

THE EFFECTS OF INVOLVEMENT IN A THEATRICAL PRODUCTION  
ON THE BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS OF PARTICIPANTS

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This research project assessed the effects of involvement in a theatrical production on the beliefs and behaviors of participants in regards to the social issue that the performance piece created by participants centered on. Participants were college students who worked together to create and perform an original piece of theater about discrimination and prejudice on their campus. Their beliefs and behaviors in regards to discrimination and prejudice on campus were assessed prior to the beginning of the creation of the piece of theater and following the performance of the piece for a live audience. Collected data was analyzed to determine what changes, if any, had occurred in the beliefs and behaviors of participants, the extent of these changes, the extent to which these changes could be associated with involvement in the project, and participants' perception of these changes and their causes.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Theater productions occur all the time in a wide variety of venues and circumstances. From low budget community theater productions to elaborate and expensive shows on Broadway, audiences experience theater both as entertainment and as art. They also experience it as a form of education. Many artists and production companies choose theater as a vehicle to share messages of social and political natures or to educate audience members about people or situations with which they may be unfamiliar. Due to the very visceral and experienced nature of theater, a theater production can be incredibly moving and have a lasting impact on audiences. The production of a piece of theater, as well as the process leading up to the production, can also have a profound impact on the ensemble creating and performing the piece. This is especially evident in the production of original works, such as the type of work created through devised theater.

Devised theater is a unique type of performance art in that, unlike more traditional theater productions, work does not begin with a script, a director with a vision of what the show will look like, and a cast with assigned roles. Devised theater instead consists of a group of individuals working collaboratively to create an original piece of theater. The group may begin with a theme, a message, or a story. The script is then created as a part of the process, in a group effort. Technical and design aspects of the production are created in a similar fashion, with group input and a gradual development over the course of the production process. Over all, the process is an organic and flexible one that

involves much discussion, experimentation, and collaboration. Through the process, the performing company works together to create an original piece of theater that they then perform for an audience.

My personal experience with devised theater consists primarily of devised theater coursework during my undergraduate career as a theater major in addition to my involvement in a devised theater production as a stage manager and co-director. The production drew on interviews with college students who had served in the armed forces in Iraq as well as their friends and family members in order to create a performance piece that told the stories of what these veterans experienced both in Iraq and upon returning to the United States and attempting to resume their civilian lives. While I anticipated a strong audience reaction to this piece, specifically an increased awareness of these experiences and heightened empathy for these veterans, I did not anticipate how strong the reaction of the production company would be. In addition to the awareness and empathy audience members indicated experiencing after the performances, members of the production company not only learned a great deal, but became invested in doing something with their knowledge and empathy. They felt that it was, to some extent, their responsibility to strive for change.

Through my involvement in that production, it became apparent to me that since the process of creating devised theater is such an involved one for the performance company, and since they are very likely to become deeply invested in the piece itself as both its performers and its creators, the piece can potentially have more of a deep and lasting impact on company members than traditional works of theater. In devised theater,



company members have the opportunity to learn, grow, become invested, and be profoundly affected by the material they work with as they wrestle with it and shape it into something to present to an audience. If the material worked with is something that involves addressing a need for social change, it seems likely that in addition to the effect of the piece on the audience, there is a great catalyst for social change occurring within the performance company itself.

My stance as a symbolic interactionist adds to this assessment in that I feel confident that it is the collaborative interaction of the production company that can lead to these changes. I lean toward the Chicago school of thought in my assumptions regarding the ever changing nature of individuals as they encounter novel situations and navigate through them. I firmly believe that we are shaped by our interactions with others and that it is our perceptions of others and our interpretations of their gestures that determine our courses of action. To me, a vital part of this interpretation stems from empathy. It is our understanding of why someone takes an action and our understanding of how our own actions will affect them that guide us in our decision making. While this occurs constantly in our everyday lives, it is also mirrored in the way a devised theater production company collaborates to create a performance piece that is intended to create a reaction in an audience.

This research project assumed that since actors, during the course of creating and performing a piece about a social issue, would not only be learning about situations and people that may be unfamiliar to them but portraying them for others as well, their beliefs and behaviors in regards to those people and situations might change as a result of their

involvement in the theater production. This research project set out to explore the occurrence and extent of these changes. This research is incredibly relevant due to the implications it holds. Theater is sometimes used to present a message to an audience and to instill in them a desire to contribute to change. There is potential, though, for it also to be used to inspire, motivate, and educate members of a production company who work to create and perform an original piece of theater. Given the intense engagement of a theater company in the production of a performance, it seems likely that devised theater in particular can have a positive impact on the way members of the production company think about social issues, can affect the way they interact with others around social issues, and can make them more likely to become involved in pushing for social change around these issues. This research set out to assess the extent to which this might occur over the course of a production process by assessing what changes, if any, were made to the beliefs and behaviors of production company members in regards to the social issue that the performance piece was centered around.

This research project was motivated by the perception that if involvement in a theatrical production can have an impact on the beliefs and behaviors of members of the production company in regards to a social issue, devised theater productions could be used in a number of positive ways. They could be used in educational settings as an alternative to other methods of learning. Students in a classroom setting could create an original piece of theater about an assigned topic. This might lead to a greater level of investment in the material that is to be learned. Devised theater productions could also be used in an effort to modify problematic beliefs or behaviors. Participants could become

better informed about issues or groups of people as well as gain greater understanding of these issues and of others. Social issues such as racism and sexism could be addressed in this way. Devised theater productions could also be used to battle apathy. People who are willing to acknowledge the existence of an issue but not act upon it might be motivated to become involved after involvement in a theater production that addresses the issue.

In order to explore the potential uses of devised theater productions as this type of educational tool, this research study was designed to assess the beliefs and behaviors of members of a devised theater performance company made up of college students in regards to discrimination and prejudice on their campus as they went through the process of creating and performing a devised theater piece based on and around their observations and experiences of instances of discrimination and prejudice. Assessments of participants' beliefs and behaviors in regards to the discrimination and prejudice they observed and experienced were conducted prior to the beginning of the project and after the final performance of the piece. It was anticipated that over the course of this devised theater process, company members would learn more than they knew previously about experiences of discrimination and prejudice as they shared their individual observations and experiences with one another and would come to identify discrimination and prejudice in ways novel to them as they worked to turn these observations and experiences into a piece of theater. It was also expected that participants would feel a personal connection with issues pertaining to discrimination and prejudice as they took on roles and portrayed characters and stories connected to instances of discrimination and prejudice and furthermore, become more engaged with the social issue as they shared it

with others in the form of a performance. It was also anticipated that in addition to changes in the company members' beliefs, the devised theater experience would affect their actions in regards to how they responded when they observed and experienced instances of discrimination and prejudice on their campus and in general.

It was my hope that the results of this research study would be consistent with these expectations, providing support that involvement in a devised theater production might have great potential as an educational tool in helping to bring about social change on an individual level. It was anticipated that if results of the research study did indicate that involvement in a theatrical production affects participants' beliefs and behaviors regarding the social issue that the performance piece was centered around, the process of creating original pieces of theater could be implemented in a variety of circumstances in the future. Theatrical productions could be used as tools to educate members of a production company, modify their behavior, and motivate as well as prepare them to become involved in working to bring about social change. If the process in this particular research study affected participants' beliefs and behaviors in regards to the social issue that the performance piece was centered around, it was expected that similar productions focused on different issues could have a similar impact on participants. It was hoped that this research project would provide both evidence of this possibility and serve as a model for future productions and future research.

CHAPTER II  
LITERATURE REVIEW

**Section 1: Introduction**

I began my search of the existing literature by seeking out the ways in which people incorporate theater into education and research. I discovered that theater is being used in education in two ways. Aspects of theater, such as role play, are incorporated into education in order to augment students' learning. Theater in its entirety, in the form of performance pieces, is also incorporated into education in order to present information to students in an engaging way. Likewise, I found that theater is being used in social science research in two ways. Some researchers use theater as a method of validating their research by turning their data into performance pieces that are then shared with their respondents in order to gauge the validity of their conclusions. Other researchers use theater as a method of disseminating their findings to the public in an engaging way, much like educators use theater to share information with their students.

This initial review of the literature led to a further review with a focus on why theater is used in these ways by educators and researchers. This inquiry regarding the reasons behind the power of theater in education and research led to a number of conclusions. Theater is powerful because it appeals to a broad audience, is capable of presenting both reality and the imagined in an engaging way, and evokes strong emotional responses. The discussion of theater and emotion was rich enough to merit further exploration, with emphasis on both the emotional journey of the performer and

the audience and a focus specifically on the empathy that is the result of engagement with a character, whether that engagement comes in the form of performance or observation.

Finally, my research about theater, its power, and its uses led me to an exploration of the existing literature that deals with theater as a catalyst for social change. Based on the literature, it is apparent that theater can bring about change in both performers and audience members. Furthermore, these changes can occur not only on a personal level, but on a broader societal level as well. The reasons these changes are possible are the same reasons that theater is powerful and that it is currently being implemented in educational and research settings.

This literature review is organized in such a way that it first considers the power of theater in its capacity to evoke emotion, empathy, and insight into the human condition (section two). Then the link between theater and emotion is explored in greater depth (section three). Next, the ways in which theater is used in educational settings is discussed (section four), followed by a discussion of the ways in which theater is used in social science research settings (section five). Then the ways in which theater can act as a catalyst for social change are described (section six). The literature review concludes with a brief summary of the key points found in the existing literature that most closely relate to this particular research project.

## **Section 2: The Power of Theater**

Anyone who has had the opportunity to sit, silent, breathless, and captivated, through a particularly moving and well produced performance of theater can attest that it is an incredibly potent art form with the potential to leave a profound and lasting impact

on an audience. This potency stems partially from theater's appeal to a broad audience and the emotional reactions it invokes in that audience. The fact that theater can place both reality and fantasy on a stage for observation contributes to that potency as well. Furthermore, through the presentation of people, places, and times that an audience is unfamiliar with, theater is powerful in that it can lead to knowledge, understanding, and novel perspectives, and with these new perspectives can come education, research, and social change.

From an elementary school holiday pageant to a historically accurate performance of King Lear at The Globe Theatre, theater productions draw in a vast array of audience members of differing ages, beliefs, and backgrounds. It is an art form that appeals to and entertains a broad spectrum of people (Saldana, 2003; Sparkes, 2003; Kushner, Burnham, Paterson, Fung, O'Neal, Uno, Pope, 2001). Part of this appeal lies in the way an audience member is allowed to interpret and reinterpret as the story they are watching unfolds. Bochner & Ellis (2003) assert that the perceptions of the audience shape the piece just as much as the artists' intent. In addition to the interactive aspect of interpreting theater, audiences experience strong emotional reactions as well. Theater is able to evoke wide ranges of emotions and to do so very intensely due to the live nature of the art. (Bagley, 2008; Saldana, 2003; Sparkes, 2003). Audience members are watching real people in real time as the performers of a piece convey motivations, emotions, experiences, and reactions right in front of them. Through the performance of theater, audiences experience an art that they react to emotionally, aesthetically, and intellectually

simultaneously (Bagley, 2008; Bochner & Ellis, 2003; Saldana, 2003). This experience can be a very powerful one that has a lasting impact.

Just as theater appeals to a broad public, it can address a broad number of themes and issues. Theater productions can range from completely realistic to entirely fantastical. This allows for the transportation of an audience to other times and places, real or imagined (Bagley, 2008, Kushner et al., 2001). Furthermore, a theater production can defy conventions and subvert norms, encouraging an audience to question their assumptions (Bochner & Ellis, 2003; Murdock, 1980; Kushner et al., 2001). It can also present potential alternatives, encouraging an audience to consider other possibilities as they watch them play out on stage (Bagley, 2008; Bochner & Ellis, 2003; Murdock, 1980; Kushner et al., 2001). By not being hampered with reality, there are no limitations to what an audience can be exposed to through theater. Bagley (2008) describes this exposure as the audience members becoming voyeurs into lives and stories that may be entirely novel to them.

This exposure to the previously unknown can lead to a number of changes in audience members. Bochner & Ellis (2003) state that this is because through their interpretation of a piece of theater and their reaction to the actions and beliefs of characters, audience members are led to recognize their own perceptions and feelings. Understanding of others can be increased as well as an audience engages with characters they may never have had the chance to in their real lives (Bochner & Ellis, 2003; Bagley, 2008; Sparkes, 2003; Kushner et al., 2001). Perhaps the most important potential impact theater can have on an audience, though, is the increased empathy that can result from



this increase in knowledge. Through their interaction with characters, an audience's perceptions can be altered, awareness can be raised, and humanization of others can occur (Bagley, 2008; Saldana, 2003; Sparkes, 2003; Kushner et al., 2001). Audience members may very well walk away from a theater production much more than simply entertained as theater is an art that possesses the power to change those who experience it, which is one of the reasons it can be implemented in education, research, and promoting social change.

