ensemble to demonstrate their commitment and gain experience. During semester two, students have the option to take COMM 260-2 “Performance and Social Change,” earning three credits for their service to the ensemble; if they choose not to enroll, they also have the option to volunteer for a second semester. Starting in their third semester, students earn an hourly wage for their service.

For the three ensembles that pay, the payment structure is as follows:

• CU-ITP pays all actors $8/hour, including weekly rehearsal, scene rehearsals, and performances
• UNC-ITC pays ensemble members with more than a year’s experience $8/hour for scene rehearsals and performances, but does not pay for the weekly two-hour rehearsal
• UT-TFD pays their ensemble members who have completed the two-semester course $50 per performance which includes rehearsal time.
*Academic Courses on Interactive Theatre*

Three of the five programs offer academic courses on Interactive Theatre: UT-TFD, OSU-I, and UNC-ITC. There are many reasons why an academic course is of benefit to their students. First, it provides a reward in the form of credit; students can participate in an activity that challenges and fulfills them, and, at the same time, advance toward their graduation goal. Second, a course guarantees the participation of a group of students for the entire semester. Third, it increases the likelihood that students will seriously explore the issues, given that they are motivated by a grade. Fourth, it links to the academic mission of the university, building bridges to academic sector of the university if the program is not located there in the first place. And fifth, if the host of the Interactive Theatre program is an academic department, the tuition for the course can help support the department financially.

UT-TFD and OSU-I require students in the ensemble to take the course for many of the reasons stated above. At UNC-ITC, I made it optional when I saw it deterred the participation of some of the students I sought. Some of them would not have been able to take the course as they were already using their spring semester credits to fulfill requirements in their academic major, minor, or the core curriculum. Some students wanted to participate but did not want to do the additional reading and writing that academic coursework requires. And some did not want to feel pressure to get an “A” while doing this potentially transformative work.

It is important to note that these three courses are distinct from related academic courses which survey a variety of applied/community theatre projects, providing an overview of the activist field. The Interactive Theatre courses are far more practice-based and reward students for doing work in the field. Based on the most recent syllabi, I will analyze these three courses according to: Course Description, Goals/Learning Outcomes, Readings, and Assignments. I will
review each course according to the first three categories and then discuss the fourth across all three courses.

OSU-I’s “Th694: InterACT: Theatre for Social Awareness,” taught through the Theatre Department, is offered every quarter and repeatable up to three times. Taught by ensemble leader and Theatre Lecturer Robin Post, the course description is as follows:

This course provides an introduction to the use of theatre as public service and a format for delving into issues of social justice and change, an introduction to interactive and improvisational skills used for Theatre in Education, and an introduction to skills used in devising new work. (Post, “Th694” 1)

The learning objectives and goals are to:

- Consider theatre as service learning tool that enhances society’s well-being.
- Learn to consider and implement theatre as a tool for communication and education of issues pertaining to social justice and change.
- Learn effective communication and conversational skills when dealing with highly sensitive and controversial topics.
- Develop improvisation & Interactive Theatre skills to be used as alternative methods of communication and education.
- Create and perform new scripts based on the collaboration of students and the needs of a variety of commissioning bodies. The following are examples of possible commissioning bodies: (OAA [Office of Academic Affairs], OMA [Office of Minority Affairs], ODS/ADA [Office of Disability Services/American Disability Association] and FTAD [Faculty Teaching and Development]). (Post, “Th694) 1-2)
The readings for the course include:

- Select readings from *Performers Guide to Collaborative Process* by Sheila Kerrigan (Heinemann Drama, 2001)
- Numerous issue specific reading (issues are different from semester to semester)
- Other readings TBA (Post, “Th694” 2-4)

At UT-TFD student must take a two-course sequence in the fall and spring. Both courses are cross listed in the Theatre Department and the School of Social Work. The fall course is titled: TD 357T/SW 360K “Theatre for Dialogue: Exploring Interpersonal Violence” and is described as follows:

This course trains students to use the tools of Interactive Theatre to raise awareness and educate others about the issues of interpersonal violence including relationship violence, sexual violence and stalking. In particular, students are trained in Theatre of the Oppressed and other applied theatre methods. Students are also encouraged to explore issues of diversity with respect to interpersonal violence. Fall semester is a pre-requisite to the spring semester course; a commitment to both semesters is required to participate in the fall semester course. (Hoare, “Theatre” 1)

The course objectives are:

- To understand the complex dynamics of interpersonal violence, including relationship violence, sexual violence and stalking.
- To identify red flags of unhealthy relationships and be able to define relationship violence, sexual violence and stalking.
• To learn how to act as an ally to a victim or survivor and to gain knowledge about the related resources on campus and in the community.

• To understand the use of theatre techniques and improvisational methods as tools to educate the campus community at large.

• To develop leadership skills and confidence in teaching others about these issues.

• To explore strategies for transforming a community through arts and civic dialogue (Hoare, “Theatre” 2-3)

The readings for the fall include:

• Select Readings from Theatre for Community, Conflict, and Dialogue: The Hope is Vital Manual by Michael Rohd (Heinemann Drama, 1998)

• Select readings from Theatre for Living by David Diamond (Trafford, 2006).

• Select readings from Readings for Diversity and Social Justice by Adams, Blumenfeld, et al. (Routledge, 2000)

• “Engaged Pedagogy, from Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom,” by bell hooks (Routledge, 1994)

• White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” by Peggy McIntosh (in Race, Class, and Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study (Worth Publishers, 2004).

• “You’re a Hardcore Feminist. I Swear” by Jessica Valenti from Full Frontal Feminism: A Young Woman’s Guide to Why Feminism Matters (Seal Press, 2007)
• “Feminist Politics: Where We Stand” by bell hooks from *Feminism is for EVERYBODY* (South End Press, 2000).


• “What Can We Do?” from *Privilege, Power and Difference* by Allan G. Johnson (McGraw-Hill, 2005)

• “[classified]: stories that catalyze dialogue about diversity” by Laura Agnich, Kimberly Baker, Megan Carney and Shannon Turner from Community Arts Network Reading Room (communityarts.net)

• And a variety of additional readings covering aspects of Interpersonal Violence and Gender oppression (Hoare, “Theatre” 2-6)

In the spring, student members of UT-TFD take TD 357/ SW360K “Performance of Theatre for Dialogue,” also cross listed between the Theatre Department and the School of Social Work:

This course focuses on using Theatre for Dialogue methods to raise awareness and educate on issues of interpersonal violence including relationship violence, sexual violence and stalking. Students trained in interactive and applied theatre methods perform scenarios to facilitate investigation of and conversations around power and control, supporting survivors, and identifying warning signs or red flags of unhealthy relationships. Student performers and facilitators offer audience participants the opportunity to examine perceptions and assumptions and to actively rehearse change. (Hoare, “Performance” 2)

The course objectives are:
• To practice theatre techniques, improvisational methods and facilitation skills and use them as tools to start dialogue and raise awareness on the UT campus.

• To create and perform scenarios about interpersonal violence for on and off-campus audiences based on the materials and training covered in SW 360K/TD357 [fall semester].

• To contribute to realistic scenarios that effectively represent issues in a way familiar to college populations and to offer audience members an opportunity to create change through rehearsing reality.

• To create characters that audience members can identify with and that reflect various behaviors related to interpersonal violence issues.

• To be informed and responsibly share knowledge of interpersonal violence dynamics, resources, support and programs on and off-campus.

• To act as a leader in confronting and challenging interpersonal violence in campus communities.

• To explore strategies for transforming a violent culture through activist work using performance. (Hoare, “Performance” 2-3)

Hoare front loads her readings in the fall, as the spring is the practical half of the sequence, with students required to participate in five public performances.

The course I taught at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill was called “Performance and Social Change, Interactive Theatre Carolina: A Theatrical Service Learning Experience.” I taught the course through the Communication Studies Department, the Performance Studies concentration. The course also was part of the APPLES service learning program. Their model requires a community partner and ours was the UNC campus community
for which we performed. The course was offered in the spring only, and students could only take it once. Those who did could then receive an hourly wage for their continued participation in the ensemble. The course description was as follows:

This course provides students with the unique opportunity to learn the dramatic theories of several community based theatre practitioners, to apply these theories in the practice of creating and rehearsing Interactive Theatre performances, to perform these scenes for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill campus community, and to analyze the experience. (Saypol, “COMM 260” 1)

The student learning outcomes were:

- **Student** will learn and apply research, writing, and presentation techniques to obtain and share knowledge around salient health, wellness and social justice issues in their communities
- **Students** will learn the theories and techniques of Augusto Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed and other related community based theatre practitioners and then apply these theories in helping to create effective Interactive Theatre scripts
- **Students** will learn and apply acting and improvisation vocabulary and skills, within the genre of realism, in order to portray believable Interactive Theatre scenes, including:
  - Writing out a detailed character analysis for each character performed
  - Pursuing one’s objective on stage
  - Staying present and open, moment to moment, to other actors and action on stage
Using a variety of acting techniques, such as affective memory, to enhance the believability of a performance

Make strong, effective physical and emotional choices on stage

Practice the art of improvisation (i.e. thinking and creating in the moment)

- Students will apply knowledge of health, wellness, and social justice issues in order to participate in the challenging conversations that occur around these issues

- Students will learn and apply skills to facilitate Interactive Theatre exercises and challenging conversations, as well as observe and gain a heightened awareness of the challenges of facilitating Interactive Theatre Performances and Workshops.

- Student will learn and apply skills to critique theatrical work devised by the group in an effort to improve it. (Saypol, “COMM” 1-2)

The reading list was as follows:


- Select readings from *Games for Actors and Non-Actors Second Edition* by Augusto Boal (Routledge, 2002)

- Select readings from *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* by Adams, Blumenfeld, et al. (Routledge, 2000)

- Select issue-based readings (varied from semester to semester). (Saypol, “COMM 260” 3)
Student assignments were consistent across the three courses and are best summarized together. Students earn credit for a variety of tasks including academic work around the theories and issues, creative work including performing and writing, and reflection/analysis, which involves reacting to the work as well as reflecting on one’s personal involvement with the work. Attendance and participation were emphasized in all three courses. Here is a synthesis of the assignments across the three syllabi. One exception is noted and will be discussed.

- Presenting academic research on a social issue and/or human research/focus groups to gauge and document student experiences around a social issue on campus
- Helping to devise an Interactive Theatre performance
- Performing in an Interactive Theatre scene(s) and reflecting on the experience
- Attending and analyzing an Interactive Theatre performance, either for personal impact or perceived efficacy
- Facilitating a performance-based exercise, workshop, or performance for the ensemble or an outside group (not OSU-I)
- Journaling or Blackboard Responses
- A final reflection/analysis of impact of the experience and form

A thematic analysis of the course descriptions and learning objectives/outcomes reveal that, in all three cases, there is an effort to teach the theories and methods of Interactive Theatre and to apply them in practice. The following is a synthesis of the learning objectives across the three courses:

- To explore and understand the role of Interactive Theatre and service learning to educate and transform a community through arts and civic dialogue
• To learn and apply Interactive Theatre theories to collaboratively create new
  scripts/improvisations for performance to foster dialogue around social issues for the
  campus community
• To learn and apply research, writing, and presentation skills through the exploration of
  particular social issues
• To learn and apply acting and improvisation skills for Interactive Theatre
• To learn and apply communication skills to participate in the challenging conversations
  around social issues
• To learn and apply skills to critique theatrical work devised by the group in an effort to
  improve it
• To learn and apply skills to be an ally to members of a targeted group and to refer then to
  appropriate resources in the campus community.
• To develop leadership skills and confidence around social issues

The only significant difference among the three courses is that OSU-I does not require
students to facilitate either a performance-based exercise or difficult dialogue for a public
audience. This is an advanced skill for undergraduates. I did not include it the first time I taught
my course at UNC as I was not confident in the students’ ability to grasp the skills nor of my
ability to teach them. After the first semester, however, I felt it essential to include it; and I had
gained more confidence in my abilities as a facilitator and as an instructor. Training facilitation
will be discussed further in chapter four.

Scene Creation

One of the prevailing sentiments among practitioners is that the theatre part of Interactive
Theatre must be of high quality in order to succeed. If the actors’ performances and staged
conflict do not foster the necessary engagement, the ensuing dialogue will suffer, and the event will fail. After securing funding, finding the right leader, and establishing an infrastructure, the next major task is to create an effective scene.

Interactive Theatre Programs use a variety of methods to come up with their scripted scenes, structured improvisations, or case studies. While a detailed section on playwriting is beyond the scope of this study, it is possible to outline the basic process of scene creation used by the five programs.

Before that, it is important to review advice given by the two major influences: Augusto Boal and Michael Rohd. In his section on “Dramaturgy,” discussing scenes for Forum Theatre, Boal dictates that:

1) The text must clearly delineate the nature of each character, it must identify them precisely, so that the spectators can easily recognize each one’s ideology.

2) The original solutions proposed by the protagonist (in the play shown to provoke the audience’s interventions, ‘the model’) must contain at the very least one political or social ‘error’ which will be analyzed during the Forum session. These errors must be clearly expressed and carefully rehearsed, in well defined situations. This is because 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. The original play – the model – must present a mistake, a failure, so that the spect-actors will be spurred into finding solutions and inventing new ways of confronting oppression. We pose good questions, but the audience must supply good answers.
3) The piece can be performed in any genre (realism, symbolism, expressionism, etc.) except surrealism or the irrational; the style doesn’t matter, as long as the objective is to discuss more concrete situations (through the medium of theatre). (Boal, “Games” 242)

Michael Rohd, in his *Theatre for Community Conflict and Dialogue Hope is Vital* Training Manual, has strong opinions as to what constitutes an engaging scene. He believes that an “activating scene” is “not a role play, not a role modeling, and not a skit” (Rohd 102).

An activating scene grabs everyone in the room … people need to care about it, recognize it, and be pulled into the drama. Most important people must want to effect change in what they see. They need to see a clear opportunity to get in involved and to explore options … It asks what can be done. (Rohd 102)

He then describes an example of an activating scene from one of his workshops and provides, in bullet points, a “Checklist for an Activating Scene:”

- A believable and realistic situation
- A previously structured but not scripted scene …
- The scene revolved around a moment of decision …
- It has a clear relationship, intentions, circumstance, location, activity, high stakes, and two people listening to each other an connecting and pretending in the moment
- A conflict that is clear
- A protagonist that the audience cared about and with whom they could identify
• An antagonist(s) or “villain(s)” that wasn’t evil and cartoony but was credible, strong, and had certain ambiguities around his actions that made him human
• A clear idea of what the protagonist wanted and didn’t want
• The protagonist failure to get what she wanted
• The reasons for failure clearly bring the strong actions, attitudes, and choices of the antagonist(s)
• A clear sense that the protagonist has inner voices or desired that reinforced her inability to succeed. (Rohd 102-3)

There are two major differences between the language used by Boal and Rohd. First, Rohd is adamant that the scene be believable. He wants the audience to clearly recognize the situation on stage as realistic. This contrasts with Boal who leaves room for symbolic or metaphorical scenes. I also sense a difference between Boal’s call for characters whose natures are clearly delineated with recognizable ideologies, and Rohd’s desire for an antagonist with certain ambiguities that humanize him. Some practitioners might interpret Boal in a way that leads them to create caricature oppressors. This is far less likely to occur when reading Rohd’s text.

The responsibility for writing the scenes can fall to program staff, students, or some combination of the two. At CU-ITP, though scripts are typically written by Trent Norman or Rebecca Brown Adelman, graduate student Assistant Directors have also begun to write them. And recently, CU-ITP has even allowed undergraduates to write scripts around issues for which they have a particular passion. AT UT-TFD students devise their own structured improvisations under the guidance of Hoare and with feedback from the ensemble. At UNC-ITC, under my guidance the ensemble generated raw material which I shaped into a script, which I then brought
back to the ensemble for feedback. In my last semester, however, I had select students write the first draft of a scene and then give it to me for the first round of revision before it went back to the ensemble for feedback. At OSU-I the ensemble members generate material and Post writes the script. Finally, the small staff at CITE writes their own case studies, short scenes, and structured improvisations.

Several key steps are taken to create the scenes. I have taken every step mentioned by all five programs and synthesized them into one list. Not all programs do all of the steps; many omit or combine steps. But this list represents the full range of possibilities, and practitioners can choose the combination of steps that works best for their campus and situation.

Scene writers first do extensive research on the issue to be covered. They seem to search for information through two lenses:

• Educational lens: What is at the heart of these issues? What does one need to know and understand to educate oneself and others? And what are the main learning points that the program wants to get across during the performances?

• Dramatic lens: How do these issues come up in real life? What are the stories out there? Who are the characters, what are their relationships, and what are the conflicts?

In the end, however, practitioners report that they seek to craft conflicts that will provide the best context for a deep audience exploration of any given issue.

First, most writers do academic research. They often start with the internet searching for sources to learn more about the issues, gather facts and statistics, and identify main ideas and themes. They also might read published personal narratives around the issues. In several cases, ensemble leaders bring in guest speakers, experts on a particular issue, to come talk with the ensemble.
They also do human research. This often takes the form of interviews and focus groups with populations on campus. Practitioners seek to identify how the different populations on campus experience the issues. Questions that follow the familiar framework of “Who, what, where, when and how?” can help define the characters, conflict, setting, and action. Whenever human research is conducted, ethics are involved. Since the research will not result in publication of data, approval from the Institutional Research Board (or its campus equivalent) is not necessary. The practitioners I interviewed, however, go to great lengths to protect the anonymity of their subjects. Specifically they will never portray one person’s story in a scene. To avoid someone being recognized, exposed, and or re-victimized, they create characters that are composites of multiple people.

Next, most groups engage in some sort of brainstorming session, asking: What could be the scene? Who could be the characters? What could be the conflict(s)? The various ideas are discussed until one idea/storyline is chosen and fleshed out. The scene chosen is the one that is most compelling to watch, raises the most appropriate questions, and provides the best opportunities for intervention.

Once an idea is chosen, there are many ways to generate raw material for scenes. Here are two common methods.

- Images from brainstormed interactions are formed or sculpted, and actors use the images as a starting point for improvising a text while writers record what they say.
- The major “beats” of the scene are outlined and actors improvise/role play the different beats, while writers record what they say.
After raw material is generated, writers draft the scenes. In some ensembles, the drafts are brought back to the ensemble for feedback and then revised. In other groups, the drafts remain among leadership.

Most leaders said that they did everything in their power to ensure that the scene did not even contain a hint of that which is donnish or pedantic. Post of OSU-I explains. “In the ensemble, I always tell my students, and they tell each other, ‘Beware the after school special.’ We ensure that we do not create anything of the sort. It would absolutely fail to impact.”

Rehearsal/Training

Given the range of tasks expected of ensemble members, leaders devote significant time to planning ensemble rehearsals to take full advantage of the limited available time. Weekly ensemble rehearsals range from 2-3 hours and are generally held in the afternoon or early evening.

Across the board, leaders reported that they have their ensembles play “theatre games,” – experiential, performance-based exercises that serve several functions:

- To engage in ensemble building
- To create a safe space for productive exploration and creation
- To improve performance and improvisation skills

Theatre games can be done individually, in small groups, or as an ensemble. Hoare emphasized that she starts UT-TFD rehearsals with low risk exercises and, as ensemble members become more capable, she builds up to higher risk ones that involve more personal sharing. In addition, students do a lot of image work so that they understand viscerally the importance of how they use their bodies to convey meaning and communicate, as well as understand what they perceive when they take in other bodies on stage (Hoare, “Telephone”). The leaders of programs
with undergraduate actors consistently said that they wanted to spend more time on exercises related to improving acting and improvisation skills, as well as vocal projection and physical expression, but they were limited by time.

Next, leaders use rehearsal time to learn about and process the issues. They use theatre games or academic presentations as a starting point for generating conversations. In addition, some ensembles use the weekly rehearsal time to build their scripted scenes or structured improvisations, or at least to generate material toward that end. Furthermore, some ensembles use the time to rehearse upcoming performances and/or to debrief/critique previous performances.

Rehearsals are usually guided by a member of the leadership. Given the interactive form, rehearsals must focus not only on the script, but also on the improvisation that will occur during the audience interaction. This can take the form of practicing the question and answer technique, with directors or ensemble members serving as a mock audience, or by simulating the moments when audience members might choose to come up on stage and challenge the characters. How leaders conduct these rehearsals is dependent on their individual style as directors, which falls beyond the scope of this study.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has endeavored to provide current and future practitioners of Interactive Theatre with a variety of ideas and strategies for establishing a functional ensemble structure, recruiting quality actors, maintaining the commitment of those actors, and for developing an Interactive Theatre course if desired. In addition, it has sought to provide a variety of Interactive Theatre formats and techniques from which to draw in order to create and perform scenes which impact audiences.
Practitioners can use this information to determine which structures, strategies, methods, and techniques would work best for their individual campuses. There is no one Interactive Theatre formula that will work for all institutions. Choices should be made in consultation with members of their ensembles. This will involve members in the process and increases their investment in the outcome. Students know best what will motivate them the most.

The practitioner should also consult their campus allies for ideas and feedback about program logistics and works in progress. Not only can they provide valuable information, but the experience of helping will increase their investment in your program and its success. Also, when collaborating on specific projects with a specific campus partners, you consult them at several points during the process to gather their input and feedback. While you are the theatrical expert, they are the content expert; they have valuable insight into how the issues manifest themselves in day-to-day life on campus. Moreover, because being an Interactive Theatre director is often a one-person job, involving others can also help the professional feel less alone in what can be a daunting administrative and creative process.

The last overarching theme to emerge from this chapter is ensemble continuity and how best to achieve it. Ensemble leaders agree that having consistency among ensemble membership helps to foster the connection and trust necessary to engage in this difficult, personal, and powerful work. Each ensemble has achieved this in different ways. CU-ITP provides an hourly wage from the onset. OSUI-I offers a course for credit that can be repeated three times. UT-TFD has created a two-tiered structure which includes a year long course, and then provides monetary and leadership opportunities if students continue. And UNC-ITC has a three tiered structure, where student volunteer then have the option of taking a course, and then earning an hourly wage.
after that. Even CITE, which, until recent adverse events, had a small but strong and consistent ensemble, is working hard to reestablish that continuity.

