

Foreword from the Editor

Bill Timpson

In the late 1970s, I was actively developing a variety of workshops on teaching. I hoped that fresh ideas might attract new "students" from among college faculty. Some who enrolled were colleagues from my own campus at Colorado State University. One offering that quickly proved both popular and practical addressed the parallels between teaching and the stage. Having performed in a community dance troupe, local ballet productions, various choirs, musicals, and operas, I knew firsthand the associated benefits to my own teaching. Whenever teaching was discussed as art and science, I could always weigh in on both sides, wedding my experiences on stage with my graduate training in educational psychology.

What became an experimental offering on campus evolved first into an article and then a book for Prentice-Hall. Written with my colleague, Dave Tobin, and published in 1982, *Teaching as Performing* introduced teachers at all levels to related skills and practices from the stage. My first workshops later became a fixed component of a regular graduate course on communication and presentation skills. Over a four-week period each spring semester, teachers would plan, script, and stage one particular idea. With a performer's approach to voice and movement, costuming, sets, lighting and props, characterization, and direction, they would rehearse their pieces both in and out of class and get feedback from their classmates. On the last day of class, these teachers would then give their performances in front of their classmates, friends, and, at times, television cameras brought in to capture a visual record for future reference.

Over the years, I have found the results of these workshops intriguing, challenging, and even dramatic as these teachers have pushed themselves to produce something both creative and meaningful to their own students. Along the way, these same teachers have also pushed me and my own understanding of the performing processes that underlie dynamic and engaging instruction. In many ways, these performances have also served as benchmarks of exemplary instruction. Rehearsed and refined over time, these “staged” lessons have proven challenging and renewing, giving these teachers a viable way to rekindle their own excitement by finding fresh and creative ways to approach familiar material.

My colleague Suzanne Burgoyne and I now offer you this extension of that first book as well as our 1997 first edition of *Teaching and Performing*, with some new examples and updated references. Suzanne brings to this task a lifetime of work in academia and the theatre, including acting and directing at the university level; maintaining an active research interest in translating a Belgian playwright; and leading workshops on performance skills for her colleagues at Creighton University and the University of Missouri-Columbia. I myself bring a background in stage work to my ongoing scholarly work on postsecondary instruction. I’m also an active consumer of good film and theatre, dance, and music.

Case Studies

In what follows, I summarize interviews with four colleagues who bring a lot of the performer’s skill and élan to their teaching. I think you’ll find their comments intriguing and useful as a lead-in to this book.

Janice Moore

Dr. Janice Moore is a professor of Biology who has an enviable publication record and a real gift for teaching. She’s a senior scholar who actually enjoys teaching large introductory classes. She is successful with them, in part, because of her extensive performance background. I’ve known Janice for several years and I’ve watched her lecture. Her expertise, skill, energy, and joy in teaching are quickly evident. Even the smallest of molusks looms larger when she lectures: its evolution miraculous, its mysteries foundational to understanding our universe. Knowing that she had an extensive background as a performer intrigued me. So I wanted to explore her insights into the teaching/performing connection.

From an early age Janice regularly sang solos in church services. In high school she received awards for public speaking. At Rice University she parlayed her singing talents into a rock band, performing every day one summer and intermittently thereafter. In college she acted in some melodramas, and wrote and directed several one-act plays for an intercollegiate competition, noting with some pride her first and second place awards.

As we talked, Janice offered a number of observations and insights about the connection between teaching and the stage:

William M. Timpson: What did you bring over to teaching from performance?

Janice Moore: All of it! I can usually get students’ attention and keep it. Students can see me as enthusiastic, interesting. On the negative side, they do say they want more AV stuff, but I know that I always saw slides and films as distracting when I was a student. They also want me to be more organized. I don’t hand out lecture notes. I do believe that students think more if they have to pay attention.

WMT: What do you do with stage awareness?

JM: With a lower-division class of two hundred, for example, I don’t need to update my notes at the same rate as I have to for upper-division classes, so I can think about teaching more. At the beginning, I’ll joke, talk about the weekend, show some empathy, get their attention. If I see students are drifting off, I’ll stop and ask what’s going on. I’ll try something different. On stage you can’t depart from your script or song, but I can change my physical relationship with the audience. In class I can do the same thing. I’ll move out toward my students. Out front there are fewer obstructions. I can project more energy.

WMT: What about preparation?

JM: There is no better preparation for teaching than performing because the challenges are the same — getting people’s attention and holding it. (I note for you, the reader, Lowman’s [1995] conclusion that the two most important qualities for university teachers to achieve in class are intellectual excitement and rapport with students.)

WMT: Energy?

JM: As a teacher I imagine myself as a student. I know that I felt timid. I think of myself as a student for two minutes or so before class —

ideally I should do it for five minutes. In this way I remind myself what it's like to be in my own class, to whom it is that I'm talking. Whereas a performance audience will pull for you. They want a good show. They're your friends. In that sense performance is more satisfying; unfortunately, not all students want to be in class. Students often assume an antagonistic relationship with their teachers. Histories and values clash. As students, we typically were the interested ones. It's important for a performer to get in tune with an audience, for a teacher to be in tune with students, but it's more difficult to relate to students. As a teacher, you have to welcome all student questions; there are more individual interactions. That's different for a performer, except for the rare instance with a drunk.

WMT: Costuming?

JM: Absolutely the same for performing and teaching. For example, I always wear a dress when I teach. It's always "Dr. Moore" with undergrads. I'm not just another student. It's part of the act. Students may like teachers who dress and act like them, but I think the subtle barrier is important. In my classes, my authority equals my expertise and contributes to their motivation to learn. Primates learn better from superiors, not subordinates or equals. Admittedly, there may be gender differences here. Women professors have less perceived authority. Consequently, they must dress the part more. I also believe that it is disrespectful of audiences to dress sloppily. Male teachers should wear a sport coat and tie, or a vest. Something "non-student."

WMT: What about preparation time?

JM: Here, there is a big difference. You cannot perfect a lesson. You give it once a year. It's more like writing for a newspaper with its daily deadlines than trying to perfect a novel.

WMT: Props?

JM: I do need to use more. As a student, however, I didn't like to sit in the dark and try to take notes. That's why I don't like slides. I use overheads, but in a lit room. Yet I know that some students miss the lecture and could use something up on a screen. If the overheads are detailed, however, students are just copying; they're not thinking. I could just as easily provide a handout. Sometimes I do provide little toys as prizes — gimmicks for winning a quiz, for example. I'll give out a wind-up

crab or something else funny and weird. I suppose I could do more to make things more interesting with multimedia. Again, this is much like newspaper deadlines. I have produced multimedia shows — for conference presentations, for example — but that can require a great deal of prep time.

WMT: In the theatre, we talk about "raising the stakes," making it important for an audience to care. What do you do in class?

JM: I'll use the building block concept. For example, "Pay attention to this. You'll see it again." Or, "This will be on the exam," although I rarely use that one.

WMT: What do you do for a hook, that theatrical device used to engage the audience early on in a production?

JM: I may say something like, "This is important or neat because ..." to get their attention. I use a review the same way, although sometimes I forget.

WMT: Any use of warm-up before teaching?

JM: On my good days — when I'm energetic, upbeat, feeling good — I may tease students or joke with them. I'll pay attention to them, talk to some. On bad days — when I'm down or tired — I'll just start the lecture. Teaching takes a different kind of energy. As a performer, you can fake it. You can certainly fake some things as a teacher, but it's hard to do the personal interactions when you're cranky. On bad days you can just do your job and teach, whereas as a performer you get more positive feedback. An audience can pull you up and out. Students don't do that as much. They're like a nameless crowd. Yet some teacher "performers" can get sucked or hooked into pleasing students, and this, then, becomes a goal. For me the goal always has to be teaching; the performance is simply a way to do it.

WMT: Do you think there are any gender differences relevant to the teaching/performing connection?

JM: As I said, women professors are not seen as authority figures, hence teaching is more difficult for them.

WMT: Any other insights into the impact of performance on teaching?

JM: I'm in demand as a speaker. I play with my audiences. Whenever I talk about my cockroaches, audiences love it. I give very playful research

seminars. My attitude is that my audiences should have a good time. I know that I'm having a good time and that's a key. It gives me energy, makes me enthusiastic. If I'm not having a good time, no one else will.

Carol Mitchell

Dr. Carol Mitchell is a friend and colleague in the English Department at Colorado State University. A folklorist by training, she has toured the Middle East and has created a new course on goddesses in literature. She is an intriguing character study for this book because, unlike Janice Moore, she has not performed. But she thoroughly enjoys her teaching and brings a lot of the performer's skill and attitude into class — i.e., costinguming, energy, self-awareness, and “stage presence” (awareness of what's happening beyond the “script” or lecture content). In fact, she really isn't that interested in traditional performance; she likes the spontaneity of creating something new in class over the demands of memorizing lines for the stage.

Carol is energetic, intense but friendly, and fun to be with. She is alive with ideas, someone who combines a genuine love of teaching with an active intellectual interest in folklore, Asian literature, mythology, and goddess studies. As a high school English teacher, she learned how to keep the interest of her students or suffer the consequences (if students found her boring, they would quickly create their own diversions). Her frequently tinted hair, sometimes a deep blue and at other times with a bit more purple, sets her apart as she walks across campus.

William M. Timpson: Do you think about your costumes?

Carol Mitchell: I do make great use of costuming in class. In my Asian Lit and Folklore classes, I'll wear different examples of clothing I've collected over the years. It's not uniformly true, but some students do respond positively, mostly the females. It adds some interest. For others, mostly the males — and this tends to be a classic gender difference — what I wear is of only passing interest. More generally, though, what I wear does affect my teaching. They are watching me. I like clothes; I like jewelry. Clothes are an art form. When I think I look good, I have more confidence and perform better. Earlier in my career, when I was teaching high school, I felt I had to dress up more because I was so close in age to the students, and short, and I looked young. I still believe that my high heels made a difference, especially among the

males. At the university, I know now that no one will confuse me with being a student, but I still wear more formal clothes — “different” slacks from what the students will wear, for example. I am in charge; my class is not a democracy.

WMT: Talk about being center stage.

CM: I enjoy being the center of attention when I'm teaching, so I have to be careful to give students enough chance to talk to each other. Yet they have limited knowledge, and I am the expert here; I do know more. Being center stage fuels my enthusiasm, which, in turn, helps me energize students about the material. But I don't teach in a vacuum; student feedback is critical. The way the class clicks makes a difference. Teaching is very dynamic; so is all performance. My Asian Lit and Goddess classes are giving a lot back to me, and I tell my students how important that is for me, how much I appreciate it. One class, my worst ever, just would not respond, no matter what I did. It was so strange because in previous years I had never had this kind of problem. I liked the material. So I finally gave up on them as a group and concentrated on teaching to those two or three who were responding. That made all the difference.

WMT: What do you do about preparation before class, and about reflections after?

CM: At least a half-hour before class, I know I'm getting up for it. I know that's what I do. I'm reviewing my notes, but not just to refresh my memory. I'm also getting in the right mood. And I do get “high” from teaching, especially after good classes. I'm “up.” But it is a “downer” when I feel class has gone poorly.

I'm not conscious of reflecting on my teaching right after class; often students are coming up after class. I'm more likely to think about it at home, sometimes when I'm getting ready for bed. For example, recently I had this interaction with a particular student in class about religion. I was claiming that Christianity, with its linear conceptualization of time, began with creation and then moved through the cataclysmic second coming and a transformation of the earth into heaven, while other religions saw life and the earth in a more cyclical fashion with a continuous repetition of life, death, and reincarnation. Anyway, she didn't agree, and it seemed to me that we were just talk-

ing past each other. It was later that night that I got this insight into why we were missing, so I started off the next class with that same issue, but it wasn't planned.

Whether I think about teaching also depends on the people around me. If I know that someone else enjoys talking about teaching, I'll often talk about it. It's fun to chat about. In fact, we have a group that gets together weekly for dinner, and we often talk about our teaching.

WMT: Do you think about sets or props?

CM: I prefer to have classes with movable desks and chairs. It's really frustrating to be stuck in a classroom with everything bolted. It's hard to do any group work. I also tend to avoid using a podium; I like to use the front table of class. If I have a small class, I'll often pass around pictures. For some classes, I now do more with slides. I can point out the details, although slides can be distracting. Some students have a hard time looking at slides and listening to me at the same time. I know that I play with my glasses, and that's been a change. And sometimes I have a book I refer to.

WMT: Are you conscious of your movements in class?

CM: I move around, in part, to give students something to watch, but I also want to have them keep their focus on me. We are a culture that focuses on action, not being. Accordingly, staying rooted behind a podium is a problem. I am conscious of my movements. Sometimes, if I notice some students who are chatting or seem inattentive, I'll walk toward them, and that will usually correct the problem. Having taught high school, I have no problem confronting discipline. Periodically, I will note the effect of a certain gesture, but rarely is there any time during class to stop and reflect but for just the briefest of moments. There's just too much going on. I could never plan to repeat it; I guess it just gets stored somewhere in my unconscious and plays out in the future.

WMT: Are you conscious of the role you play when you teach?

CM: I'm really not a different character in class. It's all one, integrated, the teacher and me, although I'm a bit more formal when I teach. However, there was this one time — this was funny — when the teacher in me took over outside of class. I was in a bar with a friend and someone I didn't know sat down next to me. Soon we were in a conversation,

and before I knew it I was giving a lecture until I stopped myself and we both laughed. You see, the teacher is me.

WMT: What do you do with humor in class? with emotions?

CM: I do enjoy myself in class and humor is part of it. I often tease my students and joke with them. I tell jokes about myself, mostly off the cuff. I like to hear laughter in my classes. But I also can exhibit the full range of emotions. My students have also seen me angry, sad, serious. I want to respond as a whole person, and I want them to do the same, to react holistically, integrating mind and body, not divorcing their emotions. At the university, we focus too much on the intellect alone, on reason. Nothing is that simple or unconnected.

WMT: It's fun to watch you teach. You have such enthusiasm.

CM: I like teaching. It's especially fun again now that I've had my sabbatical. I had a great break — reading, travel. I needed that space from teaching. The public and the legislature really don't realize how draining teaching can be. Schoolteachers need their summers off to recover, to get their emotional energy back. The U.S. just does not want to recognize the emotional needs of people.

Greg Dickinson

Tall and gangly, Greg Dickinson has a voice that booms. His easy style connects with students and his enthusiasm is infectious. Greg is enthralled with the power of speech to shape ideas and history. As a child, he was always taken by the influence his minister father could command from the pulpit — a real power to explain, elucidate, and persuade. Active from an early age in church, Greg found that he himself was often taking the lead in discussions in Sunday school; he liked to be "up front." In public school, he got even more opportunities to be "up front" through Speech and Drama. He admits that he struggled with learning lines for high school productions. Somehow, though, he avoided the often debilitating adolescent curse of self-consciousness.

William M. Timpson: So how do you connect your experiences on stage with what you do in class?

Greg Dickinson: I'm actually kind of stiff on stage. I'm more natural in a dialogue sort of setting ... when I'm acting with the audience as compared with acting to other actors and pretending that the audience

isn't there. I never knew how to negotiate that (fourth wall between the actors and the audience).

WMT: So sticking to a script was too constricting?

GD: Yeah, although I'm fine with a speech I write myself, when I can connect directly with the audience. I've also done a kind of "Reader's theatre" through the church and that was fun. My dad was well known in the region through church activities, and it was fun for me to have people tell me how much I sounded like him. I actually had fantasies about having a job and traveling the country giving speeches. Why I didn't become a politician. I don't know.

WMT: So what is it about connecting with an audience that is so compelling for you?

GD: I like the laughter, the body language, leaning forward. But I really like that moment of enlightenment, that "aha!" Those are the moments I'm looking for. As a rhetorician, I look for the three-way connection between speaker, topic, and audience. But unlike actors, I get to play myself.

WMT: One enduring area of resistance with respect to linking teaching with performance is the fear that instructors have about not being genuine — that they are experts and not entertainers.

GD: From my discipline, I would agree that it's not about entertainment *per se*; it's about this connection. You demonstrate your commitment to a topic, that you're passionate about it and you want your audience to be passionate about it as well. So it's about making these human connections so that we engage the material more thoroughly.

WMT: Let's extend this discussion. As a public speaker, could you represent either side of an argument, like a hired gun?

GD: Not me, but that's a question in rhetorical theory. I think I could make good arguments on both sides of an argument. I could even fake an argument on one side. But one of the things that works for me in the classroom is that I am genuinely excited about the material. If there's one comment I get from students it's that "this professor is so excited about his material."

WMT: Now I could see you getting excited about a great speech, even though you disagreed with the content.

GD: There are speakers with whom I agree and those with whom I don't. But what I'm passionate about is their respective abilities to negotiate the issues — issues of truth and power and language.

WMT: Such as educating an audience to be able to listen to a Hitler or any other charismatic speaker, and not get caught up in the energy of it all but be able to think through the message?

GD: Absolutely — those critical listening skills with which you try to see what's going on.

WMT: Talk about other issues that performers pay attention to. Set, for example. Does the room matter?

GD: The room matters a lot in the way it either aids or detracts from my ability to connect with an audience. In a large lecture setting, I need space in which to move, to get myself into fairly close proximity to all the students fairly quickly, whether that's up the sides or up the middle or across the front. That's important to me, to be able to move toward students who may not be paying close attention. Or, when there's a group that is really involved, I might move away from them so that there's this energy exchange across the room, and hopefully some of that energy infects the other folks. I'm very conscious of not moving toward those who are engaged because that narrows that energy band.