### **Section 3: Theater and Emotion**

Emotion plays a large role in the power of theater in that a performance can evoke a powerful emotional response in an audience. Not only does theater have a lasting impact on the emotions of audiences, though, but on performers as well. Actors, through their training and experience, are able to become privileged emotion managers, which is an important benefit of theater but by no means the only one. In addition to managing their own emotions, actors experience high levels of empathy through their experiences with theater. Audiences experience empathy as well, and it is this empathy in both performers and audiences that can lead to success when theater is utilized in education, research, and social change.

Involvement in theater is beneficial to performers in a number of ways. Timmons (1945) argued that through experience performing, actors gain helpful skills such as voice and diction improvement, acquisition of vocabulary and information, and increased poise and physical presence. Additional benefits of performing theater include increased self-confidence, self-expression, understanding, and critical thinking (Hayes & Rinehart,

2008; McLennan, 2007; Nimmon, 2006, Timmons, 1945). Perhaps more important, though, is the experience managing emotions that performers gain. Emotion management is a vital part of our everyday lives and actors are especially practiced at it. Hoschild (1983) maintains that we are all constantly striving to regulate how we feel in an attempt to align our feelings with accepted social norms. As actors work towards creating their portrayal of a character, they explore in great depth the emotions and experiences of that character using techniques they have learned that allow them to be able to authentically reproduce those emotions for an audience (Bandelj, 2003; Metcalf, 1931). Through this work creating characters, actors become privileged emotion managers (Orzechowicz, 2008; Timmons, 1945). They have access to specialized resources that allow them to excel at evoking and suppressing feelings, including training and experience gained through both rehearsal and performance. This heightened level of emotion management makes actors not only successful performers, but also contributes to their ability to manage emotions in their personal lives, allowing them to successfully cope with the feeling rules Hoschild (1983) asserts we are all constantly being subjected to.

Empathy is perhaps the most powerful emotion that can be evoked through theater. While it is experienced by audience members, it begins with and is also experienced by performers. Metcalf (1931) describes how an important part of creating a character and bringing it to life on stage is imagining the mental states of that character in a method that is both intellectual and emotional. Bodenhom & Starkey (2005) elaborate on this idea by positing that actors must develop a thorough enough understanding of the character that they can portray it for an audience, and part of that understanding entails

accepting the reality of that character. In addition, actors develop a sense of closeness and empathy with the roles they take on and the experiences they portray (Hillbrand, Hawkins, Howe, & Stayner, 2008; McLennan, 2007). All of this preparation sets up the performer for the successful and authentic portrayal of a character. It also provides the performer with greater understanding and empathy for actual people in circumstances similar to those of the character (Hillbrand et al., 2008; Dow, Leong, Anderson, & Wenzel, 2007; Kraus, 2008; Howard, 2004). This empathy can become a powerful catalyst for change.

Similar to the way empathy develops in a performer as a character develops, empathy develops in an audience member as a character is observed (Mienczakowski, Smith, & Sinclair, 1996; Munro, Selman, Esmail, & Ponzetti, 2007; Saldana, 2003). This is because, as Ponzetti, Selman, Munro, Esmail, & Adams (2009) establish, an audience has both an intellectual and an emotional response to a piece of theater. The emotional response an audience has to a piece of theater is shaped by their personal experiences, and if the performance speaks to their personal experiences, they will experience a high level of empathy (Konijn, 2000; Nimmon, 2006; Ponzetti et al., 2009; Stuttaford, Bryanston, Hundt, Connor, Thorogood, & Tollman, 2006; Cocke, 2001). This empathy leads to reflection on one's own actions as well as the actions of others (Howard, 2004; Mienczakowski et al., 1996, Stuttaford et al., 2006). Metcalf (1931) posits that this level of empathy is unmatched in any area outside of theater. This empathy has great potential. If an audience can be presented with situations that resonate with them and encourage them to analyze similar situations in their own lives, they can gain insight and become

better informed in addition to being spurred to take action where they had not considered taking action before, which can lead to social change, as addressed in Section 4.

#### **Section 4: Theater and Education**

Aspects of theater are currently being utilized in education in a number of ways. Part of the reason for this is that theater incorporates group learning and role-play, both of which are effective methods of learning. In addition to using aspects of theater, though, educators can incorporate theater in its entirety into education. Whether it be a high school sex education course or a training program for medical professionals, people have had great success with theater as a mechanism for teaching and shaping people and behaviors. This is due in part to the aspects of theater that make it a powerful venue for disseminating information, including its appeal to a broad audience, ability to evoke powerful emotional responses, and capacity to present both reality and possibilities in an engaging manner.

Group, or collaborative, learning improves both problem solving and critical thinking skills (Cooper, Cox, Nammouz, & Case, 2008; Lang, 2007). It does this in part because it is an enjoyable process that provides a cooperative environment in which students can feel comfortable and thrive (Flynn, 2004; Lang, 2007). Perhaps more important than the factor of pleasure, though, is the active role students are able to take in their learning though working collaboratively and independently, to some extent, of the teacher (Laitinen, Ettore, & Sutton, 2006; Swaak, de Jong, & van Joolingen, 2004). Another aspect of group learning that makes it so effective is the way students are forced to examine their own standpoint and defend it when confronted with differing standpoints

in group members (Cooper et al., 2008; Hayes & Rinehart, 2008; Visschers-Pleijers, Dolmans, Wolfhagen, & Van Der Vleuten, 2004). As Hayes & Rinehart (2008) point out, we better know something if we have to communicate it, which entails reflecting on what we know and organizing it logically. An additional benefit to group work is the way it can lead to increased independence, confidence, and the empowerment that comes upon the discovery that one can have an impact on the thinking of others (Laitinen et al., 2006; Lang, 2007).

Role play is an effective mode of learning because it leads to an increased and deeper level of understanding through interaction with the material in an enjoyable experience that has a lasting impact (Kraus, 2008; McCaffree & Matlack, 2001; Ponzetti et al., 2009; Hillbrand et al., 2008). It is an experiential learning process in that it allows students to act out situations and potential responses that, while they may not have experienced personally, are identifiable to them. This exposure to novel viewpoints and experiences not only leads to a broader understanding, but also to sensitization and empathy (Kraus, 2008; Hillbrand et al., 2008; Bodenhorn & Starkey, 2005; Howard, 2004). Another important aspect of this experience is that role play creates a safe and risk free space for this to occur without the fear of a poor decision reaping harsh consequences (Kraus, 2008; Munro et al., 2007; Ponzetti et al., 2009). Once a student learns about potential actions that will bring about positive consequences, though, they can be applied to real life situations (McCaffree & Matlack, 2001; Munro et al., 2007; Kumagai et al., 2007; Ponzetti et al., 2009). In addition to this knowledge of consequences, Howard (2004) discusses the knowledge students gain that they are

capable of producing knowledge and change, which causes them to become empowered and confident. In addition to all of this, after role-play, students find it easier to discuss potentially touchy subjects since they have new ways of referencing material (Howard, 2004; Munro et al., 2007).

In addition to incorporating group learning and role play into educational settings, some educators are choosing to utilize theater performances in order to educate an audience. This stems from the emotional impact theater can have on an audience and the ability of theater to present a vast number of possibilities on stage. Theater provides concrete examples of abstract concepts and experiences in an emotionally compelling way that is accessible to a broad audience (McLennan, 2007; Ponzetti et al., 2009; Stuttaford et al., 2006). In addition to accessibility, as a performance art, theater presents a learning experience that is enjoyable (Flynn, 2004; Kumagai et al., 2007; Lang, 2007; Munro et al., 2007). This is crucial because when an audience is emotionally engaged and entertained, they are more open and receptive to learning and the impact of the performance can be long lasting (Lang, 2007; Munro et al., 2007; Ponzetti et al., 2009). Part of the engagement of theater comes from investment of the audience in the outcome. When an audience identifies with the world on stage they can see their world reflected there and are not only invested but also view it in a new light (Hillbrand et al., 2008; Munro et al., 2007; Stuttaford et al., 2006). This observation of “their” world equips them for the future in terms of ability to discuss the subject matter of the performance piece more effectively, reflection upon their own past actions, and knowledge of potential alternative actions for the future (Fredland, 2010; Howard, 2004; Kumagai, White, Ross,

Purkiss, O'Neal, & Steiger, 2007; Munro et al., 2007; Stuttaford et al., 2006). Not only is an audience able to be educated through theater, but this education can result in changes in both beliefs and behaviors, which can incite both personal and social change.

### **Section 5: Theater and Social Science Research**

Theater is incorporated into social science research in a number of ways. It can be used to disseminate findings since, as discussed earlier, theater appeals to a broad audience, evokes strong emotional responses, and leads to increased knowledge, understanding, and empathy. Thus, some social science researchers choose to turn their collected data into performance pieces in order to share their findings with the public. Theater can also be used as a way to validate findings. Once researchers look over their findings and draw conclusions, they can return to participants with a piece of theater based on their findings. With participants as an audience, the researchers can verify that their findings ring true with their participants.

Knowledge that is presented through theater is more powerful and effective than that presented through text because audiences react more viscerally to a performance than they do to text they read on their own (Gallagher, 2007; Nimmon, 2006; Stuttaford et al., 2006). Stuttaford et al. (2006) point out that a performance can also provide concrete examples of abstract topics and experiences that text alone cannot. Sparkes (2003) points out that additionally, a performance is accessible to a broader audience than text is. All of this contributes to the fact that performances of data have a catalytic power that other forms of reporting data do not (Nimmon, 2006; Sparkes, 2002; Stuttaford, 2006).

In addition to being a powerful way to disseminate data and impact recipients of knowledge, theater allows for the dissemination of data in unique ways as well. This is due in part to the fact that it allows for the use of multiple voices (Gallagher, 2007). Sparkes (2003) discusses how theater also protects anonymity of participants without reducing real life experiences to text that lacks the rawness and emotional content of the data. It also allows for the presentation of marginalized voices in a profound and powerful way (Alexander, 2001; Brosius, 2001; Nimmon, 2006; Stuttaford et al., 2006). Perhaps most importantly, performance pieces have the ability to present the world not as a static reality but as a reality in process, which means that in addition to data, future possibilities can be portrayed in a realistic way (Kondo, 2001; Nimmon, 2006). These possibilities encourage an audience to think critically both about the situations presented and about the ways they can respond to similar situations in their own lives (Nimmon, 2006; Stuttaford et al., 2006).

In addition to using theater to disseminate findings, researchers are using it to validate their findings. During her doctoral research, Conrad (2004) engaged a group of high school drama students in a rural Alberta community comprised primarily of an Aboriginal population. Conrad hoped that turning their experiences into performances in the form of skits would help the students reexamine them. She was interested specifically in their experiences with rule breaking, substance use, risky sex, and interpersonal conflict. In order to validate her conclusions after conducting her research, she brought scripts, which were a combination of fictionalization and transcriptions of students' work, back to the school where the research had taken place. Students who had not been



involved in the original research were able to verify for her that the scripts were authentic in that they represented tones, contexts, situations, character types, and voices that all rang true to them.

Similarly, Stuttaford et al. (2006) conducted research in South Africa, created a piece of theater based on their findings, and then presented it to participants in order to validate their findings. Their research focused on the investigation of the prevalence and social context of strokes in small communities in order to explore the growing problem of cardiovascular disease in rural Africa. Data regarding the lay understanding of strokes and their causes was collected via interviews in six villages. The researchers then turned this data into a performance piece that was performed in the six villages. During the performance, after the protagonist suffered a stroke his family members had to decide how to care for him. After each performance, the audience confirmed that the portrayal of family decision-making after a stroke occurs was accurate. Thus, the researchers' findings were not only disseminated but also validated through participant/audience confirmation.

### **Section 6: Theater and Social Change**

Singhal, Rao, & Pant (2006) discuss both first and second order change. First order change is a small shift in knowledge, attitudes, and practices that occurs within an unchanged system. Second order change is a fundamental shift in values or beliefs that can change the system. Both first and second order change are necessary to bring about social change, as first order change can lead to second order change. As Boal (2002) points out, once change takes place on the individual level, social change becomes possible and will occur if a critical mass of individuals embrace the change and raise

awareness regarding the need for change. Theater specifically leads to social change as it leads to both first order change in actors as well as audiences and second order change through that first order change.

