



ACT'N OUT

In the 1960s Augustus Boal developed a new approach to Arena Theatre the blurred the lines of actor and spectator; whereby audience members could stop a performance and suggest different actions for the actors, who would then carry out the audience suggestions. In a now legendary development, a woman in the audience was so frustrated by an actor who could not understand her suggestions that she came on stage and began to play the role herself. For Boal, this was the birth of the "Spect-actor" and his theatre was transformed. He discovered that through this participation the audience became empowered not only to image change, but to practice that change, reflect collectively on the suggestion, and thereby become empowered to generate social action. Theatre became a practical venue for grass-roots activism. While some people make theatre," Boal said, "we are all theatre."

In this activity, student divide in to groups of 4-5 students create and act out small skits in public spaces that embody the different forms of oppression we have experience.

On the way to eliminating oppression, each oppressed group has to undo the internalized beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that stem from the oppression so that they can build unity and power among people in that group, support its leaders, feel proud of its contributions and develop strength and organize. The forms of oppression are an Interrelated System. It should be clear that none of these four aspects of oppression can exist separately; each is completely supported by the others. It should be clear that any attempt to dismantle oppression should include an element of challenge at all four levels to truly result in change.

Ideological: The very intentional ideological development of the ...isms

Examples: dominant narratives, "Othering"

First, any oppressive system has at its core the IDEA that one group is somehow better than another, and in some measure has the right to control the other group. This idea gets elaborated in many ways—more intelligent, harder working, stronger, more capable, more noble, more deserving, more advanced, chosen, superior, and so on. The dominant group holds this idea about itself. And, of course, the opposite qualities are attributed to the other group—stupid, lazy, weak, incompetent, worthless, less deserving, backward, inferior and so on.

Institutional: Is demonstrated in how institutions and systems reinforce and manifest ideology

Examples: media, medical, legal, education, religion, psychiatry, banking/financial

The idea that one group is better than another and has the right to control the other gets embedded in the institutions of the society, the laws, the legal system and police practice, the education system, hiring practices, public policy, housing development, media images, political power, etc. When a woman makes 2/3 of what a man makes, it is institutionalized sexism, When 1 out of 4 African American men are in jail or on probation, it is institutionalized racism, etc. Consider that dominant culture also controls the language itself used to describe all groups in society and can make things visible or invisible when necessary.

Interpersonal: The way we play violence out on each other, based on oppression

The idea that one group is better than another and has the right to control the other, which gets structured into our institutions, gives permission and reinforcement for individual members of the dominant group to personally mistreat individuals in the targeted/oppressed group. Interpersonal racism is what white people do to people of color up close—the racist jokes, the stereotypes, the beatings and harassment, the threats, the whole range of personal acts of discrimination. Similarly, interpersonal sexism is what men do to women—the sexual abuse/harassment, the violence directed at women, the sexist jokes, ignoring or minimizing of women's thinking, etc. Many people in the dominant group are not consciously oppressive. They have internalized the negative messages about other groups, and consider their attitudes towards other groups quite normal.

Internalized: How we internalize the ideological ideas of oppression

Internalized oppression means the oppressor doesn't have to exert any more pressure, because we now do it to ourselves and each other. The fourth way oppression works is within the groups of people who suffer the most from the mistreatment. Oppressed people internalize the *ideology* of inferiority, they see it reflected in the *institutions*, they experience mistreatment *interpersonally* from members of the dominant group, and they eventually come to *internalize* the negative messages about themselves. Oppression always begins from the outside of the oppressed group, but by the time it gets internalized, the external oppression need hardly be felt for the damage to be done. If people from the oppressed group feel bad about themselves, and because of the nature of the system, do not have the power to direct those feelings back toward the dominant group without receiving more blows, then there are only two places to dump those feelings—on oneself and on the people in the same group. (HORIZONTAL VIOLENCE) Thus, people in any target group have to struggle hard to keep from feeling heavy feelings of powerlessness or despair.

