

# ROLE-PLAYING AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL TOOL

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CALVIN HALE MOORE



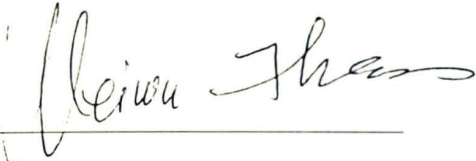
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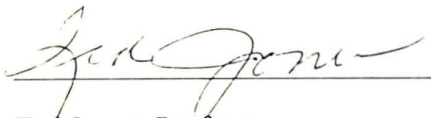
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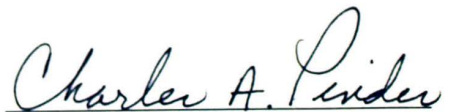
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# Role-Playing As An Instructional Tool

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Arts Degree

Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN

Calvin Hale Moore

December 2004

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Nettie Mae Smith-Moore, my  
teacher/guru, and my role model;  
and to my granddaughter, Ava Maeve, the inheritor.

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## ABSTRACT

Role-playing is a tool used by educators from the classroom to the boardroom. Role-playing has obvious connection to our earliest learning experience. This is exemplified in the development of the individual, and the growth of society.

Two beginning reporting classes were trained to interview. One class was instructed using role-playing as an instructional tool. The two classes were compared with one another. The results, as to which class performed the skill of interviewing better, were tested.

The class using role-playing as an instructional tool performed better than the control class. However, the t-test results were not statistically significant. Therefore the research did not support the hypotheses that the role-playing group would rate themselves as more confident, be rated by their sources as more competent and more accurate, and be rated by an outside evaluator as producing copy of higher quality. The experimental group out performed the control group in almost all categories. However, these differences failed to reach statistical significance. It is hoped that this work will inspire future research into the value of applying role-playing to modern education.



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## **Nomenclature/List of Abbreviations**

Didactic – A teaching method that involves the teacher presenting information to the student, and the student may follow with relevant questions to the teacher.

Imitation –An attempt to precisely copy an action in nature, of an object or a human being.

TA – The Teaching Artist that assists a traditional teacher in the classroom using artistic based techniques such as acting, painting, music etc.

Transcendent – Transcend is used as a verb “to go beyond,” and transcendent as an adjective describing a state of awareness such as “transcendental awareness.”

RP – A role-playing based method of instruction where actor training and other theatrical techniques, such as directing and playwriting, are used.

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Opening**

Imagination is our insurance for a future. Perhaps that is why role-playing is crucial to true substantive learning and retention. Acting out imaginary thoughts and ideas is fun and beneficial, evidenced by the naturalness that children express in play (Piaget, 1962). The value that role-playing, and its big brother theatre, brings to our lives and our culture supports this claim also. This should come as no surprise since mimicking/imitation is the first expression of a newborn, identifiable as a form of communication. It is also fundamental to interactions with the surroundings, and others in nature (Aristotle, trans. 1967, 48b4-15).

Playing is something we do naturally and is a natural facilitator for learning. If this is true, then the role of role-playing in the evolution of education is worth pursuing. Philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau proposed the theory that an individual learns from three different sources: nature, man, and things. "Education is the inheritance of man; the only thing man can leave his descendents is education" (Rousseau, 1762/1991: 148-49). Role-playing is, and has been, a tool for passing on this inheritance.



Theatre, role-playing, and recitation have played a significant role in propagating the great literature of Homer and other pre-Socratic authors of western education. Plato presented his knowledge in dialogue form, similar to a script. Ancient Greek literature is an inheritance essential to the rise of western culture.

Theatre is a tool used by many societies and cultures to educate. The arts provide cultural continuity that is above politics and personal interests. Theatre can be non-secular, non-political, and non-religious, but it does not have to be.

In those societies that have not developed theatrical traditions it is often gravely missed. Such was the case for the cultures of the indigenous peoples of the Americas. Unfortunately, their means of passing on knowledge was limited to story telling and example. It did not include a theatrical tradition. Perhaps this was due to the nomadic nature of the tribes. Consequently many of their cultural traditions passed into oblivion, or at best continued on as myths. The chief of the Seneca tribe of North America, Sagoyewatha (Red Jacket), recognized that the arts were missing from their cultural tradition. During a council of chiefs of the Six Nations of Iroquois and white missionaries in 1805, Sagoyewatha said:

Brother, the Great Spirit has made us all, but He has made a great difference between His white and His red children. He has given us different complexions and different customs. To you He has given the arts. To these He has not opened our eyes (Andrews and Zarefsky, 1989, p. 123).

The indigenous cultures of America are as old as any western civilizations. Imagine what we might have learned from such noble cultures, if they had developed a theatrical tradition to clarify and pass on their wisdom.

## Background

Imitation is our initial means of gaining knowledge. Beginning in the cradle, copying others is recognized as one's earliest attempt at gaining information and utilizable knowledge from the surrounding world. When a child imitates an adult's gestures or voice patterns he or she is engaged in a form of acting – mimicking or role-playing. As the child grows, role-playing becomes an important part of play and social development (Piaget, 1969).

Imitation is an established practice, rising as a culture develops from ritualistic activities to theatre. Ritualistic ceremonies require the leaders and their assistants to perform an assigned task in a prescribed manner. This is similar to the script of a theatrical production. The priest's or priestess's actions during the ceremony are similar to the actor or actress portraying an assigned part in a theatrical production. The ritualistic ceremonies surrounding Dionysus emerged into the Greek theatrical spectacles (Wilson and Goldfarb, 1994). This society's rulers did not overlook theatre's importance or influence on the masses.

According to Aristotle, theatre, especially tragedy, is an imitation of an action in nature. Imitation, or mimesis, should be translated as meaning the re-creation of the *creative principles* of nature not just duplication or copying. In acting, to imitate does not simply mean to copy. Role-playing, in the acting art, is more like the Greek "mimesis" or re-creation (Aristotle, trans. 1967, 48b4-10 and 50b6-21).

The acting art of theatrical production, imitation or mimesis, connects education and theatre most directly. There are other aspects of theatrical production that can benefit

educators such as scriptwriting and directing (Boal, 1985). However, this study focuses on role-playing because role-playing is fundamental to theatre, as well as an effective instructional technique.

Role-playing is a fundamental teaching and instructional technique (Bretherton, 1984). Therefore the question arises: why is this theatrical technique such a natural method of learning? Perhaps the answer is that a fundamental benefit of role-playing is self-awareness, as well as awareness of others. When the students assume roles, they inevitably come face to face with their own values and feelings, as well as those of others involved in the role-playing (Blatner, 2002). As stated above, the ancient Greeks used theatrical techniques to educate such great thinkers as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle (Plato, trans. 1968, p.80). The ancient Greek saying is “man know thyself.”

### *Self-Awareness*

Most educators agree that fundamental to good education is the understanding of one's self or “self-awareness.” Self-recognition, which includes one's personal values and feelings, forms a basis on which to broaden an understanding of the world, and therefore learn more effectively (Maharishi, 2004).

Self-awareness is a heightened awareness and should not be thought of as an obscure ‘psychologized’ process. The ancient Greeks referred to it when used in dialogue as rhetoric, or questions that answer themselves. With regards to self-knowledge, the ancients refer to rhetoric as a heightened awareness that occurs when one turns his or her attention inward. Implied is openness to different ideas, with innocence, much the way



the childish mind is open to illusive ideas such as a belief in Santa Claus (Plato, trans. 1968).

Role-playing relies on the development of self-awareness by the student, providing fertile fields for learning. In theatrical role-playing, self-awareness is an uncluttered awareness accompanied by the ability to focus sharply, oblivious to distractions. This concept of awareness of one's self is essential to the role-playing in actor training (Morris and Hotchkis, 1979). This would also be a fertile field for learning and education.

The value of self-awareness is recognized as an integral part of problem solving and communication (Jourard, 1973). Putting ourselves in the roles of those we wish to emulate or understand enhances our knowledge of others' motivations and feelings as well as our own. However, beginning at an early age we often form barriers to interpersonal communication with preconceived notions, biases, prejudices, and other negative associations. Role-playing is used effectively as a means of overcoming such barriers (McCarthy and Anderson, 2000; Butt, 1998; Jourard, 1973).

