

Running head: SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS & ROLE-PLAY:

APPLIED THEATRE IN TRAINING PEACE PRACTITIONERS

JEFF AGUIAR

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO

J. Aguiar

ABSTRACT

The use of Experiential Education (EE) methodologies is evident across multiple fields. With a focus on process, analyzing and digesting experiences as well as an acceptance of a multiplicity of methods that inform research, theory and practice, EE provides a powerful backdrop for many disciplines. Within the field of Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS), EE methodology connects research, theory and practice in an integrative setting, but how effective is it with regards to learner outcomes, particularly as related to the professional practice of peacebuilding? The author proposes that Applied Theatre principles, particularly those of Augusto Boal and his system called the Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) can serve to strengthen existing connections between PACS and EE while also providing multiple opportunities to enhance the learner benefit of engagement in praxis-based academic programs utilizing this intersection.

Keywords: performativity, identity, identity politics, agency, autonomy, community building, experiential education

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

INTRODUCTION

Experiential education (EE) plays a large role in a variety of fields including Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS). Historically such experiences exist within a praxis-based curriculum (Freire, 1986; Association of Experiential Educators, n.d.), examining the application of learned techniques through encounters based upon specific parameters (Dunning, 2004). The resulting simulations or scenarios are then utilized as experiments for participants and observers alike, gathering data as the result of application of knowledge and interactions within the simulation construct (Reimer, Schmitz, Janke, Askerov, Strahl & Matyók, 2015). While specific goals may not always be present, the application of pedagogical devices like learner outcomes, assessment, evaluation and reflection are essential to the process.

Much the same can be said of field and professional experiences: participants, regardless of their relationship to the situation, make choices which influence other participants as they all move toward resolution or transformation (Sweitzer & King, 2014). The largest difference exists in the capacity of these experiences to provide opportunities for establishing desired outcomes, measures of assessment and evaluation methodologies. *How can this difference be reconciled?*

The central drive of developing this training module is an attempt to bridge that emergent gap: simulations or scenarios applied in a classroom setting provide great opportunities for employing technique while field and professional experiences actually verify the embedded nature of technique. The intersection of these two ideas can be explored through the lens of applied performance in the expressive and creative arts: isolating and examining the variables which influence performance in both prescribed

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

and natural settings is a springboard for reconciling the pedagogical tension, and sometimes disconnect, of simulation and role-play in EE experiences and PACS praxis. In this space of performativity, it is possible to provide an intervention model that increases the capacity of both the simulation and its participants to engage in shared experiences which exist in the coincidence of safety and trust, bolstering potential data for furthering professional growth. *In short, this is how.*

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Shawn Dunning (2004) describes Experiential Learning as “a process that encodes understanding within the learner by virtue of doing something” (p. 23), and suggests that knowledge can be gained through a multiplicity of methods and processes. Dunning (2004) also highlights the importance of embodied experiences in learning: the human experience is not solely concerned with thoughts or feelings. Physical bodies, and much more, play a role in any experience. This type of analysis, paralleling the study of performativity, encompasses all levels of experience to create understanding in a “fundamentally different manner” (p. 23). Dunning (2004) juxtaposes this learning to the stereotypical “Banking System” (Freire, 1986, p. 36) of learning through lecture whereby a student is required to accept the knowledge of an authoritarian teacher who *deposits* (italics by author) it into the student and then requires this student to *withdraw* this knowledge in a test taking experience.

EDUCATION

Education can be described as “praxis,” and “learning.” Paulo Freire (1986) defines “praxis” as “the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

order to transform it” (p. 36). Freire is well admired, across multiple disciplines, including PACS, Education, and Communication Studies, for his perspectives on education and the challenges the dominant culture brings to equitable learning for all students. EE philosophy and methodology is grounded in, and evolves from, this manner of thinking. David Kolb (1984) has greatly influenced EE philosophy and describes learning “as the *process* (italics are place by author) whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience (p. 41). One process of transformation of experience is expressed through reflection or “debrief” used in experiential education methodologies. EE emerges from several educational movements, one of which is the Humanistic Movement.

HUMANISTIC MOVEMENT

The Progressive movement in western education emphasizes each person’s “responsibility toward their society” and “views education as a problem-solving instrument of social and political reform” (Vilhjálmsón, 2009, p.7). The Humanistic Movement takes this a step further by focusing attention on the “sacred the dignity and autonomy of human beings” (Vilhjálmsón, 2009, p.7). This focus leads to a more rounded and inclusive understanding of the learner as a human being who has countless parts of self that make up the total person. Instead of placing the teacher in the center of the learning process, those who adhere to the Humanistic Movement argue that “focusing on the learner at the center of a process of discovery and self-actualization, in a drive toward personal enrichment, integration and psychological development” (Vilhjálmsón, 2009, p.7). The humanistic approach connects with peacebuilding as each are concerned with “challenging the status quo, taken-for granted assumptions and power relationships,

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

liberation, empowerment, transformation, questioning, and re-interpreting the very cultural assumptions of experience” (Vilhjálmsson, 2009, p.7).