Above all, ensembles leaders agreed that it was their priority to provide members with a safe and secure space for artistic, academic, and personal growth. Chapter five documents how they have succeeded in this regard; ensemble members are benefitting greatly from the Interactive Theatre experience.
Chapter IV: Facilitation

I have defined Interactive Theatre as “a combination of scripted and improvisational performance, with the goal of fostering critical dialogue designed to challenge attitudes and behaviors around a variety of social issues.” Last chapter presented effective practices for creating quality scripted and improvisational performances. When crafted correctly, the performance will certainly generate dialogue – reactions, ideas, opinions, and other conversation – among the audience members. That dialogue must now be facilitated. It must be presided over and mediated.

Definition of Interactive Theatre Facilitation

As Interactive Theatre is one of the newer forms of applied and community based theatre, it is important to define “facilitation” in this context, especially as distinct from “facilitation” in the broader field, as well as “jokering” (serving as the Joker) in Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed.

A facilitator in community based theatre is typically the person who leads a community of people through a creative process which usually culminates (but does not have to) in a final artistic product which is performed for the larger community. This person, sometimes called a theatre artist or teaching artist, “facilitates” that process.

While a similar relationship surely exists in Interactive Theatre between the leader of an ensemble and its members, a facilitator in Interactive Theatre more commonly refers to the person who presides over the public performance. This person introduces the event and the format, coordinates the audience interaction, moderates the conversations that ensue, and provides some sort of closure for the event.
**Interactive Theatre Facilitator vs. Augusto Boal’s Joker**

While Boal himself does not give an explicit definition of the Joker in his literature, his long time colleague Barbara Santos at the Center for Theatre of Oppressed in Rio de Janeiro, distributes a piece called “Who is the Joker?”:

The Joker in TO is an artist with pedagogic and political functions who help people to understand themselves better, express their ideas and emotions, analyze their problems and seek their own alternatives to change or solve them. The Joker doesn’t need to have answers but should be able to formulate questions that stimulate the rise of alternatives to each question presented on the Forum Theatre play. The Joker should be an expert in diversity with multi-disciplinary background and attitude: she/he must have knowledge of theatre, popular culture, pedagogy, psychology, politics, and everything else that is possible. Beyond that she/he must have and develop sensibility, facility to communicate with and coordinate groups, pointed perception, common sense and ability to synthesize among others … (Santos 1)

It is interesting to note the Joker could be thought of as a combination of the community based and Interactive Theatre facilitator. S/he typically leads a group through a workshop process where they create their own Forum Theatre pieces, and s/he presides over the resulting performance.

Performing the latter role, the Joker seems similar to a facilitator of Interactive Theatre. But, on closer examination, Boal outlines “some rules for Jokers which are almost obligatory,” which highlight the significant differences between the Joker and the Interactive Theatre
facilitator (Boal, “Games” 261-2). Boal dedicates four out of six rules to the idea of neutrality. He writes:

1) Jokers must avoid all actions which could manipulate or influence the audience. They must not draw conclusions which are not self-evident. They must always open the possible conclusions to debate, starting them in an interrogative rather than an affirmative form, [so that we are not] confronted with the Joker’s own personal interpretation of the events.

2) Jokers personally decide nothing….

3) The Joker must constantly be relaying doubts back to the audience so that it is they who make the decisions…

4) The Joker must be Socratic – dialectically, and by means of questions, by means of doubts, she or he must help the spectators to gather their thoughts, to prepare their actions … The Joker is midwife [and] must assist in the birthing of all ideas, of all actions. Going further than Socrates who framed questions that expected answers, and so doing, limited the field of discussions, Forum Theatre frames questions that expect, as answers, new questions: what do you want to talk about? We try to avoid any form of manipulation of the participants … (Boal, “Games” 261-262)

Clearly, Boal unequivocally demands neutrality of his Joker. Given that Boal was the first influence mentioned by ensemble leaders, I asked them: “To what extent should facilitator be – or purport to be – neutral?”

While their answers will be revealed throughout this chapter, I argue from the onset that not only should the Facilitator of Interactive Theatre not be neutral, the Facilitator of Interactive
Theatre cannot be neutral. It is a near impossibility for three reasons. The goals of the work, the social identities of the facilitators, and societal hegemony all preclude the facilitator from remaining neutral during the performance.

**Scholarship on Interactive/Forum Theatre Facilitation**

There is very little scholarship on the facilitation of dialogue in Interactive Theatre, or even in Forum Theatre. One article, however, merits review. Paul Dwyer, in his 2004 article “Making Bodies Talk in Forum Theatre,” discusses his observation of a Forum Theatre project called “Boundaries” by the Headlines Theatre Company in Vancouver, Canada, the goal of which was to reduce the incidence of violence against women at colleges and universities in British Columbia. He respectfully criticized the facilitation of the student Jokers; but, even more, he criticized the adult facilitators who trained them:

The Jokers were advised to avoid, or at least minimize, discussion during the performance. The advice was that ‘as far as possible you try to get the focus off the people who are talking in the audience unless they want to intervene onstage.’ In all cases the rule of thumb was to ‘never let the discussion go on longer than the intervention, otherwise the discussion become more important that the intervention’. (Dwyer 203-204)

He points out that, ironically, the Jokers were unsuccessful in their efforts to minimize discussion; the audience talked anyway. Given this reality, Dwyer asserts, “There is no mistaking the Joker’s role as teacher” (Dwyer 204). And, as the student Jokers were not trained in facilitating dialogue, the result was “at best … a discourse in which the oppressors are never named as such and their actions rarely scrutinized; at worst, … a discourse in which those who were oppressed, if only they could get in touch with their true feelings, would learn to stand up
for their rights” – which he justifiably lambastes as victim-blaming (Dwyer 205). He laments the “limited scope of the debate on male sexual violence that was being engaged” (Dwyer 207).

Dwyer concludes that it is not the quantity of on-stage interventions that maximize the quality of learning in Forum Theatre; instead he argues “that the kind of speaking position taken up by the Joker, including the way the Joker regulates the flow of talk from other speakers, is not just subsidiary to the ‘main act’ of the Forum being played out on stage. Rather it is largely through speech that the Joker enacts a pedagogical role which may be crucial in shaping the ideological contours of the event” (Dwyer 201). Dwyer argues that more emphasis should be put on the discourse and that facilitators should be trained accordingly.

Interactive Theatre Facilitators seem to be heeding his conclusions. As pointed out in chapter three, none of the five programs are practicing Forum Theatre in its pure form, with on-stage replacements as their primary interactive technique; rather they have modified the Forum techniques to include other interactive techniques like question and answer and image theatre. More importantly, all five programs are putting significant emphasis on the dialogue portion of the event. CU-ITP and UNC set aside a whole section of their performance to do so; OSU-I jumps into dialogue right after the end of the scripted scene. UT-TFD encourages pauses and dialogue from the onset of the scene. And CITE initiates dialogue immediately after the audience reads the case study or witnesses the short scene/structured improvisation and continues it throughout the performance. Finally, the five programs invest a great deal of energy to ensure quality and responsible facilitation.

**Effective Practices for Facilitation**

Leaders of all five ensembles facilitate the vast majority of their performances. UT-TFD, CU-ITP, and UNC-ITC also occasionally delegate this responsibility to their Graduate
Student Assistants. OSU-I and UNC-ITC sometimes co-facilitate with content experts, such as mental health counselors, nutritionists, or experts on diversity. In rare cases where undergraduate students do facilitate, it is always in a co-facilitation role.

When I asked the ensemble leaders, “What makes effective Interactive Theatre facilitation? What does it look/sound like?,” there was consistently a long pause, followed by a deep sigh. Of all the skills necessary to run and Interactive Theatre program, facilitating dialogue is deemed the most difficult to execute and the most nebulous to explain. That being said, there is a consistent set of qualities that came up during the interviews. Furthermore, most noted that any discussion of facilitation demands a concurrent discussion of social justice and the significant role that identity plays in facilitation. Not surprisingly this paralleled the scholarship on facilitation, which drew on theories from a variety of fields, including theatre, facilitation, and social justice education.

Roles and Techniques of the Facilitator

Table 9 contains a list of the prescribed roles of the facilitator and techniques on how to execute them. It represents a synthesis of interview data, documents gathered from programs, and the theory found in the scholarship of the three fields mentioned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles of the Interactive Theatre Facilitator during Performance</th>
<th>Techniques to Fulfill these Roles Effectively</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foster and maintain the engagement of audience members</td>
<td>Exude the proper energy level and body language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Facilitation Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have and/or exude confidence in your ability as a facilitator</td>
<td>Establish ground rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct an audience warm-up</td>
<td>Be and/or appear non-judgmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a “safe space,” an atmosphere of respect so that all audience</td>
<td>Establish a tone that is both serious and light</td>
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<td>members who want to can share their perspectives</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage those quieter voices, or those people who might be or feel</td>
<td>Establish ground rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>silenced, to step forward and share their points of view</td>
<td>Be and/or appear non-judgmental</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manage and deepen the conversation</td>
<td>Encourage step-up and step-back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage and deepen the conversation</td>
<td>Allow for silence in the room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create an experience that feels interrogative rather than didactic</td>
<td>Ask the right questions at the right time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiate conflict and conflicting ideas in the room</td>
<td>Validate and challenge audience responses</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allow for silence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Echo back (paraphrase) comments to audience members as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Validate and challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allow for silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deal with resistance to ideas on the part of audience members and/or comments that perpetuate stereotypes/myths or continue to target people</td>
<td>Validate and challenge Allow for silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(For all of the roles above)</td>
<td>Study social justice theory, do homework on one’s own set of social identities and their potential impact on audiences, and act with intentionality with that in mind.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Engagement of Audience Members**

Audience members need to be engaged and motivated if they are going to participate. While the script, direction, acting, and improvisation have a lot to do with whether or not that is the case, the facilitator is the audience’s first contact with the group through his or her introduction, and his or her behavior throughout is critical. There is an adage in the field of education which goes, “You make the weather in your classroom.” The same goes for Interactive Theatre. The energy level with which one approaches the work establishes the climate in the room that will impact the audience and its perception of the performance. Michael Rohd writes that you should not match the energy of the audience, rather you must exceed it. You must set the energy level where you want it (Rohd 113).

The leaders I interviewed talked a lot about having confidence. The sentiment was that if you don’t have confidence in your ability to lead, why should the audience have confidence in you? A discussion on how to build up/exude self-confidence, however, is well beyond the scope of this study. It is too complex a topic and too unique a quality from individual to individual.
Receiving proper training in facilitating and finding opportunities to practice, however, are two major keys to gaining experience and the confidence that goes with it.

Audience warm-ups can also help raise the energy level in the room. When I facilitate performances, I use one of two warm-ups I learned from CU-ITP which participants can do from their seats. In “The Circle and the X”, members of the audience are asked to make a circle with one hand and an “X” with the other, and then they are asked to do them simultaneously. In “The Thumb Game” audience members are asked to place their right thumb in the open left palm of their neighbor. Then I count to three. The object of the game is to, on three, grab the thumb of your neighbor without having your thumb grabbed. Both of these exercises tend to induce laughter and a sense of play in the room.

Creating a Safe Space

“Create a safe space” is the buzz phrase of all facilitators of Interactive Theatre. If audience members are going to take the risk to offer their perspectives on issues that cause discomfort, then facilitators have to craft a space that alleviates that discomfort and stimulates the desire to share personal views. Three popular methods to creating a safe space are establishing ground rules for audience participation, cultivating a non-judgmental persona, and establishing a tone that is both serious and light.

The facilitators interviewed uniformly take time to establish ground rules for the dialogue. Pat Griffin, in his chapter “Facilitating Social Justice Education Courses,” writes that in order to create a safe space for sharing of feelings and challenging of beliefs you must “identify a set of interaction guidelines at the beginning” (Griffin 283).

Usually toward the beginning of the performance, facilitators explain each of their specific ground rules. Subsequently, it is their responsibility to monitor the ensuing conversation
and note any breaches that occur. Figure 7 displays a list of abbreviated versions of the most common ground rules gathered from facilitators and from relevant scholarship. It is important to note that the facilitators interviewed do not use all of them during a single performance. From my own experience and informal discussions with colleagues, reviewing too many ground rules can be tedious and suck the energy out of the room. Practitioners should pick and choose from the list as they feel appropriate. Three is an optimum number. One practical approach for a practitioner would be to pick the three that they think are most applicable, streamline their choice of verbiage, and then rehearse their delivery in advance of performance.

**Ground Rules for Interactive Theatre Performances**

- Respect yourself and respect others
- Give everyone the benefit of the doubt/Assume best intentions
- Speak from your own experience. Avoid generalizations.
- Share the space/Step up, Step back
- No blaming or scapegoating
- Set own boundaries for sharing/Make sure to take care of yourself above all else if you feel yourself being triggered.

Figure 7. Common Ground Rules for Interactive Theatre Performances

Leaders also strongly encouraged being non-judgmental when facilitating, or, if this proves personally difficult, then they should at least exude a non-judgmental persona. If participants feel judged by facilitators, they are going to shut down and not participate in the dialogue. Brown Adelman of CU-ITP comments,
You need to listen, track, and then you notice something and you point out what you are noticing without judgment. I might say, ‘I notice that people are feeling strongly about such and such. I wonder what that is about’ or ‘I wonder what some other people think.’ I like to use words like ‘wonder’ as these words are curious above all else. The words are questioning not telling.

This idea will be developed more below in the section on validating and challenging audience responses.

When discussing how to create an effective learning environment, Griffin suggests establishing the proper tones for conversations on social justice issues. He states that “an atmosphere that is both serious and light works well. This means treating social justice content as the serious issue that it is, but incorporating activities that include humor and playfulness as well as activities that can stimulate sadness, anger, or confusion” (Griffin 283).

**Encouraging Quieter Voices to Speak Up**

Facilitators inevitably encounter situations where a few audience members dominate the conversation, while most others remain quiet. They expressed greatest concern for the people who want to share their views but either lack the courage to do so or feel silenced in some way, either by other audience members or possibly by the facilitator. In this case, it is good idea to use a technique called “Step up, Step Back,” encouraging those who have made comments to step back and those who have not stepped forward yet to do so. Post of OSU-I explained, “You as the facilitator have to be concerned about allowing as many points of view into the conversation as possible. I want to know that everyone’s voice is being heard. So I often ask a question like, ‘Is there anyone we have not heard from who would like to add something?’”
Managing and Deepening the Conversation

Perhaps the most active role of the facilitator is managing and deepening the conversation. Hoare of UT-TFD explains, “In essence, facilitation is recognizing what to say and when to say it; when to intervene and when to be silent; and when to push, when to let something go. It is how to recognize opportunities for learning moments.” Post of OSU-I adds, “After a group of comments or points, I try to connect as many of the points as possible, offer a summation, and then move the conversation forward … There is a thread that occurs and I try to use it to propel the conversation.” Norman of CU-ITP agrees, “We try to take the points made by the audience that seem relevant with our [social justice] theories, and turn them into dialogue points to get people talking about what lies at the heart of the issues.”

Facilitators for UNC-ITC create a facilitation guide for each scene, with a list of facilitation points that they aim to cover before the end of the performance. The goal is for these points to be generated in conversation and underscored by facilitators; that approach gives the performance an organic feel that is the least didactic. Sometimes, however, these points are not raised by audience members and facilitators must raise the issue themselves, either by asking a question or throwing it out as an idea for consideration.

“Active Listening” is another pair of buzz words that comes up often when discussing facilitation. The techniques most applicable to Interactive Theatre dictate that facilitators should:

- Maintain eye contact and a open posture toward the person talking
- Not suffer from the disease interrupt-itis. In other words, do not interrupt.
- Focus (almost) solely on what the speaker is saying. Though impossible as an absolute given all the tasks of the facilitator, try not to think about what you are going to say next.

You will be surprised as to how much more information you get as a result.
• Manage internal distractions. If your own thoughts keep churning, allow them to enter and exit, continually re-focusing your attention on the speaker and his or her words.

• Keep an open mind. Try not to make assumptions about what you think the speaker is thinking until the end. This will also help with cultivating a non-judgmental persona.

• As needed, echo back, via paraphrase, what you have heard the speaker say.

• Ask questions: for clarification of what the speaker has said, to challenge them as needed, or to move/deepen the conversation in a different direction.

• Learn to accept silence, and even use it to your advantage. Either emotionally settle into the silence or practice a counting technique (count to 5 or even 10) to ensure that you are not jumping in too soon. (Heron; Hogan)

A few of these merit further discussion. Echoing back via paraphrase can serve up to four functions: it ensures that everyone in the room heard what was said, it helps to make the speaker feel like s/he was heard, it provides an opportunity for s/he to clarify what s/he said, and it allows facilitators to underscore a point before using it either to move forward in a conversation, go deeper into an idea, or challenge an idea. Facilitators have suggested that this be done with a subtext of “Did I get it right?” They might say, “What I think I heard you say was …” and then check in with the audience member either verbally or non-verbally for an acknowledgement. Post of OSU-I insists, “You really need to listen to what is being said. I tend to paraphrase and echo it back. ‘Is this what you are saying?’ I will ask.”

For Hoare of UT-TFD, the skill of questioning is especially critical, as their format and facilitation is based around questions. Their core process focuses on asking the audience to recognize the key moments in the structured improvisations that raise the most important questions about interpersonal violence. As audience members pinpoint these moments and ask
the questions, facilitators then solicit answers from the audience which generate the dialogue. In this case in particular facilitators play a significant role in framing and phrasing those questions.

As noted, silence can also be a powerful tool. Griffin points out that many teachers are uncomfortable with silence. The same goes for some Interactive Theatre facilitators. He recommends that, “After asking a question, teachers need to learn to wait rather than either answering their own question or asking another in order to fill a silence … students often need silence to think about information or perspectives that challenge that understanding of an issue” (Griffin 288).

He gives examples of how to handle silence in the room and suggests phrases that might help. In response to a “processing question” to which no one has responded, the facilitator can say, “I’m not sure what this silence means. Can anyone say what you are thinking and feeling right now?” (Griffin 288). The facilitator could also say, “Let’s just sit with this silence and give all of us time to sort out our feelings. When someone feels ready to answer one of the … questions, please do” (Griffin 288).

**Negotiating Conflict/Dealing with Resistance**

Active listening techniques are helpful in negotiating conflicting ideas in the room, in dealing with resistance to ideas, and handling comments that perpetuate stereotypes/myths and target others. These three are perhaps the most challenging aspects of performance facilitation. And they call attention to the questions as to whether Interactive Theatre facilitators should have an agenda and/or whether they can remain neutral during the dialogue. Regarding an agenda, Norman of CU-ITP says,

We do not go in with a strong agenda, rather we ask “What are the different perspectives” and go from there. That being said, I don’t want to say that we don’t
have an agenda. There is an agenda, but the agenda is that we are going to have some type of conversation. As a facilitator, you have to be able to accept that that it is going to happen – we are going to hear the perspectives that justify oppression. But we want people to say these things and we want other people to hear them say them, and then we include it in the dialogue …

Norman, here, vacillates on the idea of CU-ITP having an agenda. In a later statement, however, he is more specific:

Now what some people say is not okay. Facilitation is not about making everything okay. We do need to validate them in the sense that we want people to feel like they are being heard, but then we allow for the other people participating in the dialogue to challenge their views, or if they don’t, then we find a way to do it.

While Hoare of UT-TFD is concerned with maintaining the buy-in of audience members, she recognizes a clear need for an agenda in her ensemble’s practice.

In our program, there is a need, natural of course, to make people feel comfortable in the room. But our program is so deeply situated working against Interpersonal Violence that we would never want a situation to arise where we were powerless or unable to stop verbally abusive behavior in room – and by this I mean language that ends up putting a lot of blame on one person, for example gender put-downs or racial slurs. And so we are ready to challenge assumptions made around these issues.
To deal with conflict, resistance, or continued targeting of subordinate groups, the “validate and challenge” model seems to represent prevailing strategy. Brown Adelman of CU-ITP explains,

If you are asking people to do the best they can, you have to let people be who they are and share their perspectives. No matter what an audience member is saying, the facilitator must make them at least feel like they are being heard and listened to; because if you shut them down, others will not feel safe sharing those perspectives that we want to become part of the conversations so that they can be challenged.

Most facilitators recognize, however, that if no one in the audience speaks up, that they need to step in and do the challenging. Brown Adelman continues, “Facilitators should acknowledge the comment, honor that it has been shared – not the idea, just that it has been shared – and then turn it back to rest of group. The hope is that someone from the group will challenge the idea, and then the facilitator can underscore the opposing perspective with supporting information.”

But facilitators cannot go too far, or else they risk turning off the audience. Brown Adelman concludes, “Interactive Theatre should not be a didactic experience – this is not political theatre. Change will not happen with a facilitator coming in telling audience what to think and feel; it will happen through the fostering of conversation within the community.”

While Brown Adelman tends toward not espousing an agenda, she recognizes that there are limits:

I am most direct around the issue of sexual assault – especially when addressing victim blaming. As a facilitator I do want to have an honest discussion, but some
things feel off limits. But I recognize that this presents a problematic situation with regards to facilitation … I remind myself that not everyone will leave the performance happy. I can’t make it so that everyone leaves feeling okay. To be challenged around one’s current beliefs can be unsettling. You can’t control a person’s emotional feelings on a topic, and I have to be okay with that.

Post of OSU-I holds similar views: “I do not want to have a personal opinion that I am putting into a space. But it is impossible not to be biased, and I sometimes I have to. But if I do then I try to temper it.”