Whether it's used for understanding the varied strata of social classes, races and cultures or simply differences in the work place, role-playing is an effective means of broadening our perceptions. From shuttle astronauts to car-salespersons, football players or Oscar winners, everybody uses role-playing to sharpen skills and hone his or her craft. Role-playing, in some cases, is nothing more than rehearsal or practice.

Unfortunately the benefits of role-playing as a tool of instruction and developing self-awareness are being over-looked in contemporary education. This may be due, in part, to the fact that most research focuses on student enthusiasm rather than retention of



information (Syverson, 2002; McCarthy and Anderson, 2000). However, studies do exist which support the use of role-playing as a teaching tool (Blatner, 2002; Syverson, 2002; Creel, Kuhne, and Riggle, 2000; McHardy and Allan, 2000; Butt, 1998; Dallman- Jones, 1994). Many educators are surprised when they discover its effectiveness as a teaching technique.

For the actor, according to George Harrison, “it doesn’t matter whether your role is the king or a fabulous Beatle: it’s what’s inside that counts” (Sullivan, 2001). Perhaps Shakespeare’s statement about the world being a stage, and each of us plays a part is a truth that has been dismissed too irreverently.

### *Communication Theory Support*

Twentieth Century philosopher and father of many modern communication theories, Martin Buber, expounded on the value of self-awareness and awareness of the essential being of others. In his book *Pointing the Way* he says:

The world is not comprehensible, but it is embraceable: through the embracing of one of its beings. Each thing and being has a twofold nature: The passive, absorbable, usable, dissectible, comparable, combinable, rationalizable, and the other, the active, non-absorbable, unusable, un-dissectible, incomparable, noncombinable, nonrationalizable. This is the confronting, the shaping, and the bestowing in things. He who truly experiences a thing so that it springs up to meet him and embraces him of itself has in that thing known the world (Buber, 1957, p. 27).

As an instructional technique, creative imitation or role-playing is an untapped resource with great potential (McHardy and Allan, 2000; Witte, 1999; Ponder, 1996). The research along with communication theories such as Symbolic Inter-actionism, which advocates the emergence of human consciousness out of group life, supports the value of role-playing. Symbolic Inter-actionism proposes that one's social interactions develop out of communication with fellow individuals. According to this theory, these interactions are based on "root images" which include viewing the human being as an actor (Blumer, 1969).

Social Learning Theory is another communication theory that advocates the value of role-playing. Rehearsing the behavior one desires to model increases the proficiency and retention for the learner. The highest level of observational learning is achieved when one rehearses the model behavior (Bandura, 1977). Delayed modeling is imitation performed when the model is no longer present. This requires a greater degree of cognitive functioning. The result, according to Social Learning Theory, is a better learning experience and increased retention.

#### *As a Tool*

Role-playing supports the development of self-awareness. It also aids in developing skill: the kinds of skill required for flexible (ethos), creative (pathos), rational thinking (logos). These traits must be exercised, practiced, and learned in a rhetorical process of interaction that requires risk-taking, self-expression, feedback, and encouragement. Perhaps this explains why role-playing helps develop self-awareness (Syverson, 2002).

Syverson's literature review of studies addressing the use of role-playing is encouraging as well as frustrating. It's clear that such active learning techniques can be very effective in helping participants gain a richer understanding of multiple perspectives and of positive codependency arising out of interdependent activity. However, according to Syverson and others such as McCarthy and Anderson (2000), there is a lack of research evaluating the quality and depth of learning.

Deeper learning occurs when students engage in well-defined role-playing games. Participants move beyond two common erroneous assumptions: (1) there exist a simplistic assumption of a "right/wrong" dichotomy in complex social problems, and (2) the relativist position of "anybody's opinion is as good as anyone else's." The player comes to see that logical reasoning and factual support (logos) do not always win the day; pathos and ethos also play an important part in decision-making and problem solving. Within the framework of the game, participants have the opportunity to exercise creativity and imagination and to be playful in exploring possibilities. Yet the student learns there are consequences for the role-player.

The traditional didactic method of teaching may be a less effective means of imparting knowledge, in certain situations, than imitation-based role-playing especially when applied to skill training. Why? Most people lack depth of communication skills such as attentive listening, non-egocentricity, and non-threatening response capabilities. Consequently, simply talking in order to achieve real understanding or to solve problems is seldom effective (Jourard, 1973). There is a tool to assist in overcoming these problems in communication, and enhance the educational experience – role-playing.



## Purpose and Scope

“Teaching is facilitating opportunities to learn.” So says Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his novel, *Emile* (Rousseau, 1762/1991). Role-playing, as an instructional technique, involves the acting out of a situation. Certain members of the learning group perform the situation in either a structured or unstructured response. Role-playing is a direct facilitator of “opportunities to learn.”

During role-playing the learner expresses feeling and attitudes, is encouraged to be creative, develops social skills, and learns to remain calm in the face of adversity or pressure. These are just some of the benefits of role-playing. The disadvantages of role-playing are that it is time consuming, controversial issues sometime get out of hand, and talented students sometimes dominate the activity (Dallman-Jones, 1994). Evaluating or testing the results of instruction via role-playing is difficult. Standard measures may not get to the depth of what students are learning during role-playing. Students do not regurgitate information learned from role-playing in the same way they do when learning from memorization or traditional methods of teaching (Syverson, 2001).

This study seeks to test whether, in addition to the positive outcomes listed above, role-playing can enhance skills learned in a classroom. It attempts to test whether role-playing is a more effective instruction technique than the traditional, didactic, lecturing approach when applied to skill training for journalists.

A randomly assigned reporting class at a Southeastern university was trained to interview via role-playing-based instruction (RP). This experimental group was compared with a control class from the same university trained in the traditional method of



interviewing instruction. The two classes were evaluated and analyzed as to the quality of learning that occurred, and was displayed in their interviewing skills.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This literature review attempts to cover the historical views concerning theatre, imitation, and role-playing. It also looks at the educational connections with scientific research relating to role-playing, and acting techniques that assist in role-playing.

Theatre is an established institution, rising as a culture develops from ritual performance to structured role-playing. It is for this reason the review begins with a look at the historical and traditional opinions.

#### **Historical**

According to Wilson and Goldfarb (1994), theatre developed out of ancient Dionysus ritualistic celebrations. Theatre also introduced debate to the ritual. “When Thespis stepped out of the Greek chorus, the actor and debater were born” (Osborn, 1983).

The earliest theatrical spectacle found its initial emergence out of rituals in Attic culture. Around 550 – 250 b.c. this culture of the ancient Greeks emerged. It is a cornerstone for much of modern civilization, including educational systems (Plato, trans. 1968, p. 66). The most famous scholar from this culture, of course, was Plato.

Plato's mentor, Socrates (470 b.c. – 399 b.c.) taught during the lifetimes of the great Greek playwrights Aeschylus (525 b.c. – 456 b.c.), Sophocles (496 b.c. – 406 b.c.), and Euripides (480 b.c. – 406 b.c.). Socrates often referred to their works during Plato's dialogues, to reinforce his arguments. Examples are found in *The Apology*, 34d; *The Meno*, 100a; *The Gorgias*, 449a, 516c, 523a, 525d, (Allen, 1984). Socrates expressed apprehension concerning the source of artistic expression. Socrates felt that intuition and random inspiration motivated artistic creativity. According to Plato, Socrates preferred the foundations of knowledge to come from logos, or rational didactic learning grounded in logic (Allen, 1984).

The heir to the lineage of Socrates and Plato's knowledge was Aristotle. He gave us a basis for western theatre in his treatise *The Poetics* (Aristotle, trans. 1967). Aristotle identified a gap in Plato's educational system regarding poetry, theatre, and role-playing. When comparing the arts to other objective inquiries, Aristotle states: "the writing of poetry is more a philosophical activity and one to be taken more seriously than the writing of history. Poetry tells us the universals, history the particulars." (Aristotle, trans. 1967, 52a5-15)

Aristotle recognized, and redeemed, theatre as an imitation of an action's natural principles, which goes beyond Plato's view. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle presented certain standards for the scope and purpose of a theatrical performance. He defined theatre by focusing on the superiority of the tragic genre which is: "Imitation of an action which is complete and a whole and has a certain magnitude with a beginning, middle, and end." Tragedy is serious and complete. It is of a certain duration, varying little in length and

comprehensible by the audience in one sitting. (Aristotle, trans. 1967, 49a20; 49b9-15; 50b21-30).