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

Experiential Education (EE) and this more humanistic way of contemplating education work well with the objectives of peacebuilding. Games, play, activities, adventure, and fun are words commonly used to describe EE methods. While these representations of EE accurately portray pieces of the learning process, there are many other methodologies utilized throughout countless professional fields of practice. “Experiential education is about learning achieved through the collaboration of teacher and student as they, together, experience and reflect, immerse in practice, and translate this experience to other circumstances in their lives” (Varker, 2013, p. 14; Reimer et al., 2015). The Association of Experiential Educators defines Experiential Education as:

...a philosophy that informs many methodologies in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop people's capacity to contribute to their communities.

(Association of Experiential Educators, n.d.)

In other words, EE educators are interested in not only experiences, but also the processes by which those experiences are fleshed out and unpacked.

EE philosophy and methodologies as a means of peacebuilding has limited documentation in research literature. EE methods, including the use of role play, simulations, service learning, and other interactive strategies, are on the leading edge of methods used by educators, practitioners, theorists, researchers, etc... to develop

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

peacebuilding pedagogy and can be used as a framework in research, development and delivery of peacebuilding strategies. Experiential Education legitimately fits hand in glove with peacebuilding and PACS.

PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES/PEACEBUILDING

PACS continues to push the envelope of peacebuilding by contributing to the liberation of students in higher education by: (a) helping free students from the limited notion that knowledge of the world only comes wrapped up in neat packages called “majors”; (b) enabling students to move away from their historical and geographical prejudices through engagement with ideas from other cultures and societies, as well as developing an informed global perspective; (c) providing students a model of integrative education aiming to develop the whole person, not just the intellect, in reaching for the goal of creative, involved citizens committed to nonviolent social change (Weigert, 1989).

According to Lisa Schirch (2013), “peacebuilding seeks to change individuals, relationships, cultural patterns, and structures away from harm and toward human security” (p.9). She further divides peacebuilding into four (4) levels: individual, relational, cultural and structural.

At the individual, personal, or micro level, peacebuilding is a process that happens within the individual, involving altering beliefs, mindsets, and behaviors to recognize, own and affect individual reactions to conflict. Michelle LeBaron (2003) identifies this process as a way of knowing, embedded within the individual through a variety of values and experiences. Peacebuilding places the individual in circumstances that create feelings of discomfort and require use of skills and imagination to be creative,

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

facilitative and transformative within these crisis situations in order to build peace (Lederach, 2010).

When individuals engage in peacebuilding, new or redirected patterns create ripples that affect the relationships held by those individuals. On this relational level, adjustments or responses to new behavior are necessary. While there is no accounting for autonomy, the prospect of improving relationships relies on an “increased understanding of the differences and commonalities that exist” (Schirch, 2013, p.9). Shifting stances and positions of those involved in relationships works to lower tension and lessen resentment between them and, potentially, creates space for cooperation or an amicable resolution within the relationships. Once this path is taken, people can begin to risk vulnerability so that lenience and acknowledgment of the other perspective--the working principles of compassion--can take hold, allowing them to grapple with “trauma, grievances, crimes, and perceived injustices between people; and changing the patterns of interpersonal relationships” (Schirch, 2013, p.9).

As groups expand and share daily practices, knowledge and other resources, cultures develop. At the cultural level, peacebuilding concentrates on nonviolent ways of addressing conflict in that context (Reimer, et al., 2015). As cultural competency or fluency is achieved amongst all participants, the potential to diminish extant or latent frictions and pressures, while amplifying understanding and acceptance between groups, exists. If this can be accomplished in a manner that all actors agree upon, the community begins to change and the patterns of distrust and disturbance begin to subside. Schirch (2013) suggests this is referred to as creating a “culture of peace” (p.9).

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

Continuing the abstraction at the structural or mega level, peacebuilders are curious as to what influences these structures, institutions and systems have on the three previous levels of peace and conflict. They are equally interested in how to improve the ways in which these structures, systems, and institutions affect peace and conflict by decreasing conflict and increasing peace. The question remains as to how to implement change of this magnitude in a way that is both fluid and structured while staying cognizant of the unique characteristics and complexities of that particular situation.

Bringing this information together highlights shared principles within the fields of Experiential Education and Peace and Conflict Studies: self-awareness, honesty, authenticity, willingness and safety. Extant at the intersection of these fields exists multiple methodologies for achieving these qualities in conflict settings and alludes to an important consideration within a praxis-based program: what might be the best way to create these qualities? How can such processes be measured? Are results reproducible? Before hypotheses can be formed, it is important to examine another concept that lives within both fields: performativity.

PERFORMATIVITY

Broadly, performativity connects to the dichotomy of self-image and the practice of self and identity in various situations (Boal, 1995; Thompson, 2005; Kanter, 2007). The study of this phenomenon has generally been centralized in psychology and the performing arts, but recent connections to additional social sciences have widened theoretical approaches to include study of the concept within the context of more traditional theoretical frameworks (Barker, 2012). For the purpose of this research, performativity is seen through the lens of theatre, often referred to as Applied Theatre

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

(“Applied Theatre”, n.d.). Similarly, the application of performativity as theory and practice in EE and PACS provides insight into addressing the gap which exists between peacebuilding training and field work.