Facilitators clearly understand that one of their roles is to challenge audience members around their ideas. One handout that I received when I trained with CU-ITP is called “Manage the AIR SPACE: How to Facilitate Difficult Situations.” AIR SPACE is an acronym:

- A – Acknowledge: the persons comments and/or feelings
- I – Inquire: into the specifics behind a person’s comment/reaction
- R – Relate: to what the person has said or felt
- S – Silence: pause to open up more space for reflections, thoughts or feelings, honoring the moment or experience
- P – Paraphrase: what you heard a person say
- A – Appreciate: what is being said
- C – Clarify: what the person is saying
- E – Engage: others in the dialogue
- E – Encouraging: them to notice their triggered feelings and reactions in the moment (Interactive Theatre Project, “Manage” 1)
The document recommends phrases that a facilitator could use in these situations. UNC-ITC also has a handout that it uses for Facilitation Training with its own set of phrases. For the purposes of efficiency, I have synthesized the two below to supply facilitators with some useful examples of the validate and challenge model, as well as active listening techniques:

**Validate and Challenge/Active Listening Phrases**

- “Thank you for sharing.”
- “That’s a good point” or “I hear your point about…”
- “I understand what you are saying.” or “I see where you are coming from”
- “Can you say more about that? Can you give an example of that?”
- “So what I think I hear you saying is this:” (Proceed to paraphrase as best you can) or “If I understand you correctly, you want everyone to know …”
- “Help me understand what you are saying …”
- “I admire your honesty” or “I recognize the risk you took to say that …”
- What do other people think about what was said?” “I am wondering what other folks reactions might be …”
- “Wow, I see you feel strongly about that. Have you thought about (insert idea fact, or statistic here)? or “What do other people think?”
- “What you’re saying seems to connect with what this other person has said (or this other idea …)”
- “I’m noticing you’re speaking with a lot of energy. I’m wondering what you might be feeling right now…”
- “I’m noticing I’m feeling a little triggered. I wonder if you are too…”
Facilitating Social Justice Education

The knowledge base and skill set deemed critical by all facilitators was that of social justice theory and, of course, the ability to articulate it and to dialogue around it. Norman of CU-ITP insists, “Social justice is a huge component of our work, and if you are not integrating these ideas, then you are not doing the work correctly.”

Griffin in his section on “Assessing Initial Readiness to Facilitate Social Justice Education,” calls on facilitators to ask themselves key questions to make sure they have the requisite resources to facilitate. They include “support, passion, awareness, knowledge, and skills” (Griffin 282). Mostly self explanatory, ensuring the proper levels in these five areas is a great first step to embark on this facilitation journey.

Role of Identity

Social justice education theory emphasizes the significant role that the identity of the instructors plays in the educational environments which seek to tackle these challenging issues. Lee Ann Bell, Sharon Washington, Gerald Weinstein, and Barbara Love explain in their chapter “Knowing Ourselves as Instructors”:

Few teachers would claim that raising issues of oppression and social justice in the classroom is a neutral activity. Content as cognitively complex and socially and emotionally charged as social justice, is inevitably challenging at both personal and intellectual levels. In the social justice classroom we struggle alongside our students with our own social identities, biases, fears, and prejudices.
We too need to be willing to examine and deal honestly with our values, assumptions, and emotional reactions to oppression issues. (Bell et al. 299)

The four authors strongly recommend that facilitators raise their awareness of their own social identities and confront their own biases: “Whether we are members of the privileged or targeted group with respect to particular issues inevitably influences how we react to material under discussion, as well as how our students are likely to perceive us” (Bell et al. 300). They go on to say that facilitators can offer their “experience with both dominant and targeted identities as a way to join with students, expand the boundaries in the room for discussing these subjects, and model being open to exploring our own relative positions of power and privilege in relation to different oppression issues” (Bell et al. 300).

The significant role that social identities play in facilitation struck a deep chord in all of the facilitators interviewed. They agreed it was vital for facilitators to explore their own identities and then be mindful of them when working. While all identities are important, the identities most visible to audience members are that of race and gender. Norman of CU-ITP, who identifies as an African American male explains:

Identity has a huge impact and it is important to consider the nature of that impact. It is important to be aware of how identity will be perceived by audience members. Audience members try to code us based on how we ‘show up’ or how we appear. Audiences see race and gender first and it can have an effect on how people might perceive the ideas being discussed and moderated by us. Because oftentimes they have preconceived notions about the points of view of people who identify as specific races and genders, we need to be aware of this and to
counteract this by allowing people in the audience to witness people with different identities talking about these ideas.

Hoare of UT-TFD, who identifies as a White female agrees:

Identity definitely has an impact. I believe the audience will feel that impact but won’t bring it up unless the facilitator acknowledges it. The identities of the facilitator – or the perceived identities – are essential to acknowledge when dealing with challenging issues. For example, as we are talking about interpersonal violence, when I bring race into the conversation, I have found that I have to get very specific about what I am asking people to consider and think – because our audiences are often quick to say, “I do not see race.” So, I often have to name what we might be perceiving.”

Post of OSU-I agrees:

Yes identity has an impact. Like when I, a White female, facilitate a performance for a group of minorities about their challenges, identity is on everyone’s mind, theirs and yours. And that is just one example. Who you are and your identity impacts what you are delivering and how it is received.

The common theme is intentionality. Facilitators must be deliberate about what they say based on the identities that audiences are likely to perceive. Hoare intimates that one intentional use of identity is to have facilitators of dominant identities make statements that advocate for the corresponding subordinate identity in that category. She specifically mentions that she, a White person, will talk about race in a more inclusive way. As I trained for two years with Norman, an African-American male, and co-director Brown Adelman, a White female, I can report that they are intentional about Brown Adelman proffering statements that combat racial stereotypes, and
Norman making statements that contest gender stereotypes. In these three cases, facilitators are utilizing their agency status in a particular identity to model being an ally to another who is of target status.

**Co-facilitation**

One solutions acknowledged by interviewees is to strive to have multiple identities represented in the facilitation – as many as possible, based on a race, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and others as they apply. Griffin strongly suggests that it is most effective to co-facilitate. He explains that when dealing with an issue (e.g. sexism) it is more effective to have a team of two facilitators, one from the agent group and one from the target group (i.e. a woman and a man). He defends this idea: “Some parts … are more appropriately addressed by a facilitator from the agent group, and others are best dealt with a by a facilitator from the target group” (Griffin 281). He goes on to say:

This leadership configuration also provides students with role models from both the agent and target groups as they grapple with challenging issues. Leaders from the target group model empowerment and affirmation. Agent leaders model how to be a self affirming and effective ally. (Griffin 281)

But Griffin acknowledges that it is not always practical. And given the limited resources among Interactive Theatre programs and the fact that ensemble leaders feel overextended, they tend to agree. Norman of CU-ITP explains, “We must try, as we are facilitating, to represent as many types of identities as we can. It is best to facilitate in pairs if possible, and for the two people to have different sets of intersecting identities. But sometimes you have to run a cost benefit analysis and you go with one.”
This cost benefit analysis is an exercise that all of the facilitators have experienced. Factors that influence the decision include the availability of facilitators (staff and graduate students) and the topic of the script. Different facilitators feel that certain topics demand multiple identities more than others; two in particular seem to be sexual assault (both a man and a woman) and race relations (both a White person and a person of Color).

UNC-ITC and OSU-I found one solution to increase the frequency of co-facilitation, which was to expand the facilitator pool to other staff in the university, making use of their expertise and leadership skills. At UNC, this solution was employed especially the year it was founded, as I did not have graduate student help and my undergraduates were new to the work. There was a pitfall, however, in that, given my overloaded schedule and that of the other campus professionals, there often was not ample time to fully train them on the format, content, and/or the facilitation techniques. As a result, they were less comfortable during performance and spoke less. Then I overcompensated by talking more – one of my weaknesses to begin with. Given that I am a White male, and the other facilitator was a woman or person of Color, the imbalance of voices on stage was not an ideal model for sharing power and authority with subordinate groups. It is important for me to commit to improving in that regard in the future.

Facilitators who have to facilitate on their own often find it helpful to name their identities. Hoare of UT-TFD reports,

I sometimes find places to bring my identity into a conversation to encourage participation. I might say, “I am thinking, as a White female (or a White person), that this question could be hard to answer.” I also reference my identity as female a lot when we are talking about female survivor. I might say, “As a woman, sometimes I wonder …”
Acknowledging one’s identity can also lessen the impact of any “elephants in the room.” Once, I, a White person, had to facilitate on my own at a performance on race relations to a group of 50 students of Color from various multicultural fraternities and sororities. Right before we began the dialogue, I said something to the extent of, “I just want to take a moment here to acknowledge that I am not a person of Color and, of course, there is a set of experiences that I never have had or will have. That being said, I think I can facilitate a conversation where you all can share your views on the subject.” Though I cannot be sure, it seemed to improve the atmosphere. I know for certain that it put me more at ease, and, in turn, helped my facilitation – an ancillary benefit for sure.

Hegemony, Master Narratives, and Dominant Ideologies

A facilitator’s individual social identities and biases are not the only social justice-based items that hinder neutrality. The hegemony that exists in society, and as such in the Interactive Theatre space, precludes neutrality as well. Bell explains that,

Hegemony describes how a dominant group can project its particular way of seeing social reality so successfully that its view is accepted as common sense, as part of the natural order, even by those who are in fact disempowered by it … power consists in … an ongoing system that is mediated by well-intentioned people acting as agents of oppression usually unconsciously by simply going about their daily lives.” (Bell 11)

Hegemony exists because a series of “master narratives” combine and develop into “dominant ideologies.” A master narrative, or grand narrative, is a leading mainstream cultural story a nation tells itself and others about the society (Delgado and Stefancic 220). This story is decided upon and perpetuated by the groups in society who hold the power, privilege, and access
enjoyed by people with agent identities (in America: White, male, heterosexual, etc.) – thus the “master” and “dominant” adjectives. Those in power craft the story or “narrative,” which becomes the “ideology” by which people are forced to live with or assimilate (Delgado and Stefancic 220-6).

In “A Dictionary of Sociology,” John Scott and Gordon Marshall explain the “dominant ideology thesis”:

Proponents of the thesis identify ideology, a term used (in this context) synonymously with concepts such as shared belief systems, ultimate values, and common culture, as the mainstay of social order in advanced capitalist societies. The argument assumes that, in class-stratified societies, the ruling class controls the production of ideas as well as material production. It propagates a set of coherent beliefs which dominate subordinate meaning systems and, as a consequence, shapes working-class consciousness in the interests of the status quo. (Scott and Marshall 1)

In other words, a dominant ideology is a belief system which is held and perpetuated by dominant groups and it, consciously or unconsciously, maintains the power structure that privileges dominant groups and enables the targeting and suppression of subordinate groups. While this dominant ideology thesis was developed in the context of a Marxist critique of social class – with the ruling class maintaining its power and control over the working class – the theory is easily applied to other “isms,” for example, heterosexism and ableism. Society confers privileges to heterosexuals and able-bodied people without overt oppressive acts. LGBTQ couples are largely denied the privileges possessed by heterosexuals, such as tax breaks for married couples and, until recently, service in the military. And despite the 1990 Americans with
Disabilities Act, people with physical disabilities still struggle with physical barriers negotiated with ease by able-bodied people. Bell claims that even well-meaning liberals, who speak out against the oppression of these two groups, do little in their daily lives to challenge the system (Bell 11).

She goes on to say that “the normalization of oppression in everyday life is achieved when we internalize attitudes and roles which reinforce systems of domination without questions” (Bell 12). And both agents and target groups “play a role in maintaining oppression (Bell 12). As we learned in chapter two, oppression is ubiquitous because it is pervasive, restricting, hierarchical, and internalized. The “isms” literally and figuratively dominate our society.

Oppression, in the form of isms, operates as a result of everyday practices that do not challenge “the assumptions underlying institutional rules and the collective consequences of following those rules” (Young 41). It follows that the isms will often dominate the dialogue in Interactive Theatre performances. If master narratives are continually told, and hegemony exists, how can we expect audiences to recognize and challenge much of the oppression depicted in the scenes? They will not have the ability or the desire to recognize and challenge their privilege. As Bell explains:

Dominants learn to look at themselves, others, and society, though a distorted lens in which the structural privileges they enjoy and the cultural practices of their groups are represented as normal and universal, … reinforced through language and material practices.” (12)

She points out common examples such as: the domination of Christian symbols, holidays and rituals in public affairs and institutions where “Muslims, Jews, Hindi and Native Americans
are invisible or marginalized” (Bell 12); and “any modest proposal to change the economic system to more equitably distribute goods and services is viewed a challenge to the American (capitalist) way of life” (Bell 13). I would add that the current battle over the overhaul of health care is a prime example of the latter.

In search of a solution to challenge oppression, Bell, drawing on the theories of Paolo Freire, concludes that

One important mechanism for challenging oppression, then, is to make visible and vocal the underlying assumptions that produce and reproduce structures of domination so that we can collectively begin to imagine alternative possibilities for organizing social life. (Bell 11)

The primary way to expose the false assumptions that perpetuate oppression is through the inclusion and emphasis of counter narratives, or stories that are not representative of or resonate with the hegemonic cultural story of society. These counter narratives challenge the master narratives and can chip away at the dominant ideologies.

It follows that if Interactive Theatre is going to challenge oppression, then it must include counter narratives in a compelling way. This process starts the scripted scene/structured improvisation/case study, which will focus the audience on and generate empathy for one or more targeted characters. And it continues by allowing the audience to engage the characters and conflict in a realistic and meaningful way, which results in their personal involvement and, as a result, investment. Once involved, they are more apt to search for solutions on behalf of the targeted character(s). Finally, though, these counter narratives must come up during the dialogue among participants – and it is the facilitator who has a reasonable degree of control over this dialogue.
If Interactive Theatre is going to achieve its goals to challenge oppression, there is no way a facilitator can remain neutral. Hegemony persists; and audiences will most often proffer the master narratives. The responsibility to ensure that counter narratives are not only brought into performance dialogue, but also emphasized and deemed legitimate, falls to facilitators. And they will have to employ some form of the “validate and challenge” techniques to do so.

Because the facilitator is also impacted by the master narrative, s/he must engage in a tremendous amount of personal identity exploration and immersion in social justice theory. Norman of CU-ITP is clear about the facilitator’s inability to be neutral.

I do not believe that a facilitator can ever be neutral. That is not possible. A facilitator should never say that. We have personal biases on things, that is the way we are created and socialized; but the facilitator has to be able to work with those things in mind, for example a facilitator who is either Gay or Catholic facilitating a performance on sexual identity/orientation and the Catholic Church. The facilitator will likely not be neutral, but must allow a space for all points to be heard.

**Facilitation Training**

For leaders to improve their own facilitation, or to increase the facilitator pool so that more work can be done and/or more co-facilitation can happen, leaders of Interactive Theatre ensembles need to train themselves and others in facilitation techniques. And if facilitation of performances is acknowledged as the most challenging skill, teaching it is even harder. Norman of CU-ITP explains their strategy:

One of the ways we train ourselves and our graduate students to facilitate is by giving them training in social justice. We provide them with readings and have
conversations about the issues, and we also attend and send who we can to The Social Justice Training Institute. After that, we try to give them the basic skills they need to facilitate. We use our guide as a start, but really we are training them in techniques of asking questions, active listening, cultivating patience, and tracking the people, ideas and comments in the room. After that it is basically an apprenticeship, where they start off co-facilitating with me and Rebecca and then eventually facilitate by themselves.

UT-TFD, CU-ITP, UNC-ITC and CITE have written formal facilitation guides. Interestingly, each the leaders of these groups also expressed a desire to improve them. Post from OSU-I does not have one but plans to create one soon.

As mentioned before, undergraduate student facilitation is rare at this juncture, but is a goal of UT-TFD and UNC-ITC. Hoare of UT-TFD says she is committed to training students to facilitate, but that it takes a lot of practice for students to acquire these skills:

In our interactive theatre technique, one of the primary roles of the facilitator is to recognize what questions to ask and when. So, with our list of established scenarios, we generate and refer to a guide that contains, among other things, a list of questions that I want to see addressed for each scene. That gives them an anchor – something to hold onto – and gives me some assurance that they will bring up the more essential questions. It is not scripted per se, but structured.

Furthermore, going beyond facilitation skills to exploring more advanced social justice concepts is difficult to do with most undergraduates. Hoare goes on to say, “Grasping and incorporating these issues of identity is something I can expect of myself and my TA that I work
with. I cannot expect the student facilitators to do it as easily or regularly.” She is nevertheless committed to exploring these issues with them.

On a national level, paralleling the increase in popularity of applied/community based theatre, several higher-ed institutions have developed Master’s Programs in applied theatre and related fields. Three programs of note in the United States are: the Master of Arts in Applied Theatre at the City University of New York School of Professional Studies in partnership with the Creative Arts Team, the Master of Applied Theatre Arts at the University of Southern California, and the Master of Arts in Intercultural Service, Leadership, and Management at the SIT Graduate Institute. There are also several strong programs in the United Kingdom an Australia, including the Master’s programme in Applied Theatre at the University of Manchester. These graduate programs surely seek to rise to challenge of teaching students to facilitate the challenging dialogues that accompany theatre projects in the community.

**Conclusion**

Facilitation of Interactive Theatre performances is a challenging skill. This chapter has sought to define the roles of the facilitator and elucidate some practices for fulfilling these roles effectively. None of these roles or effective practices exists in a vacuum. Facilitators do not work on these skills independently and then put them all together. All of the skills are intertwined, from developing one’s facilitator persona, to managing and deepening conversations, dealing with resistance, and accounting for the facilitator’s and audience members’ identities.

Along the journey of the facilitator, it is crucial to recognize that Interactive Theatre facilitators cannot be neutral for three reasons: program goals, hegemony, and social identities. First of all, the five ensembles have clear goals. And while these goals start out with using theatre to create a dialogue, most quickly proceed to raising awareness about the issues. “Raising
“Awareness” is code for introducing new ideas to students that will help them get a broader understanding of the complex issues. Moreover, most ensembles go further and express clear social justice goals including giving voice to marginalized groups, challenging those with privilege, and developing allies. Any lofty goal of challenging/changing attitude and behavior change is clear evidence of an agenda. Next, given the discussion of the hegemony and power, if facilitators do not take the lead to achieve this goal, it will not happen. Last, as social justice theory illuminates, given individuals’ social identities, each individual will have a set of unconscious personal biases. Neutrality as a goal for the facilitator, as Boal desires with his Joker, is futile for Interactive Theatre. A question yet to be discussed is whether the facilitator should seek to appear neutral. I will save discussion of this question for the final chapter.

Negotiating all of these facilitation-related concerns can be overwhelming, but attaining a level of proficiency is achievable. Facilitators just need to commit to intensive training and to continually improving their skills over time. Rohd agrees: “Here is the single most important thing to remember about facilitating: You get better as you do it … Even if you are not sure that you are completely ready, do it. The learning curve jumps tremendously when you stand up there and work with a group” (Rohd 112).
Chapter V: Evaluation/Impact

As Interactive Theatre expands to serve more and more university campuses, a critical question arises: To what degree is Interactive Theatre successful in impacting the members of the campus community? More importantly, how does one measure and quantify this success? In this chapter, I will:

- Document and analyze current practices of Interactive Theatre programs to evaluate their work
- Document and analyze the results of these efforts
- Review and analyze the scholarship on Interactive Theatre and Forum Theatre evaluation
- Provide a list of effective practices for the evaluation of Interactive Theatre
- Document and analyze Interactive Theatre’s overwhelmingly positive impact on its student ensemble members.

The study of Interactive Theatre evaluation is imperative for several reasons. First, programs are expected to show reliable results to prove they are worthy of the investment of resources, especially given the struggling economy and drastic budget cuts in the arts. Gardiner Tucker, the Dean of Students that oversees CU-ITP explains, “We are becoming more data driven now than ever before. Developing more sophisticated methods of evaluation is essential.” Second, evaluation provides a structure for improvement. And third, as the work improves, the program increases its positive impact on the campus community.
Current Interactive Theatre Evaluation Practices

Despite its importance, program evaluation tends to receive less attention from leaders than it should. There is both a lack of time and a lack of sophisticated skills in this area. Evaluation – consisting of developing an evaluation tool, collecting, entering, and analyzing data, and publishing a report – is time consuming and difficult.

Most ensembles have a basic system of evaluation in place – and they readily acknowledge its rudimentary nature. In all cases, ensembles have developed an evaluation form that they pass out after a performance for audiences to complete. These evaluation forms either make use of Likert Scales (“Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree”) or a numbered rating system from 1-5. Some forms have the Likert Scale questions separate from qualitative questions soliciting written responses; other groups use forms that combine both: audience members choose a box on a Likert Scale and then write a response explaining their choice.