Aristotle defined the language used as “embellished with artistic ornamentation.” By language embellished he meant “language into which rhythm, harmony, and song enter.” The several kinds of language are found in separate parts of the play; “in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions. Some parts of the play are rendered through the medium of verse alone, others with the aid of song.” The purgation of pity and fear in the spectator exemplifies the power of role-playing and theatre. Aristotle’s exposition on catharsis, in the *Poetics*, emphasizes this view too. (Aristotle, trans. 1967, 49b25-30; 52b1-3).

His writings concerning theatre have been a cornerstone of western theatrical traditions for over 2,500 years. It has continued through the Roman Period, the Middle Ages, the Neo Classic era, as well as modern times. The great Elizabethan playwright William Shakespeare structured his work on Aristotle’s rules. However, Shakespeare embellished on Aristotle’s rules of duration for the temporal period over which the story occurs, as well as mixing genres – comedy and tragedy.

Playwright, Bertolt Brecht (1895 - 1956), also wrote and produced plays with a critical set of rules in mind (Volker, trans. 1978). The Brechtian “Epic Theatre” of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is the first extensive break from the rules of Aristotle’s *Poetics*. Brecht was a Marxist, and his theatrical views expressed this in many ways.

Where the *Poetics* suggested that thought determines being, Brecht believed that social being determines thought. Where the essence of man is viewed as stable and stagnant expressed by the *Poetics*, Brecht presented man as alterable and in process.



When the *Poetics* state that by the end of the play catharsis “purified” the spectators and leaves them at peace, Brecht says that through knowledge the spectator is driven to action.

Traditional theatre keeps the audience separated from the action on stage; Brecht attempted to break down this so-called “fourth wall.” These breaks from tradition by Brecht and others have influenced much of modern theatre (Boal, 1979, p. 95). However, breaks from Aristotelian tradition have not dominated basic playwriting. Today, Hollywood writers often strive to write within the Aristotelian formula (Fantasia, 2002, p. 54). Education, on the other hand, is possibly the real benefactor of Brecht and others’ break from traditional theatre.

### *Imitation and RP*

The introduction to Cornford’s translation of Plato’s *Republic* offers insight into the nature of the life and education of young Athenians (Plato, trans. 1968). Imitation and role-playing held a significant position in their education. It was used to propagate the literature of Homer and other pre-Socratic authors. The legacy of this ancient literature is obviously essential to understanding western culture.

Plato appreciated art and was well aware of theatre’s power to educate and influence the masses. Plato’s views on imitation, and art in general, have been thoroughly discussed in various translations and commentaries on his work *The Republic*.

Plato, discussing theatrical tradition itself, spends little time. What discussion he does offer about theatre is often interpreted in a way suggesting that censorship was of primary importance. For Plato, censorship must be exercised before a theatrical

performance is produced in society (Brockett, 1999, p.40). However, upon analysis of *The Republic*, near the end, it seems clear that Plato prescribed censorship of theatre for the young developing minds. When youth imitate and role-play the activities of the adults, it might lead to serious confusion for the children and create disharmony in their social life.

Theatre often uses spectacle and debate as a means of determining the correlation of society's laws with laws of nature (Osborn, 1983). Plato also realized civilizations must attempt to live in balance with the laws of nature: God's laws that are very personal and society's laws that are not. However, the attempt to illustrate this via theatre created problems for Plato and his perfect republic. According to Plato, an imitation of an imitation can only lead to confusion. His cave analogy, described in *The Republic* concerning reality and illusion, illuminates his view. Theatre, being an imitation of life, is indeed a very powerful tool. However, it could be very dangerous for the ruling class.

Beginning with the Elizabethan Theatre (circa 1600) followed by the rise of the middle-class over the following centuries, the divergence from Aristotelian Theatre grew. As stated above, by the 20<sup>th</sup> century an expanded and more liberal form of theatre developed with Bertolt Brecht's "Epic Theatre."

England's Globe Theatre director, Louis Fantasia, promotes the classical as well as the Brechtian tradition around the world. In his writings and work with actors, directors, and teachers Fantasia utilizes both views (Fantasia, 2002). Strongly influenced by Brecht, Fantasia emphasizes a tension in Shakespearean drama between personal fulfillment and social responsibilities.

Fantasia holds extensive workshops and shares his views concerning the transition from Aristotelian poetics to Brechtian theatre. The primary difference, according to Fantasia, is Brecht attempted to penetrate the fourth wall between actor and spectator. Brecht brought the common man into the main focus of theatre. Shakespeare also presented theatre for the common man's interest.

In his upcoming book "Tragedy in the Age of Oprah," Fantasia warns against losing the cathartic value of theatre in this modern era. He also warns against losing the essence of tragedy, which occurs in the moment of recognition by the protagonist (Fantasia, 2003). This moment of recognition is where the essence of theatre connects to the use of RP in education. During RP, recognition is the key to understanding, learning, and growth.

In classical tragedy, as well as Brechtian theatre, recognition occurs when the protagonist and audience see through a situation or disguise to reveal the truth. Fantasia emphasizes this classical prerequisite to tragedy; that is:

The dramatic representation of the moment of awareness in the face of inevitable loss. It is not the moment in which your heart breaks, but the moment just before, when you know it will and you realize that there is nothing you can do about it except go on (Fantasia, 2003).

### *Technique For Educating*

Although not directly related to theatrical tradition, some philosophers of the post-Shakespearean era directly refer to role-playing and its relationship to education. Jean-



Jacques Rousseau was one of many 18<sup>th</sup> century philosophers who were concerned with education. John Locke and David Hume were very influential on Rousseau.

In his novel *Emile*, Rousseau dramatized his ideas in the education of a young person and focuses on the nature of that learner - Emile (Rousseau, 1762/1991).

Rousseau presented a platform for future educators like Jean Piaget. Piaget recognized the physical and psychological stages that occur between birth and maturity, and therefore influence learning.

Imitation is the earliest learning technique and Piaget traced the development of a child's physical and intellectual growth. He observed and recorded the growth and maturity of his own child, and recorded the physical and psychological changes that occurred. The importance of imitation during the process of child development cannot be overstated. The first part of his book, *Play, Dreams and Imitation In Childhood*, is totally devoted to imitation (Piaget, 1962). The following two parts of this book expound the more developed means of imitation in the forms of play, dreams, and social development.

Assimilation and accommodation are the first steps of observable intelligent activity, according to Piaget. Immediately after the sensory-motor development of the early stages in the growth of the child, these two traits are dominantly displayed (Piaget and Inhelder, 1969). Since repetition is fundamental to development of the sensory-motor system, it might be inferred that the very fundamentals of imitation and role-playing are present from birth. This explains why Piaget continually referred to imitation, playing, and other forms of RP in his work.



A principal benefit of RP is the development of self-awareness. In its highest form self-awareness allows us to actually live in the moment, and perhaps respond to the moment and on its behalf.

In Martin Buber's writing concerning the "I and Thou" relationships, as opposed to the "I and It" relation, he expressed the value of self-awareness and the importance of making the other person present. This is essential for moral and ethical responsibility. Buber required that one first become aware rather than simply observing or looking on. That is, one must avoid making the other an object. In order to do this, one must first transcend the "armor" that blocks incoming signs or communication.

Buber found the ability to transcend stems most often from a religious or spiritual experience, but not exclusively. However, it is necessary for one to go beyond the surface of feelings and thoughts in order to be truly aware and experience what he called "original remembrance." This usually happens through some means of introspection, which eventually goes beyond the means itself - transcending. Consequently, religious or spiritual practices are often the first step.

If original remembrance has been established in one's awareness, then one is capable of communicating without the armor. When we truly make the other present and become attentive, we are able to address and to be addressed fully; and perhaps say or hear something of real value. Eastern philosophies refer to this as a consciousness of "unity." All things are perceived as the "Self" the transcendent limitless Self (Yogi, 1990). Buber often expressed it as the self that is "transparent into the absolute."