WMT: And that's a real license you have that a performer in a scripted play lacks.

GD: You want to be able to move in a way that responds to how a particular audience is acting on a particular day. That's very rhetorical, constantly adjusting what you need to say and do. It's what the classical rhetoricians called *kaireis*, which literally means time or timing, trying to bring the "right" speech to the "right" audience at the "right" time and in the "right" way. The best speakers bring a wide knowledge of all these factors.

WMT: Are you aware of props? Do you make use of them?

GD: Very little. I'm a little bit of a "technophobe," afraid that the technology just won't work very well. But more importantly, I'm so committed to making a connection with who I am and who they are and often the props get in the way. We start paying more attention to the prop, like an overhead that shifts the audience focus to copying. I do think about doing more with a plan for the class at the very beginning, but even

that can get in the way of a connection in the here and now. I need to find a way to negotiate that. So I'll use the board to note a concept that has emerged in our discussion, something they said or I said, but I don't necessarily know ahead of time what that key concept will be or what relationships will be identified. I end up with lots of arrows on the board.

WMT: What about costuming?

GD: I'm very conscious of the clothes I wear, but I never do the "scene" thing where, because it's Greek day, we do the togas. I don't have any problem with that, but it would take me time to find the toga and I would be embarrassed to wear it. In that sense I'm not an actor. I don't have much interest in taking on another character. I'm big. I can be articulate. I move around a lot. I want less formal clothing that says I'm approachable. I'm also gentle. I can also listen. I tell new teachers that I have an excess of authority and so I consciously dress more casually. I tell my students to call me Greg. I have a lot of power, and I can give away power and still have a lot. If these new teachers walk into their classrooms with a deficit of authority, then they may want to use clothing in a different way. If they are female, small, and non-white, then "Doctor" and the suit may be important to gaining authority.

WMT: So your talents and interests in all this developed early. It seems to come easily for you. And you enjoy it. However, it might be easy to fake it, to wing it, to come to class less than fully prepared. Is that a danger you have to watch?

GD: I think I'm reasonably good at all this, but I'm very conscious of developing these skills. It's not as if they are just there. I think a lot about it. Over the years, I've moved away from certain kinds of behaviors and added more. Like an actor who has a real proclivity for performing but must work at it and practice. To be a skilled rhetorician takes a lot of thought and practice. For me there is the danger of saying that I've prepped this material before and I don't have to prepare, but it never goes as well. I need to remake my commitment to the material every semester. What I carry into the room is a very deep commitment to that material, and students pick up on that excitement. If I don't reinvigorate myself, then it becomes more of an act. I, then, find myself being less articulate, not asking as good questions. So even though I've read this material many times, I have to read it again or, at least, scan

it, look over my margin notes. I never use lecture notes or a script, but I do spend time thinking about the key issues, what I'm excited about.

WMT: But why wouldn't you use a script or prepared notes?

GD: Because, especially in my large class, I want to use an inductive method. I want the insights to come through the conversation with students. And I'm clearly taking the lead in that conversation, but they are also involved. If I have any script, it's about the questions I want to ask. We'll start with key passages from the text. We'll reread it. I'll ask what it means, we'll start to talk, and then I'll expand on what they say. In some sense, the script is provided by the reading itself. At times, this feels like it comes from my religious background: "The verse for today is..." Let's turn today to page 561 and unpack it. That sort of hermetic method.

WMT: Do you enjoy the spotlight, being center stage? And how do you balance that with eliciting what students think?

GD: This is the joy of the spotlight: being up front and pulling from students ideas they didn't know they had. It's not the spotlight of "Let me tell you the truth." It's the spotlight of, "Watch us," but under my baton, just like a conductor, because I have thought through this. They articulate their positions as best they can and then I rearticulate those positions in ways that are more meaningful, more coherent, more connected to our readings. I help my students feel smarter. And they feel part of that process. For me, that's what's really exciting.

WMT: Rehearsal and direction are so central to any staged production. You mentioned the reference to an orchestra or a band conductor. How do you get feedback?

GD: That's why I invite my colleagues from the department in to observe my classes on a regular basis, almost every semester. Sometimes I'll have very specific things I want them to think about — for example, gender issues in the classroom or that nature of questioning. I urge my TAs to do this but they never do. I also take time out three or four times a semester to ask my classes, "How's it going folks? Give me some feedback." I very seldom get much but I sometimes do. I'm always looking for it. I don't rehearse much, except for the final day of class when I write a speech that celebrates what we've done for the semester, four to five minutes of praise and blame: what we've strug-

gled with, our successes, and why it's been important. It's a way of summarizing the class, both intellectually and in terms of what it's meant for our sense of community. I redefine rhetoric, building it from the work we've done together. So I write this speech and rehearse it quite a bit.

WMT: So given your field and the work that goes into perfecting your craft, what do you say to colleagues in other disciplines who stick strictly to prepared notes, paying little attention to delivery or any connection with students?

GD: I move around a lot in class and try to generate some excitement about the material, but there are lots of other ways to operate. At core, I would urge them to demonstrate their commitment to the topic and to students as human beings. I knew a professor who sat during her classes — she had to — but cared so much about the material and so much about her students. Admittedly, her classes were small. But there's that triangle we spoke about earlier, the connection between student, material, and instructor. For her, it was a quiet intensity that also worked. I couldn't teach that way. And that may not work in a larger class. I think that what happens with boring instructors is that they refuse to take the risk to show their commitment to the material and to the students. And that's a risk I'm willing to take. I think all good teachers risk themselves. We go in and say, "I care about this, and if you laugh at me, that's going to hurt."

WMT: And from your discipline, can the quiet introvert who much prefers the library learn to play to the big hall?

GD: Absolutely! But that's a really important question in rhetorical studies. I think you can always get better. It may be that some instructors will never be the most compelling, but they can certainly get to the place where they're not boring. It's a matter of bringing more of themselves into their teaching and at the same time asking where the students are on this material. Our own excitement is not enough. What we bring has to be understandable to the students. Anybody who is willing to step outside their own shell can do that.

Eric Aoki

A professor of Speech Communication, Dr. Eric Aoki focuses more on identity issues and cross-cultural communication. Energetic and

friendly, Eric is ever alert to student responses, reinforcing their ideas, and connecting them to course readings. His classes ask students to look deeply at their own issues, their sense of self in the context of diversity. Communication becomes that much more critical as the students learn how to navigate a bigger and more complex world.

Eric Aoki: If you look on top of my bookshelves you'll see some trophies. Those were for speech contests in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, where I first got to speak about issues that intersected the personal and the public spheres — from topics like "who's your hero and why?" to war. There's an energy required to present your ideas, to do the research and pull materials together. I grew up in a farming area and talked to a lot of farmers who were passionate about issues. And that was my entry into an arena where you get up and build a voice for yourself, and you begin to understand how much strength and power and connection a voice can have with people.

William M. Timpson: So how do you balance this passion you bring for particular issues with a longstanding academic value for neutrality and objectivity?

EA: I can appreciate the attempt for objectivity we make about knowledge in our classrooms. That was the dominant paradigm for my own educational career. But for my graduate studies on the ethnography of communication — the stories that people tell — I began to get into an analysis of subjectivity and objectivity. So in my classes, I'll typically ask students to question, to be critical of the information I give them. I want my students to see that every course on this campus has a political agenda, and that we should talk about degrees of objectivity and subjectivity. I want to let students in my classes speak their "positionality," as I describe it, their experiences.

WMT: So there's a lot of emphasis on self-disclosure?

EA: Yes. I want to expose my students to the multiplicity of identities we all represent. My students see me in suits. They see me in jeans. They see me in different cultural garb that I pick up as I travel the world. I try to show them that I am not a stagnant identity, that they cannot confine me to just one paradigm. I have many and different identities.

WMT: Have you ever come into class as a character to make a speech?

EA: Sure, there is a character there, but it's different from the theatrical version of "in character." It's tied to some aspect of my own identity.

WMT: So is authenticity important to you?

EA: I do think that there is some aspect of performance inherent in what I do, but it's not something I don't know how to play out. Coming "in character" would feel like a mocking of the issues so central to my courses — the politic of subjectivity and self-disclosure, of identity construction and multiplicity. I do not censor the multiplicity that I allow myself to play out, the freedom to be many things in class and perform many pieces of my identity. So students see a performance of many subjective identities on my part.

WMT: Observing you the other day, I noticed how alert you were to students who wanted to participate, how willing you were to share the stage. Is that the stage awareness actors describe?

EA: When I was in graduate school in Seattle, I used to go to an interactive theatre where those on stage often dissolved the stage and people in the audience became a part of that stage. That's closer to what my class is: it's an interactive stage, and every performance might be slightly different depending on who decides to participate. Thinking about my class this way, I also want to mention that my stage also includes my home, because I invite my students over for dinner once a semester in groups of four to five. I also invite students out on the town every so often. Whoever wants to join me is invited. They get to see me as more than just a presenter in class. I always wanted to bring in a more intimate feel, to break the walls of the classroom down a little bit, something you can get at a small liberal arts college. And I think that that helps them want to participate in class.

WMT: In the class I observed, you had students in a circle. In the theatre, some halls allow for a performance "in the round."

EA: The circle is very purposeful for me. I let students know from day one about my politics, my methodologies, my biases. They are aware of my rationale and motives. They know that, when I teach cultural content, the circle makes us more accountable because we're looking at each other. When we're sitting in that circle, it's harder to say something about another identity when you have to look other people in the eye. It's about taking responsibility for our discourse in the class. In

straight rows, looking at each other's backs, it's easier to make a comment without having to assume that face-to-face responsibility.

WMT: You must be talking about a certain kind of engagement because, as instructors, we can certainly get a high level of engagement with audiences sitting in straight rows.

EA: Sure. My seniors will joke with me, "Hey, Eric, I got four or so pages of lecture notes this semester," because I give lots of mini- notes. Instead of lectures, my TA and I produce frequent summaries of key concepts as handouts, maybe fifteen across the semester, because I want the students fully engaged in the classroom conversation. I tell them they can take notes but, most of all, I want them to pay attention. That's the big thing for me.

WMT: In some ways it's a more demanding climate for students in that they have to make eye contact with their classmates all the time. It's harder to retreat, to be private. Do you help students with the skills they need to function effectively in your kind of class?

EA: Yeah. We break down into smaller groups and that changes the degree of engagement as well. And we talk about communication because that's what we do in this department. I let them know that, for example, talking in a public setting is very different from talking one-on-one. Comfort and engagement can really vary.

WMT: Talk about timing and what you notice when you teach.

EA: It takes me about a half-hour to walk to campus, so I'll use that time to think about key issues for an upcoming class. And because I focus on issues, time is really a non-issue. This semester we've gone overtime because we've been deep into some issue and didn't even realize that class time was up.

WMT: What about the subtleties of time — slowing down for an important point that requires more reflection, or speeding up when things get exciting?

EA: I give them certain indicators at the beginning of class so that they can tell me if they need me to repeat something or slow down. I did a survey at the very beginning of one class and found out what kind of learners they were. A lot of students are "hearing" learners, and that sort of prompts me about what I can and can't do in class. In other

classes I get more “visual” learners and, guess what, I’m at the board more. Those are the kinds of assessments I look for in terms of speech communication—an audience analysis—and that’s what then prompts me to do what I do.

WMT: Talk about props.

EA: For me, it’s all those things that can infuse a welcoming, inclusive, liberal arts kind of climate in my class. I’ll bring in cookies, or we’ll go to the Student Center and I’ll buy them coffee or hot chocolate. The basic “Fs” of culture are *food*, *folklore*, and *festivities* — so food can be a wonderful “prop” for building a sense of community in class. When I share some British biscuits, that also says something cross-culturally.

WMT: Feedback and coaching; you’ve gotten your share through speech competitions.

EA: I’ve had such wonderful role models, such helpful mentoring and encouragement as I’ve worked to find my voice and identity as a teacher, a scholar, and an individual. At the University of Washington we had television cameras in our classrooms, and I’d often have them on and recording. My mentor would then spend many hours with me going over these tapes, looking at my body posture, my conversations, my use of material, the boards.

WMT: That’s part of the tradition of speech communication — that you, as the speaker, are part of the speech.

EA: For example, this mentor would note how often I had my hands in my pockets in class, and comment on the sense of power I was projecting, the distance from my students. Now I do the same thing with my own graduate students. I ask them to videotape one or two classes, and then we sit down and review them together. I’ve had lots of visitors this semester, and I like encouraging that because I get so much value from the feedback. I like a system in which we’re not afraid to do what we do no matter who shows up. I know that teaching well is tough, that it requires different energies and skills. I’m always interested in keeping it fresh, in learning something new.

WMT: Let’s talk about what performers refer to as “set.” One of your classes meets in a windowless, cinderblock, poster-less, off-white-colored room. What effect does that have on you and your students?

EA: My students notice it right away. They ask why we have to be in such dark places. That’s when breaking down the teacher-student barriers becomes so important. So we talk about it, and that’s why we end up holding some classes in the Student Center or out back in that amphitheatre-like space. That’s why I like to have students over to my house.

WMT: So what would an ideal classroom space be for you?

EA: I like the new media some classes have — the projection systems, for example. I love showing movies on big screens; it has such a different effect. But I also like movable chairs because we do so many small-group activities. And good lighting makes a difference. I like windows and natural light. I’d also like different colors in the room, and posters. I’ve asked for these kinds of things but it just hasn’t happened. So my hopes for something have been squelched. As another example, we made good use of bulletin boards in one class for displaying student work or pointing out study abroad opportunities that were being advertised. It’s sad, though, that, in general, our classrooms are so sterile. Yet elementary classrooms are alive with color and postings.

WMT: I’m afraid it’s partially about becoming adults — some kind of industrial mentality, keeping our heads down and focused on our work. As students move up through the grade levels and on into college, we seem to lose sight of some of the “softer” but no less important aspects of learning — what supports morale or stimulates creativity.

EA: I tell my students that many great speeches have taken place outside formal halls — in public squares, on soapboxes. In my office, I’ve almost overcorrected, plastering an entire wall with images and messages from magazines. If a student comes in searching for a topic I say, “I look at this wall for a few minutes and then let’s talk.”

Final Thoughts

Despite testimonials from gifted teachers like Moore, Mitchell, Dickinson, and Aoki, this mixing of performance and teaching may irritate some in higher education. Especially on those campuses where research is pre-eminent, interest in teaching may have limited career benefits. Those who receive awards for their teaching may even be viewed somewhat suspiciously as winners of “popularity contests.” Accordingly, a focus on the

performance skills of teachers might seem doubly dangerous, even heretical, especially for younger faculty on the tortuous tenure track.

Be that as it may, we still argue that every instructor can find something of value in this book. Whether you want to improve your own delivery or do more to inspire students, whether you want to engage students in critical and creative thinking or deepen their learning, we think you'll gain much from studying the place of performance skills and practice in teaching. Moreover, Suzanne and I both work at research universities, and we've found many ways to take our interests here and parlay them into articles, conference presentations, research, and now this book!

Ultimately, each of us has to be able to look in the mirror and feel good about our work as instructors. Can we improve? Do our students deserve better? We're convinced that performing skills can go far to help you sharpen your delivery, energize your teaching, and motivate and challenge your students. Break a leg!

Chapter 1: Planning and Performance

Higher education requires instructors to be skillful in both planning and performance, in preparation of organized class notes as well as in delivery of engaging instruction. The contrasts between these two areas are striking. While planning requires study and quiet reflection, teaching is active and often interactive, even pressured. While planning builds upon years of schooling and experience, teaching focuses on the present, the “here and now,” and typically accommodates a wide range of factors, from the expected to the unpredictable.

For example, student questions and comments can run the gamut from the predictable—“Will this be on the exam?”—to the personal—“What do you think?”—to the blunt—“Do we have to come to class?” In many classrooms, chairs are bolted to the floor, but in some you may find them scattered all over the room. Occasionally, you may have to scramble when equipment malfunctions.

Think for a moment about the contrasts between planning and performance. Most instructors work quite independently on their plans for class, often at their offices, but also at home or in the library. Yet teaching itself is highly interdependent, a function of the relationships you have with your students and the learning experiences you can design and facilitate. While planning tends to be private, teaching is intensely public and, at times, in front of critical audiences of “paying customers.” While you may have a great deal of flexibility about your planning—when, where and how—you must meet your classes at set times. *The show must go on.* Planning enables you to conceptualize and manage your classes effectively, especially in large classes where you may supervise teaching assistants or coordinate guest lecturers and the grading of exams. Performing

allows you to improvise, to adapt to what's happening in the class, to seize the "teachable moment."

In sum, successful teaching requires skill in both planning and performance. You must come prepared as the expert yet ready to think on your feet. Actors prepare by analyzing their characters, doing research, learning their lines and movement; this intense preparation frees them to live "in the moment," making discoveries through focusing on their partners, reacting spontaneously to what other actors do. The excitement of live performance arises from the interaction between human beings onstage. In her discussion of teaching as a performing art, Felman (2001, 158) emphasizes the relationship between planning and performing for teachers:

The pedagogy of improvisation is not a breeze, something to substitute when you haven't had the time to prepare properly. On the contrary, good, effective improv only follows good, effective preparation....without an assiduous command of the material and an ability to synthesize and create on the spot, the improvisation itself becomes merely an irreverent and professionally irresponsible response to the technical demands of teaching. Although some educators are more adept at improvisation than others, it remains a skill with specific techniques to be honed and learned through practice.