A thematic analysis of all five forms is summarized in Table 10 below. Column 1 is the major theme of the questions/statements presented with a brief explanation, and Column 2 is the actual wording from the various evaluation forms. The analysis reveals that programs are interested in knowing information on the following areas of their practice:

Table 10
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Statement from Evaluation Form – Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience Engagement – Whether or not the audience was interested and invested in the performance</td>
<td>• I felt involved throughout the program today. – CITE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The opportunity to interact with the characters enhanced the experience – UNC-ITC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usefulness – Whether or not Interactive Theatre is a useful method to address the issues</td>
<td>• Do you think this theatrical performance was a useful way of generating conversation on this topic? – CU-ITP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In comparison to other social justice conversations/events you have attended, do you believe ITP is…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o ______ A better way of having in-depth conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o ______ The same as other social justice events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o ______ A less effective way of having in-depth conversations – CU-ITP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How useful was the information presented in this program? – UT-TFD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aspect</td>
<td>feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Theatre</td>
<td>Interactive Theatre is an effective way of approaching complex issues – CITE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall I felt that today's session was very useful – CITE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel today's activities were well designed (planned) – CITE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How would you evaluate this interactive performance as an alternative learning tool? (Categories: Effective, Engaging, Useful) – OSU-I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The opportunity to interact with the characters enhanced the experience – UNC-ITC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic – Whether the scenario was realistic</td>
<td>How realistic was the scenario? – UT-TFD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The scene and the characters were realistic – UNC-ITC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue – The quality of conversation around the issues</td>
<td>The post-performance conversation was thought-provoking and constructive – UNC-ITC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation – Whether or not it was effective</td>
<td>How effective was the facilitator in encouraging (opening, provoking) discussion in the group? – UT-TFD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness/New Perspectives – Did the performance raise awareness or offer new perspectives?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I feel that the facilitation of the program was particularly effective – CITE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Was the process for entering discussion with the characters made clear? – OSU-I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Was it clear that you were being asked to have a discussion with characters as opposed to real people? – OSU-I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Did you feel comfortable participating in the discussion? – OSU-I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If you felt uncomfortable participating in the discussion, what made you uncomfortable? OSU-I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Was there anything that felt confusing during today’s performance? - OSU-I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The facilitators were effective in their roles – UNC-ITC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How much has this performance raised your awareness of relationship violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking? – UT-TFD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Did the conversation after the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Impact – Did the performance have impact? If so, how? | • Did the performance make it easier to discuss this type of issue with your colleagues? – OSU-I  
• This performance has impacted me in some way around these issues. UNC-ITC |
| --- | --- |
| Information Gained – Was information gained and, if so, which information? | • I left this performance with more information than I came with. – UNC-ITC  
• What is the most important piece of information you are taking away with you today? – UT-TFD  
• What lingering questions didn’t get discussed? – OSU-I |
|  | performance introduce you to new perspectives on this topic? – CU-ITP  
• Given your baseline knowledge, did today’s performance present new information to raise your awareness on (issue)? – OSU-I  
• Were you aware of these issues or was this new information for you – OSU-I  
• Does OSU provide education on these issues that you are aware of? – OSU-I |
| Application of Information/Attitude Change/Intended Behavior Change – Did audiences perceive that they were experiencing this? | • The information I learned today will help me deal with conflict more effectively. – CITE  
• How has this performance affected how you think about your role as a friend to someone involved in a situation like this? – UT-TFD  
• This performance has led me to reevaluate my ideas or opinions on these issues – UNC-ITC  
• After experiencing this performance, I intend to change some of my behaviors around these issues. – UNC-ITC |
| Previous experience or Pre vs. Post – Did and/or do audience members have it? And, if so, which experiences? | • Have you ever discussed any of the issues that came up in this performance with your colleagues – OSU-I  
• In what setting did you discuss this with your colleagues? - OSU-I  
• Was there any specific reason you didn’t? – OSU-I  
• Prior to attending this ITP performance, how interested were you in the topic of |
| Recommend – Would audience members recommend this ensemble’s work to others? | • How likely are you to recommend an ITP performance to a friend/colleague? – CU ITP  
• Given the opportunity, I would attend another Interactive Theatre Carolina performance – UNC-ITC  
• I would recommend to other people that they attend a Interactive Theatre Carolina performance – UNC-ITC |
| --- | --- |
| Effective vs. Ineffective Aspects – What are some examples of both? | • My favorite (or most useful) part of the program was ... – CITE  
• My least favorite (or least useful) part of the program was – CITE  
• Was there anything missing from today’s performance? – OSU-I  
• What were the most effective aspects of this Interactive Theatre experience? – UNC-ITC  
• What aspects of this Interactive Theatre experience... |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Experience could use improvement? – UNC-ITC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic/issue identification – Were the topics and issues clearly presented?</td>
<td>• If you were to describe the topic(s) addressed during the performance to someone that was not present, what would you say? Feel free to describe the topic(s) with your own words – OSU-I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Expectations – Were they met? | • What did you expect from this performance? – OSU-I  
• Did you get what you were expecting? – OSU-I |

Evaluation forms additionally included some or all of the following statements in a disclaimer:

- A thank you for taking the survey
- Reasons for the survey, including that the responses will help improve work and provide important information for funders and potential funders
- A statement that the survey is anonymous

Most surveys also asked how audience members learned of the performance and/or why they decided to come, a question designed to help with future marketing. Finally, most forms include demographic questions, requesting audience members to identify themselves in terms of one or all of the following: gender, race/ethnicity, status on campus (student, staff, faculty,
community member), age, and whether they have previously been to an Interactive Theatre performance by that ensemble.

Leaders acknowledged that these forms were distributed with varying frequency, depending on the size of the audience, duration of the performance (a shorter time allotted prevented distribution of the forms), and whether the ensemble had the personnel available to enter and analyze the results.

**Interactive Theatre Evaluation Results**

Gathering evaluation results from programs, in the form of analyzed data that had been summarized for presentation and dissemination, was my most challenging task. Ensemble leaders seemed reluctant to share this information. CITE and OSU-I had data, but not in a form that they were ready to share by my deadline. OSU-I is run by one person with infrequent graduate student help, and CITE is in a period of transition. The leaders of both groups apologized and stated that, though they do not always prepare formal summaries, they actively read the raw data and seek to implement appropriate changes to improve the impact of the work.

I have evaluation results from two of the five programs: UT-TFD and my own program UNC-ITC. The data from UT-TFD was for three specific performances in the fall of 2010. The data from my program is the annual report from 2008-09, which was year II of the program. CU-ITP was able to share evaluation data with me, but asked that I not publish it here as they intend to publish it on their own – a reasonable request. They did, however, give me permission to share the overview of their analysis of that data, as well as the questions they asked student audience members.

The lack of comprehensive evaluation results from the programs is due to a combination of two factors: the funders have not demanded it of their programs, and the leaders, operating at
capacity, have not made it a priority. I can say from experience that the sheer number of day-to-day tasks required to sustain a troupe make implementing a consistent system of monitoring and evaluation difficult. I felt compelled to make evaluation a priority at UNC-ITC because it was a new program which reported up the chain of Student Affairs, a data driven branch of the university. I wanted to prove myself and the program and also show that I respected their data-driven methods. The other four programs are older and more established; that they continue to thrive, despite a lack of evaluation data, is a compelling indicator of their success and impact on their respective campuses.

The following are the evaluation results compiled from UT-TFD and UNC-ITC. I will first present them individually in their raw form and then briefly analyze each. I will then add an analysis of the data from CU-ITP.

**UT-TFD**

UT-TFD presented two reports of participant evaluations (figures 8 and 9), one for a presentation to a Sociology of Gender class in October, 2010, and the other for two presentations to students in the Athletics Department in November, 2010. They were issued by the Office of Assessment in the Division of Student Affairs. Data was “prepared by Allison Kaye, Graduate Research Assistant” (Kaye, “Voices … Sociology” 1; Kaye, “Voices … Athletics 1).
The following is a report of participant evaluations of the Voices against Violence presentation to a Sociology of Gender class in Fall 2010 (October 28). As can be seen in the tables, student responses were overwhelmingly positive regarding the usefulness, realism, and effectiveness of the facilitator of the performance. 88% of students responded that the performance had raised their awareness of relationship violence issues “very” or “moderately.” Demographic information is presented in the right column on this page. Responses to the three open-ended responses are presented on pages 2 and 3 of the report.

### How useful was the information presented in this program?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### How realistic was the scenario?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>90.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### How effective was the facilitator in encouraging (opening, provoking) discussion in this group?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### How much has this performance raised your awareness of relationship violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Are you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd year student</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th year student or above</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate student</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What is your gender?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>92.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Are you Hispanic or Latino/a?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Please select the racial category or categories with which you most closely identify.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What is your age?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data prepared by Alyssa Kaye, Graduate Research Assistant, December 2010
What is the most important piece of information you are taking with you today?

Abuse is always about power and dominance and can happen to anyone. Be aware of the different red flags.
Abusive relationships are hurtful even in the emotional forms.
Allies are very important and should add support not stress.
Allies should help put the survivor in control and give them a voice. And I liked learning about "red flags" like "Jekyll-Hyde".
Be aware of red flags, don't just look the other way at small things.
Body language can be very indicative of the situation/power dynamic.
Created awareness to some red flags that I wouldn't think about otherwise.
Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde dynamic; how necessary it is to stand up for yourself.
Emotionally abusive relationships can be as disruptive to the victim's life as a physically abusive relationship.
Gender Issues. Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde

Help those in need; I now know how to do this better.

How common it is to experience dating violence/power inequality.

How realistic abuse is and the many red flags that indicate abuse is going on.

How there are many different types of violence, anyone can be a victim, and they can be very tricky relationships issues to deal with.

I think this presentation was really helpful in giving insight into relationship problems.

I've seen this happen before and realize how wrong and hurtful it can be and that I'd like to stand up for a friend if it happens again.

It made me realize how many times this experience has happened to me and my friends. Gender issues.

Just how important little signals and how and how it's important to deal with those things in a way that empowers a victim and helps them feel less isolated.

Learn to see the red flags. Whatever makes me uncomfortable, it's a sign something is wrong. And I shouldn't make excuses for situations.

More awareness.

Paying attention to little things your friends display while in new and old relationships.

Power and control though different mediums. Gender roles.

Power relations and abuse comes from all sides and can be in various forms.

Relationships violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking is real and happens all of the time in everyday life.

Situations can be different based on sex. We make assumptions about relationships and interactions based on sex and gender.

Small things that show dominance in power and control can lead to violent things.

That is equally important to recognize that both males and females can and are in abusive relationships.

That verbal abuse can happen to men, women, same sex relationships, and even friends.

That you can do something about these situations when it's in front of you.

That you should stand up for yourself and get out unhealthy relationships.

That men can be victims of emotional violence too.

The awareness that others have regularly violence.

The way a friend react to another friends abusive relationship can make a big difference.

These scenarios made me more aware of how verbal abuse can hurt males and females alike. Also, there is still a power struggle in same sex relationships.

To be more aware of some of the signs/flags of relationship violence.

To understand everyone in a situation's point of view and if someone is in a situation where you feel like there are being abused in a relationship you should stand up for them but in an understanding way.

Understanding gender differences and realizing that reversed roles or same sex situations may have caused things to be over looked in the past.

Watch out for the red flags.

Victims often feel helpless. Allies can play big role in helping.

You need good communication skills with everyone around you.

What lingering questions didn't get answered for you today?

How can a person accept that they need help. They may realize something is wrong with the relationship but how can they confront the offender.

How can friends help more?

How do you get a friend to not defend an abusive/power control relationship?

How does sexism and homophobia support power/control in the relationship? How to get involved in VAV

How the guy can solve his relationship/friend conflict.

How to better remedy the relationship if you are the one involved not just the friend.
How to handle a situation like that long term. What do you do when your friend is in a situation like that but doesn't want to deal with it?
How would confrontation be in these kinds of situations? Jordan was always told to stand up (by both parties) but it was never played ask to see what would've happened if he did or someone else did.
Information about different types of relationship abuse. Maybe address bullying
It's important to be aware, but how can people in this situation try to get out of it?
So what do you do?
The last scene in the car bothered me because I had no idea what the sister should do to help. It's that cycle of violence.
What are constructive ways for allies to make it known that they are supportive? How can we help?
What the right way to stop this is.
What would you do in a situation where the girl is suicidal and uses it to keep the guy (girl) in the relationship?
Why is Jordan with Charlie in the first place? Nothing about her seems good for him.

How has this performance affected how you think about your role as a friend to either the offender or victim in these situations?
Be aware of the situation at hand and reach out to those who do need help
Be understanding, because other people need it
Being unsupportive as a friend to a victim can make matters worse for them
Friends can have an impact on relationships and the smallest actions or inactions can make a big difference
Friends in either situation should address the situation and make it known
Gave me practical way to deal with abuse

Greatly
I feel more responsible, like I should maybe either stand up for my friend/Victim, or at least talk to them about it. And if my friend is an offender I'd need to put them in their place and let them know it's not okay.
I have a friend (male) who's going through this right now. I feel like I can give him more information.
I should stand up to my friend but be there to support them
I think I feel more confident in speaking up in a really uncomfortable position. Though I might accidentally say "pause." How can you help the offender?
I think it's important to intervene with caution to both the offender and the victim
I understand now that this isn't as rare as occurrence as people imagine
I will be more attentive to my friends relationships
I will speak up in situations I see this in
I would like to stand up for a friend put in this situation, and it not, tell her in private how I feel
I'm typically a very in your face person and have spoken up in situations similar to this - you must understand how your actions will affect that person in their relationship (possible repercussions "behind closed doors"); however, many times it is best to let your friend know your there for them
It heightens my awareness of possible manipulative behavior in both my own relationship and others, be it friends or love relationships.

I have to be aware of the different forms a victim can take.
It is important to stand up in such a role in order to resolve conflict, or otherwise it will go unnoticed and will continue to occur
It made me more aware of how you should act when you know someone in an abusive relationship. Also, it's important to speak up even if it makes you and them uncomfortable
It made me realize it is important to stand up for anyone in a victimized situation
It makes me more aware, and makes me want to take a more active role as an ally
It makes me want to speak up when I see situations like this occur
It's important to support friends in these situations
It's still a challenge to communicate to a friend who is in this situation
It's important not to attack your friend in the relationship but take a step back help
Made me want to be more gentle and not defensive/mean toward these
Makes me more aware how important it is to pay good attention to even the seemingly unseen
Next time something like this happens I will be more cautious and take an active role if it's appropriate
Not blame the victim to stand up but try to confront the offender because it's difficult to be in the victim's place
Provide help for friends when I see something is wrong and tell my friends I'm there for them if they ever want to talk
Really stand up for your friend and point out the "red flags" in the relationships
that need to tell them my input but in an understanding way
That if I see something that I don't feel is appropriate that I should speak up
That it's important not to minimize things just because they are uncomfortable
Want to help
We need to stick up for our friends and be there for them. Make it a point to talk to them if they don't approach you
You should approach your friends when issues like this are brought up

Figure 8. Voices Against Violence Evaluation: Sociology of Gender – November 2010 (Kaye, “Voices … Sociology” 1-3)
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS • OFFICE OF ASSESSMENT  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN  
1 University Station A5800, Austin, TX 78712-0175 (512) 232-9608 • Fax: (512) 475-7942

Voices against Violence Evaluation:  
Athletics (combined) - November 2010

The following is a report of participant evaluations of the Voices against Violence presentations to students in the athletics department in Fall 2010 (November 8 and November 15); these data are a combination of evaluations from both performances. As can be seen in the tables, student responses were overwhelmingly positive regarding the usefulness, realism, and effectiveness of the facilitator of the performance. 85% of students responded that the performance had raised their awareness of relationship violence issues “very” or “moderately.” Demographic information is presented in the right column on this page. Responses to the three open-ended responses are presented on pages 2 and 3 of this report.

### How useful was the information presented in this program?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>55.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>100%</td>
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### How realistic was the scenario?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Freq</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>77.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</table>

### How effective was the facilitator in encouraging (opening, provoking) discussion in this group?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### How much has this performance raised your awareness of relationship violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Are you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st year student</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd year student</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd year student</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th year student or above</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate student</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What is your gender?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Are you Hispanic or Latino/a?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>98.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please select the racial category or categories with which you most closely identify.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>56.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What is your age?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data prepared by Alyssa Kaye, Graduate Research Assistant, December 2010
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the most important piece of information you are taking with you today?</td>
<td>Absence of no does not mean yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be accountable for your action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be aware of how your actions can be taken from different perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be aware of violent relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Checking other males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concept of consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consent is mutual agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consent topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consent within a relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consent is needed!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t assault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t let it happen to someone else if you don’t let it happen to your sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t take things for granted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How effective words can be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How the world is today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How to approach a person in a certain situation. When a person fails to say &quot;no&quot; it doesn’t mean they consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How to be an ally and how to react to a similar situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How to deal with relationships with your girlfriend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How to protect people from assault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Just be a woman agrees to kiss doesn’t mean that she agree to sex. So just try to be smart about all your dec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language is power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Little things such as saying things to people can be abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make same each person has equal power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More awareness and knowledge on the situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not saying “no” does not mean “yes”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not to be too violent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not to grab women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People’s opinions aren’t changing much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Society sometimes blames the victim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That no matter how bad relationships get control yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That sexual abuse is present in the college level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That situations like this are all around is and try and avoid putting yourself in these places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That the men should take responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The notion of how information can be unsteading and stop jumping to conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The regret sex vs consent sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Think before you act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thinking not skip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To be careful with my language and actions. Everyone is accountable but only for their own actions but for th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To be more aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To look at every aspect of situations, not jump to conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To treat every female like your sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treat the lady with respect if she says no then no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Us as men to stand up for what is right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Violence and abuse takes on many forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watch my language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We as men do not have the authority in a relationship that we think we do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When Jess was lost of her friend was trying to make it seem like rape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Why some girls have trouble running or fighting or preventing what happened, that it’s not your fault.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You can make a difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What lingering questions didn’t get answered for you today?</td>
<td>How do you want someone that doe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More Insight into the girls mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Things our age should know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What actually is sexual assault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What are everyone’s motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What happens to a man gets raped</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How has this performance affected how you think about your role as a friend to either the offender or victim in these situations?

To interpret the situation and try to lessen what may happen in the future

Be a good man

Be Involved

Be more proactive in problematic situation

Be proactive

Enhanced awareness

Every girl is someone’s daughter or sister

Has showed and recommended different ways to handle it

Help my friends

Help the situation

How to keep my friends safe

I believe I should stop if someone is being abused in a relationship

I have a responsibility to hold friends accountable

I mean I have had a situation like this I handled it well

I might try to help the situation a little more

I need to be more forward with friends. If I see something bad

I really don’t know

I think I’ll be able to handle it now

I was raised to act like a man...this program didn’t change how I was taught to act/react to these situations

I will be more involved

I’ll become more aware of all situation dealing with relationships

I’m more aware

If you are a friend you should get involved if you see something going on

It broke the situation down from all angles

It definitely made me more active against the problem. I have experience with this and I want to prevent it for others.

It gives them something to

It has confirmed my responsibilities as a true friend

It hasn’t

It makes me want to stand up

It opened my eyes to be a better role model for other friends/males

It supported how I felt before

It was very insightful and gave me idea of what happens in everyday life

It just made me more aware to help

Just mind your own business for your own safety. Be from the outside looking in, you really don’t know what is going on

Let them know when they do wrong

Males wanna make friends accountable for situation

Maybe take to the man more

No because I’ve been in a situation like that and I know how to handle it

None. I would have already helped.

Not at all

People will react how they want

Showed me that it is important to step up

Taught me a lot real life situations about this situation and what to do

Tell them what’s on your mind

That I as a friend do have a role and responsibility to intervene

That it is important to be an ally to the person and to get all info before making a decision

That sometime it’s not easy to intervene

To say something when needed

To try and help them and to let them know they just need to do the right thing

You always have to help you friend or brother on certain issues. But its only far you can go with them

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Figure 9. Voices Against Violence Evaluation: Athletics (combined) – November 2010 (Kaye, “Voices … Athletics” 1-3)
One clear strength of the report is that it includes both quantitative and qualitative data about broader as well as individual impacts. UT-TFD receives generally high marks on the usefulness of their information, their realistic scenario, and the strength of their facilitators. They also receive solid scores for raising awareness around the issues. Their scores are a step higher for the Sociology of Gender class than for the athletes. This is to be expected. While attending performances is required for both groups, students in the Sociology of Gender class are self-selecting in terms of choosing to expose themselves to gender issues. The athletes, while self-selecting, are choosing to be athletes to compete rather than to learn more about gender issues.

UT-TFD does not ask any direct questions that speak to attitude or behavior change (different from having awareness raised), but the open-ended questions yield a lot of valuable data. One gets a clear sense of the information that students are taking away from the performance, as well as which aspects of the issues they are still questioning. The final open-ended question (“How has this performance affected how you think about your role as a friend to either the offender or victim in these situations?”) forces them to consider their thoughts, choices, and behaviors in the situations that have been dramatized. It also reminds the audience of members of the role of the ally. While UT-TFD does not ask directly about most and least effective aspects of the performance, the query about “lingering questions” will provide some answers. A next step for Kaye would to be to conduct a thematic analysis of the qualitative comments to synthesize the audience member reactions for quicker accessibility.

**UNC-ITC**

The UNC-ITC evaluation results came in the form of a lengthy annual report from Year II (2008-2009). Figure 10 displays the highlights of the report. The report was written by me and
my Graduate Student Assistant that year, Aprajita Anand a student in the Master’s Program in the UNC School of Public Health.

**Overview:** As they were in Year I, the evaluations of Interactive Theatre Carolina’s (ITC) performances during Year II were extremely positive, and showed a great deal of improvement over Year I … During Year II, ITC held 46 performances – an increase of 53% from Year I to Year II, and had 7007 attendees at these performances in total, an increase of 224% from Year I to Year II. This clearly shows ITC’s exponential growth and exposure in the UNC-Chapel Hill Campus, and ITC continues to grow and reach more audiences. ITC also created four new scenes with another two scenes in progress …

**Summary of Quantitative Data:** As much as possible, individuals were asked to fill out evaluation forms after each performance … While the number of individuals who attended performances during Year II was approximately 7007, the number of individuals who completed evaluation forms was 3109, because not all performances had the opportunity for evaluation, particularly the first year orientation sessions called CTOPS.

Additionally, these numbers are likely lower than they should be due to the wording of the evaluation form. Some of those who disagreed or strongly disagreed that the performance led them to “reevaluated their ideas of opinions,” or that they “intended to change some of their behavior,” qualified their response with a written comment indicating that they already felt aligned with the causes of the targeted groups. And it is likely that many felt as much without stating it. In that case, the performance reinforced their ideas, opinions or behaviors. This question will be clarified in the evaluation form for next year.
QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

[The first part of the report summarizes the results for demographics, including status at the university, race and ethnicity, gender, and age.]

Evaluation Data

Realistic Characters

When participants were asked what they felt about this statement “The characters in the scenes were realistic”, these were the breakdown of the results. As this graph shows, the majority of participants strongly agreed with this statement.

Interactive Nature of Performance

When participants were asked what they felt about this statement “The opportunity to interact with the characters enhanced the experience.” The majority of participants either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Conversation

When participants were asked about how they felt about the following statement “The post performance conversation was thought provoking and constructive”, the overwhelming results were equally positive i.e. mostly Strongly Agree and Agree.
Facilitation

When participants were asked about this statement, “The facilitators were effective in their roles”, the majority strongly agreed or agreed.

Information

When participants were asked about this statement, “I left this performance with more information than I came with” the majority agreed, and a smaller proportion strongly agreed. There were some individuals who also disagreed and a minority who strongly disagreed.

Impact

When participants were asked “This performance has impacted me in some way around these issues” the majority of individuals agreed with this statement, and a small proportion also agreed. There were some individuals who also disagreed.
Re-evaluation

When participants were asked "This performance has led me to revaluate my ideas or opinions on these issue," the results from this were interesting, in that majority of individuals agreed, though a significant number also disagreed. Of course the ideas presented in the performances often take time to sink in and this is not necessarily a negative result.