Theater contributes primarily to first order change in that it is a rehearsal for real life experiences. Singhal, Papa, Sharma, Pant, Worrell, Muthuswamy, & Witte (2006) claim that the performance of stories through theater can help people learn new behaviors, clarify doubts, and overcome fears. In theater, actions are discussed and rehearsed, allowing for increased comfort with novel ways of reacting to familiar situations. Quinlan (2009) claims something along the same lines by asserting that potential solutions to problems are conceived, enacted, and tested during the course of a performance. Fredland (2010) adds that audiences are taught new ways to handle old situations and are given opportunities to observe situations being fixed. Moreover, this occurs in a safe environment where there are no real consequences of failure to resolve the situation effectively (Faigin & Stein, 2010; Fredland, 2010; Munro et al., 2007; Quinlan, 2009). The performance thus serves as a rehearsal for reality in that audience members can take away what worked and what didn't, leaving them better equipped to control similar situations in the future (Boal, 2001; Boehm & Boehm, 2003; Quinlan, 2009).

Some specific examples of this phenomena occurring can be found in the existing literature. Howard (2004) describes a body image project that resulted in participants who created a performance piece becoming better able to communicate more effectively about the topic because throughout their process of creating a performance piece they had been

rehearsing for real life as well as for the performance. The performance created a safe frame for discussion and the actors were then able to take what they had discussed outside of that frame. Involvement increased participants' self-awareness, understanding of others, comfort and confidence discussing the topic, and taught them that they could bring about change. Howard states that "the performance was a lens through which the performers could view their behaviors, (re)shape their identities, and consider the cultural implications of what they did" (p. 225).

Other examples can be drawn from research done on sexual education programs incorporating theater performances. Munro et al. (2007) discuss how performance pieces addressing sexual behaviors allow students to see their world reflected on stage and jump into that world in a safe and risk-free way in order to test and practice strategies they can later use in real situations. This empowers them and gives them both the tools and confidence needed to successfully communicate about the issues addressed by sexual health programs. Once discussion takes place in the forum of the performance piece, when students later talk about the piece they find it easier to engage in dialogue about a typically touchy subject. The authors found that not only did students enjoy the experience, but they identified with the performance and some later cited it as a cause for a change in sexual behaviors. McCaffree & Matlack (2001) found similar results that indicate role play as part of sexual education leads to altered behaviors of students in the future.

In addition to causing first order change, theater also leads to second order change. Singhal, Rao, & Pant (2006) claim that this second order change occurs through

modeling, the reframing of existing realities, and the enactment of new action and that it requires the creation of new stories that resonate with the existing reality but provide new solutions to old problems by giving alternative actions in regards to existing issues. The modeling and reframing of existing realities is possible due to the power of theater to present both fiction, nonfiction, and a blend of both, as discussed in section two of this literature review. This flexibility allows performances to show infinite possibilities for transformation (Nimmon, 2006). This presentation of possibilities leads to social change because it challenges everyday behaviors and attitudes and allows audience members to recognize their own and others' contributions to oppression (Mienczakowski, Smith, & Sinclair, 1996).

The creation of new stories that resonate with an audience and their existing reality is possible due to the nature of the empathy an audience feels when confronted with a piece of theater, as discussed in section three of this literature review. When audiences recognize themselves and their experiences on stage, they also recognize when change is needed (Boehm & Boehm, 2003; Faigin & Stein, 2010; Mienczakowski et al., 1996). Similarly, when their awareness of the plight of others is increased, they also recognize a need for change (Boehm & Boehm, 2003; Faigin & Stein, 2010; Nimmon, 2006). Quinlan (2009) argues that theater can be used to foster transformative change due to the fact that art is accessible to all because it relies on situation and aesthetics rather than technical expertise and because the language of theater is gestures and actions, which have embodied meanings. This appeal that theater has to a broad audience was addressed in sections two and five. Finally, theater has great potential for social change

because audiences engage with the material in unique way when it is presented as art, gaining access to a closed world, which leads not only to a powerful way to disseminate research findings, but also to a greater potential for transforming social understanding than is possible with textual presentation of material (Stuttaford et al., 2006). This aspect of theater is also discussed in section five of this literature review.

### **Section 7: Conclusions**

A review of the existing literature indicates that theater is powerful for a number of reasons. It appeals to a broad audience, can be used to present an authentic reality as well as altered realities, and evokes strong emotional responses. The strongest of these responses comes in the form of empathy, which is experienced by both performers and audiences. This empathy goes hand in hand with the capacity of theater to present situations and characters that people are unfamiliar with in that both performers and audiences can be exposed and sensitized to people and experiences that they have not personally encountered. Additionally, both performers and audience members can be encouraged to examine their own beliefs and behaviors through analysis of the beliefs and behaviors of characters.

The power of theater, combined with my own experiences with theater in general and specifically devised theater, led me to pursue a research project involving it. I had the opportunity to be involved during my undergraduate career as a theater major in a devised theater production based on the experiences of college aged veterans who had served in Iraq. My experiences during that production corroborate the literature in regards to the empathy that both performers and audience members can gain when exposed to

people and experiences novel to them. As a result of that production, both actors and audience members gained a much greater understanding of what life was like for these veterans. Specifically, a sense of empathy was developed through learning about their experiences. The lasting impact that that particular production had on both myself and others encouraged me to incorporate devised theater into this research project.

A review of the existing literature also reveals that theater is a successful tool to be implemented in education for the very reasons that is powerful. Since it appeals to a broad audience and evokes emotional responses, it is an engaging way of exposing students to information in a manner that makes it likely that they will retain that information. Since it promotes empathy and possesses the capacity to explore both reality and possibilities, theater enables students to experience novel situations and people in a safe way. Thus it serves as a rehearsal for real life. Theater exercises, through collaboration and performance, also allow students to discover that they can have an impact on the beliefs and behaviors of others. Additionally, engaging with the material that appears in a piece of theater gives students a safe framework for the discussion of issues that enables them to more effectively talk about issues later on outside of the context of the piece of theater.

For these reasons, I felt confident that a research project which involved theater would not only be enjoyable for participants, but also produce positive outcomes. I wanted participants to be more involved and engaged in the research topic than simply discussing it would allow for. I also hoped that participants would gain confidence in addition to empathy, which seemed likely based on the existing literature. As they

grappled with the issues and worked towards turning them into a performance piece, they would be rehearsing for real life in that they would be accumulating ideas and language to have at the ready should an occasion similar to one addressed in the performance piece arise. Finally, I anticipated that based on both the literature and my experiences with theater, the act of performing for an audience would be an empowering and positive experience for participants.

The literature also indicates that theater is a powerful tool to be implemented in social science research. It can be used to disseminate findings in a powerful way since it appeals to a broad audience in an engaging way that evokes emotional responses, specifically empathy. It allows for multiple voices and maintains anonymity of participants without reducing their experiences to text. It also allows for the depiction of alternatives and realities, which encourages audiences to analyze their own situations. Theater can also be used to validate research when it is used to present findings to participants in order to verify that situations, people, and responses are being authentically portrayed.

This aspect of the literature informed my research project in that I anticipated participants being comfortable sharing their personal observations and experiences when that sharing took the form of turning their observations and experiences into performance pieces, thus making them anonymous; the audience would have no way of knowing if the experiences being presented to them were the participants' own. This allows participants to express themselves with more freedom. It also allows for creative license and the shaping of real life observations and experiences into fictionalized accounts in order to

convey the desired point or idea. The fact that theater allows for multiple voices also provides an opportunity for participants to share a wealth of data with an audience, drawn from their own observations and experiences but from elsewhere as well.

Finally, the literature indicates that for the very reasons that theater is both powerful and effective as a research and an educational tool, it is able to be used as a catalyst for social change. The current literature reveals that theater brings about first order change by serving as a rehearsal for real life. Both performers and audiences are exposed not only to novel situations, but also to novel ways of handling familiar situations. Both are also better equipped to discuss issues dealt with in pieces of theater as they have a point of reference during discussion. This first order change can then lead to second order change once enough individuals recognize that change is needed and alter their behaviors accordingly.

This aspect of the literature had the greatest impact on the design of this research study. I anticipated that first order change would come about in terms of altered beliefs and behaviors of participants as a result of the project serving as rehearsal for real life. As participants shared and explored observations and experiences, they would be exposed to situations new to them. In addition, by incorporating these situations into a performance piece, they would be discovering and testing novel ways to respond to them. As a result of the highly collaborative nature of working together to create a performance piece, participants would engage in discussion, leaving them better equipped to discuss the social issue outside of the group in the future. I hoped that evidence of these changes in beliefs and behaviors would be captured in participants' exit interviews. Evidence of



second order change, though, would be impossible to collect. Therefore, I limited the scope of this research project to measuring the changes in beliefs and behaviors of participants in regards to a social issue as they created a performance piece based on their observations and experiences in regards to that social issue.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### **Introduction**

Research study participants were recruited to work as an ensemble to create a piece of original, devised theater stemming from their observations and experiences of a social issue on the Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) main campus.

Discrimination and/or prejudice was chosen as the social issue for this research project since these are broad social issues that are experienced in many different ways by many different people and the direction of the piece as well as the subject matter was to be left up to participants as much as was possible. After participants worked together to create this performance piece, they performed it on campus for audiences. Participants were current IUP students aged eighteen years and older. Further demographics will be discussed in Chapter IV. A pre-post assessment was used to understand the degree to which participation in the ensemble and the resulting production influenced the beliefs and behaviors of participants in regards to discrimination and/or prejudice on campus. This assessment took the form of individual entrance and exit interviews that were recorded and then transcribed. Data analysis will also be addressed in Chapter IV.

This project was conducted in conjunction with a grant from the Frederick Douglass Institute of IUP as well as with the support of the IUP Department of Theater and Dance. The grant provided funding for the production and publicity of a piece of theater on the IUP campus that addressed issues of diversity. The support of the Department of Theater and Dance consisted of professional mentoring, the use of

facilities and technical theater resources, and assistance with technical theater aspects as well as the publicity of performances. This research study consisted of four phases: recruitment of participants, devised theater workshops, creation of an original performance piece, and performance of the original performance piece. Data collection took place between phases one and two and after phase four.

### **Phase One: Recruitment of Participants**

The initial phase of the project involved informational meetings open to all students that were publicized on campus by hanging flyers, on the internet by creating a Facebook event, and through email by contacting student organizations with members who would potentially be interested in becoming involved with a project such as this one. Additionally, email notifications were sent out on a campus-wide list-serve. Please see Appendix A for samples of this publicity. Two informational meetings were held on campus on differing days of the week in order to allow as many interested parties as possible to attend. These meetings served to inform students about what the project would entail. Contact and availability information as well as age were collected from students who wished to participate in the projects at these meetings in order to determine eligibility.

The target number of participants was no less than six and no more than fifteen. This target range was determined by the size of group it was felt would be most manageable as far as scheduling and working together to create and perform an original piece of theater. Sixteen students attended the two informational meetings and eleven of the sixteen expressed an interest in being involved in the project. Ten of the eleven were

selected to participate. Participants were selected to participate in the project based solely on availability. This availability was obtained via potential participants filling out a contact sheet at the informational meetings if they wished to be involved in the project. This contact sheet was also used to verify that potential participants were current students over the age of eighteen. Please see Appendix B for this contact sheet. One of the ten students who were selected to participate dropped out of the project due to an unexpected scheduling conflict between the informational meetings and the entrance interviews. Nine participants were involved in the project for its duration. All participants were current IUP students aged eighteen and older. Participant demographics are further explored in Chapter IV.

### **Phase Two: Devised Theater Workshops**

The second phase of the project took the form of devised theater workshops designed to familiarize participants with one another and with various aspects of storytelling through performance art. It was anticipated that by the completion of the second phase participants would feel comfortable converting personal experiences and observations into brief performance pieces. It was also hoped that they would have developed a repertoire of techniques to call upon in order to achieve this. These workshops took place on campus in multiple locations and consisted of four two hour sessions. The exercises and activities incorporated into these workshops were drawn from the researcher's background and education in theater.

### **Session One: Working with text from The Princess and the Pea**

This session was intended to introduce participants to group work and storytelling and dealt with a lighthearted and familiar subject matter in order to ease them into it.