Unfortunately, instructors in higher education rarely receive formal training in the performance aspects of their teaching. Actors, dancers, and singers, however, come from traditions which systematically address both planning and performance. In this chapter, we want merely to suggest lessons teachers can learn from performers. In later chapters we will go into increasing depth.

Individuals are selected for permanent positions in higher education for their capacities as experts — and at universities, in particular, for their potential as scholars, researchers, grant writers and managers. Rewards at the research campuses have long been skewed heavily toward publications and grants. Yet the pressures to teach well are also growing. Lessons from the stage, we believe, can give even the most dedicated scholars new ideas, concrete practices and techniques, for translating subject matter expertise into dynamic, engaging instruction and thus enhanced learning.

Commonly, instructors draw on their training and experiences to begin planning long in advance of their first class meeting. They may have

to research an area if it involves new material or catch up on other reading to stay current with the field. They may also have to select a text or create a class reader. They certainly have to think through that semester's requirements and assignments, matching announced dates and deadlines with the campus calendar. Yet, all too often, competing demands require a different kind of response: at times, you may end up pulling out old class notes and dusting them off shortly before class. On such occasions, while the course material itself seems substantially the same, you may find your own enthusiasm waning after repeated offerings.

Like teachers, performers also begin to plan long before a production debuts. Once the show is cast, formal rehearsals start and preparation becomes increasingly intense. Even for nonprofessional productions, six weeks seem necessary. Because these nonprofessionals (95% of performers are not paid) are typically obligated to jobs and families, they perform in addition to those responsibilities. Consequently, they must squeeze three to four rehearsal hours daily out of their evening and weekend schedules for a six week period, with even more time needed closer to opening.

The performer doesn't have a captive audience. Audiences must be courted, built. How demoralizing to put countless hours and a lot of work into rehearsals over several weeks and play to an empty house. Lackluster performances simply will not do. A lot is at stake; every performer must take personal responsibility to come prepared, energized, focused and fit for every show. Don't teachers also have the responsibility to give their best to their audiences?

Whatever your own area of expertise, and whatever the importance of your planning and enthusiasm, we want to draw on our own experiences with performers to offer the following suggestions:

- Be aware of the conditions that allow you to be most productive when you're planning.
- Schedule time to review past classes and rethink what you'll do in the next semester.
- Once the semester does begin, take a few minutes before each class and focus on your physical readiness with some simple exercises that get your heart rate and energy up.
- You can also quiet yourself and remember moments when you felt especially excited about the material, paying careful attention.

tion to the details of those memories, the classroom itself, your actions, even your attire. Once you re-experience these moments, note the accompanying feelings and try to bring them with you to the class session.

- Put reminders in your notes to rev up your energy level, and to move more to animate a particular point or stir up a lively discussion.
- Get to class early and set up so that you're able to begin class right on time. Convey a sense of urgency about what you want to accomplish, about achieving all you have planned.
- Be ambitious about what you want to accomplish during each class period so that your expectations can fuel your own sense of urgency.
- Observe other classes and chat with colleagues about their approaches to preparation and performing.

Warm-Up

For actors, getting ready for a role or even for rehearsal is quite different from getting ready for a performance. When planning, actors must research their characters, learn their lines, and speculate about their characters' possible motivations or relationships with the other characters. Once the production is at hand, however, warm-up becomes much more serious, intense, and focused. Here, actors must make a conscious transition to get into the characters they will portray. This metamorphosis inevitably requires intellectual, emotional, and physical *warm-up*. Using the "green room" behind a stage to concentrate and to begin moving and interacting in character, and reviewing lines and cues, are essential practices for most actors.

Although you may not think of them as warm-ups, you probably have your own idiosyncratic routines that help you prepare for and perform in your class sessions. When planning, for example, you may reserve certain days and times for writing at home or for research at the library. You may need quiet and focus to be most productive. You may need your references, your word processor, or a copy machine close at hand. Like many of us, you may need at least one good jolt of java to get yourself going.

For teaching, you warm up in quite different ways. You may like to review your notes right up until class, spending most of your time on the content, trying to get the wording just right or the ideas to fit within the allotted time period. You probably take little if any time for emotional or physical preparation. Given our experiences with performers, we suggest the following strategies that will help you warm up for each teaching session:

- Be aware of what you need to be efficient, productive, and creative, whether you are researching a topic or getting ready to teach.
- For an upcoming class, review the names of your students so that the class time can have a more personal feel. If the class is large, remind yourself to learn a few new names each day and to use the names you do know. A periodic role call can tell you who's present and give you a chance to practice names.
- Reflect on the dynamics of previous classes and what you could do differently to improve them in future sessions.

- Put your notes aside and get physically ready for class. A few stretching exercises can do wonders to loosen your muscles and release pent up tension. Humming can warm up your voice so that you minimize strain and you become primed to provide more vocal variety. Using a favorite song can help lift your mood and put you into a better frame of mind. *Just whistle while you work!*

Lesson Plans and Scripts

You write your notes in advance of class just as scripts are secured long before any "performance." However, instructors can depart from their "script" at any moment, to pick up on a particularly good question, to review a troubling concept or spark a discussion, to tie into something in the news that day. Consequently, they must come to class fully prepared but alert to student needs, in much the same way that actors improvise.

Lessons from the stage can prove useful. Consider the following: First, to perform well, actors must memorize their lines and cues. Second, performers often make extensive use of the margins of their scripts for

notes and reminders to themselves. Third, actors take time to get into character, to add physical and emotional preparation to their review of the scripts. Otherwise, productions run the risk of being wooden, a series of recited lines instead of the kind of dialogue that appears “believable” to audiences.

For teachers, then, we recommend the following:

- Know your material well enough so that you can address your students directly and make eye contact with them. This will allow you to notice students who seem lost, or those who may be drifting off. It will also free you from enslavement to the podium, permitting you to roam freely around the class. Your proximity to students can make a difference. “Over-learning” your material can give you a great deal of freedom to create spontaneous and engaging learning experiences.
- Give yourself wide margins on your notes so that you can jot down reminders to yourself.
- Again, we remind you to put your plans aside just before class and allow yourself some time to concentrate on your physical and emotional readiness.
- Reflect on what you do differently. Check with students about their reactions. Plan to give these changes a longer run and see how effective they are over several class sessions. Theatre work involves trial and error, and performers learn quickly to be aggressive about taking risks. Consider doing the same thing yourself.

Roles

For teachers and performers, getting ready for a production may differ greatly from what you need to do once class begins or the curtain goes up. Preparation requires study, reflection and training. Once you find yourself on the classroom or theater stage, however, different roles come into play.

Instructors in class have extensive, varied, and complex role demands — ever changing, shifting and blending. As grader, you play the judge. When you handle logistical decisions, you play the manager. When students are in crisis, you may play the counselor. When students struggle

to understand despite your best efforts, you may have to shift gears, play magician and pull completely new ideas out of your hat.

From our experiences on the stage, we recommend the following strategies:

- Be conscious of the varied roles you must play. Awareness alone can make a huge difference. Perhaps different hats, real or imagined, can help you make the shifts required. Each role may have a different look and emotion — a “thinking” hat for pauses; an “investigator’s” hat for when asking questions or probing students’ understanding; another hat that lets you speak clearly; and yet another hat for facilitating group discussions. Being conscious of your “writing” hat may, then, help you shift gears when out of class, signaling to others when you are busy and not available.
- Talk with respected colleagues about the roles they play. Observe them in their classes to see those roles in action.
- Write out the requirements for these roles so that you can be more clear and focused about each.
- Seek feedback from others — colleagues and students in particular — about your effectiveness in the various roles you play.
- Read. Take classes. Join relevant discussion groups on the Internet. Make your own professional and personal development a high priority. Invest in yourself.

Movements and Blocking

Your movements — or lack thereof — constitute what the performer thinks of as *blocking*. On stage, the blocking required for a production is carefully plotted far in advance, refined in rehearsal, and then practiced until all movements appear easy and natural. Once the curtain rises, directors and actors expect to remain faithful to their plans. Unlike the classroom, there’s no place for spontaneous improvisation on stage unless some slip-up happens — a line gets dropped or a cue missed, and everyone must scramble to cover the mistake.

In class what you do physically can add or detract from what you say and impact what students learn. However, preparing for physical engagement and following through are two very different challenges. Before

class begins, you can make notations about blocking in the margins of your class notes. For instance, if you want to add variety and break your dependence on the lecturer, you can remind yourself to move toward a student when a question arises — you might create a more personalized conversation from which others can learn. If a discussion develops, you might want to cross to the middle of the room.

Note the different “feel” when you do break your usual pattern. Reflect on it. Put your thoughts in writing. How do you think students will react? Ask them? Or take a few minutes and have them write their reactions. You will benefit from the feedback and they will appreciate your concern for their learning. Indeed, we believe that eagerness for feedback is one of the major lessons teachers can draw from the stage.

That’s the planning side of it; now what happens once class begins? At times you will have to leave your prepared notes and interact more spontaneously. You can discipline yourself to become more aware of your movements and how they may impact students and learning. You develop your *metacognitive abilities*, a *split consciousness* that allows you to watch yourself while you teach, a skill which performers must hone to succeed on stage. With training, experience, practice and concentration, actors become quite proficient. So can you. Timpson’s (1999) *Metateaching and the Instructional Map* offers more on this notion.

For example, you can never predict exactly when or where questions will arise. Indeed, you may want to stimulate questions or encourage students who rarely participate. Your own movements can make a difference, sparking more engagement from some students when you draw closer to them. Being closer may also allow you to notice subtle reactions, confusion or agreement. On the other hand, moving away from a speaking student may allow you to energize others across the room and stimulate reactions from them. Pay attention, also, to whether you might be obstructing someone’s view. Varying your movements provides variety and relief from the usual routine which has you up front and focused on your notes.

Equipment and Materials as Props

For their part, actors and directors must think through the props they want to use and work with them carefully so that each adds something important to the performance. There should never be any random,

spontaneous use of props on stage. However, performers do need to learn how to think on their feet when some mistake occurs, such as a mislaid prop. As in the classroom, cultivating a *stage awareness* and maintaining high levels of concentration combine with experience to give actors the wherewithal to survive. *The show must go on!*

When you plan, consider the equipment, materials and other items which can help illustrate certain concepts or function as catalysts for learning activities. From pointers to big chalk for a large lecture hall, from slides to films, videos and materials for demonstrations, these “props” can have a positive impact on learning. As with your blocking, you need to plan in advance and make sure you have the props you need.

Once class begins, you have a great deal of freedom to decide exactly when and how to use each prop; and you always have the opportunity to shift plans. However, you may also have to deal with surprises along the way: equipment which fails; all those items you either forgot to bring or wished you had. Thinking on your feet is a skill you can cultivate with planning, awareness, experience, practice, and creative resourcefulness. Once again, feedback and risk taking, so important on stage, become essential mechanisms when you decide to refine your teaching.

Lighting

As with props, performers must determine the kinds of lighting they want. While classical musicians typically work with one set lighting pattern, rock groups often use a splashy, pulsating range of lighting options, including lasers, strobes, whirling spots and every kind of color imaginable. Dancers use light changes to enhance moods and movements. At times, choreographer Randy Wray would break from the classical ballet tradition of constant and bright lighting, and use very vivid colors to evoke particular feelings. Amidst all the bright and flashy entertainment options available today, he knew that his ballets had to be creative to compete for his share of the local audience. For plays, directors may want to illuminate the entire stage at one point, but then dim the lights and focus a bright spot on one of the actors in the very next moment. A wide variety of more subtle changes, often imperceptible to those in the audience, can augment a story as it unfolds on stage.

Teachers rarely pay much attention to lighting so this may seem a trivial note. However, sometimes your planning can make all the differ-

ence, for instance, when sunlight makes a video almost invisible, and scheduling another room would help. You may sense when you should dim the lights to make it easier for students to see an overhead, slide or Powerpoint presentation: at the very least, you could ask them if the lighting is okay. Ideally, you have the kind of class climate which allows students to interrupt you if they cannot see. If students are making presentations, you may want to take the lead with adjusting the lights since they may be inexperienced in a teaching role. Variation in lighting can also help keep students alert, as changes can recapture flagging attentions.

The next time you are in a theater or watching a movie or television, notice the effects of lighting on the story. Of course, directors work lighting out in meticulous detail far in advance of any performance. While you will always have freedom to improvise in class, you may be able to resolve problems or create some special moments by thinking through your needs for lighting in advance.

Costuming

Costuming is so important to a staged production, film, or video that producers and directors go to great lengths to get it right — although getting it right can prove to be quite expensive. What fun to see a period piece from the nineteenth century come alive with fancy gowns, capes, and hats. All of this investment can help an audience “suspend their sense of disbelief” more effectively and engage more fully in a performance.

Although the classroom can feel quite informal, your clothing can and does have an impact on your students. When she gave back exams, one professor of sports and exercise sciences found that, by switching from her usual sweats to a suit, she could eliminate some of the hassling with students about exam questions, grades, and the like. Her students seemed more likely to haggle with her when she dressed more casually. The interviews featured in our *Foreword from the Lectern* describe the awareness different instructors have about their clothing/costuming.

As mentioned, costuming is designed long in advance of any stage production’s opening. We draw the following lessons for teaching:

- Be aware of the impact of clothing generally on others and on yourself, when it may be important to “look professional,” or

when formality may inhibit your own creativity or put an unnecessary barrier between you and your students. For example, you may feel uneasy about going outside to sit on the grass and hold class on a warm spring day when you’re wearing good clothes.

- Experiment. Test your assumptions and hypotheses about clothing. Check it out with others, especially your students.
- Simple “costume” changes can help you in various roles you may want to play in class, from debates to dramatizations. If you decide to wear a costume, you need to plan to acquire it in advance. However, you can also call on the imagination of your students when you need them to “see” a certain piece of clothing, when, for instance, you discuss someone from the history of your discipline and need to fill in some of the background details.

Energy and Concentration

For performers, the differences between preparing for a role and actual performance can be like night and day. The progression of the rehearsal process, however, links the two. Everyone may be relatively calm at the outset, but emotions peak as opening night draws near. Once the curtain rises, the cast wants a relaxed but alert attitude that reflects confidence in preparation and attentiveness to what is happening on stage.

An important shift also happens for the instructor between the preparation required ahead of time and what actually occurs in class. The rehearsal process helps the performer make this kind of shift. Be aware of your own energies and abilities to concentrate in class, especially since learning depends so much on the enthusiasm you bring to the material and to your students.

True enough, when you prepare for class, you may have to deal with distractions and interruptions, from answering the phone to chatting with a colleague, from responding to a student who drops in to juggling various administrative duties. Once class begins, you must deal with other stresses. You want to cover certain material and achieve particular goals. You certainly want a good plan for that day. You may find it helpful to monitor the reactions of your students while watching the time you have

available. When you begin a discussion, you face an additional element of uncertainty, not knowing exactly what students will ask or how the focus will shift, what you will need to do to keep everyone engaged or what you can use for a future exam.

Of course there are important differences between audiences in the theater and students in a class, and we don't want to minimize them. Attending one performance is far different than slogging through difficult material week after week in a campus course. Unlike performers, however, teachers don't have to present the same material day after day; they have license to shift gears, improvise or create something new. Despite these differences, we believe that instructors can profit from understanding how performers sustain their energy and concentration.

Audience Response

Through experience, instructors and performers alike learn to anticipate audience reaction. However, both groups have to deal with the unexpected as well. Felman (2001, 152-153) argues that:

The 'unexpected moment' is one of the most unrealized pedagogical opportunities in the academy....The applied benefits of the 'unexpected moment' include the following opportunities for the professor: the immediate incorporation of new theories arising from the discussion itself, the chance to make previously unrealized connections on the spot, and the development of an emotional rapport with the students based on the seemingly informal exchange that simply does not occur in the traditional lecture-style format....The act of professorial improvisation calls forth in the student a passionate engagement in the material heretofore not experienced in the classroom.

One dramatic difference between a set theatre performance and a classroom is the amount of freedom the teacher has to shift gears. Betina Aptheker (Women's Studies) often shifts into a relevant example or anecdote when she feels student attention flagging. All of a sudden, she becomes more animated, often more personal. She's telling a story and can add the kind of emotion and rich detail which engage students.

Sandy Kern (Physics) also departs from his plans when students appear confused. His use of common examples can make difficult concepts or principles more accessible for students. In a spontaneous way, he'll use

imagery, objects, gestures and diagrams—whatever comes to mind—to describe new and different examples. It really is demanding, he says, to do that in the moment when the need arises, but why press on when students don't get it?

Gil Findlay (English) typically lectures in an up tempo manner, but regularly indulges in long and personal digressions to illustrate issues from the readings (e.g., autobiographies). Students seem to enjoy these insights into the personal life and thoughts of a favorite instructor. In this way Findlay becomes more human, more real, less of an authority figure, someone with hopes and dreams deferred, joys and tragedies, worries, good and bad days. Over time, and with his encouragement and modeling, students begin to shift away from a preoccupation with class as some graded hurdle to jump, and they and accept the challenge—if you listen to them, an unfortunately rare opportunity in their college experience—to look deeply within their own stories and begin to sort out what is most meaningful, essential or problematic.

Our advice: start with your own awareness of your students and how their level of engagement impacts learning. Expand from there to experiment actively, to probe student reactions and solicit feedback. You'll find further suggestions as the book proceeds.

Exercises

1. Throughout this chapter we have emphasized the importance of self-awareness as a starting point. To guide you in this process, rate your skills in the following areas. Which factors seem to affect your performance most?