## **Scientific data**

A number of studies lend support to the advantages of RP for the success of educational programs:

McHardy and Allan (2002) found that when teaching creativity to business students, learning was enhanced by the use of simulations and scenarios. Businesses often use RP to train employees. This study is included in order to illustrate the range of RP as an educational tool. Devet (2000) supports the use of RP in business. Business professors create a professional atmosphere in the classroom by having students play roles commonly found during business question and answer sessions

McCarthy and Anderson (2000) focused on the learning impact of RP contrary to most research studies. Numerous studies exist which focus on the enhanced level of interest, displayed by students instructed through active learning techniques. This study examined the relationship between the technique of active learning and performance on standard measures such as essays.

Two experiments concerning history and political science were conducted and analyzed. Standard evaluations were used to compare students who learned via active learning, including role-playing, and students who were instructed in the traditional lecturing approach. The active role-playing groups performed as well or significantly better. The history students used RP exclusively in their study and performed at an entire letter grade higher than the control group. The efficiency of teaching active learning was

the same as the passive learning technique too. The conclusion of their research is that active learning is important to all disciplines, especially the humanities.

Blatner (2002) referred to Piaget's "accommodation" as a means of retention that far out weighs the process of "assimilation." As Blatner put it: "Accommodation involves a gaining of a knack, and tends to be the kind of learning that is almost impossible to fully forget. Assimilative learning, as we all know, is remarkably easy to forget" (Blatner, 2002). Blatner indicated that a primary reason for assimilation instruction over accommodation instruction is that assimilation is much easier to test. It is easier to give a test over what a student has acquired through rote memorization, than what is learned through accommodation. Skills, which reflect an accommodative type of learning, require a complex performance-oriented testing and more teacher attention. Accommodation, according to Blatner, covers more subtle variables than assimilation.

Dallman-Jones (1994) gave a detailed account of the positives and negatives associated with RP, and suggested the positives far outweigh the negatives. A mock job interview in which the learner is aware of the questions ahead of time exemplifies a structured situation. Using unusual or surprise questions in the interview would be unstructured for the learner and would require spontaneity.

Syverson, (2001) looked at a number of dissertations concerning the use of RP. One outstanding reference covered the effect of role-playing in composition classes. Remedial English classes, taught by Lynn Troyka, made enormous gains in the sophistication of their writing, use of rhetoric, and dealing with conflicting views. Troyka's book, *Taking Action* (Troyka and Nudelman, 2000) documents simulation games Troyka used in her classrooms.



Syverson noted that studies such as Troyka's have been neglected. No evidence exists that her work has been extended into rhetoric and composition in computer-supported environments. This view acknowledges the lack of research directed toward the quantitative benefits of RP. RP has not been thoroughly appreciated by the academic community. A similar conclusion was also drawn by the above research from McCarthy and Anderson (2000).

### **Theatrical RP Sources & Acting**

Practitioners of role-playing strategies have set down a number of role-playing techniques they find useful. Latin American playwright, author, and educator Augusto Boal turned theatre inside out (Boal, 1985). Following in the Brechtian tradition, Boal presented a new theatrical spectacle that turned the audience into participants. "Theatre should be active and do-able," according to Boal; and he introduced methods that directly involve the audience in the theatrical performance. Boal aspired to eliminate the distinction between spectator and actor. By doing so, he took theatre beyond the Brechtian era and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The ideas of Boal are used in theatres, classrooms, and boardrooms around the world (Davis and O'Sullivan, 2000; Splawn, 1998; Kaye and Ragusa, 1998; Creel, Kuhne, and Riggle, 2000; Devet, 2000; Witte, 1999; Butt, 1998).

His methods for accomplishing the liberation of the spectator are instructions for knowing the body and making it expressive, i.e. physical exercise. This is followed by introducing the language of theatre as an active happening in the now reality and not a



finished product. Finally the discourse of theatre is developed through a series of spectator/actor interactions.

Boal offered many theatrical techniques designed to educate; but his third stage for transforming the spectator into actor, “theatre as language,” seemed quite relevant for interviewer role-playing. “Simultaneous dramaturgy” (Boal, 1985; p.132) allows for audience direct involvement as a group without changing the actors. The script can change with any suggestion from the group; i.e., the group becomes playwright and director. The actors improvise suggestions and the group can intervene at any time. All group suggestions are discussed theatrically.

The actors are given an initial script relating to the topic being taught. In this case, the script could be developed around interviewing points being taught. At some point the instructor stops the action and asks the group to intervene with script suggestions and possible solutions.

Davis and O’Sullivan (2000) analyzed *Theatre of the Oppressed* and Boal’s theory on theatre. Boal has been classified as a Marxist and communist, based on his writings. The authors of this article disagreed. They argue that he expresses a completely different view than traditionally expressed toward theatre, but one not necessarily political. Boal himself expressed agreement with this assessment when he stated that there might be an alternative to political theatre. Davis and O’Sullivan concluded that benefits to the individual were Boal’s motivation. Education, not simply entertainment or political propaganda, best reflects the purpose of theatre as presented by Boal.

Lenore Kelner's *Creative Classroom* offered a dramatic technique directly related to interviewer role-playing (Kelner, 1993). She suggested that one student be selected to assume the role of the interviewed person. Preferably the role is of some famous individual, either alive or dead, that the class is familiar with. It is helpful to include a costume piece or large nametag to identify the character. A student volunteer is selected. In role playing gender does not matter; males can portray females and vice versa. Playing a character of the opposite sex often helps break the ice for the rest of the class.

Kelner suggested that the instructor prepare the volunteers for the transformation by placing the costume or nametag on them and then they face the class. In order to control the interviewers, Kelner suggested that an imaginary microphone or that an atmosphere of a press conference be utilized. There are obviously many methods of interviewer control. After a few questions the teacher should check to see if the student playing the role is comfortable or struggling to answer. If necessary, the instructor should thank the student role player and have them remove the costume or nametag. Then ask for another volunteer. The teacher could also assume the role if desired. It's important to close the role-playing activity with a specific activity, such as "close your eyes and relax. It's time to return to the real world. Now open your eyes."

### *Acting*

Morris and Hotchkis (1979) provide insight into actor training. Their techniques for developing the actor are less invasive than many stringent acting techniques. Their

approach is easily adapted to educational use of theatrical techniques. Morris and Hotchkis's approach requires that the actor first become comfortable with himself or herself as an individual, before attempting to become a character in a role.

Eric Morris is the acting coach of the Actor's Workshop in Los Angeles, California. His technique of "Personal Inventory" consists of taking a couple of minutes and allowing students to silently reflect on how they feel at that particular moment. The student goes beyond what one thinks one should be feeling, to what he or she truly feels. The purpose is multifold. It allows the students/actors to relax and take an inventory of how they are feeling.

The technique may begin with the students asking themselves "how do I feel now?" The students ask themselves this question silently, quietly reflect and express their feelings silently to themselves, then repeat the process. A more focused approach could concentrate on specific feelings such as how do I feel about school, this class, my love life, the comfort of this chair etc. This technique is designed to facilitate the students becoming more aware of their own being, and the importance of their own feelings. This exercise goes on for a few minutes, and there is no right or wrong way to do this. If someone gets drowsy or daydreaming occurs, it is part of the RP technique.

Morris also provides group sessions designed to overcome social conditioning that interfere with communication with others, as well as our selves. If the actor assumes a role expressing a feeling or emotion he or she has been cultured to avoid, it may not be believable. Consequently, overcoming these conditions is essential to actor training.

The exercise Morris provides is a round table discussion by the students. Each student tells another student how he or she perceives the other. The critiqued students



respond with how those evaluations made them feel, and why. The goal is learning to handle negative criticism, as well as accept the fact that not everyone is going to like us and that's OK.

The practical tools prescribed by Morris are self-help tools as well as actor training techniques. The personal yet universal nature of role-playing leads one to inquire about the nature of RP as an interdisciplinary tool, valuable at all levels of education.

Fantasia (2002) adds insight into actor training and role-playing. His book *Instant Shakespeare* gives practical techniques, allowing the novice to Shakespeare's plays an ability to appreciate the literary and emotive drive behind the work of this great playwright. He begins with insisting the reader apply what he calls the Shakespeare Paradigm: "Why does this particular character say these particular words, in this particular order, at this particular moment?"