1. Participants were provided with the text of The Princess and the Pea fairytale and split into small groups. They then performed the text as a group while seated and experimented with volume, tempo, pitch, and the number of voices speaking. After each performance, participants discussed which methods were most and least effective at conveying the story and why they were effective or ineffective.
2. Participants were split into new small groups and performed the story using only their bodies. They experimented with movement, stillness, physical levels, rhythm, and spatial relationships. After each performance, participants discussed which methods were most and least effective at conveying the story and why they were effective or ineffective.
3. Participants were split into new small groups and performed the story using a combination of vocal and movement techniques they had observed during the first two sets of performances. After each performance, participants discussed which methods were most and least effective at conveying the story and why they were effective or ineffective.
4. Participants performed the story as one large group incorporating the most effective aspects of storytelling that they had observed and discussed during the first three sets of performances.
5. At the end of the session participants individually reflected and recorded their thoughts.

### **Session Two: Working with definitions of discrimination and prejudice**

This session was intended to get participants thinking about the concepts of discrimination and prejudice while continuing to experiment with group work and storytelling.

1. Participants were provided with multiple definitions of discrimination and were split into small groups. They conveyed their own definition of discrimination using only their voices and the words from the definitions. After each performance, participants discussed which methods were most and

least effective at conveying the definition and why they were effective or ineffective.

2. Participants participated in a vocal percussion exercise that began with them using their voices to create improvised rhythms and melodies made up of random sounds. They then continued the exercise using words and phrases from the definitions rather than random sounds. Participants then discussed observations.
3. Participants were split into new groups and provided with multiple definitions of prejudice. They conveyed their own definition of prejudice using only their voices and the words from the definitions. They experimented with tempo, pitch, rhythm, and the number of voices speaking at once. After each performance, participants discussed which methods were most and least effective at conveying the definition and why they were effective or ineffective.
4. Participants were split into two groups and conveyed the definition of discrimination using both their bodies and voices but only words from the definitions provided. They experimented with repetitive motion, stillness, and speaking in unison in their performances. After each performance, participants discussed which methods were most and least effective at conveying the definition and why they were effective or ineffective.
5. Participants were split into two new groups and conveyed the definition of prejudice using both their voices and bodies. They included changes in tempo, echoing and mimicking, and contrasts in speed in their performances. After each performance, participants discussed which methods were most and least effective at conveying the definition and why they were effective or ineffective.
6. Participants each wrote two suggestions for vocal and/or movement methods down on slips of paper. They were then split into two new groups, each of which drew half of the suggestions. Groups then created and performed short pieces incorporating the suggestions and discussed their observations.
7. At the end of the session participants individually reflected and recorded their thoughts.

### **Session Three: Cooperative theater games**

This session was intended to assist with building a cooperative and collaborative group dynamic while allowing participants to continue playing with vocal and physical methods of conveying emotions and stories.

1. Participants played “Yes, and...”, an improvisational theater game where pairs decide how they will solve a given problem by replying to one another's suggestions by agreeing with the suggestion and then building upon it.
2. Participants played “Mirror Images” and then “Sculptor”, improvisational theater games where locations and emotions are conveyed through silent, guided physical movement.
3. Participants played “Circle Sound Pass”, an improvisational theater game that involves the quick passing of individually chosen sounds on a given theme around a circle from person to person.
4. Participants told collaborative one word stories in different sizes of groups. During this exercise, each person in turn adds one word to the story and the group attempts to tell a cohesive tale through collaboration. Participants then tried the exercise with their eyes closed and without a given order. They then improvised spoken stories as a group while experimenting with aspects such as sound effects, narration, and echoing.
5. Participants were split into groups and each drew a playing card that signified their rank in relation to everyone else. They improvised scenes while maintaining the rank assigned to them by the value on their playing card. This exercise was repeated numerous times with given situations for the improvised interactions to take place in.
6. At the end of the session participants individually reflected and recorded their thoughts.

### **Session Four: Movement theater games**

This session was intended to get participants moving freely and creatively around the space while they experimented with methods of physical expression.

1. Participants played “Yes, lets!”, an improvisational theater game where one person shouts out an activity and everyone else responds by shouting “Yes, lets!” and then pantomiming that activity.

2. Participants played “Outrageous Travel”, a follow the leader game where the first person in line moves about the space in a creative way while making a noise then moves to the back of the line so that there is a new leader.
3. Participants built “Sound Machines”, an exercise where each individual in turn links with the group in order to combine their individual repetitive motions and sounds into one machine.
4. Participants created “Melting Statues”, an exercise where individuals create still statues with their bodies that convey a given emotion and then morph those statues into different poses that portray another given emotion.
5. Participants created a “Sound Corridor”, an exercise where one individual, with eyes closed, walks between two lines of people making sounds. Participants then reflected on their experiences and the connotation of different types of sounds.
6. Participants “Filled the Space”, an exercise where individuals walk around the room, filling the empty space as best they can, while instructions are called out. Instructions can consist of varying tempo and physical levels, conveying relationships, emotions, and motivations, transitioning between locations, and quickly forming groups of an assigned number.
7. Participants were split into two groups and created then performed short pieces that incorporated activities and methods from the various games and exercises earlier in the session. They experimented with varying physical levels, proximities, and tempos, unison and contrasting movements, repetition, and mimicking.
8. At the end of the session participants were asked to individually reflect and record their thoughts.

### **Phase Three: Creation of an Original Performance Piece**

The third phase of the project consisted of participants sharing their observations and experiences of instances of discrimination and/or prejudice on campus with one another in order to eventually move towards creating their original performance piece. As participants shared their observations and experiences, they explored them in order to draw out similarities and themes. They then began experimenting together using



performance pieces in order to synthesize these observations and experiences. This phase of the project culminated in revising and shaping what had been created into a single performance piece to be performed for an audience. This process took place in multiple locations on campus and consisted of eight two hour sessions.

### **Session One: Turning instances of discrimination into brief performance pieces**

This session was intended to get participants started on turning their observations and experiences of discrimination into performance pieces by drawing on what they had learned during the devised theater workshops.

1. As a group, participants created a comprehensive list of all of the reasons that could be thought of that people are discriminated against.
2. Participants were split into small groups and, drawing on the initial discussion and the devised theater workshops, created performance pieces that illustrated an instance of discrimination. Following each performance, participants reflected and discussed the performances.
3. The small groups created performance pieces that illustrated the thought processes of both the discriminator and the discriminated against. Following each performance, participants reflected and discussed the performances.
4. The small groups created performance pieces that illustrated both the short and long term impacts of the instance of discrimination. Following each performance, participants reflected and discussed the performances.
5. The small groups created performance pieces that illustrated alternatives that could have occurred in place of the instance of discrimination. Following each performance, participants reflected and discussed the performances.
6. The small groups created longer performance pieces that compiled aspects from all of their brief performance pieces. Following each performance, participants reflected and discussed the performances.
7. At the end of the session participants individually reflected and recorded their thoughts.

8. Participants were asked to bring to the next session three written descriptions of instances of discrimination drawn from either their observations or experiences.

### **Session Two: Turning observations and experiences of discrimination into performance pieces**

This session was intended to allow participants to share their own observations and experiences of discrimination as well as to allow them some creative control on an individual level.

1. Participants each wrote down a stereotype. These were randomly handed out to all participants, who then improvised scenes with an unknown stereotype taped to their back. After the scenes, participants reflected and discussed how they were treated and how they had treated others based on these labels.
2. Participants were split into small groups and each person was given the opportunity to direct their group in the creation of a brief performance piece based on one of the three examples of discrimination they had brought in. Following each performance, participants reflected and discussed the performances.
3. At the end of the session participants were asked to individually reflect and record their thoughts.
4. Participants were asked to bring to the next session three written descriptions of instances of discrimination drawn from the media.

### **Session Three: Turning instances of discrimination in the media into performance pieces**

This session was intended to allow participants to explore instances of discrimination in the media as well as to continue to allow them some creative control on an individual level.

1. Participants were split into small groups and each person directed their group in the creation of a brief performance piece based on one of the three examples of discrimination they had brought in. Following each performance, participants reflected and discussed the performances.

2. At the end of the session participants individually reflected and recorded their thoughts.

#### **Session Four: Synthesizing instances of discrimination from observations, experiences, and the media**

This session was intended to get participants thinking about the similarities between their observations and experiences of discrimination as well as to begin the process of coming to a consensus on themes to be addressed in the final performance piece.

1. Participants were split into small groups and, drawing on the performance pieces from sessions one through three and the devised theater workshops, created performance pieces that addressed multiple examples of instances of discrimination drawn from the instances discussed, observations, experiences, and the media. Following each performance, participants reflected and discussed the performances.
2. Participants were led in a group discussion of emerging themes.
3. At the end of the session, participants individually reflected and recorded their thoughts.

#### **Session Five: Discussion and exploration of emerging themes**

This session was intended to get participants to come to a consensus on at least some of the ideas that they wanted to present to an audience in their final performance piece and to start the process of turning those ideas into that final performance piece.

1. Participants were led through a recap of the group discussion from the previous session. Further group discussion was led as to emerging themes. Themes that were decided upon included: the internal response of feeling compelled to speak up when observing acts of discrimination versus the inclination to externally respond by ignoring or avoiding the situation, little acts of discrimination can have a large impact on the person being discriminated against, and discrimination can be eliminated through greater awareness of others.

2. Participants were split into small groups and created performance pieces based on the theme of the contrary internal and external responses to acts of discrimination. Following each performance, participants reflected and discussed the performances.
3. At the end of the session participants individually reflected and recorded their thoughts.

### **Session Six: Continued exploration of emerging themes**

This session was intended to be a continuation of the previous session.

1. Participants were split into small groups and created performance pieces based on the theme of little acts of discrimination having a big impact on the person being discriminated against. Following each performance, participants reflected and discussed the performances.
2. Participants were split into small groups and created performance pieces based on the theme of discrimination being eliminated through gaining a greater awareness of others. Following each performance, participants reflected and discussed the performances.
3. At the end of the session participants individually reflected and recorded their thoughts.

### **Session Seven: Planning for the final performance piece**

This session was intended to allow participants to make some decisions regarding the final performance piece so that the remaining sessions of the project could be used to create and rehearse the final performance piece.

1. Participants were led in a group discussion that addressed several questions: What messages do we want to convey in our performance piece? What aspects of the devised theater workshops and performance pieces we have created so far do we want to incorporate into our performance piece? What do we want the audience to walk away thinking and talking about? How can we keep the audience interested and captivated? Where should we perform? How should we publicize our performance piece? What should we call our performance piece?

2. At the end of the session participants individually reflected and recorded their thoughts.

### **Session Eight: Structuring the final performance piece**

Between sessions seven and eight, I created a rough outline of my proposed structure for the performance piece. My proposal was drawn from the performance pieces created by participants as well as their discussion and recorded reflections. Session eight was intended to appraise participant reactions to this proposal and work with them to revise it as necessary so that work could begin on the script for the final performance.

1. Participants were led in a group discussion of the proposed structure of the final piece. Over the course of the discussion, it was decided that the final performance piece would take the form of a television broadcast, complete with advertisements for products, a children's show, a game show, and a documentary. Other aspects that were to be incorporated into the piece were the idea that the little things have a big impact and the idea that everyone discriminates.
2. Participants were split into small groups to start working on aspects of the final performance piece. The aspects were rotated through the small groups so that everyone had an opportunity to work with each one.
3. At the end of the session participants individually reflected and recorded their thoughts.

### **Sessions Nine and Ten: Polishing the final performance piece**

These sessions were intended to finalize the script for the final performance piece. Small groups continued to work on rotating individual aspects of the final performance piece. Periodically, groups would perform what they had so far and participants discussed what was working and what was not. Once I felt that sufficient progress had been made on all of the aspects, participants were asked which aspects they most wanted to work on and then were assigned to small groups responsible for creating the script for that

particular aspect. I then compiled these scripts and printed copies in preparation for our dress rehearsals. The script in its entirety can be found in Appendix C.

The piece began with participants telling jokes about various people being denied service in a bar. These jokes started out fairly ridiculous. For example, “A mushroom walks into a bar. The bartender says, ‘We don’t serve your kind here’ and the mushroom says, ‘Why not? I’m a fungi!’” They then took a turn for the offensive, however, referencing, for example, fags, towelheads, and retards in an attempt to get the audience to realize that even “funny” jokes have a basis in reality. Participants were repeatedly struck during the creation process by observations brought in by others that seemed unreal to them and wanted the audience to likewise experience this sensation of being surprised by the things people say in all seriousness.