Activity/Skill	Rating (High/Medium/Low)	Comments
Library research	H M L	
Anticipating problems	H M L	
Arranging for trips, speakers, etc.	H M L	
Arranging for equipment	H M L	
Vocal projection	H M L	

Activity/Skill	Rating (High/Medium/Low)	Comments
Clarity of speech (enunciation)	H M L	
Enthusiasm	H M L	
Response to questions	H M L	
Facilitation of discussion	H M L	
Thinking on your feet	H M L	
Awareness of audience	H M L	
Awareness of self	H M L	
Awareness of roles	H M L	
Awareness of movements	H M L	
Awareness of props	H M L	
Awareness of lighting	H M L	
Awareness of costuming	H M L	
Awareness of energy	H M L	
Awareness of concentration	H M L	

2. Interview several colleagues about their skills in both the planning and performance requirements of teaching. Seek out those with especially good reputations as teachers. Observe them in class.

Chapter 3: The Lecture

Do you want to engage your students during lecture? Do you want to feel more energized, excited, and confident about your teaching? Although the word “lecture” is derived from the Latin word for reading, students today want and need more. With so much fast-paced multimedia available, some students struggle when they’re expected to sit and absorb a traditional lecture. Besides, with the advent of desktop publishing, photocopying technologies, and web-based course support programs, you can produce lecture notes for distribution, for placement on reserve, or for perusal on the web. Freed of the requirement to cover merely course content, you can, then, think about your time in class differently.

If you want your students to acquire more than surface learning — to think deeply, for themselves — then you may want to consider alternatives to the traditional lecture. Discovery learning and creativity training, for example, stimulate students to construct meaning for themselves. (Accordingly, we offer in this book separate chapters on these and other approaches that have parallels to the stage.) In this chapter, however, we want to address issues inherent to lecturing.

Why lecture?

The lecture has been a mainstay in higher education over the centuries, in developing and advanced nations alike. Its advantages are substantial. Quite simply, the lecture allows you to interject the most current thinking, long before definitive findings run the gauntlet of refereed research journals and appear in print. You can pull from a variety of sources and help clarify complex interrelationships. When confusion persists, you can field questions, build on what students do understand, and provide

additional examples or alternative explanations. You also can make a topic more relevant by connecting it to current events or hooking your students with controversial ideas.

From the administrative perspective, the lecture represents a flexible structure for scheduling classes and accommodating shifts in enrollments. Once class size reaches into the hundreds, how simple it usually is to put more students into the available seats, regardless of how cramped students may feel as a result. But if the instructional paradigm is about information transmission, then even classroom capacity is no barrier, since the wonders of television and computer networking permit broadcast and access in flexible formats.

Different approaches to instruction can augment what is possible with a lecture format. For example, technology increasingly permits much more in the way of independent and active learning, access to information, and ongoing electronic interactions. Students also can benefit from small-group and cooperative projects, study groups, experiential learning, service-learning, and other activities that encourage critical and creative thinking and promote deeper understanding.

We have to acknowledge, however, the enduring viability of the lecture. Because such close parallels exist between a good performance and an engaging lecture, we will describe a number of ways in which lessons from the stage can help you energize your lectures so that you engage your students and promote learning. In this chapter, we share lessons from the stage that can enhance your preparation, voice, gestures, and teaching materials within the lecture format. We show you how ideas about scripts can help you challenge minds and harness emotions. We describe how training and rehearsal techniques can make performances more believable, and how knowledge about set design and lighting can contribute to performances in subtle but effective ways.

The Challenge to Lecture Well

Despite the lecture's seeming simplicity, you yourself may find it to be a challenging format — especially when:

- Classes are large.
- Some students show up unprepared or unmotivated.
- You look for opportunities for discussion.

- You ask a question and get no response.
- The availability of relevant media is limited.
- There is little support for teaching assistants.
- Some of your students only seem to want to know what will be on the next exam.
- Too many students come late or leave early.
- Chatting among some students interferes with other students sitting nearby.
- Some students are reading the newspaper or sleeping.
- The fear of public speaking shakes your own confidence.

We can assure you that even the best teachers share some of these same fears and frustrations. Rethinking the lecture as a stage and the class as a production can give you many fresh new ideas for addressing these challenges effectively.

In and of itself, public speaking may intimidate you. At the height of the Cold War, public speaking ranked first in a nationwide American poll of “greatest fears,” even above nuclear holocaust! Others have put the resulting stress high on lists that include such personal traumas as divorce, loss of employment, and death of loved ones. Even for *extroverts* — people who tend to be energized by interacting with others — a public talk can be a challenge, especially when the group is large or indifferent.

Students create additional tension when they demand simple truths, obsess about grades, or want only “*what’s going to be on the next exam?*” As a researcher, you probably find it frustrating to reduce the most tentative understandings of complex matters into self-contained, fifty-minute lectures that make notetaking easy. In this era of fast-paced media images, how can you sustain the attention of your students with just your own descriptions, explanations, and ideas? When film and television productions require so much money, expertise, and equipment, how can you hope to compete on your own? Even if you have a great deal of experience and many insights to share, a strictly-lecture format can prove limiting. Then, of course, you have to deal with the new criticisms of the lecture as too focused on knowledge transmission and too limiting of active and experiential learning opportunities for students.

Lessons from the Stage

A lecturer who stands rooted over a podium and drones on in an uninspired monotone will usually dishearten even the most dedicated listener. In turn, nearly everyone has memories of riveting speakers. Those of us who teach understand that the effective use of posture, voice, gestures, timing, and feeling can be a powerful component of effective instruction. The best teachers in higher education do engage their classes, intellectually and emotionally. They can challenge students to think and rethink, to see new connections and possibilities. Reread what our two public speaking instructors, Greg Dickinson and Eric Aoki, had to say in the "Foreword from the Lectern."

Ken Klopfenstein (Mathematics) is a good example of a gifted lecturer who makes the most of the time he has with students. He is focused and organized, but friendly and flexible. He moves through material efficiently, but with frequent pauses to check on students' understanding and to allow students to think and ask questions. He moves across the front of the classroom, stopping periodically to emphasize key points. What's truly remarkable is the way Ken will build suspense as he works through a particular problem or proof; he then offers the resolution, literally, in the final minute of class. And in linear algebra, mind you!

From a theatre perspective, Ken's performance offers much to applaud and a great model for any instructor in any discipline to emulate. Are these skills born or bred? Both! But whatever your gifts, training, or experiences, you can always learn something from the stage to enhance your preparation, performance, and success as a teacher.

The Teaching Objective as Through-Line

Good lecturing can be a high-wire juggling act. You enter into the hall with certain expectations. You know what you want to cover. But you must be simultaneously aware of the conditions you face on any particular day — the mechanics of getting class started and ended on time, using the board or various pieces of equipment, and picking up on what happened in the previous class session. While doing all of that, you also might want to preview upcoming requirements (e.g., exams, papers, field trips, guest lecturers, demonstrations). What can keep you and your students focused? Your articulation of *learning objectives* — what you hope your students will be able to understand and do by the end of a class period or semester.

Of course, we rarely repeat our lectures. We may update our references or use new examples. Questions and explanations may vary. Few instructors have the time or incentive to polish a particular lecture in ways that parallel how playwrights work and rework to get the language of their scripts just right. But paying attention to certain refinements may produce important dividends for you, your students, and their engagement and learning in your class sessions.

Because plays and movies are so carefully constructed, and because every line, action, and gesture is connected to a central theme, we think study of dramatic structure can help you with your teaching and with student learning. For example, every play and movie has an objective, or *through-line*, that plays out through the characters and the plot. In *Death of a Salesman*, Willy Loman has to confront his own limitations. Ultimately, he kills himself. Shakespeare's Macbeth has to reconcile his own evil after killing his king. In *Field of Dreams*, Shoeless Joe Jackson and his teammates return from the grave to play again after the Kevin Costner character actually builds a ballpark in his Iowa cornfield. Just ask yourself: Would it have been consistent for Thelma and Louise to stop their car and just give up?

Directors and actors trained in the Stanislavski tradition call the unifying element of a script the play's *spine*. Harold Clurman (1972, 27), a major American director, explains that "to begin active direction, a formulation in the simplest terms must be found to state what general action motivates the play, of what fundamental drama or conflict the script's plot and people are the instruments." The director states the spine of the play as an active infinitive verb. For example, Clurman (1972, 28) points out:

Many things are contained in O'Neill's *Desire Under the Elms*: passion, Oedipal impulses, confessions of unhappiness and hate, guilt feelings, paternal harshness, filial vindictiveness, retribution. But what holds all these ingredients together, what makes a complete meaning, a single specific drama of them all, is the play's spine.

A director will analyze a play in terms of the perceived spine, defining a spine for each character (again, a main action or an objective stated in infinitive verb form) that shows how that character relates to the main action of the play. "Where such a relation is not evident or [is] non-existent," Clurman (1972, 74) points out, "the character performs no function in the play."

Just as a play, film, or novel needs a clear storyline, so does a lecture. Your message should have a clear organizing purpose — a spine. Just as all of the character spines must relate to the play spine, all of the elements of your lecture should help you organize material so as to maximize student learning. Try analyzing one of your lectures as if it were a play script. What is the spine? How does the spine communicate the theme, or the meaning, of the lecture? What are the spines of the various parts of the lecture, and how do they relate to the primary spine? Will students get it?

Such detailed attention to the preparation of a lecture, of course, may require a considerable investment of time. While rewards for research and publication on some campuses may limit the paycheck from this kind of investment in teaching, there can be considerable benefits here for students and their learning as well as for you in the form of an intrinsic reward for a job well done. In addition, colleagues and administrators invariably appreciate the skillful lecturer who can successfully handle large numbers of students.

Once mastered, these skills transfer easily to conference and other professional presentations you might have to make. Careful attention to your lecture “scripts” also may help you convert lecture notes and presentations into published papers, chapters, or books. You’ll want to write about innovations in your own teaching, perhaps where some of these lessons from the stage have made an impact. Ernest Boyer’s (1990) groundbreaking report for the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, *The Professoriate Reconsidered*, makes a very articulate call for an expanded notion of scholarship, one that recognizes the value of scholarship about teaching. Only through encouraging the scholarship of teaching and learning, insisted Boyer, can research universities in particular rebalance their reward systems and encourage higher-quality instruction.

Note, though, the potential danger that lurks when you use your written work as the basis for lectures and then ignore the potential for interaction with students. We offer you the following options to consider:

- As budgets permit, duplicate materials for handouts.
- Alternatively, post materials on your course web site, put them on reserve in the library, include them in a course reader for sale through the bookstore, or make them available for students to copy.

- Try to make more creative use of class time. Here the lecture has distinct advantages over the written script.

From questions and brief discussions to spontaneous digressions, from full-fledged debates to group evaluations of relevant cases, you can often spice up lectures with new and topical material and energize your students with periodic and varied activities. In essence, you can use your written notes as a platform for any number of opportunities to engage students more actively in deeper learning.

Exercises

As we wrote in the Introduction, there is great value in cross-fertilization and incubation for stimulating ideas about creative alternatives. Although the following exercises focus on staged productions, we believe they’ll give you some fresh insights into your teaching as well.

1. Analyze a favorite play, film, or television program. Determine what you think the spine might be — what holds it all together, the main action. What is the theme of the piece, and how does the spine point to the theme? See if you can select spines for each of the major characters that relate to the main spine. Watch or read the piece again, noting how the dialogue and actions carry out the spines.

Learning to recognize spines takes practice. If you have difficulty on your first attempt, try a preliminary step: State the main action of the play in a single sentence (called a *root action*). The root action statement has the following parts:

- A description of the protagonist.
- A description of the main action the protagonist takes during the play.
- A description of the result of that action.

Thus the statement takes the form: “This is a play about a(n) _____ who _____ and thereby _____.”

Since the spine of a play relates closely to the spine of the protagonist, a clear root action statement will help you discover what action the playwright is imitating in the play — i.e., its spine.

2. Consider your own teaching and reflect on a recent lecture. Was the “spine” clear to your students? the theme? Find a few students and ask

them. How might you apply your knowledge of play construction to improve your future lectures?

Lecture Notes as Script

In addition to the underlying objective or through-line, the notes you prepare for your lecture could resemble scripts in a variety of other ways. Essentially, they organize information and ideas around your central theme in a logical way that is understandable to those who are watching and listening to you. You can include notes about your delivery as well, perhaps in the margins. For example, you can remind yourself to pause at certain points, ask questions or solicit comments, call on particular students, or allow for some silent reflection.

Paradoxically, while instructors in higher education rarely receive formal training in the requirements for effective lecturing, playwrights often go through years of intensive study and practice, a tradition that dates from the very beginnings of Greek theatre and continues on today. Accordingly, we know a lot about successful scriptwriting, and much of it, we believe, can be useful for teachers.

Scholars of drama consider conflict to be the heart of drama. We ourselves may want to eliminate conflict from our personal lives, but without it a play would be boring. Conflicts engage audience interest and generate suspense. How will the conflict be resolved? Who will win, and at what cost? The hero's journey has always been fraught with obstacles, problems, uncertainty, challenges to overcome — real tests of character. It might be useful to think of dramatic conflict on three different levels: conflict between individuals, within a single individual, or between an individual and larger forces (e.g., nature, society, fate). The great plays — those that continue to appeal to generations of audiences — often include all three levels of conflict.

So when you're scripting your lecture, look for opportunities to emphasize the conflicts inherent in the material. Strange or paradoxical phenomena can make for wonderful moments of reflection and questioning. Researchers working in basic mathematics, for example, have long studied what appear to others to be esoteric and koan-like problems. Where will the next discoveries come in chemistry? Physics seems full of oddities, with notions of black holes, quarks, and worm holes, the very nature of the universe pushing against the limits of our earth-bound understanding.

Our own environment has its share of aberrations as well. For example, despite massive amounts of data and the most powerful supercomputers, our ability to predict the weather using conventional approaches continues to be limited. Indeed, chaos theory and hypotheses about nonlinear relationships evolved from these unsolved questions about the weather, for which a small change in temperature could have a dramatic effect on overall weather patterns because of the interplay of many variables.

Look within your own discipline to find ideas that may be counterintuitive or paradoxical. Find and highlight the important questions that remain unanswered.

Ethical issues exist in every discipline, and they offer rich opportunities for addressing more personal conflicts. You can also ask about the "stakes" involved as individual scholars critique existing theories, propose their own, and compete for their place in history. Science, for instance, is full of stories about races between individuals or labs to be the first to announce a particular discovery. The film *And the Band Played On* depicts one such competition as an American and a French lab vie to be the first to discover a viable test for HIV. At the time, the death toll from this mystery disease was ravaging the gay community in particular. Panic and fear mixed with public apathy, ignorance, and resistance in a very deadly brew. Dr. Gallo, an American researcher, is portrayed as sinister in his competitive drive to be the first to find a cure, ignoring the breakthroughs from a French lab and risking the release of unscreened blood supplies that were tainted with the HIV virus. High stakes and high drama!

Managed effectively, conflicts also can help students clarify their own values. In Chapter 6, which explores the developmental case for drama, we describe in great detail how teachers can use dilemmas as catalysts for stimulating growth in moral development among their students. For example, you might explore issues like cheating or plagiarism with a hypothetical case study. You can ask students to judge a particular behavior and then probe their reasoning for their underlying values. "What if" questions can help you identify those conditions that determine the boundaries of student values, when cooperation becomes cheating and paraphrasing becomes plagiarism. Open discussions in class can provide the kind of rich interaction of values and reasoning that stimulates students to reflect and grow while you simultaneously address an issue relevant to your field.

But let's continue our exploration of conflict in the theatre and see what other insights we can glean for you and your fellow teachers. In the fourth century B.C., the philosopher Aristotle argued in his *Poetics* that action is the most significant element of drama, and that playwrights must structure the action of their plays with great care. The play opens with some situation, called the *stasis* or *balance*, which contains the potential for significant action. *Exposition* — background information that is essential to understanding the stasis — gradually unfolds, and the audience senses the instability and the potential for action in the situation.

An *inciting incident* — an event that disrupts the tenuous balance — sets the main action of the play into motion. A *protagonist*, the play's central character, sets out on a course of action in order to achieve a goal. In the course of pursuing his or her goal, the protagonist encounters a series of complications, events, or factors that help or hinder him or her and that build suspense. Most plays contain a *major crisis*, or a *turning point*, when the protagonist must make a choice that will eventually determine the outcome of the play.

Throughout the play, the author creates an *emotional rhythm*, structuring the emotional dynamics so as to build to high points of tension and suspense — *climaxes* — that are usually followed by periods of relative relaxation. The overall rhythm of the play, however, continues a progressive build of emotional involvement to the major emotional climax. The major structural climax then resolves the play's main action in a single moment. The play's resolution delineates the new stasis or balance resulting from the play's action.

The *thematic significance*, or meaning, of a play arises from its action. What action does the playwright choose to represent? What forces are in conflict? What choices do the characters make, especially the protagonist? Why do they make these choices? What happens to them as a result of their choices? What insights about human life can we, the audience, get from the vicarious experience provided by the play?

Not all lectures lend themselves to this kind of design, of course, but the use of drama does have a long and distinguished history as a teaching tool in various disciplines. The Roman poet Horace pointed out that the purpose of drama is not only to entertain but to instruct. Of course, some of the greatest teachers have been great storytellers. Jesus of Nazareth relied much on the *parable*, a type of short story, to communicate his ideas. Plato related the teachings of his mentor Socrates in the form of written

dialogues — plays! On campus today — and especially in certain applied disciplines like law, business, or medicine and the health sciences in general — entire courses may evolve from discussions of cases or problems.