Much like peacebuilding, performativity functions on multiple levels. Within the self, performative actions are often centered around authenticity (Boal, 1995; Kanter, 2007) weighing an individual’s participation in both the internal and external worlds. Guiding principles for this level of performativity are established through reflection: *Is this what I want to do? Is this really important to me? Is this who I am?* The information gathered from such reflection is applied to decisions and, ultimately, impacts the methods employed within interactions the self, experiences. In short, self-image typically guides how an individual makes decisions and creates a layer of identity defined by the consequences of those decisions and the self’s willingness and ability to maintain the psychological and emotional structure (Hannum, 2007; Matsakis, 1996) because, and in spite of, them.

Recognizing that relationships are both a need and a reality for many individuals (Maslow, 1943), performativity functions in a similar fashion, influencing the ways in which individuals define and maintain autonomy juxtaposed in space with others performing the same processes (Boal, 1979; Boal, 1995; Brook, 1968). At this social juncture, theatre practitioners theorize the beginnings of performance (Boal, 1995) as individuals interact with specific purposes; choices are made which might lie in conflict or in support of the self-image. In essence, the “political” emerges (Boal, 1979), with the most extreme interpretation identifying that human interactions are centered entirely around manipulation and control of others as a result of honoring the self.

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

At this relational level, performativity becomes diluted, creating more space between the self and the actions of self, necessitating reflexive work to maintain relationships. Questions like *How does she feel? What do I want from him? How can we continue this relationship?* shape decisions. In many ways, answers are found on the personal level and tested within the relational level.

This nesting continues as performativity expands to the cultural level. When relational groups combine to form cultural fabric, initial interactions become performative in nature, formed and influenced by shared values for desired effect, within and outside of the community (Thompson, 2005; Bowles & Nadon, 2013; Rohd, 1998). The scope of performativity within a cultural group broadens to include both interactions and commemorations (Thompson, 2005): cultural events and communal gatherings become spaces for performativity to be expressed. Similarly, commemorative events from anniversaries to holidays are essentially performances of culture--expressions of cultural value and historical highlights.

When considering the structural level of performativity, the focus remains the same as that of peacebuilding: *what influence do structures, institutions and systems have upon the three previous levels? How and in what ways do individuals respond to the structures around them? What are some ways that interactions amongst individuals are affected by the larger world? How do communities respond to the pressures of inclusion or exclusion?* In answering these questions, critical analysis through performativity highlights the connection between the values of the participants, be they individuals or groups, and the decisions made. The exhibited responses are representations of individual

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

understandings as they emerge upon multiple levels; they are, in and of themselves, performances.

Based upon these assumptions, simulations, games and role-play parallel natural social processes, giving credence to the idea that art actually imitates life (Boal, 1979): individuals in such imaginary circumstances have an opportunity to respond honestly and authentically, provided that there are mechanisms and processes in place which promote the necessary conditions. Augusto Boal (1979) and his Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) can be a beginning to creating these conditions.

WORKING AT THE INTERSECTIONS

Augusto Boal (1979) developed Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) as a form which spoke to the dismantling of power structures within the more prescribed theatrical form attached to the work of Aristotle: no longer was the story concerned with the conflict between the privileged class and that of the moral or social outcast. Theatre of the Oppressed was designed to be of the people, by the people and, ultimately, for the people.

This ethos is an essential connection between the drive of TO and that of peacebuilding, forging communities connected not through hierarchy and structural violence, but through shared value and consent (Reimer, Schmitz, Janke, Askerov, Strahl & Matyök, 2015). While certainly idealized, and some might say, romanticized, the potential for expanding this premise within this intersection provides an opportunity to integrate research, theory and practice within the professional field of Peace and Conflict to inform technique and increase the efficacy of the actively engaged professional.

Boal's work (1979; 1995) centers on the self in multiple relationships. For Boal (1995), "the human being not only 'makes' theatre: it 'is' theatre" (p. 13) which is an

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

assumption not often incorporated within the scope of the simulation structure. Extending Boal's premise gives way to his assertion (1979) that participation in communal activities--theatre or simulation--is a political act: to engage in simulation, play or game, as learning process, embodies participants as political enactors--contributors to an interrelated construct which connects and influences the faculty (what one can do), passion (what one has done) and habit (what one continues to do) of all. Depending upon individual perspective, the premise could center the impact locally or globally; in real-life situations, these relationships would also be affected by access to resources like technology and social media and creates a large, nuanced context which must be sampled, evaluated and implemented in simulation experiences.

While this realization can and should hold sway in the construction of the simulation, it also impacts the people who participate in the simulation. In Boal's (1979) work, these participants were the communities in which the theatre was enacted--communities that included lay-people, practitioners, oppressors, oppressed and so on. The structure, situation and circumstances contributed to an environment lacking performativity in one sense and rife with it in another. The communities making these works were bringing themselves into connection and interaction; the import of their choices was evident in a real and direct fashion. Conceding this premise as unachievable in a constructed experience like a simulation or scenario, efforts should be made in both training and research to encompass the complexities of a living, dynamic community setting.