This opening segment was followed by the first of four advertisements for imagined products that served as commentary both on how people behave in close minded ways and how they sometimes simply avoid things that make them uncomfortable. The first of these was a selective hearing aid, which allows you to simply tune out those who disagree with you rather than engaging them in discussion. Other products included disguises, perfumes, and safety spray. The disguises make it easy to hide aspects of your true identity in order to avoid potentially awkward situations. The perfumes attract just the person you need to help you through any given situation and highlight the assumptions people make about others. The safety spray alerts you to people who differ from you so that you can simply avoid them. Participants hoped that these

brief “commercial breaks”, scattered throughout the piece, would encourage the audience to reflect on the behaviors and assumptions of both themselves and others.

Six “The Little Things” segments were also interspersed, which highlighted how seemingly small and inconsequential acts of discrimination, generally discriminatory comments casually made in passing, could build up and eventually have a lasting negative impact on those being discriminated against. Each participant drew from examples of discrimination that arose during group work to create a reoccurring character that appeared multiple times in the production. Over the course of the piece each character was shown interacting with others who made assumptions about that character or questioned their identity claims. For example, one participant chose to illustrate how people who identify as bisexual sometimes encounter others who feel they just need to pick one sex to be attracted to or that they are sexually promiscuous. During the sixth and final “The Little Things” segment, all of these earlier assumptions were repeated in rapid succession and were followed by the character’s wondering if others were more valid in their assessments of their identity than they themselves were. Participants hoped that these segments would demonstrate how the things people say without much thought or weight can have a large impact on others, especially when they occur repeatedly. This impact can be so great that it causes individuals to question themselves and their identities.

In addition to these short pieces, the performance piece included three longer segments: a retelling of popular fairy tales, a game show, and a documentary. In the fairy tale segment, the Big Bad Wolf was wrongly accused of various crimes (blowing down a

house, eating sheep, etc.) because others continuously make assumptions about him based on the fact that he is a wolf. Eventually, the Big Bad Wolf tires of constantly trying to prove these assumptions wrong and begins acting the way he is expected to. Participants intended to invoke a similar response in the audience with this piece as with “The Little Things”, but wanted to do so in a less realistic and more abstract way. To this end, they used fairytale characters in hopes that audiences would be encouraged to think more generally about assumptions and conforming to them rather than focusing on the specific assumptions being made.

The game show, “Truth and Dirty Dare” asked contestants to describe how they would react when confronted with acts of discrimination and then gave them the opportunity to follow through. Most contestants struggled to follow through with their described actions when actually faced with the discrimination. For example, one contestant, when asked how they would respond if a friend called something “so gay”, claimed that they would discuss with their friend why that is problematic. However, when confronted with their friend and their language, they instead said nothing. Participants created this longer segment to specifically illustrate the idea that while people feel they should address discrimination when subjected to it, actually doing so is very difficult for most people.

The documentary segment explored reasons people discriminate by presenting instances of discrimination and then interviewing the people who were being discriminatory. Women who remarked negatively on another woman’s appearance were revealed to be doing so in order to make themselves feel more attractive, homophobia



was presented as a behavior instilled early in children by parental beliefs, and discomfort with the construction of a mosque was revealed to stem from a fear of the unknown. Participants included this longer segment in order to explore some of the reasons that discrimination happens in an attempt to get the audience thinking about ways that discrimination can be reduced.

The performance piece ended with participants confessing to their own acts of discrimination. These confessions stemmed from group discussions and many participants chose to pull confessions from their own lives. Participants concluded the piece by admitting to the fact that they were all a little bit dirty and asking the audience how dirty they were. The intent here was to convey the idea that everyone discriminates. Participants hoped that confessing their own acts of discrimination would encourage the audience to examine their own lives. By highlighting the fact that everyone discriminates, participants allowed the audience to identify as discriminators, which is problematic, but in an environment that didn't immediately condemn them for admitting it. Participants hopes that the conclusion of the piece would leave the audience reflecting on their own actions and ways that they could change them in the future.

#### **Phase Four: Performance of the Original Performance Piece**

In the fourth and final phase of the project, participants rehearsed and performed their original piece of theater. Four dress rehearsals took place followed by two performances for live audiences. The performances were publicized by emailing the campus wide list-serve as well as student organizations and professors currently teaching courses that related to the subject matter, chalking and flyers on campus, a slide on the

campus television channel, and tabletop advertisements in campus dining facilities. A Facebook event was created and participants were encouraged to invite their friends, change their Facebook profile pictures to an image promoting the production, and to make announcements in their classes. The performances were also listed on both IUP and the Department of Theater and Dance calendars online. Please see Appendix D for samples of this publicity.

### **Data Collection**

Once participants were selected, they were contacted and one-on-one entrance interviews were scheduled. These interviews were confidential and took place on campus in an empty faculty office. Prior to the interviews, participants signed informed consent forms. These interviews were recorded and transcribed and were used to determine what beliefs and behaviors about discrimination and prejudice on campus participants were experiencing prior to their involvement in the project. Please see Appendices E and F for the informed consent form and the entrance interview questions.

Exit interviews were scheduled with each participant after the final performance of the piece. These one-on-one interviews were also confidential, took place in the same faculty office on campus, and were recorded, transcribed, and used to determine what changes, if any, had occurred in participants' beliefs and behaviors about discrimination and prejudice on campus over the course of the devised theater production process. Please see Appendix G for the exit interview questions. Data analysis will be discussed in Chapter IV.

## **Sociological Framework**

As discussed in Chapter I, my stance as a symbolic interactionist strongly influenced the design of my research study. I began with an assumption that individuals possess a self that, as Blumer and Mead describe, is a fluid product of adaptation and interaction, and that their actions are guided by interaction with others (Ashley & Orenstein, 1995; Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934; Wallace & Wolf, 1999). These interactions invariably go through multiple phases as one person acts, the other interprets their act and responds to it, and the response is then interpreted by the first person (Blumer, 1969; Powers, 2004; Wallace & Wolf, 1999). Essential to the interpreting that happens during these interactions is the act of role-taking, wherein each individual must attempt to understand the motivation behind another's action in order to properly attribute meaning to it (Ashley & Orenstein, 1995; Wallace & Wolf, 1999.) Individuals also must attempt to take the attitude of the other in order to determine their own course of action, since it is determined, through imaginative rehearsal, by how they believe the other will interpret and perceive it (Edles & Appelrouth, 2010; Powers, 2004).

The sociological framework for this research study can be summarized through four main ideas. The first of the ideas that I was working with is the existence of a fluid self, capable of change evoked by interaction with others. As I observed evidence of changes in beliefs and behaviors of participants, I attributed these changes to the interactions they were having as a part of the devised theater process. The second idea is that we are able to draw on symbolic meanings during these interactions that allow us to confidently interpret and respond to the actions of others. It is these symbolic meanings

that allow not only for the interpretation of actions in our everyday lives, but also for the presentation of new ideas to an audience during a theater performance.

The third and fourth ideas, those of role-taking and imaginative rehearsal, most specifically informed my research. Since role-taking in a purely cerebral sense is an essential component of interpreting and understanding the actions of others, it follows that role-taking in a literal, physical sense also leads to heightened understanding of others. The creation of a performance piece is made up of role-taking as actors explore characters and stories. It was my assumption that this role-taking would contribute to changes in beliefs and behaviors as it instilled greater awareness and empathy in participants.

Similarly, just as we are constantly imaginatively rehearsing our actions in an effort to achieve the most desirable results, members of a devised theater company are literally rehearsing actions. They, too, are testing how actions will play out in regards to the responses they will receive from others. While their rehearsed actions are the actions of the characters they are playing, it seems likely that that rehearsal carries over into their actions in their own lives as well. It was my assumption that, throughout the creation and performance of an original piece of theater, participants would also be rehearsing for real life and that this rehearsal might bring about changes in their behaviors outside of the scope of the performance piece.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

#### **Introduction**

The focus of this project was to assess the degree to which involvement in a devised theater production impacts the beliefs and behaviors of participants in regards to the social issue that is the basis for the performance piece being created. IUP students created and performed an original piece of theater about their observation and experiences of instances of discrimination and prejudice on campus. Their beliefs and behaviors around discrimination and prejudice were assessed at the beginning of the project in entrance interviews and after the final performance of the piece in exit interviews in order to assess if changes in these beliefs and behaviors had occurred and, if so, to what extent.

During phase one contact information, age, and availability was collected from all potential participants. After the selection of participants, one-on-one entrance interviews were conducted. These interviews explored each participant's perceptions of discrimination and prejudice on campus as well as any action they currently took in regards to discrimination and prejudice on campus. This data was used to determine the existing beliefs and behaviors of participants prior to their involvement in the project. After the final performance of the devised theater piece, one-on-one exit interviews were conducted that once again explored each participant's perceptions of discrimination and prejudice on campus as well as any action they currently took in regards to discrimination and prejudice on campus. During this exit interview participants were also asked to

reflect on how their beliefs and behaviors in regards to discrimination and prejudice on campus had altered over the course of their involvement with the project.

This data was used to determine what changes, if any, had occurred in participants' beliefs and behaviors over the course of the devised theater project, the extent of these changes, and the importance participants attached to these changes and their involvement in the project. This pre-post test method was selected for a number of reasons. The purpose of the entrance interview was to establish a baseline for participants. Understanding participant's beliefs and behaviors prior to the beginning of the project was necessary for analyzing any changes that might have occurred over the course of the production. The exit interview provided a look at any changes that had occurred in beliefs and behaviors as well as the extent of these changes. The similarity of questions in the preliminary and exit interviews allowed for easy comparison of answers. Questions in the exit interview regarding participants' reflection on the production process gave insight into how participants viewed any perceived changes in their beliefs and behaviors. All interviews were conducted one-on-one with participants in an empty faculty office on campus. They were digitally recorded and then transcribed. Participants were assigned a respondent number (R1 through R9). All data was labeled with this assigned respondent number rather than a name in order to eliminate any bias during analysis and to maintain confidentiality.

### **Data Analysis**

Transcribed preliminary and exit interview transcripts were analyzed in order to determine whether or not participants' beliefs and behaviors in regards to discrimination

and prejudice on campus had altered over the course of the project. More specifically, analysis attempted to discern what changes in beliefs and behaviors, if any, had occurred, the extent of these changes, the extent to which these changes could be associated with involvement in the devised theater production process, and participants' perceptions of these changes. Examples of evidence that changes in beliefs and behaviors had occurred include:

1. Participant perceptions of frequency of observations of instances of discrimination and prejudice on campus
2. Participant perceptions of frequency of experiences of instances of discrimination and prejudice on campus
3. Participant perceptions regarding discrimination and prejudice as issues that need to be addressed on campus
4. Participant actions upon observing instances of discrimination and prejudice on campus
5. Participant actions upon experiencing instances of discrimination and prejudice on campus

Examples of evidence of these changes being associated with involvement in the devised theater process and of participants' perceptions of these changes include:

1. Participant perceptions regarding the impact of involvement with the project on his or her beliefs regarding discrimination and prejudice on campus
2. Participant perceptions regarding the impact of involvement with the project on his or her behaviors regarding discrimination and prejudice on campus.

Once data was collected and transcribed, it was analyzed in order to determine which pieces of data constituted which types of evidence. I looked at all participants' responses to each individual question side by side in order to draw out both similarities and differences. Data was further analyzed for any trends that appeared, such as

heightened awareness of observations and/or experiences of instances of discrimination and prejudice, a shift in the perception of discrimination and prejudice as issues to be addressed on campus, and a change in likelihood to act or type of action taken in regards to observing and experiencing instances of discrimination and prejudice on campus. These trends were used to determine how effective involvement in the devised theater process was in changing the beliefs and behaviors of participants.

### **Demographics**

All participants were white. Five of the participants were female and the remaining four were male. Participant ages ranged from eighteen to thirty three years. Of the nine participants, one was eighteen, two were nineteen, two were twenty, one was twenty one, two were twenty two, and one was thirty three. One grew up in Indiana, PA, two grew up in what they described as small towns in Ohio, one grew up in a small town in Virginia, and the remaining five grew up in small towns in Pennsylvania. During interviews it was established that all of these “small towns” were similar to Indiana, PA (population of 14,000, including university) in size and diversity if Indiana had not been home to a college campus. Three of the nine participants currently lived in dormitories on campus and the remaining six lived off campus.

Participants were all currently enrolled students at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. They had been students at IUP for one to four years. Two were in their first year, four were in their second, two were in their third, and one was in their fourth. They came from a variety of majors, but there was a larger number of theater majors than of any other major. One participant was Pre-Chiropractic, one was Journalism and



Criminology, one was Philosophy and Biology, one was Communications Media, two were English, one was Theater and Marketing, and two were Theater.