By studying the playwright's methods for engaging audience attention and interest, you can enhance your ability to structure your lectures. You can learn to adapt playwrighting techniques for building to a climax — to emphasize your major points — and then follow the emotional rhythm of allowing a period of relative relaxation (so that your students can assimilate the new material) before you begin another build. Professors of law and medicine, for example, often use problem- or case-based learning to orient their classes around symptoms or data, raising a series of questions and then moving through the resulting uncertainty and confusion toward some kind of resolution.

Other research on learning can be helpful in structuring your lecture “scripts” or notes, revealing, for example, why the start of a class or the first few minutes of a play or film can be so important. If you're opening is lackluster, your students might disengage early and forget most of the middle portion of your lecture. It is at the beginning of class when students are freshest. Psychologists will say that there is little *proactive* (or prior) *interference* from earlier material. At the end of class, memories are fresher because there is no *retroactive interference* from material that followed. The lecture is over.

As an instructor, you can raise important questions early on and, in the process, increase student interest. You can refer to underlying and core concepts, the conceptual structure that holds information together in some organized fashion. You can keep your objectives on the board or overhead as a reference throughout the class period. You can sprinkle in brief written or discussion activities throughout class as opportunities for students to use these new ideas and consolidate their learning. You can use more concrete examples. In the theatre, during the inciting incident of a play, a major dramatic question forms early for audience members — a question about the outcome of the play. Interest in discovering the answer to this question helps keep an audience attentive to the performance. Read on and see how this could work for you in your classes.

The Case of Oedipus

In *Oedipus the King*, Sophocles presents a stasis in which a plague has been devastating Thebes. In the opening scene, citizens plead with

Oedipus to save the city from the plague. Oedipus replies that he has sent his brother-in-law Creon to ask the oracle for advice. Creon returns with the oracle's message that the plague has occurred to punish the city for harboring the murderer of Laius, the previous king. Creon's announcement (the inciting incident) prompts Oedipus (the protagonist) to set off on a quest to find the murderer of Laius (main action), thus posing the major dramatic question: will Oedipus find the murderer? (Are there central questions you can ask in your lectures that could help hold student interest? Where is the main action? Are there relevant, important, engaging stories for you to tell?)

As the story of Oedipus unfolds, however, we see the major dramatic question evolving, often with each major complication, and reaching new levels of significance. Oedipus first sends for the blind prophet, Tiresias. When Tiresias refuses to help, he and Oedipus quarrel, and Tiresias (in veiled prophetic language) accuses Oedipus himself of the murder. At this point, the major dramatic question changes: is Oedipus indeed the killer he seeks? Who "sees" things more clearly — the sighted but hot-tempered king or the blind prophet? As the result of Tiresias's accusation, Oedipus jumps to the conclusion that Tiresias and Creon are plotting to overthrow him, and so he threatens to execute them as traitors. (If you to overthrow him, and so he threatens to execute them as traitors. (If you open discussion about ethical issues in your own discipline, for example, you can find important "plot points" and questions. Explore these as a playwright might look for dramatic material. What will be engaging — potential grist for stimulating discussions?)

A second major complication occurs when Oedipus's wife, Jocasta, attempting to smooth over the quarrel, tells Oedipus not to trust oracles: the oracle had warned Laius that he would be killed by his own son, but instead the baby was put out on a mountain to die and Laius was murdered by robbers at a place where three roads meet. This revelation starts Oedipus worrying; he suddenly remembers that he once killed an old man at a place where three roads meet. Oedipus sends for the only survivor of the attack, a shepherd who had reported that multiple robbers, not a single assassin, killed Laius. The major dramatic question has again evolved: can oracles be trusted? Will Oedipus prove to be the murderer even though that would contradict the oracle? (In your own discipline, can you find key questions to raise as you build toward conclusions?)

In the meantime, the third major complication arrives in the form of a messenger from Corinth who informs Oedipus that his father, King

Polybus, has died. Oedipus refuses to return to Corinth, however, saying an oracle warned him that he was destined to kill his father and marry his mother; since his mother still lives, he won't risk fulfilling that horrid fate. "No problem," the messenger replies. "She's not really your mother. You were adopted." The messenger reveals that he himself had been given the baby Oedipus by a Theban shepherd. With this complication, the major dramatic question shifts to: who is Oedipus? The simple detective story becomes a search for the nature of human identity. (Telling the human stories in your discipline can add an element of interest that may touch students on a more personal level. What were the twists and turns in the lives of the great thinkers, writers, and activists of your discipline? What lessons can students take from their lives?)

Back to our main story, now. The shepherd arrives. (By one of those quirks of fate common in Greek tragedy, the shepherd who witnessed Laius's murder happens to be the same shepherd who gave the baby to the messenger.) Under pressure, the shepherd finally admits that Oedipus is the son of Laius and Jocasta and his father's murderer — Oedipus has, unwittingly, fulfilled the prophecy. This revelation (the major crisis) leads to another shift in the major dramatic question: what will Oedipus do now that he knows destiny does rule human life? What should be the response of any ethical human being to unbearable self-discovery? (As you think about your own discipline, can you find compelling stories in which there are intriguing twists and turns? What happens to those whose ideas get discredited when paradigms shift?)

Although Jocasta kills herself, Oedipus does not. He blinds himself but remains alive, certain now that his life has some yet-to-be-disclosed purpose (major structural climax). Physically blind, Oedipus now possesses spiritual insight. He does not indulge in blaming the gods for his downfall but instead takes responsibility for his own actions. The resolution of the play shows Oedipus going off into exile to follow where the gods will lead him. (What happens to the tragic figures in your discipline? How has history treated the greats? the wannabes? Are there contributions from some people — women or minorities, for example — that have been ignored?)

Studying the structure of plays shows how playwrights use complications and crises to engage audience interest through stimulating questions, both spoken and unsaid. If you want to sustain student interest throughout your class sessions, if you want to use lectures for more than

transmission of information, if you want to make your students think more deeply about the significance of a topic, then you may want to experiment with more of the human stories involved in the evolution of your discipline, with all of their attendant issues and dilemmas.

You can, for instance, structure your lecture around the major questions you want your students to consider. Note that in *Oedipus*, the questions become increasingly more significant as the play progresses. All of the questions work on the simple level of suspense (what will happen?) and thus help sustain audience attention; but they also progressively demand more from the audience intellectually: what is the meaning of what's happening? When you teach, you can refer back to underlying concepts and objectives and key questions, thus helping your students stay more clearly focused on central ideas.

In good drama, the emotions and the intellect work together. As audience members, we engage in the search for meaning after the playwright has drawn us into the story emotionally and we've begun to empathize with the characters; we can put ourselves into Oedipus's shoes and feel with him the horror of having to confront the worst in ourselves, to face the dreadful realization that we have done the very thing we most feared doing. Likewise, our lectures can do more to stimulate emotional identification as well as intellectual inquiry. Relevance has long been associated with motivation, learning, and memory. As Sarason (1999, 51, 48) points out, effective teaching:

...[M]eans an effort to achieve a better integration of thinking and feeling. ... When we say that performers seek both to instruct and *move* an audience, we mean that the teacher as performing artist has in some positive way altered the students' conception of the relationship between sense of self and the significance of subject matter — i.e., an increase in competence.

Students will typically invest more energy in searching for answers to questions when they feel, on a personal level, that the material has meaning for them — that the questions raised are important for their own lives.

Writers for the stage and screen learn to craft dialogue and actions that are central to a production's through-line. Everything, every little detail, has a purpose. These writers also incorporate elements to keep the audience engaged, in suspense, laughing, wondering, worrying, thinking,

Writers use surprises, plot twists, or conflicts to add drama and comedy to a production. In a similar way, they focus on the timing of lines, actions and pacing, costuming, lighting, and choreography, all of which can contribute to the ability of individual audience members to engage their thoughts and feelings and "suspend their disbelief."

Across an entire semester, you have only so much time to invest in any one lecture. If you explore a few new possibilities in depth, however, you may learn some things that can have long-lasting benefits. Consider the following ideas:

- Step back and consider the entire lecture as a production with an opening, a clear through-line, a pace that fits the audience and the material, and a build toward a conclusion or climax.
- Consider doing a practice run through the lecture/"script" — a "rehearsal."
- If possible, get someone to videotape the actual lecture. Then analyze the "script" as you saw it "performed," as well as from the perspective of your students.

Exercises

1. Get a copy of a script from a library, a book store, a colleague, or a friend. Read it to get a better appreciation of the careful crafting involved.
2. Rethink a recent lecture and then plan one for the future. Investing some time in crafting one lecture may lead you to some valuable insights that generalize to others.

Hooking Students from the Start

A great deal of research supports the value of student engagement as an important factor in learning (e.g., Ramsden 1992, Eble 1994, McKeachie 2002, Denham and Lieberman 1980, Davis 1993). In his popular book on university teaching, Joseph Lowman (1995) insists that intellectual excitement and rapport are the two most essential factors for engaging college students and prompting their learning. Sarason (1999, 52) emphasizes the obvious: "The way subject matter is taught and experienced by students ensures that students will tune in or turn off." Timpson and Bendel-Simso (1996) describe a number of concepts and choices that instructors in higher education have at their disposal for sustaining stu-

dent interest — among them discovery and group learning, debates and discussions, demonstrations and role plays, and student-centered and problem-based learning.

While engagement itself is somewhat slippery to identify and measure as a researchable construct, students themselves can certainly tell you whether or not they're absorbed in a particular lecture. They can clearly describe what gets their attention, what sustains it, what allows them to drift off, and what turns them off completely. When asked to describe what has worked and what has not, your fellow teachers also can be remarkably accurate, identifying times when they felt they were losing a class and describing approaches that might have worked to "get the students back."

Plays and movies must have something that grabs the audience member in the first few minutes if they're to have a chance at being successful. Without an effective *hook*, performances may feel long and audiences will likely become restless. Interest must be piqued right away, curiosity whetted. Along with the story and the action, lighting, costuming, and the set combine to augment the impact of the hook. In class, meanwhile, a student's first impressions of you as a teacher can "set the stage" for the rest of the semester. Just as actors "make an entrance," so too can you grab the attention of your class/audience from the very first day.

While audience members may disagree about the exact nature of the hook that worked for them in a particular production, successful films do grab their attention early. Let's look at some specific examples. Whether in the animated version of *Peter Pan* or Steven Spielberg's remake, the kidnapping of the children by Captain Hook sets up the drama to follow. Spielberg also had the opening to *Jurassic Park* shrouded in mystery as workers tried to move a large container with something huge, alive, and very ominous. Remember the accompanying soundtrack? Suddenly, one of the workers is pulled in and, to the sound of screams and chomps, killed and eaten. The hook for *Home Alone* comes when the parents drive to the airport, board their flight, and actually take off before realizing they've forgotten their son. The hook for *Big* occurs when the Tom Hanks character wakes up the morning after his interaction with a strange mechanical genie and discovers that his wish to be big has been granted.

The hook for *ET* happens when the alien spaceship lifts off in a hurry, when pressed by a menacing human search party, and it leaves be-

hind one of its own to cope as best he can. The darkness of that opening night scene — with all of the headlights and flashlights, the urgency in the voices, the foreboding soundtrack, the low shots and quick cuts — creates a sense of impending danger for the viewer. *Come with the Wind* pulls us in at the very beginning when the roguish Rhett Butler shows a riveting interest in the flighty Scarlett amidst all the brash talk about a "quick victory for the noble South." Remember that scene when they first make eye contact as Scarlett descends the mansion's circular staircase and the camera zooms in on a smiling Clark Gable below, looking up at her?

For teaching, Hunter (1982) describes this hook as *set* — the comments or actions, activities or experiences that pull students into the lesson for the day, engage their emotions, and focus their minds. The classroom as "set" should not be confused with the term "set" that's used for stage and film. As is the case with any audience, students enter your classroom from a variety of prior activities — other classes, home, friends, studies, eating, playing, napping, working, or perhaps just hanging out. Although the degree of anticipation by audience members and students will vary at the outset, your lecture, like the theatrical production, could attempt to capture everyone's interest early on.

Jim Boyd (Philosophy) often has music playing when his Eastern Religions class begins. What a wonderful way to pull students into the material, let them know that class time has begun — Jim often starts the music five to ten minutes before class officially begins — and encourage them to reflect or even meditate a bit about another reality. Note Jim's attempt to create more of a holistic quality to teaching and learning, since meditation is so central to many Eastern religious practices. Boyd can, then, refer back to the music during class as a concrete example of a particular religious or cultural practice.

What can work as a hook in one of your lectures?

- A good question can challenge your students to think, or alert them to connections with events in the news. Something puzzling or complex can stimulate creative alternatives.
- A demonstration at the very outset can raise questions and illustrate principles, which you can then discuss later.
- A brief activity that has students working together on a question or problem can energize everyone at the very beginning of class.

- Some description of the personalities or human drama in the background of your course or discipline can help personalize the course and sustain student interest.

The key is to have your idea of a hook in mind, to be willing to experiment, to look for early engagement, and to assess the impact of what you try.

Exercises

1. Try to identify the hook next time you watch a movie or television drama. Note your level of engagement. The movie industry knows how important the hook is and will add a few carefully edited and fast-paced previews of coming attractions at the end of an episode. These advertisements then serve as mini-hooks of their own. In the last several television seasons, producers have been starting their shows with action, not the traditional theme and credits, to engage viewers before they even identify the show.

2. Now watch another film or play and pay particular attention to the entrances made by the various actors. A key here is to *detach* yourself from the story line and focus solely on the actor's entrance. This *distance* can be important for your own training as you learn how to identify *objectively* what the elements of effective presentations are.

3. Think about some of your past lectures that had good hooks. Try to create a hook or enhance one for an upcoming talk.

The Classroom as Set

Some instructors essentially ignore their classroom spaces. Sure, most have preferences for certain rooms, and nearly everyone who teaches knows about lousy rooms that are too cold or too hot or that have difficult acoustics. Many classrooms contain immovable desks, making small-group assignments nearly impossible. You undoubtedly have your own horror stories about equipment that failed at the worst time; rooms that proved too small or too big; or rooms where projectors created a distracting hum, noise bounced off hard walls, or light streaming in from the windows made it hard to see overheads. Whatever the problems, we carry on as best we can. There's probably not much you can do about your assigned room anyway.

The lesson from the stage that applies here is that the set is integral to the success of a production, so much so that the set designer receives near equal billing to the director and, technically, works for the producer. Every script includes scenic directions, although writers differ in the amount of detail they provide. The set designer, then, works closely with the play's director to create the desired backdrop for the production within the space available and the limitations of budgeted resources.

But back to the classroom. Just what can you do within the limitations of assigned spaces? What helpful lessons can we draw from the stage? Consider the following: Think of the overhead or the board as having more creative possibilities. Bettina Applucker (Women's Studies) invites students to put relevant announcements on the board before class to save time from the lecture. This makes for a fun backdrop with lots of interesting reading. Some instructors put the day's goals or activities up as a visual reference to help keep everyone focused. Showing a videotape or film can briefly transform your lecture hall into a movie theatre. Music or other sounds can also help re-engage your students. Posters can add color, visuals, and inspiring language. Too many classroom bulletin boards seem only to carry advertisements. You also can change the position of the podium and, thereby, your relationship to students.

In many smaller classrooms, you can move chairs and tables into any number of different configurations. You can also offer demonstrations. You could think of a field trip as a set change. You could use other rooms on occasion, perhaps to take advantage of laboratory equipment or better accommodate small-group activities. When you're telling an anecdote or providing an example, you can use extended descriptions to invoke the imaginations of your students and help set an imaginary stage. Once you reconceptualize your class as a set, you may find any number of ideas to enhance your teaching and student learning.

George Wallace (Natural Resource Management) has a real gift for conceptualizing his teaching "stage" in a very big way — one that often goes far beyond his classroom walls or the campus itself and inevitably impacts student learning. In a course on multicultural education, for example, George had his students conduct a neighborhood walk of a local barrio, talk to residents in the area, and get a personal feel for different people and places. For one course on environmental impact, he has a long and detailed field assignment that requires students to explore a number

of local sites. These experiences supplement the students' readings and help form the basis for a rich discussion in class.

Maura Flannery (Biology), a Carnegie Scholar, has as a pedagogical goal helping her students to feel "at home" in a cell — to imagine a cell as a three-dimensional environment. Her strategies include assigning a paper in which students describe transforming their classroom into a cell. The papers show the students' ability to engage in metaphorical thinking, using everyday objects in the room to represent cell structures.

Exercises

1. Recall a lecture you attended in which the use of the room added to the impact of the message. Make a note of what worked for you and why.
2. Rethink one of your lectures for which, in hindsight, you could have done more with the set of your classroom. What can you do in the future to explore this potential?

The Roles You Play

As an instructor, you do much more than lecture: you play a number of different roles with your students. While you may have graduated to a more specialized focus, you might still have the large, introductory course to prepare. As such, you're also part director, producer, set designer, choreographer, costumer, props manager, and, yes, even roadie — someone has to haul all those papers and props around! (Your dean or department secretary won't.)

Let's look at these teaching roles more closely. Before class ever begins, you invariably serve as your own producer, organizing everything from text selection to the placement of readings on reserve at the library, from the preparation of course syllabi to the scheduling of guest speakers. Once class does begin, you then become responsible for a wide range of activities, from clarifying class procedures to ensuring the effective use of overheads, slides, videotapes, and films. As a lecturer, you really are your own master of ceremonies, providing reminders to the class/audience of what has transpired before, announcing upcoming events, introducing the day's topics, fielding questions that arise, moderating discussions, adding final comments at the very end of each session, handling unexpected interruptions, and so on and so on.