PARTICIPANTS

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

To these ends, three categories, divided by foreknowledge and the abstraction of access to resource, are proposed: player-participants, actors and facilitators. Each of these categories comes with a distinctive obligation to the structure of the simulation, though verisimilitude supposes autonomy and presumes agency.

Player-participants shall be individuals whose primary relationship to the simulation is that of learner; they enter with little to no foreknowledge and experience resource restraint typically in accordance with both their assigned role in the simulation as well as their actual role as learners. This might emerge as a conflict that needs to be addressed. For example, the player-participant might be enacting a role associated with a local community that experiences hunger daily but, conversely, student-learners of an institution must maintain health. This is a conflict that cannot rest solely upon the structure of the simulation but actually requires the complicity of the player-participant, something that can be ignored in simulations designed and implemented to represent situations directly correlating to learner outcomes. Training for these individuals must exist in coincidence of these nearly contradictory states, exploring the principles of honesty and authenticity intersecting with Boal's (1979) assumption that art imitates nature, or that choices made in imaginary circumstances can reflect reality. In this space, reflective practice becomes paramount to application of technique in field experiences.

Actors are individuals who will portray various non player-participant roles. These individuals should not only have specific characters to draw from (Colleran & Spencer, 1998) in the simulation, but also need the implicit trust of player-participants. This trust is essential to reinforcing Boal's (1979) belief that the interaction of the real (player-participant) with the fictitious (actors) creates a context for surrendering to the

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

idea that the fictitious holds sway over the real; the deeper an actor commits to a scenario, the more the resulting circumstances inform player-participant authenticity and agency. That being said, the internal conflict of an actor is essentially the same as that of the player-participant: *how real is this? How real do I make it or let it be?*

Facilitators need to be unconstrained by the structure of the simulation, receiving knowledge necessary to enhance the player-participant experience while respecting the autonomy of all participants. This particular role is teased out of Boal's (1979) "Joker" utilized in multiple TO forms. Facilitators are intended to shepherd the narrative action within the simulation in efforts to increase efficacy, authenticity and practicality of experience for player-participants. In TO, the "Joker" is imbued with magical powers, granted the ability to shift circumstances to facilitate the work of the group; similarly, facilitators must utilize their foreknowledge of circumstances and interpersonal awareness to guide the action through various types of intervention, the least desirable being to stop the action entirely. Arguably the most complicated role, facilitators must be adept at moving into and out of the simulation setting without disturbing the natural atmosphere of the experience.

PROPOSED TRAINING MODULES

While there are intersections and necessary shared experiences within the scope of training all participants, each role brings with it unique needs that necessitate training pathways determined by role categories. To verify both internal and external validity of training, it is imperative that experimental considerations be made: establishing a baseline for control by identifying the relative understandings of PACS, EE and performativity within all participants; evaluating and theorizing the impact of information and activities

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

presented in training; and assessing the lasting value of the training module itself as it relates to the particular participant role.

The general recommendations are listed below and include a concept timeline that leads up to point of immersion within the simulation setting. Much like Boal's (1979; 1995; 2002) work, the participant communities dictate the necessary strategies for connecting experience or practice to the necessary theory or concept. Training modules for publication will include a menu of activities, reflexive interventions and engagement strategies to provide for dynamic curricular changes when necessary.

For Facilitators:

- **Prior Simulation Experience Preferred**
- **Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) Training Workshop:** a 12-16 hour, two-day experience designed to introduce participants to the various forms and techniques of TO (See Appendix A).
- **Multiple half-day encounters:**
 - *TO Forum Theatre/Invisible Theatre:* Refreshing and reinforcing practice from TO Training Workshop.
 - *Improvisation* (Spolin, 1986; additional forms): Developing and harnessing the performative impulse through informal script development processes.
 - *Devised Performance* (Kanter, 2007): Working with text and “found” inspiration, devised performance explores additional layers of performativity that can be mined for expressive and creative means.
- **Immersion:**

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

- *Embodied Research*: Similar to the individual work of the TO workshop, embodied research is a necessary part of the immersion process; facilitators will need to understand the geography of the playing space, have experience with their own impulses and responses in simulation setting.
- *Observation*: Facilitators will need to be constantly engaged in observation and, as a part of the immersion process, the necessity of the act is to establish baseline for the individuals, both actors and player-participants, represented within their groups.
- *Reflexive Cycle*: Facilitators must be engaged in a personal reflexive cycle and be aware of opportunities to engage that cycle in player-participants.
- *Invisible Leadership*: In many ways, the simple presence of the facilitator should engender trust and security; similar to Boal's (1979) Invisible Theatre, the facilitator presence should provide for organic interventions that highlight salient issues and opportunities without detracting from the shared reality of the simulation.