Sources of Inspiration:

Grassroots Institute for Fundraising

<http://www.grassrootsfundraising.org/>

Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed

<http://ptoweb.org/aboutpto/>

THE AMERICAN DREAM

Monopoly is considered the leading proprietary game in the Western Hemisphere. Published in 43 countries, most cadets will have familiarity with the game. The objective of the traditional game is based on one primary rule to “. . . become the wealthiest player through buying, renting, and selling property.” Monopoly represents a simulation of a significant feature of a capitalistic political economy and when played can help highlight the experiences of living in the Western world. However, one assumption of the rules of the game is that everyone begin equal--\$1,800. This version of the game *Modified Family Monopoly* accounts for the socio-economic error and distributes income according to different classes—capitalist, upper middle, lower middle, working, and working poor and underclass to more robustly represent class distributions in the United States. Other rules are also stratified along class lines.

Figure 10.5 The U.S. Social Class Ladder

Social Class	Education	Occupation	Income	Percentage of Population
Capitalist	Prestigious university	Investors and heirs, a few top executives	\$1,000,000+	1%
Upper Middle	College or university, often with postgraduate study	Professionals and upper managers	\$125,000+	15%
Lower Middle	High school or college; often apprenticeship	Semiprofessionals and lower managers, craftspeople, foremen	About \$60,000	34%
Working	High school	Factory workers, clerical workers, low-paid retail sales, and craftspeople	About \$35,000	30%
Working Poor	Some high school	Laborers, service workers, low-paid salespeople	About \$17,000	16%
Underclass	Some high school	Unemployed and part-time, on welfare	Under \$10,000	4%

Source: Based on Gilbert and Kahl 1998 and Gilbert 2003; income estimates are modified from Duff 1995.

Each participant receives a purse with the following amounts of money (Do not tell players how much other players receive) and is told where their family lives and where they are can buy property.

Beginning Salaries:

Underclass $\$100 \times 3 = \300

Working Poor $\$170 \times 3 = \410

Working $\$350 \times 3 = \$1,050$

Lower Middle $\$600 \times 3 = \$1,800$

Upper Middle $\$1250 \times 3 = \$3,750$

Capitalist $\$10000 \times 3 = \$30,000$

Buying Property:

Underclass SES can buy the purple and the light blue properties;

Working SES can buy lower SES and maroon and orange properties;

Middle SES can buy lower and working SES properties, red and yellow properties, utilities and railroads;

Capitalist SES can buy any properties it can afford.

If an SES family lands on a property that is for sale but is ineligible, they may purchase the property if they pay a \$200 Missing Family Support tax. The Missing Family Support tax pays for babysitters, transportation, travel to family gatherings... and other things that residents have access to when in close proximity to family. If they decline to purchase a property, the property is auctioned off to the highest bidding eligible SES status. Bidding runs in increments of \$10.00.

Passing Go Salaries: Salaries are a major feature of *Monopoly* and they are obtained by passing "GO." When a family passes GO, the

Underclass SES receives \$85;

Working SES receives \$130;

Middle SES receives \$150;

Capitalist SES receives \$200.

Taxes and Jail: Any status landing on the corner "Free Parking" spot must pay a flat tax fee of \$200 each time. Similarly, when landing on "GO TO JAIL," Underclass SES must go directly to jail and remain there until doubles are rolled; Working SES must go directly to jail, but can pay \$50 to get out on the next or any of the following turns or remain there until doubles are rolled; Middle SES must go directly to jail and roll greater than 7 to be released or pay \$50 on any following turn. Capitalist SES immediately rolls the dice and if an even number turns up, they do not have to go to jail. If an odd number turns up, they go to jail but can roll again immediately. If the second roll is greater than 7, they are released; if less, they must remain until a number greater than 7 is rolled or pay \$50 on any following turn.

Outside of the above specified rules, all other *Monopoly* game rules apply. The course instructor is the bank. Finally, the contravening of a rule by any player (voted on by referendum by all players playing rolls that are 18 years or older) sends a status to jail get out of jail rules then apply. Three violations constitute expulsion from play com