Once class is under way, you also serve as your own warm-up act, getting students engaged and helping them focus on the material at hand. As a facilitator of learning, you invariably juggle a mixture of carrots and sticks. As judge and jury for each course, you decide upon the final grade. As mediator, you may have to resolve conflicts that arise, from complaints about grades to squabbles within student project groups. As a surrogate parent, you may be asked about any number of nonacademic issues as well. Sarason (1999, 43) cites Dewey in defining the teacher's role as "one of coaching, managing, and arranging the learning environment."

So what can we offer you from the stage that will help you manage this degree of role complexity? Again, Sarason (1999, 51) compares the teacher to the performer:

As with any performing artist, the teacher willingly and internally defines a role with characteristics intended to elicit in an audience of students a set of reactions that will move them willingly to persist in the pursuit of new knowledge and skills.

First and foremost, we encourage you to strive for greater awareness of the roles you play. Playwrights, for example, take great care when developing their characters. Producers make sure everything is organized ahead of time. Directors create a unified performance. Your ability to run through these performance roles before teaching can give you a very helpful systematic check.

Let's look at a concrete example. Michael Lipe (Music) is a colleague who's blessed with a wonderful tenor voice. He often takes leading roles in performances on campus. As a relatively short and heavyset fellow, however, he wouldn't seem the likely choice to play a romantic lead. Yet, in one memorable opera production of *Carmen*, he found himself playing opposite a physically stunning soprano, his love interest, who was taller than he and quite thin. While their voices blended beautifully, their differences in size and shape made them initially incongruous, almost unbelievable, as a couple. Yet Lipe exuded such confidence in his role that audiences were quickly won over. His resonant voice and skill as an actor seemed to make the physical differences disappear.

Similarly, you can study the various roles required of you and learn how to develop each of them as needed. As the master of ceremonies, you open the class and help get everyone set for that day's lesson. As public speaker, you must project to the last row and enunciate clearly. As an ex-

pert, you come to class knowledgeable and prepared. As a member of your discipline who cares about the subject, you find ways to share that enthusiasm with your students. As a human being who cares about people generally and each of your students as individuals, you convey that sensitivity as well. Like LiPe, you too can be the character you need to be — with sufficient preparation, confidence, and energy.

Additionally, you can make better use of the range of resources that students themselves bring to class. You can do more to assess their understanding and then draw on the students who do “get it” for help in addressing areas of confusion. As a teacher who understands critical thinking, you can create opportunities for your students to engage their minds and emotions fully, and learn for themselves how best to question, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate. As a “coach” who values cooperation, you can develop activities that promote teamwork. As an instructor who cares about the quality of the learning experience, you assess progress on an ongoing basis, solicit feedback, improvise as needed, and experiment with various innovations and ideas for improvements.

Loren Crabtree (History) is a wonderful instructor who successfully blends his expertise as an Asian scholar with a studied commitment to student learning and a caring climate in class. Although stretched to teach a class when he was dean, he nevertheless wanted to try a series of instructional innovations during one particular semester. The best teachers seem ever open to new possibilities. To his more conventional approach of set readings and lecture/discussion, he added a course requirement of a cooperative student presentation. What was new to his role as teacher was the supervision and guidance required to make these projects successful, including the possibility of intervention when one group got derailed, when another was beset by a repeatedly absent member, and when another never really rose to the challenge to do anything other than divide the group’s time among the various members for a series of lackluster mini-lectures.

While the instructor must master this range of roles, the playwright constructs a plot with a range of characters in a carefully developed mosaic of actions, motivations, hopes, fears, and responses. The director makes sure it all works on stage. In many ways, you do the same thing as a lecturer. Each role can be “believable” (i.e., effective) in its own right, both in theory and in practice. And as the actor uses study and practice to create a believable role, you too can become more of the character you need to be

in each of the roles you must play. For example, the exams you write can match the objectives you state in your syllabus; your enthusiasm for the subject can be reflected in the energy you bring to class; and your concern for students can manifest itself in your willingness to listen to their ideas.

Exercises

1. Think about actors who have played a wide range of roles. Dustin Hoffman and Meryl Streep come to mind for us. Both of these actors have the reputation of working very hard at every new role. For example, it was widely reported that Hoffman spent a great deal of time learning about his autistic character for *Rain Man*. Streep did many of her own stunts in *Wild River*. Study, experimentation, experience, and practice are keys to succeeding in different roles. Now think about the various “hats” you wear as a lecturer. Which are most comfortable? Least? Keep a journal of reflections over several class periods. Think about what you might do to improve your performance in your less comfortable roles.

2. Some actors, of course, have been trapped by a certain kind of role. They’ve become *typecast*. Can Sylvester Stallone do more than Rocky-like films? Was Marilyn Monroe capable of more than her stereotypical “sex goddess” image? Have you been trapped into certain characterizations that limit your use of the lecture? For example, as a self-styled expert, are you uncomfortable with small-group assignments for which you turn control over to your students and the “blind lead the blind”? At times, it might be important for the “blind” to help each other become more independent. At times, your role as “expert” may produce unhealthy dependencies.

The Roles You Could Play

As a lecturer, you bring your training, knowledge, and experiences into your classes. As we’ve already suggested, why not bring along other “characters” as well — the personalities behind some of that knowledge, the stories that form the backdrop of your field? Science texts, for instance, tend to describe facts and theories in a straightforward manner, with little discussion of the human stories that brought each discovery to light. Why not share more of the thinking and creativity, the frustrations and perseverance, that underlie these discoveries? How did the greats overcome the ignorance of their times, the prevailing paradigms about truth, and strike out in new directions? How did Galileo overcome the “facts” that were

taught to him as well as the prohibitions of the church to reconceptualize the relationship of the Earth to the sun?

Surely your students ought to know as much about the *process* of discovery (the thinking and creativity required to discover things) as the discoveries themselves (the *products* of research). It certainly seems that the future will require people to be more creative, more skilled in problem solving and group dynamics, and more able to work as team members with people from different backgrounds and in diverse settings. What is your role in the preparation of future generations? Could your undergraduates participate more in research? How should the curriculum change to accommodate development of creative thinking and collaborative skills?

Actually, role playing one or more characters can *dramatically* enrich any lecture. Imagine the impact of introducing a whole range of characters into a lecture about the "discovery" of the Americas in 1492. What was the perspective of the native? of the soldiers that accompanied Columbus? of the royalty in Spain that bankrolled the exploration? of the missionaries who accompanied later explorations? Such "discoveries" are found across the centuries, on every continent, as groups move and mix, invade, trade, and assimilate.

What advantages might there be in researching such characters before enacting them? First, you can delve into the actual process of discovery and share with your students the actions, motivations, and relationships behind these stories — all of which can be models for thinking and creativity. Second, you can broaden and deepen your own understanding of the field. Third, such efforts can breathe new life into old subjects. If necessary, you and your students can study a new set of characters each year to provide a constant element of freshness for you. Remember: your enthusiasm speaks volumes to students.

The value of role playing may be especially high at this point in history as we hear the canon in literature challenged, as we rethink expert opinion and presumed objectivity, and as we analyze the contextual background of writers and their environments. The flexibility and empathy acquired from assuming a variety of roles may prove helpful when we ourselves seek more diversity in interpretation, and when we ask students to think for themselves and participate more in the *construction* of meaning.

Suzanne Burgoyne has used role playing in theatre history classes — courses that, in theatre departments, are normally considered "aca-

demie" rather than "performance" classes. In American Theatre History, for example, students researched their assigned subjects, then presented oral reports to the class — in the character of a significant historical American actor, director, or designer from the period studied. The student presenters wore appropriate costume pieces and brought in relevant photographs and recordings. Following each report, the presenter remained in character to respond to questions from classmates. In World Theatre History II, each student reported on a major theorist of the modern theatre (e.g., Stanislavski, Brecht, Artaud). Following the reports, the students participated in a mock debate — each in the role of his or her theorist. Suzanne found that significant issues about the nature of acting and the role of theatre in society came to life for the students, as each ardently argued his or her theorist's point of view.

Bill Timpson also makes regular use of spontaneous role playing to illustrate particular points, especially when skills are involved and a lecture/discussion can only accomplish so much. At these points, students need to see certain techniques modeled and then have some practice with them. For example, during a presentation on effective communication—which covers reflective listening, "I" messages, and building consensus—one student described a situation in which, as a tutor in a study session, he was constantly in demand to help students solve particular problems they'd just reviewed. On occasion he'd be asked the same question(s) by the same student(s) two or three times. What follows are the alternative responses Bill offered and role played when this issue arose. The responses would allow the tutor to help students think more systematically through their struggles with learning:

- *Tutor:* It seems you're having difficulty with that problem. Can you say why?
- *Tutor:* When we review material and then students come running to me for help right away, I get frustrated because no learning seems to be occurring. Can we discuss this further?
- *Tutor:* When so many students need help after going through similar solutions, I think we need a new plan in this class. Let's use the consensus model to develop something we can all agree to for guiding our study sessions here.

Bill's experiences in a variety of theatre workshops and productions have pushed him toward using more spontaneous role playing as a way to augment traditional lecture/discussion.

Exercises

1. Reflect on the greats in your own field — those who have influenced your own thinking. Consider coming to class as one of these characters or enlisting the help of someone else to play the role. Let your students interact with you as if the character were actually there. Dave Martin (Economics) has extended an approach he developed for his classes into a new book with a catchy title, *Lively Conversations with Dead Economists*, in which he explores various ideas via hypothetical conversations between himself and various economists of the past. It's creative and often fun, and it seems to make an otherwise dry subject come alive. Literally and figuratively, J. Willard Hurst (History) has done something similar in using biographies and autobiographies to help personalize the "names" students read in history or law. Again, this technique helps students humanize otherwise distant figures. It also gives students some insight into the reasons behind the writings. Various law faculty are going to courtroom fiction for representation of memorable characters and compelling stories. Student learning begins with engagement, and the human stories behind various events can be effective reference points.

2. Consider the variety of roles you could add through student presentations. Although you may feel inhibited about "acting in public," every class and every campus has students who enjoy this kind of challenge and can do it well. What fun you can have when you open your classes to these sources of creativity and energy. You might also want to contact a colleague who works with actors, on campus or in the community. Recruit some of those actors for role playing in your classes.

Techniques to Enhance Your Roles

It's one thing to recommend that you take advantage of a variety of roles in your teaching, but it's something very different to help you develop and refine those roles. Here, lessons from the stage may be especially helpful. Actors use a variety of approaches to get into their roles. One set of techniques permits them to work from the *inside-out* and draw on their own experiences and feelings for the emotional foundation of their roles on stage. Another technique permits them to work from the *outside-in* and adopt the physical mannerisms, actions, gestures, movements, and facial expressions required for their stage roles.

Inside-Out

Actors can draw upon their own experiences to recreate particular feelings. It can be difficult to feel sad on cue, for example, night after night. Consequently, some performers will "relive" certain events that produced similar feelings in their own lives, using meditation and concentration to recall as much detail as possible. Once those feelings arise again, the actors can then transfer them to the scene on stage. While you may not need any help in feeling tired before class, you may want to try this approach when you need to get up for teaching, when you want to show your enthusiasm, when you need to crank up your energy level to project yourself effectively in a large lecture hall, when deadlines have you distracted, or when problems with a few students have you down.

We know you've had good days and bad, better lectures and some you'd rather forget. Undoubtedly, you're more enthusiastic about some topics and a bit bored with others. Some classes may feel very special to you, just the right chemistry. For such classes you probably feel more focused, clear, responsive, and effective. In some lectures, though, you've probably had to contend with a variety of disturbances — chatter, reading, sleeping, late arrivals, early departures, and the like. An *inside-out* approach may help you draw on the emotions and experiences that accompanied your best teaching in the past so that you can ride through difficult periods and perform more effectively in the present.

Suzanne Burgoyne adds, however, that affective memory techniques can be problematic with actors, dredging up past personal traumas and opening a psychological Pandora's box. She herself has moved away from this sort of invasive technique for actor training, though she fully recognizes that actors do call upon their life experiences when they portray roles. If you're going to use personal memories, Suzanne stresses, focus on the sensory impressions associated with each memory and not on the emotions themselves.

Inside-out approaches also include the actor's analysis of the character's psychology. What does the character want? What strategies does the character employ in pursuing his or her objective? What is the character thinking at this moment in the play? In getting "inside" the role, then, the actor *thinks* in character and actively seeks to attain the character's objective. In other words, the actor imagines himself or herself as the character and behaves *as if* he or she were the character. If the actor is thinking

the thoughts of the character, those thoughts will affect how the actor feels, moves, and speaks — and thus the audience's perception of the character.

To use an inside-out approach yourself, then, you need to think about the requirements of the role you want to play. If you want to play a lively, enthusiastic teacher, thinking "I'm tired" or "this class is boring" will interfere with your performance — your body language will reflect your thoughts, and your students will read your body language. If you want to play a passionate, dedicated teacher, then focusing your energy on really achieving your teaching objective can light a fire under you and your students.

Outside-In

Another technique that actors use requires analysis from a more behavioral perspective. Actors choose a way of walking, for instance, or a particular voice for a character, or a gestural pattern. In this approach, the actor begins with the body rather than the psychology of the character. For some performers, the *outside-in* approach seems purely a matter of technical skill. Through manipulating the voice and body, the actor moves the audience by making them believe the character is moved — while feeling nothing at all themselves. However, the outside-in approach also can generate genuine feeling on the part of the actor. An actor who tenses all her muscles in order to play a stressed-out character will soon start feeling stressed out herself. A connection exists between body and mind; thus the outside-in and inside-out approaches are merely different starting points on the way toward a complete characterization.

As an instructor, it's critical for you to think about an important quality like "enthusiasm." For the outside-in approach, you define it in terms of descriptors — what it "looks like" or "sounds like" or how you should "behave." You create the appropriate gestures, movements, expressions, vocal pitch, and timing. Likewise, you can identify the behavioral descriptions you need for other desired qualities in your role as lecturer: for example, the patience you need to listen well when students raise questions, or to wait for them as they formulate their responses; the nimbleness you may want when you facilitate debates and discussions within the lecture format; the concentration you need to sustain focus on a lesson's through-line (learning objectives). How fast should you make your movements and your speech? What about your pitch?

Try behaving in the way you've defined — as "enthusiastic," for instance. See if, just by moving and speaking in an enthusiastic way, you don't find yourself feeling more lively and energized.

Exercises

1. Think about one of your best lectures. Visualize yourself back in the moment. See the room and your students. Hear yourself teach. See yourself lecturing. What did you look like? How did you move and sound? See if the attendant feelings can energize your preparation for an upcoming lecture. Can you recycle some of what worked back then into the *now*?
2. Become aware of your own thought patterns in class. What thoughts are likely to help you achieve your teaching objectives? What thoughts may interfere?
3. Try both approaches — *inside-out* and *outside-in*. Which works best for you? Would a mixture of the two be even better? (Many actors use a combination of approaches.)
4. The goal for using either of these techniques, or both in combination, is to enhance your effectiveness in a *natural* way. Work on finding an appropriate comfort level with each of these approaches.

Pacing

Every good lecture has a certain pace: not so fast as to leave students feeling overwhelmed and weary from notetaking, and not so slow that they drift off. After an introductory *preview*, you could intersperse periods of information-giving with periodic reminders about underlying core concepts, thereby helping your students with the intellectual organization of all they have to assimilate. Ausubel's (1963) groundbreaking research on the *advance organizer* demonstrates the importance of a conceptual framework for supporting student learning and retention. You could also mix in questions (e.g., "How many of you think that...?") with brief discussions (e.g., "Does anyone have a comment on this issue?").

Although you may have a firm grasp of your subject's knowledge base, your students will not. Inevitably, and especially in large introductory settings, some students will not share your enthusiasm for the course material, and a few may even be resistant or downright hostile. Most, how-

ever, will respond positively to variety; attention spans have their limitations, even for the best students. For example, you can sprinkle examples and demonstrations throughout a lecture to provide concrete references to the real world, counterweights to more abstract and conceptual material. A conclusion, then, could recap the lecture and re-emphasize essential learning.

Any good script also incorporates a variety of actions and feelings. An audience can absorb only so much tragedy, banter, or suspense during any one stretch. Playwrights change the mood or pace to augment, contrast, or shade certain emotions. Actions on stage can build up in overt or subtle ways toward a climax. So too can you shape a lecture and add examples, demonstrations, and questions to provide variety while moving toward conclusions.

More importantly, alterations in pacing may make a world of difference to students who are struggling. Two different incidents with the same student really brought this issue home to Bill Timpson. In the first instance, Bill called on M, one of his best students, to respond to what another student had said. "I can't answer that," she said. A bit perturbed and thinking that M just wasn't listening, Bill quickly called on another student. The next morning, Bill found a rather angry email message from M noting that she'd just not heard what had been said and wanted it repeated. She went on to complain about the fast pace of class, which, she thought, made discussions brief and superficial. Bill responded on email by apologizing for cutting her off and admitting that the large number of students enrolled (seventy-five) did make him anxious whenever the pace slowed.

A few days later, another incident arose with M. She asked for more information about a course requirement concerning computer applications. When no one else admitted to sharing the same concern, Bill was initially resigned to dealing with M on the issue after class. But he then had the good sense to slow down and ask for those conversant with the Internet to come up to the front and describe their progress with the assignment. Five students came forward, and the resulting discussion was very productive for everyone; it turned out that many other students were also uncertain about the assignment but were unwilling to admit as much. Twenty minutes were lost from Bill's plan for that day, but those twenty minutes proved well worth the shift in plans and change of pace.