For Actors (similar to Facilitators):

- Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) Training Workshop (See Appendix A).
- Multiple half-day encounters:
 - TO forum theatre/Invisible theatre
 - Improvisation (Spolin, 1986; additional forms)
 - Devised performance (Kanter, 2007)
- Immersion:

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

- *Embodied research*
- *Improv-based routine-building*: Using research and performative skills, actors will need to create the basic routines that overlay the characters they inhabit.
- *Community building*: Further, actors must create a sense of community that is realistic for player-participants; the more expressive of shared values or shared missions, the stronger this aspect becomes.

For Player-Participants:

- **Introduction to peacebuilding techniques and processes**: Ultimately dependent upon host institution's curriculum, but should include human rights policy (international and domestic as related to mimetic country); ethnographic information; demographics; guiding principles in the practice of peacebuilding.
- **Community building**: Pivotal to trust and, by extensions, risk-taking or honesty in simulation, creating a sense of community within player-participants as people and learners is vital; the simulation may call for player-participants to represent different factions but the underpinning of relationships must reside in safety and trust to encourage authentic responses and decisions in simulation.
- **Introduction to Theatre of the Oppressed**: Abbreviated workshop session for fundamentals and techniques. Player-participants need not be well-versed in TO to be successful; the traditional forms allow for lay people to interact with circumstances without much foreknowledge.
- **Immersion**:

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

- *Procedures/safety protocol*: Likely there will be liability waivers, but additional safety procedures should be outlined to include stop-gaps for circumstances which may be untenable for participants.
- *Embodied/Role research*: Player-participants will have information prior to the immersion stage centered around their role within the simulation circumstances; time should be given for adjusting to inhabiting that role in relationship to the reality of being in simulation.
- *Participation*
- *Evaluation*

The structure of these modules brings to bear the intersection of Peace and Conflict Studies, Experiential Education and Applied Theatre thus providing participants with a multi-layered engagement experience--one that examines internal processes as they impact participation in conflict situations as well as the additional consideration of observing, accounting for and analyzing the behaviors of others active in the same space. The recognition of this experience and identifying its impact on decision-making as well as the quality of life and relationships of participants becomes a centerpiece to assessment.

LONG-TERM TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS

Much like conflict transformation, working toward a comprehensive training system within a praxis-based PACS program necessitates multiple approaches at multiple levels. Experiential Education and Applied Theatre are not the only areas of research, theory and practice to be mined as a program works toward increasing the efficacy of its pedagogy. While the development of these training modules provides for some of the

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

necessary pedagogical processes in the short-term, there are overarching considerations to be made within a larger framework as it relates to the viability and sustainability of simulation-based practical experiences as components of academic study within a post-secondary institution.

The first consideration is the establishment and evaluation of learner outcomes for player-participants in the simulation. Working within the confines of an appropriate goal creates opportunity for success. While this refers to the specific outcomes of the simulation, the scope might be larger if the simulation experience is a culminating activity. Curriculum design around this relationship should then trigger an assessment of the anticipated program of study: what is the focus of the current program of study? What integrative experiences are provided within the curriculum for practice? What concepts and techniques are taught throughout the curriculum? How are those concepts and techniques taught? The answers to these questions shape simulation development.

Conversely, simulation development can also shape curriculum: if a program is not already praxis-based, there are structural and systemic constraints which will need to be addressed including how to reshape curriculum to reinforce the necessary skills for application in the field and redefine certain aspects of programming. These lead to more questions: How is the curriculum preparing students for the field? At what points are there opportunities for practice and interaction with both Boal (1979) and Freire's (1986) work and concepts? What are the professional needs of the faculty in association with moving in this direction?

These questions are the start of deeper conversations for faculty and students; establishing this focus within the community necessitates conversation around several

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

areas: (a) professionalism within the field of PACS; (b) interpretations of ethics; (c) recruitment strategies; and (d) branding the program. Discovering shared values around these ideas provides a great opportunity for genuine engagement in community-building which can further the aims of praxis-based programming. Utilizing suggestions from Peter Block (2009), Bowles & Nadon (2013), Boal (2002), Chinn (2008) and so on can meet the needs of a collaborative community and provide mutual benefit for faculty and students alike while creating an aspirational model for intended peace practitioners.

Additionally, crafting the simulation experience itself necessitates a focus on several issues representing the tensions of integrative practice. On one hand, performative research indicates the need for specificity (Colleran & Spencer, 1998; Boal, 1979; Brook, 1968 & 1993), but the realities of creating specific, intentional recreations of real-world circumstances are cumbersome and challenging; even within the professional world of theatrical performance, the audience may find it hard to escape the thought that they are in a performance venue with refreshments and restrooms while they watch Frank Galati's (1988) adaptation of John Steinbeck's novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*. Even though actors might be presenting realistic interpretations of the Joad family, there is no accounting for the connection and commitment of the audience as a part of the community. The same can be said of simulation experiences: there is no specific control for how participation occurs. In this sense, specificity is a tool for risk management. The more specific the simulation in its presentational effect the more likely there is to be commitment from actors and player-participants alike in pursuing the work within the simulation.