Change

When participants were presented with this statement, “After experiencing this performance, I intend to change some of my behaviors around these issue” the majority of participants agreed, though a significant proportion also disagreed. This may be because participants feel that they already behave correctly, though the purpose of ITC is to make people re-think about situations, and often the learning and thought continue much after the performance.

Attending Another ITC Performance

The significant majority of participants either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement “Given the opportunity, I would attend another ITC performance”, which proves that individuals are intrigued by the
performances and wish to see them again.

Recommendation

When participants were asked about whether they would recommend to other people that they attend an ITC performance, the majority strongly agreed, and agreed.

QUALITATIVE DATA

[The report starts with a section summarizing the audience response to open ended responses, as sorted by performance and open ended statements, omitted here in favor of the following more bird’s-eye look at the program’s impact]

While performances are focused around varied topic areas, universal themes emerged about how performance attendees were affected by the performance. These themes have been grouped around the three open ended questions that were posed to respondents around issues of (1) Knowledge gained, (2) Impact, and (3) The intention for positive behavior change behavior around these issues. Some of these themes described in questions are echoed in response to other questions The fact that these themes overlap indicates not only that these broader questions present over-lapping ideas in terms of how an individual is affected, but also that the message of a certain performance can often affect an individual in multiple reinforcing ways.

KNOWLEDGE GAINED

Of the participants who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I left this performance with more information than I came with”, a significant number elaborated on specific knowledge gained as a result of attending ITC performances:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Increased Knowledge   | Responses indicate that participants felt they had a heightened awareness of the issues presented as a result of the performance | • “I left this performance with more information than I came with.”  
• “The discussion provided valuable insight into differentiating opinions”  
• “I haven’t thought about these issues in a while”  
• “Made me think deeper about the subtle oppression of women that surrounds me” |
| Awareness around placing judgment | Responses indicated more awareness of their own tendencies in placing judgment | • “I will be less hurried to judge other women based on how they dress, I will be more aware of tendency to do this”  
• “I’m going to try not to let pre-judged ideas come into play”  
• “I am more stereotypical than I thought!” |
| Heightened awareness of resources | Responses consistently indicated an increased awareness of existing under used resources on campus to help students deal with difficult situations related to a whole host of issues | • “I learned about the resources available to deal with these issues which are already in place”  
• “I learned that it is important to refer to professionals and ensure follow up when intervening in the case of eating disorders; I didn’t realize how hard it would be to convince someone to get help” |

These self-reflections in the context of what individuals gained from the performances indicated that ITC performances were able to create a sophisticated form of self reflection, particularly in increasing individuals’ self-awareness with regard to societal norms and trends which subtly influence perceptions and behaviors. The increased awareness of resources is encouraging news for underused university resource providers as ITC is able to raise consciousness levels about UNC's student support structures.
Constructive Feedback

The qualitative interviews also left feedback about some points of improvement for ITC. Of course this is a young fast growing program, and ITC was grateful for this feedback, as we are always looking for ways to improve this service. Below summarize the main areas for improvement that have been a focus for Year III and will continue to be a focus as the program moves forward.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Quotation examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Scene Format       | Individuals often felt that scenes were too short, and would have preferred a more in depth performance; others felt the format could use a bit of tweaking | • “ Longer scenes!”
|                    |                                                                        | • “ maybe use a couple of different scenes and comparing them instead of just one” |
|                    |                                                                        | •                                                                                |
| Access to Characters | Multiple Individuals suggested wanting more access to characters, perhaps out of character as well. | • The in-character conversation doesn’t feel very genuine – I wanted to know how they really felt. Let actors talk out of character
• “ Perhaps being able to ask the actors questions when not in character” |
| Acting Experience  | There was feedback regarding a desire for an improvement in acting quality, and being invested in the characters | • Character diversity – seemed like they were dealing with essentially the same two issues and Working on delivering information about issues (seemed unclear, contradictory at times)
• Characters need to be less defensive in Q&A
• Actors need to work on getting the scenes to be more realistic |
| Exposure to different communities | Individuals suggested the other communities would benefit from ITC performances | • It would be really cool to have something like this at a middle school level because it could be a great tool for discussing bullying, relationships, diversity, etc. |
Conclusion

The data presented here is evidence of the amount the program has grown between Year I and Year II, in terms of the number of individuals ITC has performed in front of, as well as the number of performances. The data shows that individuals have had an overwhelmingly positive experience, and often performances have impacted individuals in significant ways, as the qualitative comments illustrate. Of course, there is room for improvement always, and this is always an area of focus and energy as ITC continues to expand and grow.

Figure 10. UNC-ITC Evaluation Summary 2008-2009 (Saypol and Anand 1-16)

I acknowledge my inability to be completely objective in analyzing the UNC-ITC results, but I will make my best effort to view them with the same critical eye I used on the others.

The UNC-ITC evaluation is broad in scope, seeking a variety of quantitative and qualitative data. It also attempts to connect the two, asking students to answer short response questions which directly explain their choices on the Likert scale questions. This evaluation attempts to document attitude change and intended behavior change – though perhaps less effectively than possible. The questions are too general and there is too much leeway for interpretation.

Specifically, I struggled with the phrasing of the statements around re-evaluation of ideas and intended behavior change. The form says:

- “This performance has led me to reevaluate my ideas or opinions on these issues.”
- “After experiencing this performance, I intend to change some of my behaviors around these issues” (Interactive Theatre Carolina, “Evaluation Form” 1)
These statements do not allow people who align themselves strongly with the issues to express clearly that the performance might have contributed to their further understanding. For example, a LGBTQ person at a performance on homophobia might not answer either of the questions above in the affirmative.

As pointed out in the evaluation, while the majority of participants agreed that the performance led to re-evaluation and change, a significant proportion also disagreed. This led me to add the disclaimer that:

Additionally, these numbers are likely lower than they should be due to the wording of the evaluation form. Some of those who disagreed or strongly disagreed that the performance led them to “reevaluated their ideas of opinions,” or that they “intended to change some of their behavior,” qualified their response with a written comment indicating that they already felt aligned with the causes of the targeted groups. And it is likely that many felt as much without stating it. In that case, the performance reinforced their ideas, opinions or behaviors. This question will be clarified in the evaluation form for next year (Saypol and Anand 2)

Unfortunately, I never found the time to fix the form.

The evaluation results are consistently positive, though weaker in the area of attitude and behavior change. UNC-ITC and other programs should continue to research and explore methods for documenting these phenomena which are difficult to measure and quantify. An evaluation of an Interactive Theatre program in California presented later in the chapter will address one novel approach to meet this challenge.
A strength of UNC-ITC’s evaluation is the clearly expressed request for constructive criticism which led to responses that helped us make informed choices as to how to improve the program. When we received the above feedback, I was particularly responsive to the requests for more emotional depth, access to characters, and improvement of the students’ acting. We worked harder on acting skills and fostering personal connections to our characters, and we also increased the number of performances where we utilized on-stage interventions in addition to the usual question and answer technique.

CU-ITP

CU-ITP conducted an evaluation of “Just Another Party,” performed for all incoming first-year students during the summer orientation sessions. Students are asked to fill out general orientation evaluation which includes a small set of questions devoted to the Interactive Theatre performance. There were approximately 6000 incoming first year students and 812 responses, a response rate of 13%. The results were written by Sara Staley, a Ph.D. Candidate in the School of Education at the University of Colorado at Boulder hired by CU-ITP to analyze the data and draft the evaluation report. I have included the overview and the questions in figure 11, but not the results. CU-ITP conducted the evaluation for internal purposes only, to improve and adjust the performance and facilitation. Thus they did go through the approval process for research with human subjects. According to Brown Adelman, for this specific performance, with data from performance required of the entire of the first year class, they would have had to receive approval to publish the result.

Overview: After reviewing the data from the Just Another Party survey responses, it appears that the majority of respondents found the performance to be effective in deepening their awareness
of issues around gender violence and sexual assault; useful in representing various compromising
situations in which they might find themselves as college students; and informative insofar as
many respondents reported feeling better equipped to handle such situations should they arise.
Q75. What was the purpose of the performance of Just Another Party?
Q76. What are the primary issues brought up in this performance?
Q77. Prior to this performance, what was your level of awareness of gender violence and sexual
assault as a community concern?
Q78. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - Prior to this
performance, ending gender violence and sexual assault was very important to me.
Q79. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - Prior to this
performance, I would discuss gender violence and sexual assault with my friends.
Q80. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - This session at
Orientation is not useful as a way to introduce gender violence and sexual assault as important
issues for the campus community.
Q81. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - After this
performance and discussion, prevention of sexual assault and gender violence are more
important to me.
Q82. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - After this
performance and discussion, I feel more personally responsible to end gender violence and
sexual assault.
Q83. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - As a result of
attending this ITP performance, I feel less responsibility to prevent gender violence at a party I
am attending.
Q84. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - After this performance and discussion, I gained new skills on how to address gender violence and sexual assault.

Q85. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - This performance and discussion has helped in my preparation for campus life.

Q86. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - After this performance, my personal responsibility towards ending gender violence and sexual assault has been lessened.

Q87. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - After this performance and discussion, I will talk to others in the CU community about some of the issues raised here.

Q88. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - This session at Orientation is a good way to introduce gender violence and sexual assault as important issues for the campus community.

Q89. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - As a result of attending this ITP performance, I feel a greater responsibility to prevent gender violence at a party I am attending.

Figure 11. Evaluation Results of CU-ITP’s “Just Another Party” (Staley 1-5)

Most importantly, the evaluation results need to be understood in the context of the topic and the audience. “Just Another Party” is a performance on sexual assault and alcohol for a captive audience of students at their college orientation. The students are just a few months removed from high school and are likely overwhelmed by the excitement of their first days on
campus. The performance is not a priority for most of them. That being said, orientation students’ lack of focus is the reason why the Office of Student Affairs chose a format like Interactive Theatre to address these issues. They needed the most engaging format possible to capture students’ attention on this critical campus issue. In any case, the deck was stacked against CU-ITP in terms of the potential for the highest scores.

The first two questions of CU-ITP’s survey focus on whether students understand the purpose of the performance and the primary issues raised. Next, they make a concerted effort to compare pre and post-performance attitudes and behaviors, but both questions are asked after the performance; ideally, the “pre-performance” questions would be asked before the performance, but I acknowledge that this is very difficult to do in practice.

With the next set of questions, CU-ITP ventures into gauging potential changes in attitudes and behavior. The questionnaire asks about “feeling personally responsible for preventing gender violence”, “gaining new skills to address the issue”, and “expressing intention to talk to other about the issues.” Finally, unique to CU-ITP, the evaluation form poses a series of questions phrased in the negative. Students are asked to consider both affirmative and negative statements (more personally responsible vs. less personally responsible), and subsequently if their responsibility has been “lessened.” This is a bold evaluation technique, as it requires students to actively disagree with something in order to prove impact. I agree with the evaluator who uses the results to both types of questions to defend her assertion that the performance is having impact on students’ perception of their responsibility around the issues.

The numbers for this evaluation are not as strong as they could be, but, again, it is important to remember the challenging orientation environment in which the performance was situated. I suspect that a PowerPoint or lecture dealing with the same issues would be less
effective than this Interactive Theatre performance – as will be documented in the evaluation of a program at a university in California later in this chapter.

**Anecdotal Evidence**

Despite the degree to which evaluation results provided evidence of Interactive Theatre’s impact on audience members, practitioners, funders, and actors were careful not to overstate that impact. The following comments, by Brown Adelman of CU-ITP and Cruz of CITE, were representative of the views of the other practitioners:

I do not know if a theatre performance can decrease the incidence of sexual assault – I don’t know if we have the power to do that. But I do know we can increase awareness and dialogue around the issue and hit home how people can play a role in preventing it or responding to it. What the evaluations show is that they leave with a heightened awareness and sometimes a shift in perspective.

Also, we consistent hear anecdotally that the theatre piece stays with them. If they encounter the situation or issue later on, they recall the Interactive Theatre performance and it becomes a point of reference. A perfect example is our performance “Just Another Party” that we perform every summer for orientation. I have talked to people who have said that they, at first, they really didn’t see the point of it, but found themselves thinking about it and referring to it when the issue came up later in their dorms or classrooms, or as they were processing. Arts have the power to do this, and this is what we want our Interactive Theatre to do.

Cruz from CITE adds:

Anecdotally we hear consistently that a company’s employees continue to talk about program and the topics. The conversation is continuing and the people are
processing and learning the information. For example, in our programs around sexual harassment, audience members now have better ideas of the dynamics and the policies that exist in their work environment.

These two comments remind us that the goals of Interactive Theatre have two levels. The first level is to promote campus dialogue in a way that has not been done before. The second level is enacting the attitude and behavior change that practitioners hope will follow as a result of that dialogue. In all cases, leaders have said with confidence that they achieve the first level goal. Clearly, leaders have not spoken as strongly as to the work’s ability to achieve the second.

That being said, as Cruz and Brown Adelman’s comments exemplify, anecdotes abound. Corporate and student audiences rave that the performances are engaging and thought-provoking and generate a lot of discussion. People talk about audience members having light bulb moments and audience members hanging around after the performance continuing to contemplate the issues. Actors talk about getting recognized on campus, and people praise their performances as well as the form. These anecdotes reveal that the potential exists to prove efficacy, which, in turn, begs two questions:

- How can one harness the power of this positive feedback so that the evidence of impact is more than just stories?
- Can one document efficacy/impact in a more compelling manner? How else can one gather, analyze, and package data, so that it speaks persuasively to the power of the work? Are there more sophisticated methods for gauging and documenting attitude and behavior change?
Scholarship on Interactive Theatre/Forum Theatre Evaluation

There is little scholarship on the evaluation of Interactive Theatre or even Forum Theatre projects. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will review and analyze two worthy evaluations of Interactive Theatre projects on university campuses – one of a project at the University of Missouri at Columbia and another of a project at California State University Long Beach – as well as one of a Forum Theatre project in the Palestinian territories. All three point the way toward effective practices for the evaluation of Interactive Theatre programs.

In “Investigating Interactive Theatre as Faculty Development for Diversity,” Suzanne Burgoyne (a member of the ATHE Interactive Theatre Subcommittee), Peggy Placier, Mallory Taulbee, and Sharon Welch argue that “engaging in social science research on audience response may help theatre educators to generate ideas, hypothesis, and suggestions for practice” (Burgoyne et al. 107). The authors encourage theatre practitioners to use these methods despite the presence of “negative attitudes toward applying social science research methods to performance” as well as a “fear” of research (Burgoyne et al. 107).

In a study that spanned over three years, the researchers analyzed audience reactions to “an Interactive Theatre project intended to raise faculty awareness of multicultural dimensions of teaching” (Burgoyne et al. 107). They emphasize that their research method is “grounded theory, a qualitative social science approach in which the data to be analyzed are texts rather than numbers” (Burgoyne et al. 107). In focus groups and follow-up email surveys, they asked audience member for their reactions to the performance. They then used “grounded theory” to analyze these reactions and then coded the data to identify recurring themes and categories.

Burgoyne explains:
The grounded theorist does not start with a theory-driven hypothesis and then attempt to prove it ... we decided to investigate the reactions people really had ... Grounded theory seeks to understand an event or process from the point of view of those who experience it. The researcher, like the Forum Theatre Joker, is supposed to keep his/her own biases out of the process as much as possible ... The goal is to generate theory that is grounded in participant experience (Burgoyne et al. 110)

The general questions they asked were: “What central problems, actions, or strategies occur; under what conditions; with what consequences; for whom?” (Burgoyne et al. 111). The data yielded the following Conditions, Strategies and Consequences:

**Conditions: What Factors Influence Audience Reaction to the Performance?**

- Individual background of the audience member
- A faculty member’s academic discipline
- Formal training in dealing with diversity issues
- Significant prior experiences in the classroom or in personal life
- The race/ethnicity of the respondents
- Assumptions held by the audience member
- How they viewed the role of the teacher
- Definitions of diversity
- Assumptions about the goal of the interactive performance

**Strategies: What Teaching Techniques Did the Audience Perceive as Being Used in the Performance, and Were Those Techniques Effective or Not?**

- Active learning
• Memorability [sic]
• Stereotypes in characterization
• Realism of the performance
• Emotional response

Consequences: What Was the Impact on the Audience? What Did They Take Away from the Performance?

• Generated personal reflection
• Increased awareness of and sensitivity to cultural differences in the classroom
• Presented techniques on how to handle challenging classroom situations
• Confirmed the prevalence of student resistance to multicultural education classes
• Fostered the desire for additional training (Burgoyne et al. 112-117)

To reiterate, grounded-theory resists “the premature application of theories external to the data” (Burgoyne et al. 111). Only after the authors completed their grounded-theory analysis did they interpret their findings through two preexisting theoretical lenses: self-efficacy theory and critical race theory.

Albert Bandura defines Perceived Self-Efficacy as the “belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura 3). In other words, perceived self-efficacy is people’s belief in their ability to achieve a desired outcome in a particular situation. These beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave, and they have “diverse effects” on four major processes: cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection (Bandura).
While Bandura differentiates between simply believing that one can do something and having the actual skills to do it, he quotes numerous studies that show that people who rate their self-efficacy high for a particular task will be more motivated and will perform better than people with more ability who rate their self-efficacy lower. “If people believe they have no power to produce results, they will not attempt to make things happen” (Bandura 3). In short “Beliefs of personal efficacy constitute the key factor of human agency” (Bandura 3).

Analyzing the data through the self-efficacy lens, the researchers hypothesize that IT [Interactive Theatre] may enhance the self-efficacy beliefs of higher-efficacy individuals, and thus has a value beyond ‘preaching to the choir’ for them. However, the performance may actually have a negative effect for lower-efficacy faculty, reducing their motivation to address cultural differences in the classroom and increasing their commitment to their current practices (Burgoyne et al. 118).

The other interpretive lens chosen for this study was Critical Race Theory. This theory shares many of the same tenets of social justice theory, with a particular focus on race. The researchers qualified this exercise due to the “tendency for participants to interpret the scene as presenting an immediate problem for an instructor to solve, not as a manifestation of historically-constructed identities and relationships.” In a statement which connects back to this dissertation’s discussion of neutrality, the researchers wonder aloud whether “with a predominantly White audience, the Joker would have to lead the audience in this direction” (Burgoyne et al. 119).

Viewing the data through the Critical Race Theory lens, they noticed that in one focus group “the participants expressed a consensus view that paying attention to the identities of their
students would be impossible,” and “came down in support of the colorblind approach.” (Burgoyne et al. 119). In the other focus group, however, the group “agreed that the White professor in the scene needed to become conscious of the racial identities of his students—and himself” (Burgoyne et al. 119).

They drew two overall conclusions. The first focused on the value of gathering the data to improve performance: “Insights from our study into the performance itself” influenced leaders of the project to direct a character to “emphasize his fear of classroom conflict as a motivation for his refusal to engage his students in a ‘teachable moment’” (Burgoyne et al. 120). The second conclusion, “suggested what is heard often anecdotally: that the performance itself—perhaps because it is vivid and memorable—then becomes part of the background the instructor brings into the classroom.” (Burgoyne et al. 120). This conclusion parallels the contention of Brown Adelman who said that the performance often becomes a point of reference in the audience members’ lives. The authors call for further research into “the role that memories of interactive performance play in teachers’ real-life behavior” as it “might help us understand the long-term impact of IT techniques.” (Burgoyne et al. 120).

I echo their call. One possible way to research the latter idea would be to conduct a longitudinal study which measures impact over time. The act of surveying audience members at various intervals after a performance (e.g. after 3 moths, 6 months, or 1 year) has not yet happened. Nor has anyone measured audience members’ responses pre-performance which could provide a basis of comparison with post-performance results.

Finally, while praising the attributes and opportunities of qualitative social science research, the researchers mention a few “practical difficulties,” which include: a “frustrating and time consuming” bureaucratic process with the Internal Review Board—“a labyrinthine
bureaucracy fraught with rules, demands, and caveats”; the possibility of researchers unconsciously conducting themselves during the focus groups in a certain way which might lead to “inauthentic responses;” and the fact that the sample was self selecting” (Burgoyne et al. 120-121). These difficulties focus on amount of time necessary, as well as researcher and selection bias.

While helpful, the study was not able to make conclusive claims about efficacy. This next study however, makes bold claims as to the efficacy of the Interactive Theatre performance, and backs them with a rigorous method. In “Assessing the Impact of Augusto Boal’s ‘Proactive Performance’: An Embodied Approach for Cultivating Prosocial Responses to Sexual Assault,” Jose I. Rodriguez, Marc D. Rich, Rachel Hastings and Jennifer L. Page compare an Interactive Theatre performance on Sexual Assault influenced by Augusto Boal’s work to a more traditional, didactic academic lecture, as well as a standard control condition in the college classroom. This study, like the previous one, utilized Self Efficacy theory.

The performance was part of a Sexual Assault intervention program produced by a performance troupe called interACT (different than the OSU-I’s InterAct) at California State University Long Beach. For each of the three formats, the authors measured the “empirical predictors of comforting [type behavior],” including “perspective taking, emotional contagion, and empathic concern” (Rodriguez et al. 231). Perspective taking is the ability to see things from another’s point of view. Emotional contagion is the tendency to internalize emotions that are similar to and influenced by those of others. And empathic concern refers to an emotional investment in the welfare of another influenced by that perceived need (Rodriguez et al. 231). Audience members responded to between 3-7 items in each category. The goal was to “assess the
efficacy of a proactive intervention when compared to a didactic model using theoretically relevant, prosocial outcomes” (Rodriguez et al. 231).

The results showed that participants exposed to the theatre performance, in comparison to the academic lecture and a control group, reported greater perceived self-efficacy in: perspective taking, emotional contagion, empathic concern, and comforting behavior toward potential sexually assault survivors. In short, the evidence strongly argues for the efficacy of the intervention.