Along with the real meaning of the words Fantasia emphasizes structure or where the play is going, character or rhythm and sense of the line, and understanding the central event or what the play is about (Fantasia, 2002). Part of his actor training includes performing a particular role as an animal. This exercise turns out to be very insightful for the actor.

In the fall of 2003, Louis Fantasia held a conference at a Southeastern university. During the conference he illustrated in depth his theatrical techniques for educators when teaching Shakespeare. During the conference he presented participants with sections of his yet to be published book *Tragedy in the Age of Oprah*. He underscored the dangers that await a society that fails to appreciate tragedy due to relying, too heavily, on rationalization and psychoanalysis alone.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODS**

The research question this project should answer is as follows: Which is the best way to instruct students in journalistic interviewing the role-playing method (RP), or the traditional lecture method? To answer this research question, the following hypotheses will be tested:

1. The RP class will feel more confident than the control group.
2. The RP class will be rated as more competent than the control group by the interviewees.
3. The RP class' written articles will be rated as more accurate than the control group by the interviewees.
4. The RP class' written articles will be rated as being of higher quality than the control group by an objective professor.

Reporting classes always contain a unit on interviewing. Different instructors often approach teaching this topic in different ways. This experiment fit in well with evaluating these different approaches in how this topic is taught. The instructor of record taught his/her own class, and the experimental class adapted a more rigorous role-playing (RP) approach than might normally be used. The lecture approach was used in the control class.

Traditional lecture refers to the method of lecturing, followed by a question-and-answer period during the class. The RP approach consists of the professor teaching his/her class via theatrical based role-playing techniques. Both professors provided students with the same handout of interviewing tips (see Appendix A). Each professor has taught a course in interviewing skills before, using little or no role playing instruction.

## **Background**

The researcher randomly assigned two classes of journalism that teach interviewing skills to either the control or the experimental group. The experimental group was instructed using an RP approach, and the control group used traditional lectures. The decision on assignment was decided by the flip of a coin.

Two beginning reporting classes from the spring, 2004, semester of a Southeastern university provided the groups to be evaluated. Student in these classes interviewed students in two public speaking classes that met during the same time. The interviews were integrated into the subject matter of these two public speaking classes. The experimental class met twice a week for 1¼ hour each session. The control class met once a week for 2¾ hours. Therefore, instruction time was the same for both the experimental and control groups. These were the only two reporting classes that match public speaking classes for scheduling at the university.

During the second week of February 2004, the researcher addressed each of the classes selected for the research project. This was also the week the instructions took

place. Students were informed as to the nature of the research prior to the instructional portion of their classes. They were informed that there were no requirements for participation in the research and it would not affect their grade in any way whether or not they participated.

In each of the four classes, consent forms were given to each of the students (see Appendix B). The students were asked to read the consent form. If they chose to participate in the research study they signed the form. If they chose not to participate, they did not sign the form. The researcher then personally collected the consent forms. Ten signed consent forms were collected from the control group; and nineteen signed consent forms were collected from the experimental group.

The consent forms were presented to the public speaking classes the day of the interviewing. Ten signed forms were collected from the public speaking class being interviewed by the ten control group participants. There were nineteen signed forms collected from the class being interviewed by the experimental group. Neither the teachers nor the students knew who chose to participate and who did not.

After consent forms had been collected, students from both the experimental and control groups interviewed public speaking students with the purpose of writing a “personality profile” of the interviewed student. Each interview lasted ten minutes, and students wrote a short personality profile from the interview. The success of the interview was evaluated in the following ways.

1. The students conducting the interviews rated on a scale of one to five their personal feelings of competency as interviewers (see Appendix C).
2. The interviewed students evaluated on a scale of one to five the competency of

the student who interviews them (see Appendix C).

3. Then the interviewed student evaluated the accuracy of the information presented in a personal profile written by the interviewer (see Appendix C).
4. An outside journalism instructor evaluated all of the personality profiles from the interviews on a five-point scale (see Appendix C).

T-tests were run on each of these four scales to test for statistical significant differences between the experimental and control groups.

### *Teacher Training Resources*

Both classes received the handouts on “Techniques of Interviewing” (See Appendix A). Standard instruction focused on seven major goals of a journalistic interview:

1. Putting interviewee at ease,
2. Getting complete information,
3. Getting accurate information,
4. Getting quotes that are lively and relevant,
5. Being prepared,
6. Staying on a unified theme.
7. Being flexible enough to recognize and pursue the unexpected.

The control class consisted of a lecture fleshing out the points of the handout, followed by a question-and-answer period. However, some structure would be needed to present the main points via RP. During the weeks leading up to the experiment the researcher met with the professor of the experimental group. The researcher presented the



seven major goals of interviewing using theatrical instructions. The following identify situations that address these main points, and provide structure to the RP class in the form of scripts.

1. *Putting Interviewee at Ease...* Have your partner assume the role of someone notorious, or who has something about which they felt uncomfortable discussing. Make them comfortable.
2. *Getting Complete Information...* Have your partner give you part of the information, and you may be aware or unaware of what the information is that is not given. Get it out of them
3. *Getting Accurate Information...* Have your partner give you what you know, or suspect, is inaccurate information. Persuade them to give you the correct information.
4. *Getting Quotes...* Have your partner say something quotable, then carefully take notes of what they just said. Use the provided 'handout' to utilize the quote in your interview notes.
5. *Being prepared...* Have your partner formulate a character. Devise questions necessary to obtain vital basic information?
6. *Staying On A Unified Theme...* Have your partner try to digress from the line of questioning. Keep them on topic.
7. *Recognize and Pursue the Unexpected...* Have your partner provide an interruption to the standard dialogue during the interview. Maintain control of the situation and continue the interview.

## Activity

In the first meeting the professor of the experimental group said she was familiar with Lenore Kelner's use of RP (1993). She liked the idea for the main-points script, but for this class she wished to try something different. She preferred to interview an actor who would assume particular roles. During class the regular professor did the actual instruction. The researcher served as an accompaniment to the instructor, providing various characters to the role-playing technique, similar to Ponder's "Teaching Artist" model (Ponder, 1996).

The researcher met with the professor a second time to further discuss what would actually occur during the RP part of instruction. It was decided that the focus would center on public and private interviewees. Based upon her personal experience as a reporter, she decided to present scenarios of both types of interviews. During the RP session her interview of the teaching artist focused on a politician with something to hide, and the other a Pulitzer Prize winning author. It was also decided that as a group, during the second session, the class would interview the teaching artist.

The control class met February 9, 2004, for a two and one half hour class period. The researcher attended this class as an observer. The professor used the same textbook (Rich, 2003), and covered much of the same material that the experimental professor used in her first class session. However, his class took a 20-minute break before starting their next session. The control class interviewed the students of the public speaking class on February 16, 2004. The students met for their interview during the first 30-minutes of their class.

The control group professor spent a considerable amount of time on the importance of body language, eye contact, and other physical and environmental topics. Topics like these could be presented actively in a RP class. Before taking their second twenty-minute break, he spoke on the value of role-playing and trying to put oneself in the place of the interviewee. The control professor presented the knowledge required for a successful interview. Before ending the class, he instructed the students to pair-up and interview one-another. After this activity they regrouped and evaluated the experience. They discussed what information was garnered about the person interviewed, and that interviewing is the best tool of a reporter.

The experimental class met February 12<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004 for one hour and 15 minutes each class. The experimental group interviewed their public speaking class during the second half of their session on February 17, 2004. During the first class session of the experimental group on the 12<sup>th</sup>, the professor lectured on the main points of interviewing. As stated, the textbook used was the same for both the experimental group and the control group. The “G.O.A.L.” method of interviewing was thoroughly discussed. This method was also emphasized in the control group classroom. The experimental group professor emphasized sensitivity during the interview, and focused on the distinction between public and private interviewees.

Thirty-minutes into the experimental class on the 12<sup>th</sup>, a 10-minute break was taken. After the break the professor and the TA role-played interviewing the politician and writer. After each interview the professor made comments and took questions from the class. The TA observed during the lecture section of the class. The TA did respond to some questions from the students, but the professor fielded the majority of them. This



question-and-answer session met McCarthy and Anderson's (2000) stipulation that information be put into context.