Highlighting this commitment works for the hosting or producing institution as well. Following through with specificity keeps an eye on the circumstances the

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

simulation is seeking to mimic or propose. In this regard, specificity not only refers to the construction of the simulation but also the constructs employed. Following through on Colleran & Spencer's (1998) reminder that the personal is political, the cast of the simulation--the people and bodies used as adornments within simulation circumstances--will be viewed as an intentional choice. Are actors selected because of their willingness, ability, appearance and so on? While these implications play to larger structural critiques, they also inform more localized choices from player-participants. What layers of reality is the simulation intended to address and how are these expectations shared with the larger simulation community? Are there intersections within the scope of the specific training developed for any of the populations?

The more authentic the relationship of the actors and player-participants to the circumstances, the more risk exists for potential trauma amongst the participating individuals. In many ways, participation in this experience purposefully places people in a position to have what Matsakis (1996) identifies as a "normal reaction to an abnormal amount of stress" (p. 2). In addition to simulation considerations--how it is built--there can be additional measure for prevention and intervention including imbuing facilitators with the power to halt the simulation, offering counseling and therapeutic support prior to, during and following the simulation and, ultimately, being ethical and reasonable in pursuit of this type of research (US Dept. of Health & Human Services, 1979).

That being said, what makes the simulation lived experience versus political agenda? Similar to mediation processes, neutrality can be lost as the simulation is translated from reality to a more controlled and contrived environment to accomplish learning outcomes. It seems that the only barrier is the application of ethical research

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

principles that seek to respect the player-participant as an autonomous subject that must benefit from both participation and the analysis of data gathered. While this is a consideration for those participants, it is a stronger guide for host institutions and development teams. What is a reasonable level of expectation that maintains the necessary safety to create effective learning experiences?

In creating effective simulations, it is imperative to consider the cultural backdrop created within the simulation. What evidence exists of simulation culture (Gounaridou, 2005)? This performative element emerges in how actors interact with one another as well as player-participants, or the other. Social norms are expressed through moments of performativity and expectation. As evidenced by ethnographic study, the nexus of performativity and expectation begins the discourse around cultural practice. It is here that simulation development must grapple with the balance of ethnographic study and action research as inspired by Thompson (2005); while his perspective, he admits, informs an approach, it essentially highlights the spectrum of practitioner participation in cultural events. In this way, the simulation creates real circumstances for integrative practice but must be constructed and conveyed as such. Focused contact with player-participants in settings constructed to elicit discussion around professionalism and ethics--in and of themselves, modes of performativity--as well as introduction to intercultural engagement are appropriate interventions to create the space necessary for the development of professional practice.

In exploring the intersection between PACS and Applied Theatre, the potential for partnership is great. Performing arts programs in postsecondary institutions can be a valuable resource as those individuals are engaged in the study of performativity on

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

several levels. There are also graduate and doctoral programs in Applied Theatre that might provide further resources for development and implementation of powerful simulation experiences. Additional resources can be found in communities around the host institution. Legitimacy in the field of performance can be granted according to experience in lieu of accreditation; there might be community groups exploring Theatre of the Oppressed, working within their own worlds to improve social conditions. As outlined above, TO lives but one phase outside of the training necessary for these enhanced simulation experiences.

The final consideration is the feasibility of implementing the simulation. Within the field of commercial theatre, performances take months, sometimes years to mount; the same commitment of time and resources is necessary to craft scenarios which will be successful in optimizing conditions for rich data and refine training modules to accurately reflect and encapsulate the expected learner outcomes at host institutions. Establishing a timeline for this implementation is imperative to the success of such an undertaking as it manages bringing together all of the disparate resources to culminate in the simulation experience.

CONCLUSION

It is theorized that Applied Theatre principles can enhance the efficacy of Experiential Education methodologies in Peace and Conflict Studies education and, by extension, enhance the efficacy of peacebuilding. Through the lens of Applied Theatre, practitioners receive the opportunity to develop a conception of self as a performative being--one who does things for a reason. This intentionality assists in identifying

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

appropriate strategies for achieving goals in community-building, organizing and healing as identified practices within the developing field of peacebuilding.

Training in this fashion brings a focus to observation and assessment that are integral components of the reflexive cycle, amplifying the principles of Experiential Education and producing valuable data for peacebuilding efforts. In many ways, this skill is necessary for peace to have purchase within the lives of any individuals; it is through the achievement and maintenance of inner peace that building peace is possible (Hanh, 2005; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2011). Contributions to refining that individual sense can only serve to benefit the greater community.

The development of this intersectional and interdisciplinary training also provides an objective lens for interpreting the actions of participants in conflict situations. For the practitioner, the transformation of interpretation resides in recognizing that witnessing action is seeing choices at work--choices which can reflect feelings, beliefs and attitudes but are not necessarily viewed that way or always intended to be personal and punitive. This interpretation can foster a sense of security and safety in work which can be perilously dangerous on multiple levels.

To support these outcomes, simulations must be crafted with care and concern to create realistic circumstances that maintain their integrity when a simulation exercise is halted to allow for learning processes and maintaining personal security. Considerations must be made in development which reflect pedagogical concern within the curriculum of participating institutions to accurately quantify and qualify professional knowledge and its application.