As is true in the theatre, a dry and monotonous plodding through even the most brilliantly conceived material can drive off all but the pathologically persistent. Consider putting more of that brilliance onto paper, or on reserve at the library, or on the Web, using more of your class time for the kinds of interactions that can take advantage of the collective talents, creativity, and energy in the room.

At the other end of the continuum is the challenge you inevitably face with material that may be inherently dry, at least on the surface. With such topics, your own energy and enthusiasm can keep an engaging pace to instruction. For example, Irene Vernon (English) teaches a tough course on the law surrounding U.S. relationships with Native Americans. It includes stories of bloody wars and massacres, racist and genocidal thinking, and treaties broken amid official deceit and deception. All of this tortured history is encased within complex legal documents and court opinions, primary sources that are further complicated by racist language and custom. Recognizing the difficulty of the material, Vernon uses her big personality, her booming voice, her natural vivaciousness, and her passionate concern for the material to pull students into active engagement and critical analysis.

Exercises

1. Track the pacing of a favorite movie or play. Note the periods of comic relief. A great thriller is usually more like a roller coaster than a nonstop reign of terror. Periods of calm and unpredictability heighten the fear factor. In the classroom, many instructors use regular reminders about what will be on an upcoming exam to jolt students into paying closer attention. While you should minimize the use of fear in your classes, there are other possibilities worth exploring: your use of pauses or silences; the ways discussions or debates can heat up and animate everyone; or your use of free-writing exercises in class to promote student reflection. Examine one of your recent lectures for pacing. Could you have varied the pace more to heighten students' engagement with the material?

2. Rethink the pacing of an upcoming lecture. For example, can you provide periods of relief from the usual routine — from the presentation of information or the completion of problem sets? Could regular stops for a few questions or comments give you a chance to emphasize certain key

points? Could these stops also allow your students some relief from the intensity of notetaking to think about the ideas and issues you're raising?

Warming Up

This is a bit of a repeat, but we think it's worth repeating: The lecture format can be a very pressured situation, especially as class size increases, and so we think you'll benefit from even a little warm-up. Nothing in teaching comes closer to the requirements for the stage than the lecture. Remember that most performers treat warm-up as a given, often beginning their rehearsal and pre-performance time together with stretches and vocal exercises. Taking a few minutes to warm up for class will help you prepare emotionally and physically, and it will complement your intellectual preparation of the content as well. For a description of some warm-up exercises you can use, be sure to reread Chapter 2.

Movements

Few lectures require extensive movement. Routinely, you enter the classroom and lay out your materials at the front. You may use the board, an overhead, a film, a video, or slides to illustrate key points. You may wander a bit in the front of the classroom. But rarely will you have anything "staged," "blocked," or "choreographed." If you move much at all, you may just pace as you think and talk. Is this approach effective for you? for your students? What else might be possible?

Some teachers have largely abandoned the traditional lecture. Instead, they want something more dynamic and energizing. For example, using a case study approach allows Marty Feltman (pathology) to serve as a facilitator for discussions with classes of one hundred, two hundred, or more. He may move around the lecture hall as different students offer their ideas and others take issue with those ideas. In this way, Marty's students analyze the presenting symptoms and discuss possible remedies. The cases are true to life and require students to act like practicing veterinarians. Marty's forays out from behind the lectern physically shift the focus from his own expertise to a large-group guided discovery process. He challenges his students to think for themselves. Marty's energy, movements, and creativity add life to a professional curriculum often dominated by lecture-based information giving. As a scientist who has flown in space on the shuttle, Marty seems to enjoy the challenge of dynamic and interactive teaching.

Although there's a big tradeoff in the time devoted to content coverage, another popular option for helping you create a more dynamic classroom format involves small-group assignments or student presentations that allow you to get students up, moving, and participating. Apart from the obvious benefit of helping sustain student interest, active learning also can dramatically enhance students' understanding of your material. Developmentalists like Piaget (1952), Bruner (1966), Kohlberg (1981), Gilligan (1982), and Perry (1981, 1999) have long emphasized the power of activity in promoting deeper learning. A new generation of developmentalists like Tharp and Gallimore (1988) and Rogoff (1990) continue to reaffirm the relationship between active learning and the development of critical thinking skills.

Other critics of the traditional information-driven, expert-dominated lecture (e.g., Belenky et al. 1986, Tobias 1990) also call for more participatory learning in higher education, so that women and minority students, in particular, can have more peer support and assistance. Active and cooperative learning within a social context foster success in large and high-demand classes where teachers feel they have to cover a great deal of material.

Historically, the traditional approach to course design and grading has also served a gatekeeping function, often producing an impersonal and competitive environment where norm-referenced assessment (grading on the curve) defines class climate and discourages cooperation. When teachers try to sift through the masses of students to uncover "those few with potential," they inevitably — surprise, surprise — find students much like themselves.

A massive cloning process results, argues Sheila Tobias (1990), one that tends to replicate the values, perspectives, styles, gender, and culture of the teachers, most often older white males. When this occurs, everyone suffers: some students get "weeded" out for the wrong reasons; the disciplines themselves lose out on a rich and diverse talent base; and at the very heart of the research agenda, the cloning process compromises the pursuit of new knowledge, doing more to sustain prevailing paradigms than to support healthy and creative challenges.

We think our lessons from the stage can help you become more aware of the "choreography" that does occur in your classes and that may enhance learning. Every script written for production includes directions for stage movements: who should be where for which lines and actions,

and when. Although actors, directors, and choreographers discover the specifics of how to physicalize what is only on paper, writers do sketch out basic movements in the script. Unless improvisation is called for — which is rare — no one wants any surprises on stage.

While spontaneous digressions, questions, and discussions can challenge students' thinking and stimulate their learning, the planned lecture can also benefit from notations about movements or blocking. For example:

- You could give yourself written reminders to get out from behind the lectern when you think you're reading too much from prepared notes and losing students in the process.
- You could remind yourself to move toward a student who asks a question, to get that person's name, and, in this way, help personalize the class more fully. Have students print their first names on sheets of paper, then fold them over to stand up conference style on the front of their desks.
- After giving a small-group assignment, you could make a note to yourself to move quickly around the room to help keep students on task.
- You could indicate when you want to use the overhead projector or where you could stand when slides are showing so as not to block anyone's view.

In *The Teacher Moves: An Analysis of Nonverbal Activity*, Grant and Hennings (1971) report on a variety of studies that affirm the importance of teacher movement in the classroom. In one study, a number of teachers were videotaped and their movements analyzed. A full eighty percent of these movements were deemed relevant to the instructional process, although not in ways you might expect. Over sixty percent involved *conducting* behavior (controlling student participation, getting students' attention). Approximately thirty percent involved *wielding* (moving toward action, picking up assignments, reading). Less than ten percent involved *acting* (emphasizing, illustrating, pantomiming, role playing).

Grant and Hennings go on to make several recommendations for teachers:

- **Eliminate Contradictory Cues.** Too many teachers undercut what they think is exciting when they deliver their lectures in a

dry, rigid manner. Students believe what they hear and see. Allow yourself to get animated when appropriate, or reflective when important questions arise, or even confused when a problem gets complex.

- **Increase the Right Kind of Nonverbal Cues.** Teachers dominate much of the allotted classroom time, and nearly all of the time in lectures. Look for opportunities to substitute nonverbal cues for verbal expressions. For example, you can reflect pleasure over a particular response with a facial expression or a hand gesture, thus allowing more space for other students to participate. Felman (2001) describes emphasizing a student's classroom declaration of a paradigm shift with a mock faint, generating applause for the student's transformation.

- **Eliminate Irrelevant Nonverbal Cues.** Given that twenty percent of the teacher's classroom movements are personal and unrelated to instruction, try to minimize irrelevant nonverbal cues. Just think back to your own teachers who were plagued by distracting nervous mannerisms — playing with their hair or beads, constantly adjusting their glasses, blinking excessively, jingling their keys or coins.

Stage directors know that movement draws an audience's attention, so they carefully choreograph all movement on stage. The movement may look spontaneous, but it has been thoroughly planned and rehearsed. In class, you may not want to preplan your gestures, but some basic stage principles about how to use movement for emphasis can prove helpful.

For instance, actors and directors use movement to *point*, or emphasize, significant lines. The principles of pointing involve the relationship between movement and speech. There are four possible ways to use movement with a line of dialogue. One can:

1. Move before the line;
2. Move after the line;
3. Move during the line;
4. Break up the line by saying part of it, moving, then saying the rest.

To illustrate how pointing works, consider the line, "Gwendolyn, will you marry me?" from Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Let's say the movement the actor will perform is to kneel in front of Gwendolyn. Thus, the actor can:

- Kneel first, then say the line;
- Say the line, then kneel;
- Say the line while kneeling;
- Say part of the line — for instance, "Gwendolyn, will you ... " — then kneel and finish the line — "... marry me?"

Try performing the line yourself, all four ways. Note that:

- Moving before the line emphasizes the line;
- Moving after the line emphasizes the movement;
- Moving during the line de-emphasizes both the line and the movement;
- Movement that breaks up the line emphasizes the part of the line following the movement.

The application of these principles to lecturing is subtle but real: the best place for you to move in relation to a climactic, significant point is probably just before the meaningful statement — or the most important words in that statement. That movement will "point," or draw your students' attention to, the significant statement. The movement doesn't have to be as obvious as pounding on the table. A step, a gesture, or a turn will do the trick. If you've been pacing, a sudden stop can catch the students' interest.

The principles of pointing also make it clear that you should not move during the significant statement — because such movement will distract your audience and de-emphasize the important point you want to make. Good comics instinctively understand timing and pointing; you won't see one move during the punch line of a joke!

Exercises

1. Have someone — a friend, colleague, or student — track your movements during class, noting what happens when and where. What effects do your movements appear to have on student engagement (listening, attentiveness)? Similarly, have someone videotape one of your lectures and get a good look at yourself in action. These kinds of data alone

may suggest areas for improvement. Discussing the results or viewing the tape with others can get you valuable additional opinions.

2. Keep a journal for recording your insights. Jot down your impressions, worries, and hopes before each class and then again immediately after each class is over. Reread your thoughts and reactions to earlier class sessions. What patterns emerge?

3. Once you decide to make a change, either to eliminate distracting movements or add movements as enhancements to your lecture, give yourself several trials. Habits are difficult to break and new ones challenging to implant. Pacing nervously across the front of the class may distract some students. Continuing to talk while you move toward the chalkboard may make you inaudible. You could use a portable microphone to help students hear whatever you do. Moving out from behind the lectern and toward students who ask questions may help re-engage everyone. Your physical proximity to students can affect their motivations. Experiment. Put reminders in your notes.

Here again you can learn a lesson from the stage. Actors know that it's easier to *do* something on stage than to try *not* to do something. For instance, if an actor has fidgety hands, the director will often give him or her something specific to do with them — a character gesture or a stage property to work with. If you discover you have a nervous habit to break, look for a specific, concrete, helpful action you can perform instead of the nervous habit. If you have a tendency to pace aimlessly, for instance, find a way of grounding yourself. While you're learning the new habit, you can write into your lecture script periodic cues to remind yourself to perform the desired behavior.

Solicit ongoing feedback on your progress, perhaps from one or more students who would like to earn some extra credit. Videotaping your class may seem intimidating, but once you get past the initial "shock" of your own appearance — like many professionals, you're probably your own worst critic — this *purely objective* viewpoint can prove helpful. It also will give you a good sense of what your students see. Using both sources of feedback in concert may be ideal.

Voice

Lecturers depend on their voices. Yet few have studied the physiology of the voice or the nuances of speech that can impact their effective-

ness in class. Speech scholars, teachers, and coaches, for example, have long known about the benefits of appropriate pauses and timing, of projection and volume, of pitch and inflection, of good articulation and clear enunciation. Most people judge others based in part upon speech. Given your own speech patterns, what do your students think of you? While we cannot expect to do justice to each of these areas within a chapter on lecturing, we can give you enough of an explanation to raise your awareness and get you started.

As we noted earlier, a pause can serve a variety of functions in the theatre: to underscore the conflict of a scene, to hold for a laugh, and most often to allow the audience member to wonder, "What will happen next?" Similar results can come from *pausing* in class. Even without any background as a performer, you can recognize the benefits when time for reflection helps deepen learning.

Anyone who communicates with an audience — whether from the stage or in the classroom — also needs clear articulation and enunciation. This concern may be particularly important for you if you have a regional dialect, a non-English-speaking heritage, or a speaking disability. In these situations, think about consulting with a speech expert on your campus or in your community.

Timing is everything; it's been said. As students in class with a superb lecturer, or as audience members in the presence of great actors, we often admire their "sense of timing." Understanding how rapidly or slowly to deliver a particular line, as well as how long to hold a pause, can help you engage your students or lend power to the actor's performance. In class, changes in pacing can add variety, surprise, and life to your presentation.

Unless you're watching a pantomime or a dance production, however, the "word is the thing," sayeth Shakespeare. Your students *must* be able to hear your voice clearly, even in the very back of a large lecture hall. Use any amplification possible. Even the seasoned performer can tire the trained voice after *projecting* for three hours at a time. Speakers find that two of the most difficult aspects of voice involve *pitch* and *inflection*. Pitch is the quality of vocal sound — the relative highs and lows (i.e., number of vibrations per second), while inflection represents the rise and fall of the voice. *Intonation* is the particular tone.

As students in a lecture hall or as audience members in the theatre, we appreciate teachers and performers who also can add drama and nu-

ances to their lines. For the professional actor, the voice becomes an instrument. In performances of poetic drama, such as Shakespeare, the actor's vocal work can be as varied and melodic as that of a singer. British and French actors are particularly noted for the attention they pay to vocal performance. In France, for instance, people talk about going to "hear" rather than "see" a play. In melodrama and farce, the audience may accept exaggerated vocal expression — the character's squeal of embarrassment or gasp of shock — because of the unrealistic style of the play. In realistic drama, which reflects our everyday lives, we expect actors to give the illusion of speaking naturally and spontaneously.

Students in your classes also expect you to speak naturally — but you, like the actor, can benefit from vocal training to make your voice more expressive. While you may find limited need for using the full range of your voice, changes in *emphasis* can be effective for sustaining student attention and enhancing their understanding. Consider the following suggestions:

- Punctuate key points by increasing the volume of your voice.
- Explore the use of near whispers to express sadness and sensitivity.
- Speed up your talk to reflect your own enthusiasm.
- When you read a passage from a previous era — perhaps out of the history of your discipline — try to capture the right tone.
- Certainly a monotone rings a death knell for any classroom presentation! Avoid it at all cost.
- Seek out a trusted colleague and ask him or her to come to one of your class sessions to assess your monotonal tendencies.

Exercises

1. Experiment with a variety of warm-ups before class, from humming a favorite melody to running up and down your vocal range with "la la la la." You may never have had any formal training or practice, but you still can benefit from some vocal exercises. If nothing else, such exercises can increase your awareness of inflection, pitch, and intonation.

2. Record yourself on audiotape to hear how you sound in class. Then try a videotape to see how well your voice matches what you're doing with your facial expressions, gestures, movements, and props.

Props

Undoubtedly, you make extensive use of props (short for stage *properties*), but you just don't think of them as "props." Anything you use to augment what you say can be considered a prop, including the lectern, chalk, the overhead, slides, videotapes, films, materials for demonstrations, a table, or a chair. You can even include the intellectual "things" you use to supplement your instruction — cases for law or business, problems for medical and health sciences, word and story problems in mathematics. You can improve your use of props by exposing yourself to new ideas, experimenting and receiving feedback, and practicing.

Do you need props for every lecture to be an effective teacher? Not necessarily. Do you remember John Houseman's character — Law professor Kingsley — in the film *Paper Chase*? He rarely used props — only his experience, authority, and commanding presence. Robin Williams's character in *Dead Poets Society* — English teacher John Keating — employed a range of facial expressions, vocal inflections, volume, accents, body movements, postures, and gestures.

Everyone, however, can benefit from thinking about props more consciously. Let us share an example from one of our classes. Piaget (1952) has categorized cognitive development into distinct stages that young people move through as they mature. In addition, Piaget identified certain tasks that serve as markers for movement into more advanced stages. When Bill Timpson lectures about one of these tasks — for example, the conservation of length — his students often struggle to understand that children can think in *qualitatively* different terms. Before age six, it's common for a child to say that a pipe cleaner has gotten shorter when it's been bent in the middle. If you override your own logical thought processes, you yourself can "see" (literally) clearly that the *end points are closer together*. The young child concludes that the entire pipe cleaner has gotten shorter.

In time, children are able to override this visual domination with a more logical conclusion: that is, because nothing was taken away, the pipe cleaner must still be the same length as before. Using a pipe cleaner in class as a prop has helped Bill demonstrate this phenomenon to his own students. Showing a videotape of first-graders struggling with this concept of conservation, some insisting that the pipe cleaner is indeed shorter, then provides the conclusive visual evidence that these university students

need. Learning about this phenomenon through lectures or reading alone just isn't as effective.

Lots of other examples come to mind. A physicist brings in a pendulum to demonstrate properties and problems. A sociologist uses large portraits and photographs of the writers he covers in his survey class. Seeing these faces seems to help some students relate better to each writer, to set each within a historical context. A lecturer in music uses a piano to illustrate various concepts. The availability of the piano allows him a certain degree of spontaneity in class — especially valuable when students raise questions.