All participants were involved in some sort of theater organization. Three of the nine participants were actively involved in the theater department on campus, three were involved in the local community theater, and the remaining three were involved in a student theater group on campus. The student theater group is one that incorporates community service. One participant involved in the student theater group was also active in both a nonprofit focusing on education opportunities and a campus organization focused on environmental activism and education. No other participants claimed membership in any organizations that are involved in any form of activism.

While I collected demographic information from participants, I chose not to focus on demographics during data analysis. Since the intent of my research was to determine whether or not changes in beliefs and behaviors of participants would occur as a result of their involvement in the project, I needed a clear picture of what they thought and how they acted prior to their involvement. Why they thought or acted in the ways they did, though, did not fall within the scope of my research. Therefore, I chose to neither analyze their responses in light of their demographics nor reveal their demographics with their responses. I did, however, use demographics to analyze how diverse or homogeneous the sample was in various respects, which is addressed in the limitations portion of Chapter V.

## **Broadening Definitions**

Participants were asked to define both prejudice and discrimination in both their entrance and exit interviews. Definitions of six of the nine participants broadened from their entrance to exit interviews. Their definitions became more all-encompassing and their lists of examples were drawn from a wider array of types of discrimination. R1 focused on sexuality and religion during the entrance interview but included a much longer list in the exit interview: “Discrimination is judging people on how they look or how they present themselves without really getting to know them. Religion, sexual orientation, outward appearance, black, white, blonde, redhead, if you're in a sorority.” R2 mentioned appearance and race specifically in the entrance interview but expanded the definition in the exit interview to include “circumstances or jobs”. R4 cited examples of race and gender initially but broadened the definition later: “Holding some kind of unwarranted belief about someone else. Preferring someone over someone else for pretty much some arbitrary reason or any reason really.” and went on to list gender, race, class, and upbringing.

R5 mentioned race, gender, appearance, and sexuality during the entrance interview in a fairly broad definition of discrimination but emphasized that it could be based on “any sort of difference” and included a longer list of examples in the exit interview: “It's a feeling of hatred towards somebody for a difference. Their personality, their appearance, any sort of difference. Racism, sexism, gender discrimination, discrimination against mental illness, sexual orientation, appearance.” R8 began with a definition that referred specifically to gender, age, and race but also later broadened the

definition to include appearance and actions: “Discrimination is actions and behaviors towards individuals based on differences discernible to the discriminator. Physical characteristics, skin color, gender, the way a person dresses or acts, anything that sets off flags that they are different.” Similarly, R9 referred to race and sex in the entrance interview but race, gender, religion, and choices in the exit interview, defining discrimination as “The act of singling someone out just based on who they are.”

Three of the participants' definitions did not significantly change over the course of the production. Their definitions were very broad initially. R3 defined discrimination as “when a lot of people think discrimination they think race, but it's not just race, it's everybody. People discriminate against social class and just being different. I guess the best definition I can come up with is people rejecting people that aren't like them.” Similarly, R6 defined it as “thinking differently of a person based on any sort of aspect of them that's different than any other.”

While their definitions did not significantly change, two of those three participants did include references to examples from the production in their exit definitions. R6 referenced one of the product ads from the production that stereotyped Jewish people. When asked for examples, R7 stated that “Most of the examples that come to mind are out of the production”, and then specifically referenced a stereotype addressed in the Little Things segments. Of the six participants whose definitions broadened over the course of the production, three included references to examples from the production in their exit interview definitions. R1 and R3 both referenced the documentary segment and R2 referenced one of the stereotypes addressed in The Little Things segments.

### **Knowledge of Groups on Campus**

During both entrance and exit interviews participants were asked if they were aware of any organizations on campus that dealt with issues involving discrimination and prejudice. Four of the nine participants could not list specific examples of campus organizations during their entrance interviews. Two of these four participants did mention examples in their exit interviews, these specific examples being The Safe Zone, a program designed to improve visibility and support to gay, lesbian, transgender, and bisexual students and employees, and Take Back the Night, a march to show support for victims and survivors of violence. Of the five participants who mentioned specific organizations in their entrance interviews, four mentioned no additional organizations in exit interviews. One mentioned an additional organization in the exit interview, which was the campus Women's Studies Club. Three participants expressed regret during their exit interviews that they were not aware of more groups. R3 stated "I wish I knew more organizations and I know there are some out there that deal with it. I feel like after all this I should but I don't. I don't. I feel really bad."

### **An Issue Needing to be Addressed**

In both their entrance and exit interviews, participants were asked if they thought discrimination and prejudice were issues on campus. Follow up questions asked if they needed to be addressed, and if so, how and by whom? During entrance interviews, two participants stated that discrimination and prejudice were not issues on campus, three stated that it was possible but that they were not sure, and the remaining four stated that

they were issues on campus. During exit interviews, all nine participants stated that they were issues on campus.

R1 is a particularly telling example of the change in views on discrimination on campus. During the entrance interview R1 said “I think IUP is one of the most accepting campuses. So, I don't see it so much here. I think we're more equal than most universities.” During the exit interview, though, in response to the same question R1 said “Yeah they are. It's hard to deny even if you can't think of exact instances there are so many. It's just really evident that it's here.” Similarly, R5 moved from thinking they were probably an issue to firmly declaring that they are an issue, originally stating “When I think about it, it probably is more of an issue than I think it at first glance. It's probably deeply rooted, like hidden well. It's probably little stuff. It's probably stuff that is more individualized toward one or two people.” but later simply stating, “Yes. With the students and the teachers and everybody.” In the entrance interview R9 said that while discrimination and prejudice were present on campus, they were not issues that needed to be addressed. However, when asked if they were issues on campus in the exit interview R9 said “Yeah. I think they lead to issues and they fuel arguments.”

Four of the nine participants stated that these issues needed to be addressed by everyone in both their entrance and exit interviews. R6 stated in exit interviews “I think everybody should be addressing the issues. Even if it makes you a hypocrite, like everybody discriminates.” In entrance interviews R8 said:

“Everybody should be to some degree. You can't really have a committee that runs around and raps everybody on the knuckles for being discriminate [*sic*], but it's everyone's obligation to perceive these things for what they are and to think about their own thoughts and actions as well

as other peoples and if necessary inform themselves as well as inform others.”

Similarly, in exit interviews R8 focused on the individual's impact on the issue:

“There are so many layers of what can be done for these sorts of things, you know, official sanctions and polices all the way down to little gestures by everyday people. But I think for the most part it's more towards the bottom end of the spectrum. I see it more as everyday people in everyday situations not being afraid to speak up and not being afraid to question themselves and to question people close to them as well.”

R9 expressed a similar sentiment in the entrance interviews, stating “I think it's society's responsibility- the people, not the administration. I think I should take it into my own hands. This is our responsibility to take care of one another. It's what humans do.”

Of the five participants who did not state that everyone needed to work to address it in the entrance interview, one stated during exit interviews that it is everyone's responsibility. This participant, R3, stated in entrance interviews that the responsibility fell to those who had an existing understanding of the issues:

“I think that people who really, really do understand what it means should be addressing it. I think you have to be able to really understand what these people are going through to really be able to know how it affects them. I just think that having people that know what they're talking about, having people who have understood it, who have been through it presenting it, they're going to give a more emotional feeling to it. They're going to be able to say I've been through this.”

In exit interviews, though, R3 said that every individual should be addressing it: “I think everybody from the time you're a teenager to even when you're in your old age. I think everybody needs to address it in any shape and wherever you can.”

Five of the participants did not mention addressing the issue by raising awareness during their entrance interviews but did stress the importance of this during their exit

interviews. R2 said “I think maybe if people were made aware or I think some people are afraid to ask questions and I think if the door were open or if people knew that it is ok to go ask somebody. I think some people are afraid to ask or they don't know how to. Come and open that door of communication.” R4 specifically mentioned educating students about false assumptions: “If there was just a way to give all people the opportunity to learn more about it. I guess discussing why some assumptions are usually false.” R6 stated the importance of keeping people focused on the fact that it's there. R8 expressed a need “to let it be more open and something that gets talked about.” R9 advocated raising awareness with small acts that “shine light on people who don't notice it”.

Four of the nine participants indicated in exit interviews that it should be addressed in the way that we as a group had worked to address it. R1 stated “I think the route that the play took was one of the best because it did it in a funny way but it showed people that sometimes the things we say does lead people to have a self-fulfilling prophecy or it can lead to suicide or acts of violence toward others.” R3 referenced using various mediums of art, including theater, to raise awareness. “I think everybody needs to address it in any shape and wherever you can whether it's in a blog or in a performance or in a song or in poetry, you know any way they so chose to do it. Just being able to go out there and confront it and say something about it alone is doing something enough.” R5 referenced the production as raising awareness but went on to say that alone is not enough. “First off, there's the awareness, and we did that. But there has to be things to back it up. You can't just point out something without doing something about it.” R9

discussed the success of the production in raising awareness, specifically mentioning the response of a professor who attended a performance:

“I think we did a pretty good job of doing it. Honestly, I didn't really think our show was going to have any impact. I thought it was just going to be in one ear and out the other. I thought it was going to be oh, these are artsy fartsy kids and they're just going to be doing whatever just to do it, but I don't know, I think it took Rick Kemp coming up to talk to me, almost crying, and saying thank you guys for stepping up and addressing these issues because it gives me hope for the future. And I don't know, I think that gave it- that gave the situation meaning for me. So I think if we just do little things it might actually help. It might shine light on people who don't notice it.”

### **Observations of Discrimination and/or Prejudice\_**

During entrance interviews participants were asked if they had ever observed discrimination and/or prejudice on campus. During exit interviews participants were asked if they had observed discrimination and/or prejudice on campus during the past month (the duration of the project). If participants had observed discrimination and/or prejudice on campus, they were asked how they responded during both the entrance and exit interviews.

Eight of the nine participants had observed instances of discrimination and/or prejudice on campus during entrance interviews. Based on exit interview responses, all nine participants had observed them on campus during the course of the production. Furthermore, every participant indicated that they had either observed these instances more often over the course of the production or that they had just noticed them more often because they were more aware. Six participants specifically said that they had observed these instances more frequently and four participants specifically said that they



were more aware of instances of discrimination and/or prejudice since beginning work on the project.

R1 stated in the entrance interview that “For the most part I think IUP is a very open minded school. I really haven't seen much of it. I've seen a lot of ignorance but I don't think there was enough anger behind it to classify it as discrimination or prejudice.” but when asked about observations of discrimination and/or prejudice over the course of the project said “Yes. Since doing this I've picked up a lot of acts of discrimination and prejudice that I wouldn't even have picked up on before.” Similarly during the exit interview R2, reflecting on more frequently observing discrimination, said “I think I've been more in tune to that. Because of the production. It's kind of looking for it.” While R3 stated in the entrance interview that “It's very evident on campus everywhere. It really is noticeable.”, R3 was also even more aware of it after the production, stating in the exit interview “I've become more aware of it. I've definitely become more aware especially in dorms and apartments and just watching people. It's really become a lot more evident than it was before.” During exit interviews R5 expressed similar thoughts: “When I was actually looking for it I saw bits and pieces. During the thing I was becoming much more aware of stuff. I was kind of more in the loop vs. before I started I started this thing. Also I was looking for examples so I was much more aware of things.”, as did R7: “More often than I did before being a part of this production. I saw it more.”

If participants had observed instances of discrimination and/or prejudice on campus, they were asked in both entrance and exit interviews how they had responded to their observations. While five of the nine participants did not describe any changes in

their reactions to observations, the remaining four expressed a change in how they would react, with the change being internal for one participant but external and leading to action in three participants. For these three participants, while they had not acted when they observed discrimination and/or prejudice on campus prior to their involvement in the project, they stated that they had spoken up when observing them since beginning their involvement in the project.

R9 described a change in reaction to discrimination that was entirely internal in nature. In the entrance interview R9 said “I feel like there's not very much that I can do about discrimination. I know that in history it's been said to have been snuffed out, legally it's snuffed out but it's not. It's still there.” During exit interviews, when asked about responding to discrimination since beginning work on the project R9 stated “I think I've just observed it. I think I'm in that place now where I can see it happening and I'm noticing it instead of just ignoring it. Noticing it happen is what I've been doing.”