A few of these results might speak to best practices in other categories. First of all, dramaturgically, the final scene of the Santa Barbara troupe’s performance focused on the different ways one might comfort a survivor of sexual assault. In this respect it departed from Boal’s work and is more closely linked to Drama Therapy. Because current intervention programs focus solely on preventing date rape, we wanted to utilize … [an additional] scene that took place after an assault, where audience members could role-play a compassionate friend … We believe it is important for audience members to leave the performance better prepared to talk to a friend who survives sexual assault. Because most of our performances are presented to college students and teens, we believe that it is a useful pedagogical strategy to invite audience members to assume the role of an empathic or compassionate friend.

(Rodriguez et al. 238)

There are links between the compassionate friend in this study, UNC-ITC’s concerned friend option, and the CU-ITP’s empty chair technique. Perhaps encouraging audience members to come on stage as themselves – as opposed to as characters already in the scene – increases their belief in their personal ability to intervene. More research is needed.
These authors’ measuring tools were more sophisticated and scientific than any I came across in the five programs under study. Instead of measuring general audience attitudes toward sexual assault or rape, they looked at “perceived responsive self-efficacy” defined as “the self-reported belief in one’s ability to respond with empathy and comforting toward a sexual assault survivor” (Rodriguez et al. 247). They chose to do this because:

- self-efficacy beliefs are linked to behavioral intentions as well as overt action …
- linked theoretically and empirically to actual communication behavior …
- This focus on specific, communication-based outcomes is important because we are measuring whether or not audience members were effectively enrolled as agents of change and induced to believe that they were capable of being empathic as well as comforting through their performative or vicarious participation in the intervention (Rodriguez et al. 247).

The authors of this study are moving away from the mere assessment of negative or positive attitudes toward rape myths toward the development of the palpable beliefs “in one’s ability to make things better, to make a positive change” (Rodriguez et al. 247). Audience members are moving from thought to action, or if not action then at least the intent to act. And this is one of the explicit desired outcomes of Interactive Theatre.

Both the Burgoyne and Rodriguez studies apply social science research methods toward evaluating Interactive Theatre performances. Their methods had a significant difference, however. Rodriguez and his crew went into the performance using self-efficacy theory as their primary lens, and created a set of indicators to determine whether the performance has impact in those specific areas. Burgoyne and company, on the other hand, started with grounded theory which gathered, coded, and analyzed all of the respondents’ reactions, and allowed the data to
generate the indicators. Then, they presumably took stock of many theories that exist and picked the two best that matched the indicators they gathered.

Both methods were valid; practitioners just picked the more appropriate method with regard to the goals for the performance and evaluation. Burgoyne and company wanted to gauge general impact and so started from scratch, while Rodriguez had a more specific set of desired behaviors in mind and so started with the specific theory and indicators from the start. Although Burgoyne and her team did not have as much success applying the data to Critical Race Theory (due to audience members perceiving race as secondary in the scene), their results suggest that if an Interactive Theatre ensemble did a performance that explicitly focused on race relations, Critical Race Theory could provide useful indicators of efficacy.

Above all, what we learn from these two studies is that there is tremendous opportunity to increase the sophistication of the evaluation methods of Interactive Theatre ensembles. Practitioners might be wise to familiarize themselves with the methods of social science research, specifically, grounded theory, self-efficacy theory, and social justice theory – or the specific brand of social justice theory that aligns with the issues addressed in the particular performance.

Given the dearth of scholarship on evaluation of Interactive Theatre, I expanded my scope to include efforts to evaluate Forum Theatre projects. I found three quality studies. While I will only analyze one of them, for the purposes of a complete literature review, I will mention the other two. Jenny Hughes and the Center for Applied Research drafted “The Impact of [The] Blagg [project] on Challenging and Reducing Offending by Young People: An evaluation of a drama based offending behavior workshop” (Hughes, 2003). The project was developed by TiPP (Theatre in The Theatre in Prisons and Probation Research and Development Centre) in
Manchester, England. In addition, Shelley Hymel provides an online summary of an evaluation of “Don’t Say a Word: Interactive Theatre that helps you not get your ass kicked,” a Forum Theatre project created by The Headlines Theatre in Vancouver, British Columbia (Hymel, 2003).

The third, David Silver and Marco Weeks’s evaluation of the Ashtar Theatre in the Palestinian territories, adds a few important and effective practices not heretofore covered. International Consultants Silver and Weeks were contracted by the NGO CARE West Bank Gaza to evaluate the effectiveness of the Ashtar Theatre’s 2003 production of *Abu Shaker’s Affairs*, which focused on the topic of violence against and among students in the school environment. Before embarking on the project, Silver completed an extensive review of the literature and practices of what he called “Popular Theatre” throughout the world, with a particular emphasis on impact evaluations (Silver and Weeks 1). Based on his research he chose an overarching approach for his evaluation which he called the “Participatory Process:” which included not only outside evaluators, but also three Ashtar staff member and two funders from CARE.

While Silver admits the evaluation was “predominantly qualitative and impressionistic,” he affirms that the “the validity of the findings was enhanced by triangulation of multiple voices and points of view” (Silver and Weeks 3). Silver gathered information from the full range of sources available to him, conducting focus groups and key interviews with: audiences of previous *Abu Shaker’s Affairs* performances; leaders of community and social service organizations in Ramallah, Bethlehem, and the Shu-fat refugee camp in East Jerusalem; labor NGOs; CARE staff; and Ashtar staff.
He then developed a set of operational indicators “to obtain data that was actually able be measured in the field.” Based on these indicators, Silver and his team collectively compiled a set of diverse “tools” – both qualitative and quantitative – with which to evaluate the theatre project. These included:

- Separate topic guides for focus groups
- Key informant interviews
- Post-performance qualitative and quantitative surveys
- A self-efficacy questionnaire
- An audience composition and response checklist
- A video of a live performance of *Abu Shaker’s Affairs* which included the level and nature of audience participation not only on-stage but off-stage as well (Silver and Weeks 3-4).

Silver concludes that the Ashtar Theatre continues to have a positive impact: “Abu Shaker’s Affairs not only addresses key social issues, but also provides a much-needed outlet for an oppressed Palestinian society. With opportunities for entertainment so severely restricted, and with the eroding of the educational system, human rights, and cultural identity, Abu Shaker’s Affairs helps the Palestinian people and the future generation cope with their oppressive environment” (Silver and Weeks 13). Specifically, Silver underscores three items:

1. “Stand-alone performances have limited effectiveness: Lack of an organized scheme for conducting performance follow-up discussions, in both classroom and community settings, misses an opportunity to increase the potential impact of Forum Theatre messages.”
2. The lack of an integrated plan for monitoring and evaluating both the effectiveness of performances and their long term effects limits opportunities for making timely changes to the *Abu Shaker’s Affairs* which would further enhance its impact.

3. Considerable demand exists, on the part of student groups, teachers and community-based civil society organizations, for *Abu Shaker’s Affairs* performances and for their services training others to produce their own Forum Theatre plays. The current capacity of Ashtar staff, however, is insufficient to meet the increased demands expressed by the community. (Silver and Weeks 18)

Silver concludes his evaluation with recommendations for Ashtar. Many of them came directly from the wide range of people interviewed. First, he recommends that Ashtar form partnerships: “Integrate Abu Shaker performances into programs run by others, so that they are complementary rather than stand-alone” (Silver and Weeks 19). He suggests that these associations with organizations and institutions, which specifically provide support for people trying to change their behavior, can increase the potential impact of the Ashtar’s Forum Theatre.

He also strongly suggests following up performances with school-based or community based discussion sessions – in essence a continuation of the dialogue

Next, Silver proposes that Ashtar develop a “comprehensive yet feasible plan for monitoring and evaluation” in a “sustainable routine;” it should be a “team effort, and not done in isolation or by only one person” (Silver and Weeks 20). Last, he suggests that Ashtar engage in “Strategic Planning,” especially in light of the severe travel restrictions being placed on Palestinians, and the complexity of the social issues being addressed by *Abu Shaker’s Affairs* (Silver and Weeks 21). That way Ashtar could perform for more people more often.
While many of Silver and Weeks evaluation methods will be included in the “Effective Practices for Evaluation list below,” one of their recommendations constitutes an effective practice for general Interactive Theatre practice. They call for collaborating with local community organizations to create a mechanism to continue the dialogue with audience members after the performance, as well as to follow up with audience members to provide further support around the issues. This practice can be repeated on university campuses to increase impact.

**Effective Practices for Evaluation**

Based on current Interactive Theatre evaluation practices and their results, the two more sophisticated studies of Interactive Theatre programs on university campuses, and the additional information gleaned from the evaluation of the international Forum Theatre, I have deduced a list of effective practices for the evaluation of Interactive Theatre projects. They are numerous and represent an ideal situation:

- Gather data from as many sources as possible (Audience members, leaders, actors, funders, other staff)
- Use a wide variety of methods (Interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, video)
- Include both quantitative and qualitative data. Numbers give an overview of efficacy and impact and can impress; qualitative data, in the form of comments by audience members, flesh out the ideas represented by the numbers.
- Make an effort to measure attitude and behavior change; if able to go beyond rudimentary methods, use applicable theories such as self-efficacy and social justice theories to create indicators for evaluation forms
- When possible, gather data before the performance, at the performance, and after the performance (longitudinal data). Gathering data before provides a basis for comparison,
and gathering data at intervals after the performance (e.g. after 3 months, 6 months, or 1 year) measures impact over time.

- Use alternate and/or control groups for comparison (people who experienced the issues via a different method, and/or people who did not see the performance
- Evaluation should be a team effort, not the work of one person.
- Create an integrated plan and sustainable routine for Evaluation

Implementing all of these effective practices is not practical given the limits of time and resources. Moreover, there is a Catch 22 here. Ensembles cannot evaluate without more resources. But more resources are not going to be easily forthcoming without compelling evaluation data. Nevertheless, this list can inspire advances in the evaluation practice. Creating an integrated plan and sustainable routine for evaluation is the best first step.

UT-TFD is seeking to improve their evaluation practice and considering employing a similar approach to Rodriguez. Dr. Bost explains,

One thing I would like to see is some better form of evaluation of the program. We would like to able to measure what is actually happening – an attitude and behavior study. We are exploring a pilot study with the School of Social Work where we compare a group that has attended a TFD Forum performance with a control group – both before and after.

Bost suggests that collaboration with other campus groups might be helpful when evaluating. In addition to the School of Social Work, a program might consider approaching a Statistics class looking for a semester long project or the School of Public Health. During my second year at UNC, I worked with a graduate statistics class that was looking for real-world projects. I had them analyze my data and suggest some additional measurement tools. During my
second summer at UNC, I was fortunate to have a practicum student from the UNC School of Public Health, who analyzed my evaluation method and helped me improve the form. She also conducted an independent evaluation of the impact of ITC on its student actors, which is documented in the next section. Finally, another possible solution is to go narrow and deep rather than broad and shallow – i.e. not to evaluate every performance, but to evaluate only occasionally with more sophisticated methods that yield more telling results.

**Impact on Student Actors in the Ensemble**

While measuring impact of Interactive Theatre on audience members was encouraging but not clear cut, the positive impact on its student ensemble members is well documented and definitive. Two ensembles, CU-ITP and UNC-ITC, commissioned studies to measure this impact, and UT-TFD measured proficiency in each of their course objectives.

At CU-ITP and UNC-ITC, leaders had an outsider conduct the study, and student participation was optional and anonymous, assuring that it would not impact casting or treatment. The results consisted of internal reports not meant for publication, and so they did not require IRB approval; therefore, no quotations from them will be included here. Alternatively, I interviewed one actor from each of the ensembles, and my data confirmed the reports’ findings. I will include quotes to support the conclusions.

**CU-ITP**

The report at CU Boulder, completed in 2007, was called, “Assessment of how the Interactive Theatre Project at CU Boulder Supports Student Development in Student Actors,” and it was authored by Lee Scriggins, LCSW, employed by CU Boulder in another division. The
goal of the assessment was to “explore and describe salient aspects of the development of the student actors in the Interactive Theatre Program” (Scriggins 2).

Scriggins interviewed twelve of the fourteen actors, as well as the assistant directors and four alumnae (the latter with a 10-question web-based tool). She analyzed the answers “with primary attention to a set of six themes based on developmental theory and research” which had been adopted by the Division of Student Affairs at CU Boulder for planning and assessment purposes (Scriggins 3). The individual findings were extensive and truncated in the interest of length; but I did so in a way as to not impact the integrity of the results. The themes and a summary of select findings within each theme are listed in figure 12. It is important to note that each finding was supported by several quotes, which, for the reasons mentioned above, will not be included.

Theme 1. Intellectual Development: We help and support students in their development as intellectually curious, creative and knowledgeable critical thinkers and problem solvers.

Findings: The students interviewed describe significant development in critical thinking skills, and pleasure and confidence in these capacities. Factors that appear significant in supporting students to develop critical thinking skills include:

A. Taking on different roles, social positions or perspectives and fully inhabiting, defending, and articulating them.

B. Improvising: students take ownership of a viewpoint.

C. Seeing the structure not just of one position, but how a set of positions create, construct or mutually reinforce each other; seeing situations on a systematic level.

D. Developing and practicing critical thinking skills…
Theme 2. Lifelong Learning and Career Development: We help and support students in their development as life-long learners who can successfully apply their experiences toward personal and professional fulfillment.

Findings: The intellectual confidence and creativity that these students have make them seem particularly solid and resilient and capable of continued intellectual growth.

A. Participants discussed how the ITP experience fits with their goals for the future, both professional and personal. The relatively broad array of academic interests and future career choices in this group is notable:

B. Participants discussed continued learning and education for themselves and others as a significant life goal …

Theme 3. Beliefs, Values and Ethics: We help and support students in developing their own beliefs, values, ethics and worldviews in order to participate as responsible citizens.

Findings

A. Repeatedly, students described ITP as a crucible for their basic commitments and sense of themselves as moral participants in the world.

B. For some people, this was a further elaboration of a process started in their existing family or cultural milieu.

C. For some, ITP has honed values that were forged more in opposition to their early experiences:

D. Students described having greater confidence in their ability to participate in the world …

Theme 4. Belonging and Developing a Sense of Connectedness: We help and support students in developing a sense of connection to others through a variety of meaningful, respectful and diverse relationships.
A. Clearly ITP has fostered significant connections for all the interviewees on various levels:

B. Several students described the atmosphere on the CU Boulder campus as often thwarting this developmental goal or need for some students, but that ITP has provided a respite from this difficult environment.

C. The cohesion the program provides has an impact on retention.

D. Students described developing an understanding of how intimacy and trust grow.

E. Some were candid about the challenges of group work…

Theme 5. Multicultural Awareness: We help and support students in developing greater understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity in order to challenge attitudes and promote a socially just environment for all. This includes but is not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, and country of origin.

A. Almost every example under this category could be included under another theme. This speaks to the sophisticated nature of the multicultural education in ITP. In particular Themes 1 (Intellectual Development) and 3 (Beliefs and Values) and 6 (Identity, Independence and Interdependence) are relevant.

B. Students are developing ideas and practical competence in the process of engaging social justice projects.

Theme 6. Identity and the Role of Independence and Interdependence: We help and support students in developing a deeper understanding and appreciation for the uniqueness of who they are and how they impact and are impacted by others.

A. Students describe significant change in Identity Development/Uniqueness

B. Impact: Students note a growing sense of personal efficacy (impact on others) as well as empathy (allowing and acknowledging impact)
C. Students describe being part of a group effort that creates change, and the impact of ITP performances on audiences.

Figure 12. Themes and Findings from CU-ITP’s “Assessment of how the Interactive Theatre Project at CU Boulder Supports Student Development in Student Actors.” (Scriggins 4-22)

This study also included a section “Recommendations from the Study Participants” broken down as follows:

A. Make expectations clear for all and follow through.
B. Make sure both support and structure are offered.
C. Balance the need to serve the community with performances with the learning and growth needs of the student actors.
D. Continue to develop scenarios including interactive forms like Forum theatre, image theatre, and experiential retreats.
E. Continue to develop opportunities for student writing and directing.
F. Continue to focus on both acting skills and social justice learning.

(Scriggins 22-23)

I asked ensemble leaders to refer me to an actor in each of the programs who could speak about the program critically. CU-ITP actor Taylor Pridgeon’s interview was consistent with the findings:

I can say with confidence that I would not be the same person I am now if not for the Interactive Theatre Project. In terms of learning about social justice it has been mind blowing. The first year, there was so much to take in, and then it kept making more and more sense. ITP not only affects you and the way you respect
others, but also the way you live your daily life – you keep your eye out for the little things, things that are not quite right. I love that. It was a plethora of new concepts.

On a side note, CU-ITP recently began sending out an email newsletter to its alumni, so that students and leaders could stay in contact and keep tabs on what everyone is doing, as well as to increase fundraising.

**UNC-ITC**

The report of UNC-ITC ITC was called “Discovering the Motivation to Participate and Involvement of Ensemble Members in Interactive Theatre Carolina.” Commissioned by me, it was completed by Joy Messinger, a graduate student in the UNC School of Public Health who was earning credit for her summer practicum by interning with UNC-ITC. She was not part of the ensemble and worked for us over the summer and early fall of 2009.

Her methods consisted of individual interviews with self-selecting student ensemble members, though most participated. Data from each interview was analyzed for common themes and sub-themes. Here is the most significant excerpt from the report:

Once they auditioned and were accepted into ITC, students overwhelmingly wanted to stay involved because they found it to be a learning experience … and a vehicle for exposing them to new ideas … Other reasons involved being involved as ITC as a group experience, the development of interpersonal skills or liking the positive group dynamic and the Monday night rehearsals … Additional students felt a personal connection with the material presented through ITC, a personal connection with the ITC Director, the opportunity for development as a performer, or the potential to have an impact on UNC’s campus (Messinger 3).
Students were also asked if they had feedback about how to improve the program. Most requested increased opportunities:

- Increased acting instruction in Monday night rehearsals
- More opportunities to get involved through directing or writing
- Additional community connection
- More artistic freedom to explore the characters
- More leadership opportunities for ensemble members (Messinger 3-4)

Karen Bernstein, an alumna of UNC and UNC-ITC, said of her experience:

> ITC has had a pretty profound impact on my life over the past few years. Before becoming a part of ITC, I had a very shallow opinion on social justice issues and a basic idea of different techniques that could be used to facilitate conversations about them. Even then, my ability to talk about social justice was limited to using outside sources such as movies, museums, or newspaper articles. ITC forced me to invest more of myself in these issues by understanding them not only on a deeper level, but also from multiple perspectives.

> I find that this has helped me immensely even after leaving ITC. As a teacher in a low-income school, I feel like I am bombarded everyday with the same issues I was challenged to think about as a member of ITC: racism, socio-economic class, gender identity, ageism, etc. Because I have that wider perspective on these issues, and have been "trained" in how to see issues from multiple sides, at a structural level as well as in every day situations, I am ultimately a stronger teacher for my students.
The two ensemble reports have much in common. Students experience significant positive impact because they feel they are learning a great deal about a wide range of topics including social justice, improving critical thinking skills, developing interpersonal skills, and impacting the campus for the better. In addition, they feel a tremendous connection to the ensemble – a sense of belonging to something important. Finally, members feel that the experience will be an asset in the future, helping them to achieve their personal and professional goals.

The recommendations for improvement also had two commonalities, a desire for more instruction on acting and social justice, and more leadership opportunities, including those to direct and write.

**UT-TFD**

In a different type of evaluation to measure impact on its ensemble members, UT-TFD, in the fall of 2010, distributed an evaluation tool to their students at the end of the fall semester of their two-semester course. The form instructs students: “Please rate yourself on the following items both before you took this class and at the present time and presents them with 21 items (Kaye, “Theatre … Program” 1) For items 1-12 the Likert scale uses the terms “Poor, Fair, Good, Excellent” and for items 13-21 the Likert Scale uses “Novice, Apprentice, Proficient, Expert” Then it asks two open ended questions:

- What have you learned about the issues of interpersonal violence that has had the most impact on you?
- What do you want us to know about your experience with Theatre for Dialogue? (Kaye, “Theatre … Program” 1)
The frequencies for items 1-21 and the results of the qualitative responses are documented in figure 13. The data was again prepared by Alyssa Kaye, Graduate Research Assistant in the Office of Assessment.
Voices against Violence Evaluation:  
Theatre for Dialogue Program – December 2010

The following is a report of student evaluations for a year-long Peer Theatre Educator course. Students enrolled in this year-long, upper-division course in Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 in order to be trained as Peer Theatre Educators for the Voices against Violence Theatre for Dialogue program; this evaluation is an end-of-semester evaluation that students completed halfway through the course in December 2010. All sixteen students enrolled in the class in Fall 2010 completed the evaluation.

On the evaluation, students were asked to rate themselves “before this class began” and “now (at the present time);” thus for each item, students reported two ratings. For the set of items on this evaluation, two 4-point scales were used: students were asked to rate themselves “poor,” “fair,” “good,” or “excellent” on items 1-12 and “novice,” “apprentice,” “proficient,” or “expert” on items 13-21. The analyses for items 1-12 (Tables 1 and 2) are on page 2 of this report. Analyses for items 13-21 (Tables 3 and 4) are on page 3 of this report.

Tables 1 and 3 show the full distribution of responses for all items. Tables 2 and 4 indicate the average gain from “Before” to “Now” for each item. One point is indicative of an average gain of one category (e.g., from “novice” to “apprentice”). The change from “Before” to “Now” for all items was statistically significant. Effect size, a measure of the amount of change seen between time points, was also investigated; not only did participants report a significant amount of improvement from “before” to “now” on all items, but effect sizes were very large on all items.

Finally, two open-ended questions were asked on the evaluation. Students were asked what they learned about the issues of interpersonal violence that had the most impact on them and what they want Voices against Violence to know about their experience with Theatre for Dialogue. Tables 5 and 6 (page 4) report the students’ responses in full to these two questions.