The experimental group met in its second RP session on February 17, 2004. Class began with acting preparation exercises, presented by the TA. They included physical stretching, mild vocal exercises, breath observation, feeling the body and relaxation. This took approximately ten to 12 minutes of class. Following a short introduction by the professor, the class began interviewing the TA. The interview lasted about ten minutes followed by a commentary from the professor. The TA and professor took questions from the students for about five minutes. The class then took ten minutes to walk to the interviewing area, where the public speaking class was meeting.

The researcher coordinated the interview activity for both the experimental and control groups. The students were randomly coupled after the researcher confirmed that consent forms had been collected and identified. This took some time, and the couples waited until given the 'go-ahead' signal from the researcher. A stopwatch was used and the interviews lasted ten minutes. The researcher then distributed evaluation forms to the interviewers and interviewees respectively (see Appendix C). The students returned the completed evaluation to the researcher before they left the class. The entire activity did not go beyond the regular class schedules. There was no noticeable difference between the experimental or the control groups' interview experiences.

The experimental and control groups had been assigned the personality profile article by their professors. Their resources were the notes taken during the interview. It did not appear that there were personal-relationships between the interviewers and interviewees. The articles were due to be collected one week from the interviewing event



for each of the groups. The public speaking interviewees were told to expect a copy of their personality profile.

The following week the papers were collected from the two research groups by the researcher. Copies of the personality profiles were then distributed to the corresponding interviewees, along with an evaluation form. The evaluation forms were to be turned in the next class period. The researcher, as assigned, collected the evaluation forms.

The outside evaluator received a copy of the personality profiles from both the experimental and control groups. She was also given an evaluation form for each. The researcher collected the completed evaluation forms from the evaluator. The data were analyzed and significance recorded by the researcher.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS**

The research data failed to reject the null hypothesis. The statistical difference between the two approaches to training reporters for interviewing, RP and traditional lecture, were not significant according to this research. The research does support the “higher than or equal too” hypothesis in the mean-scores of the experimental group. However, the t-tests were not statistically significant in any comparison but one. That one is the last question on the personality profile evaluated by the outside instructor. It provides the only statically significant comparison difference between the two groups. The personality profile of Table Four, question four “The quotes are of higher quality,” was significantly better for the experimental group than the control group.

According to the t-tests, none of the four evaluations of the areas investigated showed any statistical significant difference - except the one question mentioned above in the personality profile. As stated, the mean scores were equal to or better for the experimental group than the control group on all but one evaluation – Reporter Evaluation. This self-evaluation scored by the reporters, indicates less confidence for the experimental group than the control group. This may be due to a more critical self-evaluation as a result of observing and participating in RP, perhaps an indication of heightened self-awareness.

## Tables

Table 1, Means, Standard Deviations, and T-Tests for Differences in the Reporter Self-Evaluations were tested.

On a scale of 1-5, where 1 means strongly agree and 5 means strongly disagree, rate the following.

1. I felt very comfortable during the interview.

Exp. Mean	Con. Mean	Exp. SD	Con. SD	t	Sig. 2-tailed
3.32	3.22	1.86	1.72	-.131	.897

2. I feel the person I interviewed was very comfortable.

Exp. Mean	Con. Mean	Exp. SD	Con. SD	t	Sig. 2-tailed
3.21	3.11	1.54	1.40	-.165	.872

3. I feel I asked relevant and focused questions.

Exp. Mean	Con. Mean	Exp. SD	Con. SD	t	Sig. 2-tailed
3.42	3.33	1.43	1.87	-.125	.903

4. My ability to get the necessary information in the allotted time was good.

Exp. Mean	Con. Mean	Exp. SD	Con. SD	t	Sig. 2-tailed
3.21	3.56	5.61	6.55	.537	.599

5. Over-all reporter scale.

Exp. Mean	Con. Mean	Exp. SD	Con. SD	t	Sig. 2-tailed
13.16	13.22	5.61	6.55	.025	.980

Control (Con) N = 9, Experimental (Exp) N = 19.

*Table 2, Means, Standard Deviations, and T-Tests for differences in the Source Evaluations were tested.*

On a scale of 1-5, where 1 means strongly agree and 5 means strongly disagree, rate the following:

1. The interviewer put me at ease.

Exp. Mean	Con. Mean	Exp. SD	Con. SD	T	Sig. 2-tailed
1.33	1.89	1.03	1.54	.98	.347

2. The interviewer asked relevant questions.

Exp. Mean	Con. Mean	Exp. SD	Con. SD	T	Sig. 2-tailed
1.28	1.56	.46	1.33	.607	.599

3. The interviewer understood what was being discussed.

Exp. Mean	Con. Mean	Exp. SD	Con. SD	T	Sig. 2-tailed
1.11	1.67	.47	1.32	1.22	.253

4. The interviewer solicited relevant questions.

Exp. Mean	Con. Mean	Exp. SD	Con. SD	T	Sig. 2-tailed
1.83	2.44	.985	1.59	1.056	.312

5. The interviewer kept interview on point.

Exp. Mean	Con. Mean	Exp. SD	Con. SD	T	Sig. 2-tailed
1.33	1.56	.686	1.01	.593	.564

6. The interviewer got relevant unanticipated information.

Exp. Mean	Con. Mean	Exp. SD	Con. SD	T	Sig. 2-tailed
1.28	2.11	.461	1.69	1.451	.182

Control (Con) N = 9, Experimental (Exp) N = 19.



*Table 3, Means, Standard Deviations, and T-Tests for differences in the Story Evaluations were tested.*

On a scale of 1-5, where 1 means strongly agree and 5 means strongly disagree, rate the following:

1. The information in the article is accurate.

Exp. Mean	Con. Mean	Exp. SD	Con. SD	T	Sig. 2-tailed
2.5	2.5	1.5	1.0	.000	1.0

2. This profile reflects the most interesting aspect of my personality.

Exp. Mean	Con. Mean	Exp. SD	Con. SD	T	Sig. 2-tailed
2.25	2.75	1.53	1.26	.679	.525

Control (Con) N = 4, Experimental (Exp) N = 16.

*Table 4, Means, Standard Deviations, and T-Tests for differences in the Personality Profile Evaluations were tested.*

On a scale of 1-5, where 1 means strongly agree and 5 means strongly disagree, rate the following.

1. The article answers all of reader’s questions.

Exp. Mean	Con. Mean	Exp. SD	Con. SD	T	Sig. 2-tailed
2.78	3.33	.943	.707	1.715	.101

2. The facts are accurate.

Exp. Mean	Con. Mean	Exp. SD	Con. SD	T	Sig. 2-tailed
2.39	3.11	1.145	1.269	1.439	.171

3. The student obtained enough relevant information to explain the situation to readers based on the interview.

Exp. Mean	Con. Mean	Exp. SD	Con. SD	T	Sig. 2-tailed
2.94	3.56	1.05	.527	2.00	.056

4. The quotes are of high quality.

Exp. Mean	Con. Mean	Exp. SD	Con. SD	T	Sig. 2-tailed
2.44	4.44	1.54	1.130	3.82	.001

Control (Con) N = 9, Experimental (Exp) N = 18.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DICUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

#### **Discussion**

There is a revolution going on in education. Computers and the Internet are opening doors for educators never before witnessed. Classroom web pages, web links, and search engines allow students to do research at levels previously available only to college students. Secondary and grade school students utilize the Internet in ways unimaginable as recently as five years ago.

Interactive computer programs allow teachers to instruct on a very different, and somewhat impersonal, level as well. By impersonal involvement I mean, the teacher does not have to be present to teach the lesson. Certain aspects of interpersonal communication are obviously denied, such as all non-verbal communication and body language. This creates a need for deeper personal involvement by students, when the classroom activity is not on-line. By personal involvement I mean, the student should have the opportunity to involve all of his/her senses and emotions in the activity.

The use of structured role-playing can fill this gap created by instructional computer technology. Education requires more than an intellectual understanding about a situation; it needs personal and emotional involvement too. Applying theatrical based role-playing to the curriculum is needed today more than ever before. When RP is used as a tool in the classroom to develop self-awareness, along with computers and the Internet, then we may truly facilitate an opportunity to learn. Imagine the future.

## Conclusion

Role-playing is a valuable tool for education. However, this study does not statistically support that claim. The low number of participants in this study affected the statistical significance of the results. There are other reasons that negatively affected the outcome of this research too. Therefore, the research should not be taken as purely negative concerning the value of RP as a tool of instruction.