For the three participants who described a change that was external, this involved a move from doing nothing upon observing discrimination and/or prejudice on campus prior to involvement in the project to speaking up upon observing it after involvement in the project. Initially R3 stated that “There generally isn't an external reaction because I'm very non-confrontational and I'm a very shy and awkward person and I don't like to get involved in other people's affairs.” While this remained the case when it was strangers observed discriminating, during exit interviews R3 described speaking up when it was friends who were discriminating: “I'll say something. Like why do you... what's your stance behind doing that? It's more so people I really know or kind of know. Not so much

strangers.” R3 went on to describe the positive reaction that had been received when speaking up: “Most people they get into a discussion about it. They don't get angry about it. They don't get upset. I ask them a question and they explain their answer and we have a full blown discussion about it that could last easily up to two hours just about the whole situation and we try to see each other's point of view and where they're coming from.”

Similarly, R5 went from saying “I just sit there and I'm quiet. I just kind of let them do their thing. Inside I'm mad but when I'm watching it I just kind of sit back and wait for it to go away.” in the entrance interview to describing an incident where a friend had said something discriminatory and R5, drawing on the project, spoke up: “With my friend I told her this is exactly what we're doing in the play. We shouldn't- I kind of made an offhand comment, probably not as much as I should, but still probably more than I would have done a while ago.” R6 also described a slight change, stating in the exit interviews “Sometimes I brush it off and sometimes I'll just say something about it, like just tell them that's not cool. If I feel like something they're saying is more offensive than like a normal joke then I would probably be a little bit more responsive to it. My initial reaction is always just to brush it off but lately I've been just, like, trying to say something about it.”

Two participants mentioned that they had comforted the victim of discrimination after observing it in their exit interviews but not their entrance interviews. R1 described one instance in which a friend had been targeted, saying “I was just explaining that I felt that was really wrong and I was sorry that people made that kind of judgment. I just told him that it was really upsetting that such a good person was discriminated against. I told

him that here he was accepted for what he was and had really good friends who don't care what you are or what you believe.” R2 similarly stated “I normally go and talk to the person, like hey, by the way, how are you doing today, and then kind of do some character building stuff, make them feel better just in case.”

Seven of the nine participants expressed either feeling that they should have reacted differently or presented reasons why they had not reacted differently, including that if the discrimination had been more severe they would have acted, that they did not think that reacting would have accomplished anything or that reacting would have taken a lot of time and energy (which would have been wasted), that they were unsure how to react, and, most frequently, that they did not want to risk a confrontation. R2 expressed that action would have been called for only if the discrimination had been more severe. In the entrance R2 said “Normally I'm standing in the hall with someone else and I hear it and I kind of just go well, okay, he seems to not be bothered by it. He knows what's going on and he seems to just, you know, I'm unusual, it's okay. He just really has a great attitude about it so I think maybe if it made more of an impact on him I would step up more.” and in the exit interview R2 said “There's a guy in chorale who used to get bashed all the time by this one guy and it got to the point where I was like, ok, one more comment and I'm going to say something, but it stopped before I got the chance to actually step up for him.”

Both R7 and R9 expressed that they would have reacted to their observations but had decided that reacting would accomplish nothing. When describing observing friends discriminating, R9 said “If I know the friend to be narrow minded- if I know that if I

“speak up they're not going to change, then I won't say anything.” Similarly, R7 said “I've said something a few times. Sometimes, just, what's the point of saying something? I just ignore it.” When asked to clarify when this happened, R9 stated that “It's based on who it was. Whether I felt they would understand or be able to- how I felt that they would deal with it or where it was coming from for them. If they couldn't even see it and I thought that after a fifteen minute conversation they wouldn't understand where the discrimination was that was a reason I would just ignore it.” R7 went on to say in exit interviews that this failure to act when it was perceived that action would not bring about results was linked to the amount of time and energy required to act: “It takes a lot of energy. If I was tired or I was preoccupied I would find myself more likely to just walk away from it.”

Three participants indicated that they did not react because they were not sure how to. R1 said “With a group of strangers I really don't know how to react.” Similarly, R4 described an observation and said “I almost overreacted and then I just walked away. It was somewhere between extreme anger and not being able to react so I just chose way over here with the not being able to react.” R7 said similar things in both entrance and exit interviews but also shed some light on what contributed to not knowing how to react. In entrance interviews, R7 said “You know where you have that sort of gut reaction, where some things are more unexpected so it takes a while, you see something and it takes you a few minutes to just understand what happened. I guess what prompts me is to have the ready answer. I guess if I have something I know to say to something so I guess

it's repeated things I'm more likely to speak up.” In exit interviews, R7 revisited this idea of being prepared making one more likely to speak up:

“It comes down to ease of discussing. There a lot of types of discrimination that are discussed on campus, on TV, that we are sort of hyper aware of and those are sort of easier to confront. There's more awareness. There's an expectation that everybody is aware of, that everybody knows or has a common ground, at least knows what the dialogue is. Understands the dialogue taking place or at least knows what the issue is. Those are much easier to confront versus other things that are either never discussed or are discussed but maybe from a completely different perspective. Sometimes it's having the easy access to the dialogue that's already out there. There's a lot of dialogue out there that is readily available out there about things like racism so it's easy to draw on. There are these dialogues out there. We have common terminology on some subjects where on others we don't.”

The most frequent reason for inaction that was cited by participants during both entrance and exit interviews, with no noticeable change over the course of the project, was an avoidance of confrontation. R1 described this as “I really try to maintain composure just to not add to the situation. I just try to find the middle ground and try to keep things civil and just keep my personal feelings out of it and to stop the situation at hand before it gets worse.” Similarly, R3 said “There generally isn't an external reaction because I'm very non-confrontational and I'm a very shy and awkward person and I don't like to get involved in other people's affairs. Just because I'm non-confrontational.” R5 said “I know I should but mainly I shy away from confrontation. It's just my nature. I've never been in a lot of fights physical or verbal. I don't lash out. So I just sit there and I'm quiet. I just kind of let them do their thing. Inside I'm mad but when I'm watching it I just kind of sit back and wait for it to go away.”

Sometimes participants went so far as to state that they feared a violent, physical confrontation and therefore chose not to act. R2 described a fear of being attacked after speaking up:

“I'm not very confrontational so I'm not the kind to be like oh hey, you over there, I heard that comment and that was mean and that was wrong and here's why. I'm not confrontational. I want do something but I don't want to because you never know how the other person is going to react. I don't really want to get into a big thing in the middle of a public place. I just don't want to get into one of those oh, well you oppose me so I'm going to punch you in the face kind of deals. Some people are like that. I don't want to make anybody angry.”

In a similar vein, when describing observing a stranger harassing passerby on campus R4 said “I almost said something snide and then decided not to because if he was being that weird in the first place I didn't know what he was capable of.” R5 also expressed a fear of being psychically attacked, but by an acquaintance rather than a stranger, which led to deciding not to respond to an offensive post on Facebook: “I didn't comment because honestly I didn't want to start things. She lives right down the street and I really don't want her coming up to my door because this is one of those girls who doesn't really understand that verbal repartee- there's the difference between trying to discuss something and getting violent over it.”

These excuses for not acting were paired with vivid descriptions of how negative the participants' internal reactions to the observation were. In the entrance interviews R1 described the reaction as “Internally, disgust. I just have this gut wrenching feeling.” and described the discrimination that had been observed as “really wrong” and “really upsetting” during the exit interviews. R2 said in entrance interviews “It makes me angry. That's not fair and that's not right.” and described the internal reaction as “fuming” and

the discrimination as “bashing”. R5 said “I get really upset. I usually get angry.” in the entrance interview and stated in the exit interview that the discrimination observed was “not right”, “horrible” and “over the line” and that R5 had been “shocked” and “disgusted”. R4 also described an intense internal response to observations during exit interviews: “It's kind of the same as my internal reaction to some of the stuff we were saying in the play, which was just, how completely horrible, ignorant do you have to be to make a comment like that? They're just so over the top, outright discriminatory and horrible that it was hard to actually get my head around that people actually said this.”

### **Experiences of Discrimination and/or Prejudice**

During entrance interviews participants were asked if they had ever experienced discrimination and/or prejudice on campus. During exit interviews participants were asked if they had experienced discrimination and/or prejudice on campus during the past month (the duration of the project). If participants had experienced discrimination and/or prejudice on campus, they were asked how they responded during both the entrance and exit interviews. Four participants stated that they had experienced prejudice and/or discrimination in both entrance and exit interviews. Three participants stated that they had not experienced discrimination and/or prejudice on campus in both interviews.

Two participants stated that they experienced instances of discrimination and/or prejudice on campus during entrance interviews but not exit interviews. R1 had been on the receiving end of comments on appearance, including weight and being stereotyped as a dumb blonde. This discrimination did not occur often, though, and during exit interviews R1 had not experienced any discrimination since beginning the project. R2



had experienced sexist comments and been stereotyped as a result of being home schooled throughout high school. This discrimination had not occurred often either, though, and during exit interviews R2 also had not experienced any discrimination since beginning the project.

Of the four participants who had experienced instances of discrimination and/or prejudice on campus in both entrance and exit interviews, three expressed no change between entrance and exit interviews. R5 experienced discrimination on campus when communicating about R5's mental illness with people who would later question whether or not it was real or R5 was “faking it”, either for attention or through laziness. R7 had experienced differing standards in classes in terms of how papers were graded and had been treated differently due to being a few years older than most students. R9 had been made fun of for engaging in “dorky” extracurricular activities and for choice of major. All of these examples were labeled as acts of discrimination and/or prejudice by participants in their interviews, and no changes in experiences occurred between beginning and finishing the project for these three participants.

R3, though, stated in exit interviews that a change had occurred since entrance interviews. This participant had been stereotyped for choice of major, treated poorly by other students from a different major in the same college when trying to socialize, and been discriminated against for the amount of hours that were required for chosen major and related activities. It seems, based upon the participant’s description of these events, that most of this discrimination took the form of others either questioning or not understanding the participant's action. R3 said that less discrimination and/or prejudice

had been experienced on campus over the course of the project, though, since R3 had become more aware of discrimination, more able to avoid it, and better equipped to say something about it. During exit interviews, when asked if discrimination and/or prejudice had been experienced on campus during the past month, R3 stated:

“Not so much as before. Because I've become more aware of it I think I've found ways to not become part of it. It still happens, and I've found ways to either stand up to them or not let it affect me. So I just kind of tend to brush it off. It doesn't even strike me the ways it used to anymore. It's mostly me telling them, well, this is how I feel or you shouldn't... kind of back off. You don't understand where I'm coming from. You don't understand the situation that I find myself in. You're just assuming from the outside and that's generally how it turns out with people that I kind of know or my friends. On a more personal level it gets more heated and aggravated because the stakes are a little higher in that situation. On the personal level it's really hard. It strains the relationships I have with people because they don't like to be fought back by someone who is normally used to taking it.”

If participants stated that they had experienced instances of discrimination and/or prejudice on campus either during their entrance or exit interviews, they were asked how they had reacted upon experiencing them. Of the six participants who had experienced them prior to the entrance interviews, four had again experienced them between the entrance and exit interviews. Of the six who had experienced them prior to entrance interviews, only two had done something in response. Of the four who experienced them between interviews, the two who had spoken up before spoke up again and an additional participant who had not spoken up before also spoke up when faced with them over the course of the project.

R1 and R2 both experienced discrimination prior to but not after the entrance interview and both did not do anything about it. R1 described reacting to being

stereotyped as a dumb blonde, focusing on struggling to maintain composure despite being very upset: “I don't really know what to say. I don't really know how to react. Physically I just try to laugh it off but my face turns red and my voice starts to shake and you can tell that I'm upset. Internally I'm more severe than what I portray. I get very flustered.” and R2 described being subjected to sexism and stereotyped as a socially awkward home schooled kid:

“It makes me feel like crap. I normally don't have problems with self-esteem that much because I do things that will build it back up but it kind of stings a little bit. Like oh, is that really what people think? Why do people think that? And then I start thinking, well, how can I change that? So it's not a good feeling at all. It stings. Makes you question things. Like maybe I don't know what I'm talking about. I internalize things. I mean there's anger and I'll rip up something, like I got really angry and ripped a cardboard box to shreds which was my nonviolent way of dealing with my intense anger. It's very rare that I will act out.”