Data prepared by Alyssa Kaye, Graduate Research Assistant
### Table 1. Full distribution of responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1. My ability to see red flags in relationships around me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2. My ability to identify red flags in my own relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3. My ability to define sexual assault, relationship violence, and stalking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4. My understanding of consent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5. My ability to describe and understand the cycle of violence and its different phases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6. My understanding of the difference between rescuer, distance, and anchor behaviors as an ally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7. My ability to describe anchor behaviors for supporting a survivor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8. My knowledge of various resources available on campus for survivors of interpersonal violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9. My knowledge of various resources available in the community for survivors of interpersonal violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10. My ability to effectively articulate my thoughts about issues related to interpersonal violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11. My willingness to listen and consider others' points of view about issues of interpersonal violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12. My confidence as a representative for VAV on campus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2. T-statistic and Effect Size for change from "Before" to "Now" for Items 1-12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Average Gain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My ability to see red flags in relationships around me.</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My ability to identify red flags in my own relationship.</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My ability to define sexual assault, relationship violence, and stalking.</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My understanding of consent.</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My ability to describe and understand the cycle of violence and its different phases.</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My understanding of the difference between rescuer, distance, and anchor behaviors as an ally.</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. My ability to describe anchor behaviors for supporting a survivor.</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. My knowledge of various resources available on campus for survivors of interpersonal violence.</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. My knowledge of various resources available in the community for survivors of interpersonal violence.</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. My ability to effectively articulate my thoughts about issues related to interpersonal violence.</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. My willingness to listen and consider others' points of view about issues of interpersonal violence.</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. My confidence as a representative for VAV on campus.</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: All items are significant, p = .000)
## Table 3. Full distribution of responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Novice</th>
<th>Apprentice</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Expert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. My understanding of how to create a VAV Theatre for Dialogue scenario.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. My competence at creating a realistic scenario for the VAV Theatre for Dialogue program.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. My skill as an actor in the Theatre for Dialogue program.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. My ability to speak coherently and effectively as a character/facilitator in a VAV scenario.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. My ability to portray a character that is different from myself.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. My willingness to receive feedback from others about my performance skills.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. My ability to give feedback to others about their performance skills.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. My role as a leader on campus around issues of interpersonal violence.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. My role as an activist in my community around issues of interpersonal violence.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Table 4. T-statistic and effect size for change from “Before” to “Now” for items 13-21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Average Gain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. My understanding of how to create a VAV Theatre for Dialogue scenario.</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. My competence at creating a realistic scenario for the VAV Theatre for Dialogue program.</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. My skill as an actor in the Theatre for Dialogue program.</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. My ability to speak coherently and effectively as a character/facilitator in a VAV scenario.</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. My ability to portray a character that is different from myself.</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. My willingness to receive feedback from others about my performance skills.</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. My ability to give feedback to others about their performance skills.</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. My role as a leader on campus around issues of interpersonal violence.</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. My role as an activist in my community around issues of interpersonal violence.</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: All items are significant, p = .000)
Table 5. Responses to the first open-ended question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What have you learned about the issues of intimate violence that has had the most impact on you?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actively being an ally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about the role of an anchor and ways to be a good ally has helped me in my relationships outside this class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to take care of myself!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking about differently abled people shined a new light on abuse for me. It was very intense reading about this. Also discovering where I stand as a feminist and how many different issues play role in interpersonal violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The biggest, most important lesson I have learned about interpersonal violence, is that it can happen in any relationship, at any age, any gender, and that this behavior can be prevented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The idea of being an anchor had the greatest impact on me. Understanding the difference between rescuer, anchor, &amp; distancer &amp; reflecting on my own life when I have been all 3 of these. Also, how to be a better anchor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lesson on how to be an anchor ally. It's good to know how to react when are a bystander in these issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The psychological-mental aspect of relationship violence impacted me a lot, as I've had previous experiences with it. It made more passionate about preventing these issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These issues affect people of all genders, racial backgrounds, sexual orientations, and social classes. I've completely altered my on behaviors in my relationships. I am overall a more considerate partner and friend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This class helped me realize that people that have gone through issues like this have many resources around them, and resources within themselves.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Responses to the second open-ended question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you want us to know about your experience with Theatre for Dialogue?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amazing!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have honestly been inspired by our work to impact members of my community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have learned so much about myself as well as working with other people around these issues to spread awareness which is the first step towards the ideal world without interpersonal violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have really enjoyed being a part of this experience. I have learned so much about relationship violence and am now aware of the impact all around me. Most of all I have enjoyed getting to know the people around me going through this experience as well. I feel like I have a better sense of the person I want to be through this class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has been an incredible journey. It was very challenging trying to use my body to portray these issues, but I could not be more grateful that I got to be a part of it. I loved the impact that I got to see while being a part of this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has been life-changing! Although the work can be heavy &amp; over-whelming, it has given me a sense of purpose &amp; validation of what I want to do in my life as a social worker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It really has changed my life. I feel like I found my purpose now, and I can't wait to take these lessons into next semester, and in life, and do good with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was difficult getting into the &quot;improv&quot; set of mind while also being aware of what we were doing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's very hard for me to open up. I've always learned to hide what I was feeling. Though it's still really tough for me, this class has really been an outlet for a lot of the things I've bottled up. Thank you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THIS CHANGED MY LIFE. Thank you for everything and more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You guys have really helped me to heal, and to accept help!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data prepared by Alyssa Kaye, Graduate Research Assistant
These numbers speak for themselves, with significant increases in percentages in each category, indicating that students are moving to greater awareness, knowledge, and skills around issues of interpersonal violence and greater confidence to take action to combat it. And the responses to the open ended questions speak volumes. Students have experienced significant impact, describing the experience as life altering. Several students mentioned that the experience has the feel of a challenging yet fulfilling journey. They have learned tremendous amounts about all aspects of relationships, as well internalized the social justice theories on gender oppression. In addition, most comments mentioned the importance of being an ally and anchor, which is strong indication of intended behavior change. It seems as though students intend to act differently in their own relationships, as well as try to intervene if they see fellow students struggling in their relationships.

Gopi Ganesh, an alumnus of UT-Austin and UT-TFD, confirms these results:

Being a member of Theatre for Dialogue had a huge impact on me. It opened a lot of doors for me, personally and professionally. It led to work. We had performed for a local non-profit which also sought to reduce IPV in the community. As a result of the performance I started working there as a student, helping to launch a teen dating abuse hotline. I then went to work there full time after I graduated. But not only did it lead to this job, it also helped me develop the skills for this job. TFD really turned me into a public speaker and helped me get a really intimate and nuanced understanding of the issues of IPV and Sexual Assault.

As a quick critical aside, the evaluation form suggests that UT-TFD students were asked for both their pre- and post-course perspectives after they had completed the course. As opposed to random audience members who would be hard to find and pin down in advance, it seems as if
UT-TFD could easily survey their students at the beginning of the academic year in addition to the end of the fall semester. The results might be more accurate. That being said, these results are compelling.

Finally, bringing in a perspective of a student from OSU-I further confirms the results from the other three programs. Barbie Papalios says:

InterAct has helped me learn how to converse with people and understand their points of view. It is easy to say you’re wrong and I’m right. But Interact has helped me recognize that it is important to understand how they feel – and why the feel like they do. You can’t just disregard what they say or else they will do the same to you. InterAct also gave me a new career path in Theatre. I always loved the Theatre, and I always loved volunteering the community. InterAct has given me a way to do both. Also I have met some of my best friends through Interact. You have so much in common and you work so closely – you just bond.

In summary, being members of Interactive Theatre ensembles has had a significant positive impact in the lives of these students. While students who are drawn to performance and social change tend to be seeking out challenging growth experiences, Interactive Theatre ensembles clearly provide a seminal experiences for these students, be it for one semester, one year, or the duration of their college careers. The Interactive Theatre experience proves invaluable to their development as individuals, professionals, and citizens.

*A Compelling Argument*

In addition to inferring effective practices for the evaluation of Interactive Theatre programs, this chapter has analyzed results that document the impact of Interactive Theatre performances on university audience members, as well as impact of the Interactive Theatre
ensemble experience on its student members. To reiterate, while there was evidence to suggest the former, the latter was proved beyond a reasonable doubt. I repeat these findings here to make a final point: when university funders and administration are considering whether or not to establish – or to continue to sustain – an Interactive Theatre program, they should not only focus on the impact of the performance product on their campus; they should also consider the impact of the ensemble process. While student ensemble members tend to be a small percentage of the student population, there is no doubt that Interactive Theatre provides them social-educational experience of the highest quality, imbuing them with valuable knowledge and skills which will serve them throughout their lives. I struggle to think of other experiences on university campuses that come close; while they certainly exist in the form of Honors programs, Fellows type programs, and specialty majors, they are fewer and far between. In sum, taken together, the impact of performances on campus, and the impact of the ensemble experience on select students – product and process – make a compelling argument for establishment and sustainment of an Interactive Theatre program on a university campus.
Chapter VI: Conclusion – Interactive Theatre as “Theatre of the Oppressor:” Ethical, Theoretical, and Practical Implications

With Interactive Theatre poised on the cusp of expansion and growth, this dissertation has sought, through interviews and text-based research, to elucidate effective practices for all of the major aspects of establishing an Interactive Theatre program on a university campus. In order to establish and sustain a program, practitioners must consider a wide range of activities and develop many skill sets. This dissertation has paralleled that process, providing future and current practitioners with requisite information in each area so they can efficiently achieve proficiency. Of course, as programs develop, practitioners likely will need to pursue further knowledge and skills in several areas; the bibliography provides sources in each area and is intended in part as a guide to future study. ATHE’s Interactive Theatre subcommittee also provides a list of Interactive Theatre resources at http://www.athe.org/interactivetheatre/index.

Ethical Implications

Because Interactive Theatre is potentially transformative, on an individual and a societal level, all of the program leaders strongly emphasized the necessity for ethical practice. Interactive Theatre groups should not stir up people’s feelings around controversial issues if they are not able to manage the reactions and responses. The form’s greatest strengths, if misapplied, can become its greatest weaknesses.

The field, however, is relatively new. Theatre of the Oppressed began its work in the 1970’s, and Cornell established its program in 1992. Thus, ethical guidelines are only just being developed and talked about. Interactive Theatre does not yet have it own “Hippocratic Oath.” As the work is powerful and personal, leaders stressed the need to continually monitor their practice.
for signs of harmful impact. As Brown Adelman of CU-ITP says, “There are so many sets of
ethics in the work: ethics as a playwright, ethics as a director of an ensemble, ethics as a
facilitator of a dialogue, and others.”

In this concluding chapter, I will apply the responses of Interactive Theatre leaders to
ethical questions that arise with respect to each of the chapter topics – Foundations, Structure and
Methods, Facilitation, and Evaluation/Impact – with the disclaimer that, in practice, they all
function together. I will then introduce an “Ethics Statement” drafted by the Interactive Theatre
Subcommittee of ATHE, which will help bring together a few major themes.

In terms of foundational aspects, Dane Cruz of CITE says, “Ethics are intertwined with
our mission statement; it’s about voice and human dignity.” He insists,

We never want to leave someone in an audience in a place where there is no hope
for further dialogue and interaction. Our sessions are often a venue for the client
to make participants aware of resources and policies related to the session topic.
This may include an invitation from the client to engage in further dialogue on the
issue, in both formal and informal ways with the group or with an individual.

Norman of CU-ITP also speaks to ethics of their mission: “We are ethically bound to
create experiences that represent a range of experiences, belief and ideas.” More specifically,
Post of OSU-I talks about how ethics apply to their methods and artistic process: “As we create
our scenes, it is important for us to put the struggle out there as it is – to portray a realistic
scenario with a variety of perspectives in it.”

Ethics also impact the creative process when developing a scene. Interviews revealed a
particular concern with the portrayal of the oppressor. Hoare of UT-TFD explains, “We think
about ethics in the way that we create our scenes, and characters, and the way we direct our
actors. As we create our perpetrator, we think very intentionally about how can we create the most real and whole characters, so that the audience can see beyond the fact that they are oppressors and focus more on the offending behaviors. We cannot demonize them.”

At UNC-ITC we sought to make the oppressor a real and whole character in all of our scenes. We tried to make them good people who happen to make choices that target and hurt people. If we were to make them simply bad people, it would be easy for the audience member to think, “That person’s a jerk. I’m not a jerk so I would never do that.” Portraying the oppressor as a good person who is making an bad choice, however, opens up the possibility for the audience member to think, “Oh, that is a good person, but he/she is doing that; is it possible that I sometimes do that too?”

Cruz echoed these sentiments and expanded the discussion to include the targeted character:

Whatever topic we are working on, we want to represent multiple points of view, and to do so in a compassionate way. We are not portraying victims and villains; rather we are portraying a gray area, where most human conflict arises. We strive to create identification with and empathy for all of characters. No one is a lost cause. Everyone is human and we in the audience can identify with them on some level.

Practitioners consider ethics not only with respect to characters, but also with respect to the people on whom the characters are based. As pointed out, practitioners get inspiration for their scenes by talking with students on campus or others in the community about how they experience these issues. Leaders stressed that they strive to protect the anonymity of their subjects to avoid the potential to re-victimization of the subject. I personally have used two
strategies to achieve this goal. The first is to record the data without identifiers that could point back to the original subject. In addition I avoid using one person’s complete story in a scene lest someone else recognize it. Instead I create composites, based on salient details from multiple subjects.

Finally, Brown Adelman of CU-ITP stresses that it is important to understand the role of Interactive Theatre in the larger campus educational mission. She thinks one part of ethics is to “never think you are too good, or that your piece is in some way going to be the answer. You have to know that it is all a process and Interactive Theatre is just one small part of that process.” Echoing David Silver’s recommendation to Ashtar in chapter five, Brown Adelman goes onto say that it is crucial to forge long terms relationships and partnerships in the campus community:

That way, not only do you create buy in and mutual understanding but you also, as staff members, are able to keep each other in check around the issues. Stay in conversation with them. After a performance, talk about how it impacted the audience, and ask “Where can the conversation go from here? What should we do next time?”

There was a lot of discussion around ethical practice with respect to facilitation, with emphasis placed on social justice. Norman of CU-ITP explains,

Ethics are learning about social justice. If we are asking other people to do it, we need to do it ourselves. We have to explore our own identities, and doing our work around ourselves and privilege. Ethics is recognizing where I hold privilege and realizing where this identity can be helpful in the conversation? Heightening our awareness of how we show up in a space and how we are being perceived – that’s an important part of doing this work from an ethical perspective.
Hoare of UT-TFD builds on this point when she says, “There are ethics around how we talk about identities that are in the room. We should allow that to be an important part of the conversation, asking the question: how do our own biases get in the way of us recognizing that something is happening that needs to change?”

Exploring ethics within the facilitation of individual moments of performance, Cruz of CITE points out,

One of the things we do, right from the start, is make clear about what we can and can’t accomplish in 90 minutes or 2 hours. We are going to tackle the issues, but it is likely that we will only scratch the surface. And then we strive to make sure a mechanism has been set up so that the dialogue can continue after we leave – that they can continue the conversation.

Brown Adelman of CU-ITP and Post of OSU-I talk about ethics in terms of always keeping your audience in mind, especially during moments of resistance. Brown Adelman says, “The people who are part of the oppressor or dominant group are likely to feel singled out, with the spotlight on them because of what you the facilitator are saying. My hope is to have a conversation in a way that they will not get pissed off and leave the room.” Post of OSU-I continues along these lines:

You need constant consideration of your audience and the issues you are exploring. For example: you are going into a community and the goal is explore moments of oppression and encouraging people to recognize that. You have to realize that some people won’t recognize it, and then you as facilitator will have to challenge them around that. You have to prepare for that. You know it is
coming, so you should develop the skills of handling those moments. And practice them.

Finally, practitioners are extremely focused on the impact of their work, specifically the potential for negative impact. Norman of CU-ITP says, “We are ethically bound to not intentionally do harm. We should not put people in a position that they feel emotionally or psychologically harmed or hung out to dry. Now that doesn’t mean people may not feel harmed/targeted, but, again, it is about having the right intent.” Hoare of UT-TFD agrees:

We are especially concerned about the impact of the performance on the survivors of interpersonal violence. They can easily be impacted by uneducated or unaware audience members who victim-blame. So what we do is acknowledge, from beginning, that audience members have permission to take care of themselves. It is okay, we say, to leave or take a break, or to zone out. We also are sure to make the audience aware of all the resources available to them and we bring materials to distribute.

Cruz of CITE uses language similar to Norman’s but has the efficacy of the work in mind, trying to determine the optimal conditions for audience processing and learning. He uses the example of their performance on sexual harassment:

We make sure that we are doing no harm with our theatre, rather that we are doing it in responsible way. We want to do the work in a way that it will engage a group so that they will seek out more information. For example, if we make our performance all about policy, people would not be emotionally engaged. They might not think through how their behavior might have impacted someone personally. So instead we try to create the scene, and the interaction, and dialogue
so that they find the link between the two. We want them to ask themselves: how does that policy apply to me based on what I just saw?

Effective practices with regard to ethics, then, include:

- When drawing scenes, make sure they are realistic, representing the broad range of perspectives around an issue. Interactive Theatre is best utilized in the gray areas of life.

- When creating characters, do not portray caricature oppressors, or direct the actors to play them as demons. Make them whole people who perpetrate negative acts. In the same vein, do not portray stereotypical oppressed, or direct the actors to play them as victims. Make them whole people who are targeted for one of their identities and allow them to struggle with that in a realistic manner.

- Add a ground rule around self care as it applies to certain issues

- Rehearse how you as a facilitator will validate and challenge audience members. Practice difficult moments likely to come up. You make your actors rehearse; you should too.

- Always research, or work with the partner audience to research, what resources are available to audience members. And carve out time at the end of the performance to advise the audience of those resources.

- Always encourage that the dialogue to continue at the end of the performance and, if possible, help develop mechanisms to make that happen

While all leaders emphasized that ethical practice was of prime importance, none had a formal ethics statement. ATHE’s Interactive Theatre Subcommittee, however, drafted one in January 2009, which grew out of a planning retreat at Wayne State University in Detroit the
previous fall of 2008. The subcommittee included: Rebecca Brown Adelman, Lindy Bumgarner, Suzanne Burgoyne, Michael Ellison, Lynn Hoare, Jorge Huerta, Kaarin Johnston, Cheryl Kaplan, David Kaye, Cece McFarland, Trent Norman, Doug Paterson, Jeffrey Steiger, and me.

This statement (figure 14) provides an excellent wrap up for a discussion on ethics, and recalls many of best practices emphasized over the course of this study:

[ATHE Interactive Theatre Subcommittee] Ethics Statement: Because this form is highly interactive, bridges many structures, and is used so often in partnership with communities, the Interactive Theatre Task Force felt a responsibility to identify a code of ethics around the use of this powerful methodology. To use Interactive Theatre responsibly we believe that it is important to:

1. Foster dialogue as a central component of Interactive Theatre; within the research, rehearsal process, and performance process, and in a manner that names master narratives while inviting untold or counter narratives.
2. Engage the work within a community context.
3. Lead or participate in a manner that responsibly addresses outcomes of a dialogue or performance.
4. Practice active and respectful feedback, offering and inviting constant exchange regarding the craft, efficacy, and ethical use of Interactive Theatre.
5. Engage in a performance devising process that allows individuals to reflect on their own values and truths, name and practice their own personal, group, and social power, and connect to and within a community.
6. Be critical and reflective regarding one’s own assumptions related to power relationships and best practices, and how these factors may be affecting one's approach to Interactive Theatre and the future use of Interactive Theatre.

Figure 14. ATHE Interactive Theatre Subcommittee Ethics Statement (Interactive Theatre Subcommittee, “Ethics”)

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Two ideas in this statement warrant further exploration: the idea of responding to the master narrative by soliciting counter-narratives, and the idea of being cognizant of power structures within the practice.

An issue that came up consistently among the practitioners interviewed was the relationship between Interactive Theatre and Augusto Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed (TO). Across the board, practitioners had tremendous respect and appreciation for Boal and his pioneering efforts to develop an impressive set of powerful tools to use theatre for social change. All had read from his books, most had studied with him, and all acknowledged how he always sought to develop and improve his work over the course of his career. Practitioners consistently echoed the need to make sure that people who do TO and Interactive Theatre continue to grow and develop the work, so that it is does not remain static. They reported that they continually challenge themselves to move the work forward.

One idea discussed informally within the field is that Interactive Theatre is developing a theatrical identity closer to what can be called “Theatre of the Oppressor.” While Boal used theatre to empower the oppressed to seek strategies and solutions for negotiating the power structures above them, much of the Interactive Theatre work on university campuses focuses on
using theatre to challenge the oppressors in the audience – to challenge the master narratives which monopolizes the psyches of the community and keeps the oppressed subordinate.

I encountered this idea for the first time in 2008 when I attended “The Art of the Joker: Theatre of the Oppressed Training for Experienced Practitioners” co-facilitated by Marc Weinblatt of the Mandala Center for Change and Michele Decottignies of Stage Left Productions. At the end of the training, Weinblatt handed me a draft of an article he was working on called “Toward a Theatre of the Oppressor.” Since then his work has progressed. In the last year, he rewrote the article, with contributions from his longtime colleague Cheryl Harrison, which is soon to be published as a chapter entitled “Theatre of the Oppressor: Working with Privilege Towards Social Justice” in the book *Come Closer: Critical Reflections on Theatre of the Oppressed*, edited by Toby Emert and Ellie Friedland (Peter Lang, Inc., 2011). In it, Weinblatt starts out by explaining:

> Long before developing T.O. adaptations for working with privilege, I was convinced that all of us are culpable and responsible for uprooting social injustice – not just the “oppressed.” We all have to be protagonists and therefore activists. We all must be willing to look at where we are (even if unintentionally) part of the problem and therefore potentially a more effective part of the solution.

(Weinblatt)

He then introduces his “Theatre of the Oppressor” which seeks to “analyze the role of the potential ally from the dominant social group” (Weinblatt):

> In classic T.O., we replace the most “oppressed” – the disabled person in a scene about ableism, the teen in a scene about adult-ism. Again, this is very important work. But the work of the ally, the person from the Agent or dominant social
group who does not have the historic wound and might even be taken more
seriously by those instigating the oppression, is equally important. (Weinblatt)

He tells the story of a performance on elder issues by his Poetic Justice Theatre
Ensemble, using a Forum/Playback hybrid technique, which depicted an oppressive situation at a
senior assisted living facility:

For many reasons, they [the elderly] felt powerless to change things. The Forum
yielded not only possible solutions for the elder residents but also invited one
younger adult advocate in the audience to explore what he might do as an ally in
support of his friends … I encouraged him to essentially play himself – the
potential ally. What might he do for his friends? He took the challenge and tried
several alternatives. (Weinblatt)

He goes on to point out that, facilitating as a straight White man of privilege, he is
symbolically and, and in some cases literally, the oppressor, and that he has come to the
realization that his most valuable work might be here in the United States with people like him –
people with privilege. He calls for agents of oppression “to reinvent themselves as agents of
liberation” and be “Allies” to those who are marginalized (Weinblatt).