Surprisingly, many students appreciate even the simplest of props. In the physics class, some students benefit from seeing an idea in action as a supplement to their reading and lecture notes. In the sociology class, many students say that seeing the portraits gives them a historic or visual frame of reference. The images also seem to permit the lecturer to add more personal, biographical, and engaging information to otherwise dry, theoretical material. In the music class, the lecturer enjoys playing and the students respond enthusiastically to live demonstrations.

Working with such props is profoundly important to teachers and learning. We know from so many different sources that appealing to all of the senses has distinct advantages when it comes to teaching and learning. Students do have different sensory strengths and preferences, different learning styles. Using visuals or participatory demonstrations pushes students to engage more than their listening and note-taking skills. Multisensory input can strengthen students' memories, giving them more cues for recall. Active learning can energize everyone.

In class, props can include the most common of items. A text to read from, for example, can become a prop when you hold it up for summary comments. John Finley, a classics professor at Harvard University, was famous for roaming the stage at Sanders Theatre while holding the microphone chord as it trailed behind him, periodically making rather grandiose flips of the chord when he had to change direction. These simple theatrics helped enliven his lectures about Greek and Roman drama. Every campus has its own stories; over the years you yourself have probably seen examples of props that worked famously (as well as those that bombed).

When you use a table at the front of the classroom to sit or lean on, you're using a prop — at least in the tradition of a staged production. An

active consciousness of the nature and purpose of the physical objects you use—the props in your class—can help you eliminate distractions, engage your students, and enhance their learning. Some lecturers do seem rooted to their lecterns. Others muffle their words because they talk to the blackboard while they're writing. Some seem addicted to their PowerPoint presentations, slides, or overheads. Others seem wedded to a style of teaching that has them—and their students—writing furiously all class long, often filling and erasing a seemingly endless progression of board panels. While students do stay busy this way, the information could be distributed as handouts or sold as part of course readers, and class time used for activities and interactions that do more to enhance students' understanding and learning.

On stage, the use of any prop is very carefully assessed and orchestrated so that it enhances a scene, action, or character. Playwrights, directors, set designers, and performers know the importance of using props for a specific purpose on stage. The same can be true in class: if you don't use any props at all, you may be missing out on some wonderful instructional allies. But when you fidget with the lectern, you may actually distract some of your students.

What lessons from the stage can help you determine which props might be effective, when, and how? Consider the following suggestions:

- Examine your current use of props, and eliminate those that may be distracting—for example, nervous fidgeting with your notes or chalk. Getting feedback from observers or in interviews with students can help you identify these distractions quickly and point you toward possible new behaviors.
- Add props that will enhance your teaching—e.g., a laser pointer, overheads, slides, videotapes or films, or materials that can illustrate or reinforce certain ideas.
- Improve your use of such straightforward props as the board with some forethought, feedback, and experimentation. Your writing may be small and difficult for those in the last row to see; or perhaps you clutter the board and confuse your students; or maybe you could improve your diagrams.
- Experiment with using different-colored chalk or markers so that your students have some visual help with organizing information.

- Think about other kinds of props that could enhance particular topics—a flag when you're discussing national identity or patriotism, articles of clothing as historical references, a pendulum or pulley when you're demonstrating aspects of arcs for physics or math, a vintage instrument when you're telling the story of a particular musician, or actual food items that are introduced as new vocabulary words in a foreign language class. Bill Timpson has made extensive use of outdoor obstacle courses as catalysts for learning about teamwork and risk taking. Climbing up a forty-foot pole and walking across a beam can be a memorable way to help students confront their own fears and develop self-confidence.

Actors love working with props. A particular prop associated with a character can help individualize that character for the audience. Consequently, actors often select character props even if they're not specified in the script. Likewise, you could enhance your classroom "persona" with a judicious choice of props, as the Harvard classics professor we mentioned earlier made the microphone chord his particular trademark. When Suzanne Burgoyne taught in a room that lacked a wall clock, for instance, she brought to class—every day—a foot-high, red and yellow, Big Ben alarm clock, an eccentricity that students enjoyed. Actors also appreciate working with props because "stage business" with the props gives the actors something specific to do, reducing their performance anxiety and the usual accompaniment of fidgety habits.

Two final notes: Whenever you use an animal or a child during a lecture, be prepared to be upstaged. These kinds of distractions can be difficult for an audience member to ignore. Also, even if you can handle mistakes or failures with relative ease, practice with each of your props—especially microphones and audiovisual equipment, particularly when you use a lecture hall for the first time.

Exercises

1. Inventory your classroom needs for chalk, markers, overheads, pointers, slides, computer disks, handouts, and the like. What else is available and how could you learn about it? What else would help? Are you familiar with the equipment? Do other rooms have what you need? Could you get access to them?

2. Review your plans for a future lecture. What props would enhance your talk? What would be interesting for students to see and experience?

Lighting

Like the lecture hall itself, lighting is just there. You learn to deal with it, whatever you have. You may dim the lights for slides or films, or try to counteract the effect of bright sunlight. Lighting can certainly affect what students see on the board or the overhead projector, especially if they're in the back of the room. Yet, teachers typically have little control over the lighting in their classrooms. Minimally, you can always discipline yourself to check with your students about adjustments that might help them. Even though you don't have elaborate lighting equipment, we still believe there are lessons from the stage that you can use to enhance the learning of your students.

Lighting for stage and screen receives a great deal of attention. Most theatres, even amateur ones, enlist the help of someone who's experienced in all aspects of lighting. While written scripts may include some indications, the director and lighting designer are really on their own. Most often, the lighting designer, in consultation with the director, designs a "light plot" and hangs and focuses the lighting instruments, experimenting with different color filters. Considerable time goes into determining and recording the necessary lighting cues. At least one technical rehearsal is devoted to setting lighting levels and cues with the actors on stage.

Stage lighting serves various functions, impacting visibility, emphasis, and mood. The primary function of lighting, of course, is visibility — the audience needs to see the actors' faces. The lighting designer, however, will modify the lighting according to the need for emphasis. The most brightly lit actor draws the most audience attention; observe, for instance, how the follow spot on the lead singer in a musical comedy makes him or her stand out from the chorus.

In theatres today, the darkened auditorium and brightly lit stage direct the focus toward what's happening on stage rather than in the audience. This convention did not become established in the theatre until the nineteenth century; in prior periods of history, audiences were more active, even vocal, shouting out approval or disapproval of the performance, and often coming to the theatre as much to display themselves and inter-

act with their friends as to pay attention to the play. Darkening the auditorium contributed to the transformation of the audience into quiet and passive observers. If you as a teacher rely heavily on dimmed classrooms for slides, films, or videotapes, we suggest you think about the potentially parallel transformation of your students into passive learners.

Creation of mood is the most innovative aspect of lighting design. Common sense shows us how the quality of light affects human emotions. Think, for instance, of how a bright, sunny day can raise everyone's spirits, while dull, overcast skies often have the opposite effect. Lighting designers can manipulate the intensity, direction, and color of stage lighting to create a brooding, malevolent atmosphere for *Macbeth* or a sentimental, romantic mood for a musical comedy love scene.

Given the elaborate equipment that stage designers have at their command, you may see little if any parallel with what you have at your disposal in the classroom. Yet designers in many small theatres achieve impressive effects with few instruments or dimmers but considerable ingenuity. Certainly the principles of visibility and emphasis apply to teaching and learning. For example, spotlights trained on the podium can help keep the focus on the lecturer. A darkened room can augment the impact of slides, film, and television. Some mixture of lighting may serve best for showing overheads. Turn on the lights in the auditorium to encourage questions and discussion — more active involvement from your students.

Creating mood poses a problem in many classrooms. If you have a choice of classrooms, opt for one with plenty of windows and natural lighting, a space where you feel comfortable, alive. Fluorescent lighting has its critics. If you can find a classroom with incandescent lights, grab it! You may not have much choice, but exploring and asking can't hurt. On nice days, consider holding class outside. It's amazing what ingenious and determined faculty members can accomplish, both within and outside the formal rules. Remember that your enthusiasm in class is quite contagious and speaks volumes to students about your interest in the material. Beware if your own enthusiasm is depressed by a "dungeon" of a room.

Knowing what's possible where lighting is concerned may be the biggest challenge for you. While considering what aspects of lighting might impact a presentation, look more carefully at student experience. When Bill Timpon requires presentations in his classes, he often encourages the students to be creative — to think first about learning and then, if appropriate, use lighting as a tool. Given this license, students often light

the classroom space in new ways, and their presentations improve accordingly. Your modeling a variety of possibilities can help.

Exercises

1. Take a few minutes to reflect on lectures you've witnessed that have made effective use of lighting to enhance your learning. Conversely, which lectures have been distracting because the lighting was too bright or too dim?

2. Think about an upcoming lecture and what changes you could attempt to make with lighting, no matter how subtle. Use a penlight for focusing attention on slides or overheads. Get to know the lighting options you have in your classroom(s). For example, some rooms allow you to light the board while dimming the lights everywhere else.

3. Get in the habit of checking regularly with your students about the kinds of lighting that help them learn most effectively.

Costumes

Costume design serves important functions in the theatre. Costumes help establish the historical period when a play takes place. Costumes also delineate character, illustrating the social and economic status of each role as well as the individual's personality and tastes. Costume historians argue that all clothing is costume. Clothing provides a means of communicating the "persona" or role a person assumes — the way he or she wants to be perceived by others. Actors discover that merely putting on their costumes helps to transform them into their characters because they feel different in costume. Costumes also affect bearing, posture, and movement. It's hard to play Queen Elizabeth I in jeans!

So what about you? What does costume mean outside the theatre? While we don't espouse the "dress for success" philosophy, we do want to raise your awareness about the choices you have and the potential impact of your clothing on your students and their learning. What you wear may affect how students perceive you. Your clothing can make you the powerful, distant professional or the casual, friendly adult. Everyone notices and smiles when Halloween gives some teachers and students permission to be more playful and dress in costumes, providing relief from the routine of campus life. As you explore the different roles you play in the classroom, think about your own "costuming."

If you're working on changing your role, remember that how you dress can also affect how you feel and behave. A favorite outfit can add some class to the first or last day. Older and more comfortable clothes might make it easier for you to conduct a demonstration or take your students outside on the grass. Students' willingness to join in may also depend on the clothes *they* are wearing, so you should forewarn them of what activities you plan for future class sessions. When working hard in class, Bill Timpson takes off his sport coat or sweater, loosens his tie, or rolls up his sleeves. At the end of the session he often feels a bit like that great soul singer, James Brown — the "hardest working man in show business" — who leaves the stage exhausted, his jacket draped on his shoulders, in a *Cold Sweat* after a charged rendition of *I Feel Good*.

To get more insight into how your clothing impacts your students' learning, look at your student evaluations. Do students see you as distant and intimidating? If so, might a more informal style of clothing help? If you're planning on lecturing about someone from the history of your discipline, see if you can use some clothing from that era to give students a sense of the time and place—a hat or wig, a jacket, accessories, makeup, or even a complete outfit if you can find one. Leigh Ann Wheeler, an assistant professor of History at Bowling Green State University, wore a Victorian costume—complete with corset and bustle—while teaching a class on "Women in the Modern United States" at Rollins College. Observing Leigh Ann's restricted movement and her struggle to get her breath in that corset, her students found the oppression of women embodied in fashion of the period coming to life for them. Now able to imagine how the feminine body felt and moved in the nineteenth century, they were eager to delve into the readings about Victorian women, who at first had seemed far away and perhaps irrelevant to them. Costumes, then, can not only be fun, but also can serve as an important stimulus for learning.

Exercises

1. Take a few minutes and reflect on lecturers you've seen whose clothes or costuming added something, no matter how subtle. Were you ever thrown off by what a lecturer wore?

2. Think about an upcoming lecture and what impact a change in your usual costume could have on it. Try some ideas for laughs. Students appreciate humor. The resulting variety could provide a counterweight to the seriousness and work your course might usually require.

Notes

Most published scripts are designed so that actors, directors, and other stage personnel have plenty of room to make written notes in the margins. These notes become reminders and cues for study and rehearsal. Successful productions are never left to chance, especially when the additional anxiety of performing in front of an audience can block actors' memories and cues — unless they are overlearned. With complete confidence in your command of the material for a particular class, you can concentrate more on reactions from students: who seems alert and who seems confused, who may have a question and who's prepared to respond, who could use a hint and who might be on the verge of an important insight.

The marginal notes a lecturer might use include last-minute updates or comments about current events, ideas about student involvement, responses to questions that arose in previous class sessions, hints about material to be emphasized on the next exam, or announcements about relevant activities on campus. You can make similar use of notes so that you can remember, for example, to:

- Ask specific questions at certain points to probe student thinking and promote more active participation.
- Wait for students who may need a little more time to get their own thoughts together, especially in the very public arena of the classroom.
- Use a visual of some sort — an overhead, a video, or a slide.
- Have students complete a short written response and try to put ideas or solutions into their own words.
- Move to areas of the room you often neglect.
- Poll the entire class on certain issues — e.g., “How many of you believe the best response is _____?”

Notes can also help you connect one class session to another. While you've been concentrating on preparing for class, your students, as we mentioned earlier, come from any number of other activities — other classes, chatting with friends, sleeping, eating, even studying! Taking some time at the beginning of each class to remind them of your most recent points and where the day's lecture will go can be very helpful as a warm-up and orientation. You also can make notes about ideas you'd like to apply

when the course is offered again—topics you'd approach differently, other examples you'd like to use, or activities that might help resolve the kinds of confusion students experienced this time around.

Exercises

1. Take out some recent lecture notes. Think about what happened in class. What could you have noted that might have helped in the next class period?
2. After the next class session, take a few minutes to reflect on what happened and what you might do differently next time—how you began, what sparked the most interest, where students seemed to lose interest or miss the plot, what you should revisit in future classes, who participated and who did not, and what students learned.
3. Talk to your colleagues and find out who makes notations in the margins of their notes. How do these comments help them?

Impact on Students

In the theatre, a production is not a production until it plays before an audience. While a poor production is quickly forgotten, a good one will engage an audience and a great one is memorable. Unfortunately, there are no guarantees; despite the best of intentions, a good cast of characters, considerable expense, and a lot of hard work, some performances just never catch on with audiences. Hollywood history is full of big-budget, star-studded box office busts. Consider Cimino's *Heaven's Gate*, Dustin Hoffman and Warren Beatty in *Ishtar*, or *Cutthroat Island* with Geena Davis. At last count, Kevin Costner's megabuck *Waterworld* may break even, but \$200 million plus?

Just as often there are *sleepers* — productions with low budgets and a cast of unknowns that come out of nowhere to spark a lot of audience interest and make a lot of money. *Pulp Fiction* was produced for a fraction of what it took in. *The Crying Game* surprised everyone, as did *Chances* and *I Know What You Did Last Summer*. How about the cult classic, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, or the black comedy about GM's closing of the Flint, Michigan assembly plant, *Roger and Me*?

The same is true for teaching. Your students can tell you, either directly or through a variety of nonverbal signals, whether or not they're en-

gaged intellectually or emotionally. An experienced lecturer can often *read* a class and make necessary modifications to his or her presentation along the way. You're not tied to your lecture notes as actors are tied to their scripts. Indeed, you have the freedom to improvise and create as you go.

Bill Timpson remembers fondly one of his own professors who would briefly stop her lecture when she noticed any drowsiness. It was a late-afternoon graduate class, and most of those enrolled had already worked a full day. Instead of fighting the problem or giving up and dozing on and on, she would just stop and get all of the students on their feet for a few stretching exercises. What a terrific way to re-energize a group! Once back in their seats, Bill remembers, the students were much better able to listen, absorb, and participate actively.

But how do you know what to do? How do you sense the need? You watch. While you lecture, make eye contact. Don't stay buried in your notes. Listen carefully for sounds that indicate restlessness — for coughing or shifting in seats. If you sense your students are beginning to fade and drift off, you then have choices. If your production is bombing, you can change your performance style.

For example, you can stop and take a break of some kind. Or you can alert everyone to hang in there for a bit longer so that you can finish something. You can ask for reactions. You can provoke a discussion with a question or comment. Or you can shift to some other active option for which students must write something in class or join small groups to discuss key points. You might have a simulation ready to move into, or a role play. It might be a good time to practice some skill in class. The fundamental question has to be: what's the use of going on as planned if too many students have disengaged? A number of potential remedies exist, but they all begin with your awareness of the students' degree of intellectual and emotional engagement.

Exercises

1. Try supplementing the more typical end-of-course student evaluations with other forms of feedback. Interview students along the way. Ask your students to take a few minutes periodically to assess particular classes. What worked? What didn't? What could have made the class better?

2. Invite one or more of your colleagues to give you some feedback to balance what you get from your students.

We've suggested a number of lessons from the stage that can enliven both your scripting and performance of lectures. Remember, however, that in theatre, no matter how good the script, a lackluster performance leads to a flop. As Sarason (1999, 133) points out, the same holds true for the classroom:

Between the script and the audience is a performing artist whose artistry determines to what extent the audience will be stimulated, moved, energized, and responsive, or unmoved, disinterested, bored, disappointed, disillusioned, eager that the occasion should end. No one disputes that in regard to the conventional performing arts; everyone regards that as a glimpse of the obvious. But when it comes to teaching as a performing art, it is another story, the central theme of which is that teachers convey information and demonstrate and supervise the acquisition of skills. ... [A] classroom that recognizes little or not at all the artistry a teacher should have or the fact that each student has an individuality which, if not recognized and nurtured, makes the classroom a frustrating, boring place

We urge you to hone your performing skills, to view your students not just as spectators but as fellow cast members, and to make each lecture a "hit".