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

Continual work must be done in evaluation and assessment to develop measurement tools that accurately and verifiably acknowledge institutionalized standards of pedagogy. Mixed methodologies are encouraged to create a holistic picture of the practitioner within the integrative space. Elements of research, theory and practice must be explored as a vital part of the integrative experience. To that end, work can be done with students entering the program to assess their visions of continued contribution to community-building, organizing and healing in pre- and post-conflict settings and create dynamic, individualized programs of study that emphasize EE methodologies and Applied Theatre principles.

Though meeting these conditions is possible, it will take a commitment of resources to discovering what works best within host institutions: time, money, labor, research and development, leveraging partnerships and so on. Much like peacebuilding as a process, the context within each situation will dictate much of the decision-making with regards to not only the feasibility of hosting a simulation but the reality of the necessities for an effective simulation.

What research indicates will serve these aims best is continued application of research, theory and practice at the intersections of PACS, EE and Applied Theatre. Within this interdisciplinary space, there is opportunity for growth in all three areas as impacted by the application and evaluation of cross methodologies. The most important piece points to a basic principle within the scope of improvisation as an art and an aesthetic (Spolin, 1986), something echoed in both Peace and Conflict Studies and Experiential Education: “Yes, and...”

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

This concept guides innovation and invention across the globe and is particularly powerful in community settings, liberating within an individual context and an important part of the process of building peace. Built into “Yes, and...” is acknowledgement, legitimacy and, when employed appropriately, an expression of the desire to build something new, something better; can Applied Theatre increase the efficacy of Experiential Education methodologies in Peace and Conflict Studies? Yes, and so much more.

J. Aguiar

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

APPENDIX A Abbreviated Sample Theatre of the Oppressed Two Day Workshop Format

DAY ONE:

3 hours Individual Work

Exploration will be framed in game-play and creative problem-solving with a reflexive strand (likely 1 hour) throughout the block.

Break (1 hour)

2.5 hour Group Work/Building

Participants will collaborate to create Forum Theatre scenarios focused on social justice issues.

.5 hour Group Sharing/Discussion

Unpacking the experiences of the day, participants will share their group progress (performance) with other groups and reflect upon their discoveries.

DAY TWO:

.5 hour Group Sharing

Continuing the sharing from Day One.

.5 hour Individual Work

Reconnecting with the self in performative space.

2 hour Group Refining

Groups will use this time to refine their work for final showing, with the coaching of workshop leadership.

1 hour Break

2 hour Group Refining

Continued time used for refining for performance, establishing performance venue and preparing for community engagement.

1 hour Show

Groups will present their shows with various audiences.

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

APPENDIX B

OPEN SCENES

Sample Encounter Exercise

DESCRIPTION: Open scenes are scenes that include dialogue, often mundane or natural in appearance, without punctuation. In performing arts-based disciplines, open scenes are used to explore characterization or how an actor might embody information in both voice and stature to convey given or chosen circumstances. In many ways, the process mimics discourse analysis—reading the choices in terms of physicality and voice to infer meaning.

Similarly, open scenes can be used in training peace practitioners to not only identify the modes of communication within the scene as an observer, but also actively engage in understanding the personal impulse to embody information.

Open scenes can be found in a variety of locations including through online search engines and a variety of performance-based texts (Spolin, 1986). Trainers might write their own scenes and, under certain conditions, the same might be true of the learner community.

MATERIALS:

Open scene scripts

Given circumstance samples (*optional*)

Field journals

Writing utensils

Costumes (*optional—discouraged for exploratory work*)

DIRECTIONS:

Find/craft an open scene.

Assign roles to participants (generally 2 characters per scene).

EXPLORING PERFORMATIVITY

UTILIZING PERFORMATIVITY

Allow learners time to become comfortable with the text without any guidance.	Allow learners to rehearse the scene, creating characters and intertwining narratives. Optional: given circumstance samples may be used to assist learners. Suggest that they try a few versions with an eye toward finding ways to share information with observers.
Encourage volunteers to share their open scene.	Share scenes.
When scene is complete, open the space	Upon completion of scene, explore what

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

<p>to observers for sharing around what was heard and how it was received:</p> <p><i>What did you see?</i></p> <p><i>What did you learn?</i></p> <p><i>How did you learn it?</i></p>	<p>information was gathered and how those conclusions were made. Encourage specific references.</p>
<p>For volunteer performers, discussion might be centered around:</p> <p><i>How did it feel to be the center of attention?</i></p> <p><i>How did your emotions affect the choices you made?</i></p> <p><i>Did the observers get your message?</i></p>	<p>For performers, after hearing the above information, ask that they return to the rehearsal process to refine their choices to reflect adjustments or enhance their choices.</p>
<p>Reflection (Guided or Independent):</p> <p><i>What was the experience of being watched like? What was it like to watch others perform?</i></p> <p><i>Do the performers' relationships affect their interactions?</i></p> <p><i>How did you gather information about the sequence of events for each scene?</i></p>	<p>Reflection (Independent):</p> <p><i>Why did you make the choices you shared? What was their significance? Was that significance noticed by observers?</i></p> <p><i>How did it feel knowing observers understood your work? If they did not, how did that feel?</i></p> <p><i>What might you do different now?</i></p>

SAMPLE OPEN SCENE

A: Hello

B: Hi

A: How are you

B: Fine thank you

A: Don't you know what time it is

B: No I don't have a watch

SAMPLE OPTIONAL GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES:

Characters: Trainers might opt to give guidance on characters/relationships (e.g. parent/child; best friends; teacher/student; etc...)