It is clear that these same ideas are important in the minds of the practitioners of
Interactive Theatre. They hope that their theatrical form, which involves the audience members
in an experiential way, might lead them to recognize where and how they hold agent status and
inspire them to use that status to intervene on behalf of marginalized fellow citizens.

Weinblatt, of course, is not the only one to think critically about Boal’s theories as they
are applied in the United States. In Playing Boal: Theatre Therapy and Activism, Editors Mady
Schutzman and Jan Cohen-Cruz explore both the possibilities and challenges that exist when
Boal’s techniques are applied outside of their original context. Bruce McConachie, in his “Theatre of the Oppressed With Students of Privilege: Practicing Boal in the American College Classroom” argues that “modest progressive work centered on the goals and strategies of Boal can occur in academic settings if one can negotiate the immense gap between Boal’s Marxist assumptions about oppression and the [privileged] students’ lack of experience of oppressive situations” (247). Dwyer, whose analysis of the Forum Theatre project in Canada was cited in chapter four, believes that there is an “inherent risk with the pedagogical model Boal borrows from Freire: a model of invisible pedagogy in which … the hierarchical nature of the teacher-student (or Joker-audience) relationship is masked” (201).

A brief overview of Paulo Freire’s theories will prove helpful. In his “Pedagogy of the Oppressed,” after differentiating between the oppressor and the oppressed in the unjust world, Freire advocates for a new educational model that allows the oppressed to reclaim their humanity and power and overcome their condition. Toward this end he insists that the oppressed play a significant role in their educational process:

No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption (Freire 54).

Freire also calls upon the oppressors, if they are truly committed to a just society, to heighten their awareness and think critically about their role. He calls for oppressor and oppressed, and teachers and students, to realize that education is a political act serving a state agenda. He is critical of the didactic nature of what he calls the current “banking” method of education, in which the student is an empty account to be filled by the teacher. This method
“transforms students into receiving objects. It attempts to control thinking and action, leads men and women to adjust to the world, and inhibits their creative power” (Freire 77). He says this “negates education and knowledge as a process of inquiry” (Freire 53).

Freire did not approve of the teacher-student dichotomy and called for reciprocity between the two: “Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously students and teachers” (Freire 72). He wants teachers who also learn, and learners who also teach to be the central model of classroom participation. Freire reiterates, however, that teacher and student have unequal power; thus the teacher must not be authoritarian and must stay open to new ideas through interactions with the student. Teachers must recognize that “their fundamental objective is to fight alongside the people for the recovery of the people's stolen humanity” and not to “win the people over” to their side (Freire 95).

There is no doubt that Facilitators of Interactive Theatre share Freire’s views on the injustice of the society’s oppressor-oppressed relationship. And they deeply believe and embody the two-way dialogue model of participation vs. the one way monologue/banking model. But our practitioners seem reluctant to abolish the teacher-student relationship.

Deborah Mutnick, in her “Critical Interventions: The Meaning of Praxis,” points out that “Freirian pedagogy and Boalian theatre are revolutionary in their commitment to struggles for social and economic justice; however, they do not aim to convert students to any particular organization or political philosophy. Their aims are broadly nonsectarian rather than narrowly political” (43). In contrast, Interactive Theatre practitioners maintain defined goals, which espouse social justice theories and practices. The different definitions and practices of the TO Joker and the Interactive Theatre epitomizes this fundamental difference in the forms.
This divergence, however, is easy to reconcile. In contrast to Boal and fellow TO practitioners, Interactive Theatre practitioners are not working exclusively with the “oppressed.” On university campuses, they are by and large working with groups of potential oppressors in some areas, as they carry various privileges as a result their dominant identities in areas such as race, gender, class, sexual identity/orientation, ability and others. Whereas oppressed people are generally quick to recognize where they are targeted – they experience it every day – and can more easily envision solutions to change that, oppressors, due to their privilege, tend to be blind to their targeting behavior. Because of the master narrative, much of the offending behavior is subtle, condoned, and/or unconscious. As a result, students of privilege are not conditioned to recognize and understand oppression.

Facilitators of Interactive Theatre can heed Freire’s call to fight with the people for their stolen humanity, and can heighten their own awareness of oppressor-oppressed relationships and work to combat them, but not by becoming neutral moderators. If they did so, the oppression, more often than not, would not get named because members of the dominant group, prevalent on college campuses, are not wired to do or say things that would upset their position of power in society. And more often than not, subordinate communities have internalized the oppression and, in these mixed audiences, will be shy to speak up for fear of rebuke.

If it is impossible, and unwise, for facilitators of Interactive Theatre to be neutral, how then should they act during performance? Clearly it is a balancing act, and the answer seems to be, to emphasize dialogue first and agenda second. Brown Adelman of CU-ITP stresses,

It is important that the facilitator does not profess to be an expert about everything. You have to be present with the audience. You have to go along the process with the audience. Yes, you are a leader and have some authority in the
room, but if the audience perceives a strong power differential, then this will be problematic. You will not have the deep conversation that you want in the room. A facilitator has to have adaptability and flexibility in and during the conversation. You have to be immersed in the conversation in such a way that you do not project having an agenda.

She then suggests a solution which she has found helpful:

Do not have an expectation that the audience gets it or will get it. Because, in my experience, if an audience gets the sense that you want them to believe something specific, I think it they sense it, and it gets very problematic. Instead, be with the audience wherever they are. And then find a way to push them, encouraging them to think deeper. And that is the challenge of course: how do you as a facilitator allow that conversation to happen in the community, but still find a way to convey ideas that we want them to learn about?

This idea was echoed by many of the facilitators. If the students sense a biased agenda, they will resist what they perceive to be information being “shoved down their throats.”

I see two possible strategies to achieve these goals. One is to make choices that minimize the audience’s perception that the facilitator has an agenda. I admit that this is an “ends justify the means” approach and might seem problematic. One could argue however, that given the power and pervasiveness of the master narrative, it is a viable choice for Interactive Theatre facilitators seeking to achieve the lofty goals of student attitude and behavior change. To begin to tear down oppressive structures, one has to ultimately take a stand – but only in a way that audience members are able and willing to hear. Facilitators have to meet audience members where they are.
A more straightforward alternative to dealing with perceptions of bias is to simply name the dynamic. One can own and share one’s perspective with the audience while welcoming other perspectives in the room in a non-judgmental way. When I was facilitating with UNC-ITC, we had a performance on homophobia where one roommate, Emily (target), was inadvertently “outed” in front of the other, Samantha (agent). Sam became angry and demanded that Emily tell her why she had not admitted to being gay when they moved in together. Emily responds that it was none of her business. Emily was challenged again by the audience around the same issue during the question and answer section. The issue came up a third time during the dialogue portion.

At that point, I, the facilitator, who espoused the counter narrative and wanted it to challenge the master narrative, tried a validate and challenge technique. I said, “It seems as if there is an idea in the room that heterosexual people, if their roommate happens to be gay, have a right to know. And that if they don’t know, the heterosexual’s rights are being compromised in some way. What do other people think?” There was no dissent, so I took it a step further and named my lack of neutrality. “Well just to let you know, I personally don’t agree with that. I think that she has a right to her privacy. Can anyone imagine why others would agree with me?” At that point, someone spoke up and offered a defense that built on my privacy argument and added that Emily was not a threat to Sam at all. This person’s comment led to a valuable conversation on heterosexism, as well as the idea of attraction in opposite and same sex situations. I was prepared to defend my point of view, however, had someone not spoken up.

One significant question looms: Why does the facilitator get to be the final arbiter of what is right and wrong? Why do they hold the power and authority? This study will not seek to provide definitive answers to this question; it will simply offer perspectives on the
topic. First, Interactive Theatre is helping universities advance a particular social-educational agenda. Students are paying money for their education; they are literally and figuratively buying into an environment where the expectation is that they will be bombarded with ideas which will seek to educate and persuade them. The agenda of this environment is dictated, by and large, by the administration of the university. Whether students approve of the social-educational agenda is another matter. Recent events at the University of Colorado at Boulder, discussed in the next section, quite possibly exemplify an example of this dissent.

Another perspective comes from the journal *Organizational Studies*. In the “The Politics of Performance in Organizational Theatre-Based Training and Interventions,” authors Nick Nissley, Steven S. Taylor and Linda Houden explain: “This article proposes a framework for raising questions about the ‘politics of performance’ in “theatre based training,” based on the criticism of Augusto Boal” (Nissley et al. 833). It is important to note that their term “theatre based training” includes all types of theatre – with Interactive Theatre being just one small part. Their framework is based on the intersections of two continuums that they establish: “Control of the Role” and “Control of Script.” Briefly “Control of the role” ranges from professional performers performing for passive audiences to organizational actors (member of the organization) improvising on stage; and “Control of the Script” ranges from professional writers crafting fixed scripts controlled by management to improvised scripts created on stage by organizational actors (Nissley et al. 820-21)

The authors have three conclusions. The first is that “theatre-based training often is a powerful managerial tool for shaping ‘organizational performance’ – a ‘theatre of the oppressor’ (in Boal’s terms)” (Nissley et al. 834). In other words, if the theatre training is “corporate controlled” then it becomes a managerial tool which “assists the manager in shaping the
‘organization’s performance” (Nissley et al. 834). Second, they provide an “offer” to organizational theatre-based training practitioners, which will sound like old news to Interactive Theatre practitioners: “The most truly powerful organizational theatre-based training and interventions are not presented to audiences as a finished product or grand narrative; rather they encourage the audience members to find themselves (role) and their voices (script) in the performance” (Nissley et al. 834). Aligning themselves with Boal, they want to shift the power dynamic away from the managers and toward the workers by using less didactic theatre, with fixed scripts presented to passive spectators, to more of a different type of pedagogical theatre, which engages active audience members who take on roles and impact the script and on-stage action.

Their last piece of advice sheds light on whether or not a facilitator should mask or name their program’s agenda. The authors write: “We simply suggest that asking who controls the script and who controls the role allows the politics to surface” (Nissley et al. 834). Extrapolating this suggestion to practitioners of Interactive Theatre, it would seem as if perhaps the naming of the agenda and lack of facilitator neutrality is better than seeking to minimize the audience’s perception of it.

On a side note, this article also provided an alternate definition for Weinblatt’s variation on Boal’s term. Boal named his form Theatre of the Oppressed because he wanted to provide theatre to oppressed peoples to use as a tool to challenge those who keep them in their subordinate condition. Weinblatt, appropriating Boal’s language, coined “Theatre of the Oppressor” because he advocates using this same theatrical toolbox to foster ally behavior on the part of those with oppressor identities. Nissley et al. also appropriate Boal’s language, but do it in a way to call out the vast majority of theatre based trainings as “Theatre of the Oppressor,”
considering them to be managerial tools used to control worker performance. Weinblatt and Nissley could not be using the same term any differently.

Despite the harshness of Nissley et al.’s term, facilitators of Interactive Theatre do use theatrical tools to espouse a philosophy which they hope will influence their audience’s behavior. The big difference, however, is that their agenda is not to maintain the status quo with its unequal, unjust power structures, rather they seek to dismantle them and, instead, provide equity and inclusion for all. Perhaps Interactive Theatre facilitators, in light of this question of authority and power, can at least fall back on the fact that their form, as Nissley et al. pointed out, is the most democratic – or worker controlled – of all theatre based trainings; plus practitioners have defined, as part of the performance, a whole section devoted to audience dialogue, with all perspective welcome. Finally, their facilitation model necessarily validates first and challenges second.

To be sure, further research is needed to explore the complex issue of Interactive Theatre facilitator as authority figure.

This discussion of usage of the term “oppressor” bring up another important point. In my experience, and through informal discussions in the field, I have learned that using the term “oppressor” with audiences not only puts people on the defensive, but can shut them down completely. Oppressor and oppression are powerful words, which can conjure up images and associations with horrific acts like slavery and genocide; and your average audience does not want to be labeled – or perceive that they are being labeled – as this type of oppressor. Instead, I say “someone who targets,” and I often qualify the verb with another word like “unconsciously” or “unintentionally.” In any case, a facilitators needs to be extremely conscious of the terms they choose to use when conveying ideas related to social justice and identity.
The last idea from the ethics statement which must be underscored is the directive to “Be critical and reflective regarding one's own assumptions related to power relationships and best practices, and how these factors may be affecting one's approach to Interactive Theatre and the future use of Interactive Theatre” (Interactive Theatre Subcommittee, “Ethics”). Even institutions which seek to abolish unjust power structures exist within those power structures; as a result they fall prey to the same patterns of oppressive and targeting behavior. One of the most significant criticisms that many practitioners have of the TO field is that the five most well known Joker/Trainers in the field are all White men: Augusto Boal (and with his passing Julian Boal), Marc Weinblatt, David Diamond, Doug Patterson, and Michael Rohd. Interactive Theatre is a bit more diverse in its leadership, but the field is still predominately White and more male than female and intersex/transsexual.

Interactive Theatre, then, must find ways to include more diverse identities in its leadership: more women, more people of Color, more LGBTQ identified people, and so on. Furthermore, those practitioners with agent identities (i.e. one or more of the following: in terms of race White, in terms of gender male, in terms of sexual identity heterosexual, etc.) must heighten their awareness of the choices they make in their daily practice to be sure they are not committing micro-aggressions against people with target identities (e.g. unconsciously silencing them in common routine interactions).

**Recent Events**

When CU-ITP merged into one funding source under Student Affairs in 2009, student fees provided by the Student Government Association (SGA), accounted for 45% of the Interactive Theatre Project's annual $218,000 budget, with each student paying $1.78 per semester to support it (Anas). The remaining money was still provided by Housing and Dining
Services. Dean Gardiner Tucker, supervisor of CU-ITP, explains that while this allowed CU-ITP to operate more efficiently, and increased campus visibility and presence, it also increased their vulnerability. This vulnerability was exposed when students elected a fiscally conservative student leadership for the 2010-11 academic year.

The new leaders of the SGA took a hard-line approach to cutting student fees. On February 25, 2011, as this dissertation was nearing completion, the SGA passed a controversial bill called the ITP Responsibility Act, which reduced student fees directed toward the Interactive Theatre Project by 45 percent. SGA defends its action by pointing to the agreement put in place during the merger, which indicated that CU-ITP would work to ultimately become financially independent of the student fee process, through an aggressive fundraising campaign aimed at raising several million dollars over five years.

CU-ITP has not made significant headway to meet this goal. The program intended to hire a full time fundraising person, but the downturn in the economy prevented the group from hiring and also drastically reduced potential donors’ ability to give. As it stands, the bill allows for a built-in incentive: SGA will grant one year of student funding if the theatre project raises $100,000 by the end of July (Auran et al.).

There is informal speculation on the CU campus that the members of SGA are not only fiscally conservative but also politically conservative, and their actions that threaten CU-ITP could be motivated in part by their resentment to the program’s liberal social justice oriented agenda. This unfortunate twist adds a layer of complexity to the discussion of agenda and neutrality on a university campus. In any case, the situation at CU affirms my UNC colleague’s advice, which emphasized the critical step of getting the student body to believe in and brag about your program.
There is strong evidence to suggest that, despite the actions of the SGA, students support the program at CU-ITP. At the Legislative Council hearing in which the bills were passed, the *CU Independent* newspaper indicated that over 100 students showed up at the meeting to speak on behalf of CU-ITP. The paper reported:

Co-senator for the School of Architecture and Planning, Isra Chaker, a 20-year-old junior architecture major, said she thought the student body was ignored, especially those who supported the ITP.

“I feel like the student body is being ignored,” Chaker said. “We had hundreds of people in that room.”

…Before the bill was passed into legislation, dozens of students lined up in front of the microphone and repeated the phrase “I support the use of student fees to fund ITP. You are my representatives. Please hear my voice.” (Auran et al.)

The situation at CU underscores two ideas from this chapter. The major key to garnering support is for potential funders to witness live examples of the work. This suggests that leaders of CU-ITP, and those of all Interactive Theatre programs, should host private performances for potential donors, as evidence suggests that checkbooks are more likely to open at an event with a performance than without it. The second point concerns staffing: Interactive Theatre programs should strongly consider finding the resources to hire a full time administrative person. As Gardiner Tucker of CU-ITP explains,

For the creative directors to do their best work, they need an administrative assistant solely focused on the business aspects of the program. This person is not an actor, or director, or facilitator, rather this person fulfills all the tasks that allow the work to happen, including budget, marketing, coordinating budget logistics,
fundraising, and exploring more fee for service engagements. That would free up
the Directors to do what they do best.

I would take this point one step further and urge Interactive Theatre programs to operate
like a business. CITE is unique example among the five programs as it is largely self sustaining,
relying on outside engagements from corporations and other universities. In these lean economic
times, perhaps this model merits closer exploration. Whether or not a program adapts a fee-for-
service model, however, they should nevertheless make it part of their daily practice to engage in
the sound business practices of strategic planning, marketing, and increasing efficiency.

When I left UNC-ITC to focus on Theatre Delta, I heeded the advice of colleague who
suggested I take advantage of the free service of SCORE, a national non-profit agency which
offers “free and confidential business advice through online, face-to-face mentoring, workshops
and more” (How can SCORE). These services are provided by volunteer successful
entrepreneurs and executives. In my first meeting, my two mentors stressed, above all, to
develop a thorough business plan; they indicated that it was the most crucial step to attaining
success.

Next Steps

An ancient Chinese proverb says: “Tell me, I’ll forget. Show me, I may remember. But
involve me and I’ll understand.” If you believe in the power of Interactive Theatre to promote
dialogue and transform our communities, then take action: The following steps are drawn largely
from the lists effective practices from each chapter, with a few ideas added from my own
personal experience of establishing UNC-ITC and establishing the Loyola Interactive Theatre
Ensemble this past year at Loyola University New Orleans.

For those people looking to establish a program:
• Peruse the list of allies/advocates and contact as many as you can. You likely will not be able to secure funding for an entire program, so strive for a pilot project.

• Gather the necessary staff. You can divide and conquer by using multiple people with partial skills sets; just be sure to have defined leadership in the form of a project manager. The other roles will be (theatrical) Director, Facilitator, Logistics Coordinator, and Marketing person. Graduate students are invaluable; they are generally energetic, eager, valuable, driven, talented … and cheaper! Utilize them.

• Decide who your audience is and set specific goals.

• Choose an issue, research, and write a script. Consult the resources in the bibliography and choose a format and techniques. The theatre needs to be of sufficient quality to foster ample engagement or the form will not succeed.

• Acquire adequate space on campus to plan, rehearse, and perform.

• Recruit and audition actors; reach far and wide – well beyond theatre and performance studies.

• Cast and rehearse – both the scripted and improvisational aspects.

• Choose facilitators carefully, and rehearse them. Create a guide and make them practice. Heed the effective practices from chapter four. When you rehearse the scene, gather a test audience and rehearse the facilitation as well. The facilitators/facilitation must be skilled to effectively frame and advance the performance and conversation.

• Market the event far and wide. And make sure that the key players on your campus come see the performance and bear witness to the power of the form. They are different on every campus, but they will come from the list of allies in this study.
Focus on that list and reach out to your warm market in these communities. Personal invites, while time consuming, are best.

- Create a basic evaluation form to gather data at the end of the performance. The chapter on evaluation provides examples from which to draw.
- Perform, dialogue, impact, and impress.
- Analyze the data and publish a report. Aside from documenting the results, it also shows that you are serious about using Interactive Theatre as an evidenced based learning tool to implement change. Be sure an include ways that you can and intend to improve.
- Disseminate the report far and wide.
- Rinse and repeat. In other words, read and heed the data, make the necessary improvements, and do it again.

For those current practitioners looking to improve:

- Be critical of your practice: how can you create the optimal conditions for student learning, in your daily practice? How can you improve in each and every one of the areas discussed in this study? They are all important, but the most critical are the theatre, the facilitation, and the evaluation.
- Expand the number of scripts you have and issues you engage. Perhaps reach out to other potential funders/allies with this goal as enticement for them. Your ensemble has the power to dramatize their issues in a powerful way.
- Create a course for college credit to give your students more options for learning and reward. Explore securing a budget to pay student actors – or select student actors
• Evaluate and scrutinize your evaluation data, what is it telling you? Also bring in outside eyes, allies or other campus folk you trust – faculty staff and students – to give you feedback on how to improve the work.

• Improve the level of sophistication of your evaluation method.

• Grow your program. Use the evaluation data to seek additional funding in the form of grants, both internal and external. Fundraise if you are so inclined.

• Run the administrative side of your organization like a business. Engage in strategic planning and marketing, and seek to increase efficiency

Finally, if there is a best practice that suits the end of this study, it is the one that came up at the first symposium for Interactive Theatre in 2009 in Missouri. To use a phrase from the chapter on facilitation, “Step up.” If you are so inclined, and you believe in the power of Interactive Theatre to foster dialogue around social issues and impact individual and societal change, step up and engage the practice. Conference participants agreed that the best way to do that was to start with one scene. Brown Adelman of CU-ITP says, “If you want to have people support your program you HAVE to have them experience a performance. They have to experience what it is like; only then will they start to see how it can be applied in other areas.”

I close with words from Marc Weinblatt’s forthcoming chapter:

One of my deepest gratitudes [sic] to Augusto Boal is for providing a mechanism, the Theatre of the Oppressed, which embodies, enlivens, and nourishes as much as it challenges. I sometimes wonder if Augusto's passing was strategic – throwing the gauntlet to all of us, his potential multipliers, to take the work further. How delightful that we have a tool box with which, in the words of Beth Amsbary, founder of the Seattle Public Theatre where I was first introduced to the
then pioneering work of Augusto Boal, we can “change the world and have a
good time doing it.” (Weinblatt)
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