The instructor of the control group did not make it a requirement to participate in the research and write a personality profile article, as did the experimental group instructor. Instead, an offering of extra credit to students who participated in the interview and wrote the article was made. As can be observed by the N factor of the control group, the research activities involved fewer and fewer control group students. In the final personality profile activity, the control group only had four participants. Also, some of the public speaking students failed to turn in their 'source' evaluation form. In the future implementing a requirement into the syllabus of the Reporting Class, to interview and write the article, could prevent this error of participation.

The amount of time devoted to the variable RP, introduced in the experimental group, should also be clarified. The actual time devoted to RP activity was less than 30 minutes of the two and one half hour experimental class. Carol Ponder's model of TA or teaching artist, could serve as a good pattern for the amount of time dedicated to variable activity (Ponder, 1996).

Coordinating and organizing large numbers of participants is challenging to say the least. Organizing and handling of documents, such as evaluation sheets and consent



forms, requires more than one person. It is very disorienting to have so many people turn in documents and interact with only one researcher in such a brief time-period.

A research design flaw may have influenced the scoring of the evaluations. A natural inference is to associate the higher number with the better evaluation. However, the research evaluations in this study state that the lower number is a better score than the higher numbers. This was brought to the researcher's attention by an instructor who had had questions regarding numbering from participants. Therefore, confusion on which number indicated a lower or better score may have occurred during evaluations.

The above influences had a negative effect on the outcome of this research. Most importantly, the number of participants obviously influenced the significance of the evaluation's t-tests data. However, some promising results of the evaluations in this study are that the experimental groups' mean scores were consistently better than the control groups'. This indicates that further research is justified

History supports, and limited research establishes, that role-playing's influence on learning is extremely valuable. However, the benefits of role-playing as a tool of instruction are being overlooked in contemporary education. This author's personal experience as a substitute schoolteacher in four different school districts, for grades 1 – 12 over the past 22 years, indicates that after the 5<sup>th</sup> grade role-playing is seldom used as a teaching tool. Personal experience aside, numerous studies exist which support the use of role-playing as a teaching tool. It is fun for most students, and research supports this statement.

There's a little actor in all of us; evidenced by the naturalness of imitation and role-playing throughout our developing lives. Its status as a tool of instruction should not

be over-looked. Role-playing's effect on learning, retention, and performance should be further investigated. It is hoped that such investigations will facilitate the creation of a better opportunity to learn. It is to this end that the efforts of this thesis and research have aspired.

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## **APPENDIXES**



## Appendix A

Interviewing tips provided to the experimental and control reporting classes.

### TECHNIQUES OF INTERVIEWING

The skills needed for interviewing are akin to those needed by the professional psychologist or actor. In fact, some writers think that a good course in acting and mastery of stage presence can help an interviewer become confident and skilled – that is, a good manipulator. For that’s what interviewing is. You graciously manipulate someone into giving you what you want to know about her or him, often more information than the interviewee may want to give – and usually in a very short time.

You will develop techniques of your own and fine-tune them with practice. As a starter, here are 30 tips:

1. *Be prepared.* The more you know about a person ahead of time, the more wisely you can use your time and zero in on new or keen interest areas. Check newspaper file clippings, resumes (if available), magazine articles and *Who's Who*.
2. *Have the basic vital information.* Know about the person’s residence, family status, age, and so on. Don’t overlook basic background information. Make sure you have the name of the person spelled correctly. If it’s a difficult name, put it in your notes in block letter. Repeat the spelling slowly to the subject. Use some words to get the right letter. Some letter, b and v, and s, t and p, m and n, are easily confused orally. For “Trautman” for instance say T for Tom, R, A, U, T for Tom, M for mother, A, N for Nelly. Watch the double consonants: F N are tricky.

Is it Hoffmann, or Hofmann, or Hofman; Tanenbaum or Tannenbaum? Watch F and HP. Adolph or Adolf, Rudolph or Rudolf. Watch simple names. One student didn't check the spelling of what sounded like "Lee" in a telephone interview. It appeared in print as "Lee," but it should have been "Leigh."

3. *Get right to the point.* The subject's time is valuable, and so is yours. Get on with the questions. People basically appreciate a professional attitude.
4. *Avoid interviewing someone in a pressroom.* Meet in a quiet place where you can interview the subject alone. You don't want other reporters to interrupt or steal the good answers you get to your questions.
5. *Have some questions ready.* Some writers plan on having all the questions ready, including questions that might help the subject open up.
6. *Identify yourself and your purpose sully,* if possible indicating where your story will be published. Subjects tend to be more comfortable if they know what is going on.
7. *Avoid off-the-record conversation.* If a person says certain matters are off the record (and can't be used), remind that person to keep it on the record or not to say it. (There are variations to this, depending on how badly you need the information, but usually the subject will provide the information anyway.)
8. *Keep yourself out of the interview.* Some subjects are such charmers that they get you talking about yourself instead of the other way around.
9. *Pretend to be on the interviewee's side.* In fact, you are on nobody's side, but a subject who thinks you are with her or him will talk more readily. If you're seen as the enemy, you might as well go home. In other words, don't be negative or

rude when it isn't necessary. Sometimes you'll need to vary your attitude; but, in general, appear sympathetic, a good listener.

10. *Camouflage note taking for some interviews.* If the subject is uptight for some reason, pretend you are writing in full the answers to the innocuous questions and aren't paying attention to the answers to penetrating question. Of course, it just looks that way. Ask a tough question, then don't write anything; follow with a simple question, about the family or a hobby, and write down instead the answer to the tough question.

11. *Don't be intimidated.* So what if you haven't read the subject's latest book?

Maybe the subject hasn't read what you've written either. Ideally, you prepare as much as possible before the interview. Some magazine pieces allow you time for a crash course on the interviewee's books or films, but how do you completely prepare for somebody like the late Isaac Asimov, who wrote over 400 books?

Newspaper reporters with daily assignments find it virtually impossible to read an author's books before the interview. But they do take a quick look at the file clips.

12. *Do some fishing.* Get what you came for in the interview, but float some questions that might open up unexpected areas.

13. *Include "superlative" questions.* Such questions are useful in getting anecdotes, as we've noted. Ask what was the most dangerous moment, the happiest moment, the best time, the best "whatever" and the worst. These questions can reveal fascinating aspects of a subject's personality.

14. *Repeat questions, persist.* If you're dealing with an adventurer or an explorer, for instance, ask what was the most dangerous moment. But also ask about what was



the second and the third most dangerous moment. Sometimes the persistent third question yields an anecdote or facts that can give your story a real spark.

15. *Always ask "why?"* Somebody was scared, somebody made a decision or has a certain attitude – why”
16. *Collect documents.* IF the subject has a copy of a speech or a book, ask to take it with you.
17. *Think pictorially.* If you’re setting up a photo to go with your story, be imaginative. Don’t just put a book in the person’s hand or stand your interviewee against a wall map.
18. *Avoid fragmented quotes.* Take down enough so that your quote is a sentence. Fragmented quotes are suspect; it’s better to paraphrase than to use fragments.
19. *Get good quotes.* Help the subject to use metaphors or similes. Sa “That is like what?” and so on. Quotes are good only if they are interesting. When you write, don’t put quote marks around information. Quotes should be alive; they should stand up on their own.
20. *Get the full quote.* Sometimes you need to get down an important statement or declaration by the subject exactly as it is said. A governor chooses not to run again, for instance. Reader – and history – will want the words down just right. First of all, you have to recognize the statement’s importance to your story as soon as you hear it. You acquire that skill, of course, from experience and from being prepared. One way to get a verbatim quote (without using shorthand) is to take down the first letter of every word and write about the fifth word out in full.



Then go back after a few sentences or so and fill in the other words before you take more notes. You should be able to get the important quote in full.

21. *Understand the context.* Maybe what a person is saying isn't quite what he or she means. What did the person say just before the quote in question? What is there in the person's background that would shed light on the words? IF you report words, without understanding intent and meaning, you can mislead the readers.

22. *Keep a sense of place.* Readers relate to an interview subject if they feel they are there, if they can see the person. Describe the subject in a few words (avoid bromides such as "blonde, blue eyes" for women). Give readers some idea of where the interview takes place. If it's over the phone, say so. If it's in a conference room, mention an elbow on the table or the turtleneck sweater, but don't try to be Charles Dickens or Victor Hugo.