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

Conflict-based: Information can be given around a conflict within the scene (e.g. you're late and your scene partner is moving slowly; you were waiting for this person; etc...)

Motivation-centered: Information can be provided using what characters want from each other or the interaction (e.g. you wish things were different; you know the other person knows; you forgot; you can't forgive; etc...)

VARIATIONS: Variations with an eye toward enhancing opportunities for learning are encouraged, particularly if learners are expanding the activity to become inclusive of more concepts and topics. It should always be remembered that the purpose of this exercise is to examine performativity—how information, be it more concrete as in knowing the relationships between two characters or leaning toward abstraction as in motivation-centered, affects the choices made in any situation.

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

WORKING BIBLIOGRAPHY

Applied Theatre. (2010, April 24). Retrieved from

<http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/music/edtheatre/programs/appliedtheatre>

Association for Experiential Educators (n.d.). *What is experiential education?*

Retrieved from <http://www.aee.org/what-is-ee>

Barker, C. (2012). *Cultural studies: Theory and practice*. London, UK: SAGE.

Bar-On, D. (1996). *Tell your life story: Creating dialogue among Jews and Germans, Israelis and Palestinians*. New York, NY: Central European University Press.

Block, P. (2009). *Community: The structure of belonging*. San Francisco, CA:

Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Boal, A. (1979). *Theatre of the oppressed*. (C. A. McBride & M.L. McBride, Trans.).

New York, NY: Theatre Communications Group. (Original work published 1974)

Boal, A. (1995). *The rainbow of desire: The Boal method of theatre and therapy*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Boal, A. (2002). *Games for actors and non-actors* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Routledge.

Bowles, N. & Nadon, D. (Eds.). (2013). *Staging social justice: Collaborating to create activist theatre*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Brook, P. (1968). *The empty space*. New York, NY: Touchstone.

Brook, P. (1993). *The open door: Thoughts on acting and theatre*. New York, NY:

Anchor.

Chinn, P. (2008). *Peace and power: Creative leadership for building community*.

Boston, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers.

Colleran, J. & Spencer, J. (Eds.). (1998). *Staging resistance: Essays on political theater*.

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

- Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Creswell, J. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
- Dunning, S. (2004). *A call for adventure-based conflict resolution* (Master's Thesis). George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia.
- Freire, P. (1986). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York City, NY: Continuum Press.
- Galati, F. (1988). *The grapes of wrath*. New York, NY: Dramatist's Play Service.
- Gounaridou, K. (Ed.). (2005). *Staging nationalism: Essays on theatre and nationalism*. London, UK: McFarland & Company, Inc.
- Hanh, T.N. (2005). *Being peace*. Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press.
- Hannum, K. (2007). *Social identity: Knowing yourself, leading others*. Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.
- hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Johnston, C. (1998). *House of games: Making theatre from everyday life*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Kanter, J. (2007). *Performing loss: Rebuilding community through theater and writing*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- LeBaron, M. (2003). *Bridging cultural conflicts: A new approach for a changing world*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Lederach, J.P. (2010). *The moral imagination: The heart and soul of building peace*.

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

- New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Maslow, A.H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50:4, 370-396.
- Matsakis, A. (1996). *I can't get over it: A handbook for trauma survivors* (2nd ed.). Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.
- Ramsbotham, O., Woodhouse, T. & Miall, H. (Eds.). (2011). *Contemporary conflict resolution*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Reimer, L., Schmitz, C., Janke, E., Askarov, A., Strahl, b. & Matyók, T. *Transformative change: An introduction to peace and conflict studies*. (2015). London, UK: Lexington Books.
- Rohd, M. (1998). *Theatre for community, conflict & dialogue: The hope is vital training manual*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Schirch, L. (2013). *Conflict assessment and peacebuilding planning: toward a participatory approach to human security*. Boulder, CO: Kumarian Press.
- Smith, L.T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples* (2nd Ed.). London, UK: Zed Books.
- Spolin, V. (1986). *Theatre games for the classroom: A teacher's handbook*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Sweitzer, H.F. & King, M. A. (2014). *The successful internship: Personal, professional, and civic development in experiential learning*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole Cengage Learning.
- Thompson, J. (2005). *Digging Up Stories: Applied theatre, performance and war*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.

SIMULATIONS, SCENARIOS AND ROLE-PLAY

The United States Department of Health & Human Services. (April 18, 1979). *Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research.*

Retrieved from <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html>

Varker, F.G. (2013). *Examination of how team emotional intelligence climate and organizational conflict are affected by experiential education programming* (Master's research report). The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, North Carolina.

Winslade, J. & Monk, G. (2000). *Narrative Mediation: A new approach to conflict resolution*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.