23. *Be sensible in restaurants.* Some people don't like to interview their subjects over a meal. But a restaurant provides a relaxing atmosphere. Your subject is captive for a definite period of time. The interview lunch also offers a chance to kill two birds with one stone – have lunch and get the interview at the same time (in reality, you're probably taking a longer lunch and may not be saving any time). Don't order too much food. You don't want to take up too much space and crowd your note taking or recording. If you're feeding your face you'll be talking with your mouth full; you might even get drowsy. Remember why you're there. Get to the interview right away; otherwise you might chat away much of the time. Save the niceties and idle banter for whatever time is left after the interview.

24. *Have a neat appearance.* Nobody respects a slob. One campus reporter at Michigan State University put on a dress and hose before she went to talk to people in the university business office for a sensitive article. She said they were used to talking to business types, and so she planned to look the part.
25. *Pursue the subject.* If you can't get a person all to yourself for an interview, then stake out the path to and from the auditorium or press room and get in your question. The placing of police and security types will usually give the route away. The assembled press herd will be waiting at the end of the line. Catch the subject as he or she materializes at some distant escalator in the hotel. You'll get in some exclusive questions. You could always get a long walk with Martin Luther King, Jr., this way or with a chief justice of the Supreme Court (Earl Warren) or even a vice president (Nelson Rockefeller); some quick shuffling of the feet and you get a word from Ted Kennedy or the pope.
26. *Get phone numbers.* In one interview, Martin Luther King alluded to the possibility of a new demonstration that could shut down one of the automakers in Detroit. The reporter couldn't pin him down but knew where he could be reached by phone. The desk at the newspaper had the reporter call King to pursue the question. Sometimes your profile subject can give you other numbers. One interviewee gave a reporter the unlisted phone number of Betty Shabazz, Malcolm X's widow. The reporter got an exclusive phone interview on the anniversary of the black leader's death.
27. *Keep cool.* If a subject becomes insulting or patronizing, just keep a level head. There is nothing to lose by keeping calm, everything to lose if you blow your top.

You lose the interview and sources, and word of your temper might get back to your editor.

28. *Verify facts.* If your subject quotes another person or a book, don't include it in your article without checking. Invariably, the quote is inaccurate. Nobody quotes accurately from memory, and facts conjured up in an interview can be wrong. Ask for sources for facts, quotes and statistics. If the interviewee is an absolute authority who normally the last word, then you can go with her or his facts, attributed, of course. But repeated quotes, or excerpts, bear checking. Quotations from Scripture or literature need checking if for no other reason than to have the punctuation right. "To be or not to be...." Maybe there's a comma in there?

29. *Ask an open-end exit question.* At the end of the interview, you might ask, "Is there anything I should ask you that I haven't asked?" Some reporters would bristle at this, but in some instances this final question has elicited one, an aide in the room might say, "Ask him about....," and you're off and running on something exciting.

30. *Send a clipping.* Most subjects are flattered and happy with the prospect of another story about them. They will ask you to send a clipping. Tell them you "plan" to send a clipping. But you have a lot to do, and maybe when it is published, your reminder note to send it will be lost Try to remember.



## Appendix B

### Consent to Participate in a Research Study Austin Peay State University

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form is intended to provide you with information about this study. You may ask the researchers listed below about this study or you may call the Office of Grants and Sponsored Research, Box 4517, Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN 37044, (931) 221-7881 with questions about the rights of research participants.

#### 1. TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY

**Role-playing: As an instructional tool.**

#### 2. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Calvin Hale Moore, graduate student, under the supervision of Ph.D. Ellen Kanervo at Austin Peay State University.

#### 3. THE PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

As an applicant for a Masters degree in Communication at APSU, I am testing to see which is the best way to teach journalistic interviewing skills. Is the traditional way of lecturing better than role-playing instruction for imparting this skill? Data may be published or presented.

#### 4. PROCEDURES FOR THIS RESEARCH

##### Objectives:

To instruct students in one class using role-playing, how to conduct an interview.

To instruct students in another class by use of traditional lecture methods, how to conduct an interview.

To test students' skills of interviewing.

To determine if any difference in competency of interviewing skills is a result of teaching methods.

The time it will take to participate in this study is no different than the time it would take to complete this course. Identifying information is never collected. Data will be published or presented in a way that does not reveal identity of participant.

#### 5. POTENTIAL RISKS OR BENEFITS TO YOU

The potential risks may be that students may feel uncomfortable role-playing in front of a class. The researcher is sensitive to this possibility and will use encouragement and praise to make students feel at ease during class sessions.

The potential benefit to reporting students is that they will improve their interviewing skills through classroom instruction and through an actual interviewing session. The



benefit to the students who will be interviewed is that they will gain an alternative perspective: that of being the source rather than the interviewer.

## 6. INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

If you have any question please contact me by phone (931) 645-3091 or e-mail me at [Kcalvinmoore@aol.com](mailto:Kcalvinmoore@aol.com), write: 1851, East Boy Scout Road, Clarksville, TN 37040; or contact my supervisor Dr. Ellen Kanervo, phone 221-6124 or e-mail [kanervoe@apsu.edu](mailto:kanervoe@apsu.edu)

I have read the above and understand what the study is about, why it is being done, and any benefits or risks involved.

**I understand that I do not have to take part in this study, and my refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of rights.**

I agree to participate in this study and understand that by agreeing to participate I have not given up any of my human rights.

**I understand that I have the right to withdraw my consent and stop participating at any time during the study and all data collected from me will be destroyed.**

If I choose to withdraw, that choice will be respected and I will not be penalized or coerced to continue.

I understand that I will receive a copy of this form.

---

Signature of Research Participant (or legally authorized representative) Date

---

Signature of Researcher

## **Appendix C**

### **Evaluation forms for four activities.**

#### **Reporter Evaluation**

On a scale of 1 – 5, where 1 means strongly agree and 5 means strongly disagree, rate your personal feelings of competency as an interviewer.

1. I felt very comfortable during the interview. (1 2 3 4 5)
2. I feel the person I interviewed was very comfortable. (1 2 3 4 5)
3. I feel I asked relevant and focused questions. (1 2 3 4 5 )
4. My ability to get the necessary information in the allotted time was very good.  
(1 2 3 4 5)

#### **Source Evaluation**

On a scale of 1 – 5, where 1 means strongly agree and 5 means strongly disagree, evaluate the competency of the person who interviewed you.

1. The interviewer put me at ease. ( 1 2 3 4 5 )
2. The interviewer asked relevant questions. ( 1 2 3 4 5 )
3. The interviewer understood what was being discussed. ( 1 2 3 4 5 )
4. The interviewer solicited relevant quotes. ( 1 2 3 4 5 )
5. The interviewer kept interview on point. ( 1 2 3 4 5 )
6. The interviewer got relevant unanticipated information. ( 1 2 3 4 5 )

## Story Evaluation

On a scale of 1 – 5, where 1 means strongly agree and 5 means strongly disagree, evaluate the accuracy of the article written by the person who interviewed you.

1. The information presented in the article is accurate. ( 1 2 3 4 5 )
2. This profile reflects the most interesting aspects of my personality. ( 1 2 3 4 5 )

## Profile Evaluation

On a scale of 1 – 5, where 1 means strongly agree and 5 means strongly disagree, evaluate the accuracy of the written article.

1. The article answers all of reader's questions. ( 1 2 3 4 5 )
2. The facts are accurate. ( 1 2 3 4 5 )
3. The student obtained enough relevant information to explain the situation to readers based on the interview. ( 1 2 3 4 5 )
4. The quotes are of high quality? ( 1 2 3 4 5 )

## VITA

Calvin Hale Moore was born in Clarksville, TN on July 22, 1951. He was raised in Woodlawn, TN and went to grade school and junior high school at Woodlawn School in Montgomery County. He graduated from Clarksville High School in 1969. He graduated from Maharishi International University, Fairfield, IA in 1979, and received a BA in philosophy with a minor in human development.

Calvin is a former member of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, as well as a former member of the Nashville Musician's Union. The combination of artist and philosopher has led to many interesting life experiences for Calvin, and the pursuit of knowledge never ends.