R5 experienced discrimination prior to and after the entrance interview. In both interviews R5 stated that there had been no external reaction to the discrimination other than separating oneself from the situation. In the entrance interviews R5 said “When I've experienced it inside I get angry and upset and it hurts and I just walk away instead of just standing there and waiting for it to go away. I kind of just walk away and block it out, whoever is doing it because I can't take it anymore.” In exit interviews R5 elaborated on why no action was taken in response to being discriminated against: “I'm not one to try to do that stuff. Even when the whole bullying thing in high school started, I didn't do much. It had to get to a certain point for me to go look, this is a problem. I'm going to tell somebody. I don't like the conflict. I don't like getting people in trouble.”

R7 experienced discrimination both prior to and after the entrance interview and reacted in much the same way in both cases. During entrance interviews R7 described experiencing differing standards in classes and speaking with teachers about it, specifically mentioning discrepancies in writing standards discovered during peer editing: “I have talked with a teacher or two. Two teachers and other people about it. Depending on who you talk to you get different reactions about it. Teacher-wise seems to be the least productive. I walked away disheartened. I feel disgust when I see it.” During exit interviews R7 stated that reactions to experiencing discrimination ranged from not caring to getting upset. When asked what determined the response, R7 answered “Mood. Number of people involved and who the people were. Some people you respect more than others. Feeling negativity from someone I respect more hurts more. From someone who doesn't mean a damn to me doesn't hurt as much. Same thing with if one person versus three or four people. All of a sudden it's a group thing. That's worse.”

While R9 also experienced discrimination both prior to and after the entrance interview and reacted in much the same way in both cases, during the exit interview R9 indicated that change had occurred in the reaction to experiencing discrimination after involvement in the project. During the entrance interview, R9 described frustration at being made fun of by friends for participating in a boffing group. R9's response during those situations was to “try to explain what I do”. During the exit interview, when describing being discriminated against for choice of major, R9 said “I think it's just my eyes have been opened so to speak and I'm registering that is segregation, that's prejudice towards me just because I am a theater student. Honestly, if I didn't do The Little Things,

if I didn't notice these little things mean something bigger, I probably would just have not noticed it. But I actually took a moment and questioned it.”

R3 experienced discrimination on campus both prior to and after the entrance interview, but while R3 did not speak up prior to involvement in the production, this changed between the entrance and exit interviews. When describing experiencing discrimination during entrance interviews, R3 said “I get really, really aggravated. I did not want to be there any longer because I felt like an outsider. It just, it made me feel really bad about- not bad about myself, but aggravated at them and aggravated at him and partially aggravated at myself.” In exit interviews, though, when asked about experiencing discrimination, R3 stated:

“Not so much as before. Because I've become more aware of it I think I've found ways to not become part of it. It still happens and I've found ways to either stand up to them or not let it affect me. So I just kind of tend to brush it off. It doesn't even strike me the ways it used to anymore. It's mostly me telling them, well, this is how I feel or you shouldn't... kind of back off. You don't understand where I'm coming from. You don't understand the situation that I find myself in. You're just assuming from the outside and that's generally how it turns out with people that I kind of know or my friends. On a more personal level it gets more heated and aggravated because the stakes are a little higher in that situation. On the personal level it's really hard. It strains the relationships I have with people because they don't like to be fought back by someone who is normally used to taking it.”

R3 did not run into these troubles when speaking up about others being discriminated, though, but instead indicated that it had led to productive discussions.

### **Changes in Beliefs**

During exit interviews participants were asked if they felt that they had been changed by their involvement in the project. The change in beliefs as a result in

involvement in the project that was most talked about by participants was a heightened awareness of the social issue that had been addressed. One aspect of this change involved a greater awareness of the many forms discrimination and/or prejudice take on campus.

R1 said:

“I feel like I know more of what to look for. I didn't realize that there were types of discrimination. I didn't realize that there was so much everywhere. I'm more aware of it. I didn't realize that some people were so mean. I always used to avoid it. I didn't realize that some people will discriminate against people with anxiety disorders and nervous disorders. That to me was sickening. I didn't realize that it existed, that people were rude like that.”

Similarly, R5 stated, “I know I learned that there are more than just the ones you think of.

People are discriminated against for being a dumb blonde. I've never had that happen.

But I was made aware of it.” and R7 said:

“Before I wouldn't even have considered something like choosing not to vaccinate, now I would consider it. It's not that I agree with it, but I guess I am aware that some people will consider that as part of discrimination. I was exposed to viewpoints that were different than my own and it heightened my awareness of viewpoints that exist.”

While part of this heightened awareness stemmed from group members sharing their personal experiences with discrimination and/or prejudice, part of it also stemmed from things people had overheard and then incorporated into the script for the final production.

R2 addressed this, saying:

“It kind of makes me more upset when people make a comment that is blatantly racist or just horrible and you should never say things like that, so when people say things like that it makes me angry and I might not say it in so many words, that I'm angry with that or show that I'm upset without expressing myself completely when someone makes a blatant comment like that but yeah, I think I'm just more aware of what's going on. I think it was once we started going through the actual production it was like, wow, this is really bad. People say this stuff, too. That's not

good. This is based on truth, which is even worse. I said a lot of things and I was like, wow... like one of the things when we were first going through and I said something and I was like, ouch!”

In addition to a heightened awareness of the ways in which discrimination and/or prejudice manifested on campus, participants gained a broader awareness of the social issue as a result of their involvement in the project. R3 stated:

“I've learned that it does happen everywhere and everything and that it can be a short term process, it can be a long term process, there can be a long line of things leading up to it, there can be just one little thing leading up to it. That it's expressed in more ways than we can ever imagine. That it's expressed in the smallest of things to the largest of things. It's very evident all of the time. It's made me be a lot more understanding toward people. It's also made me a lot more defensive of people who aren't so strong by themselves. It's made me more aware of a lot of things. Not just with discrimination but with the way people behave in general.”

R9 said:

“Opening my eyes basically is what the biggest thing was. Noticing the little things and knowing that wow, that kid's show that really puts down the bullies, that's not helping the bullies at all. You know, kind of things like that came from this project. I think it's good. It's kind of pressuring me into thinking more empathetic towards people and their problems. Yeah. It's made me more aware of things- of problems. And made me categorize issues that could like, watching cartoons now that I know already that are teaching kids values in life and then sometimes they teach the values that bullies are mean and to be bully is to be mean and stuff like that. Tied together with this, I've been taking an educational psychology class that's been talking about bullies and people that are bullying aren't just being mean, they're trying to tell someone that they have a problem and stuff like that. Categorizing things, actions, like teaching your kids to assume the worst about a person because they're doing something bad. Or against the social norm. So teaching your kid that a bully is the meanest, evilest person ever just because he's taking your lunch money or saying mean things about you because you think that's the right way to go.”

R6 mentioned becoming more aware of how difficult it can be for some people to address discrimination when they see it, despite their desire to do so:

“I feel like I became a lot more aware of discrimination on campus because it was kind of like, there in the back of my head and I was focusing more on it. And when it happened I was more aware. I guess more enlightened I guess about the issue. I think that's a positive thing. I feel like trying to come up with a bunch of different scenes helped us come up with a bunch of different aspects of discrimination. Results of it and stuff. Like for the game show, I hadn't even thought of like, people actually addressing it and that they found it difficult in social situations. So I feel like just working on it was, like in a wide area made it more susceptible to learning different things.”

R5 learned that everyone discriminates:

“I also realize that everybody is guilty. I'm pretty sure everybody in our group would admit to at least thinking like, oh that girl's a dumb blonde or a slut at least once. I feel first relieved and then a little worried, like well, what's the difference? Where's that line between opinion and discrimination? It made me think a lot. It made me worry where the line was drawn between what's alright to think and what's not. It made me more aware. I notice when I hear someone say something I cringe a little more. Before I probably would have just tuned it out but now I actually listened and like, that's horrible. It used to be one of those things where you just kind of laugh out of politeness but I just can't do that anymore because it's horrible. Now I just sit there silently and kind of just cringe. For the most part it feels kind of good to know that I'm aware of things. Like I said, though, it is a little bit confusing because at times I think am I doing this wrong? Am I doing that wrong? Am I saying this wrong?”

R8 was made more aware of the extent of the negative impact discrimination and/or prejudice has on individuals:

“I think for me- seeing how personal and passionate discrimination is to essentially everybody when we started relating experiences and stuff like that and sharing ideas in the group. Everyone felt really passionate about discrimination typically in some discrete, specific way that was very personal to them. That may not be shared by anyone else but in a way was all still the same. So for me I guess I had never really felt that personal of a connection to discrimination in terms of my own experiences and for me it was more of a you know, external kind of thing. So really, I felt kind of like a bit of an outsider sometimes. You know, these people are sharing these things that are very emotional and personal to them and at the same time it's kind of like, oh, I'm not sure I have that kind of connection like they do. So in a way I'm not sure if I learned about myself, but it made me



try to be more aware, more sensitive, not necessarily to discrimination as a whole, you know, not to tread more lightly necessarily, but to kind of understand that probably everyone out there has something like that and they would like that voice to be heard just as we did. I guess I feel a little educated. Or enlightened or something as far as gaining that kind of perspective. Because I guess I didn't feel like I had that, still don't I guess, but being able to be- work very closely with these people who were feeling these things very passionately helped me to kind of feel that through them.”

### **Changes in Behaviors**

During exit interviews participants were asked if they were likely to react to observing discrimination differently now than they were prior to their involvement in the production. All nine participants answered affirmatively. Reasons cited for the change included having more confidence in saying something when discrimination is observed, knowing now how much of a negative impact discrimination has on individuals, and being more aware of the many ways that discrimination occurs on campus.

When discussing an increase in confidence and ability to respond to discrimination, R2 stated “I think before I'd be the bystander. I'd *want* to step up but I'm a non-confrontational person. But I feel like, with discrimination I would step up more. It's more of an awareness thing. Like oh, that comment *was* racist or that was not a comment that person should have made. Before I'd be like, oh, well, you know, maybe they don't mean it. Or maybe they do... I'm just gonna, you know... So I guess now I'm just more confident in myself to step up and do something about it. Because one person stepping up could make a difference.”

Mentions of a greater knowledge of the negative impacts of discrimination on individuals included R1:

“If I was talking to someone who said something derogatory or discriminating or anything like that I would probably, I would definitely say something to them or point out that it was a flaw or not something good to say. It's different than where I was when I started the project. Not that I was ever okay with discrimination, because it's not good. Before the project I feel like if somebody had said something I didn't agree with I would have just bit my tongue and listened. If they were saying something really rude or horrible about a certain group of people I feel like I would just let it happen. But since the project I morally don't feel able to just let that happen. I feel like I would have to say something because it is so hurtful and even if you're just saying it to a group of friends people can overhear it and that affects you a lot to hear someone else saying something about you. It can really hurt your self-esteem and I wouldn't want that happening to me so I wouldn't want it happening to someone else.”

Similarly, R3 said that the change in response to discrimination was brought about “because of everything I've gone through and seeing you know, personally how it affects people and how it affects people that I've gotten close to in the past couple of weeks. It really does hurt people on a level that a lot of us don't know.”

The reason for the change in reaction that was most commonly shared between participants was an increase in awareness of discrimination and how it happens on campus, which was brought about by involvement in the project. R4 stated that as a result of involvement in the project, when faced with discrimination, “I'd be wondering what to do or what to say about it.” R5 said that the difference was an internal one rather than a change in external reaction to discrimination: “I'm more aware and it kind of- I internally react and I just don't say anything but I kind of don't go along with it anymore. I wait until it's over and let it go.” R7 also stated that the change lay in perception: “It has opened my eyes to different types of discrimination.” Similarly, R8 noticed a “change in the quantity and quality of discrimination I see.”

Other changes in behavior were described during the exit interviews by participants when they were asked if they felt that they had learned anything through their involvement in the project. All nine participants responded affirmatively. These changes included: as a result of their involvement in the project participants were more receptive and sensitive to the ideas of others, participants thought more about what they said before they spoke, and participants had more confidence when it came to speaking up when confronted with the social issue addressed in the project.

Five participants stated that their involvement in the project had resulted in them being more aware of and sensitive to the viewpoints of others. R1 said, "I'm a lot more receptive to other people's thoughts and ideas. I feel like it's helped me to handle situations better in general. Not just discrimination but things like group projects. Because we had to work with so many people and there were so many different ideas I feel a lot more prepared than some of my classmates do." R3 stated, "It's made me be a lot more understanding toward people. It's also made me a lot more defensive of people who aren't so strong by themselves. It's made me more aware of a lot of things. Not just with discrimination but with the way people behave in general." Similarly, R7 said, "Before I wouldn't even have considered something like choosing not to vaccinate, now I would consider it. It's not that I agree with it, but I guess I am aware that some people will consider that as part of discrimination. I was exposed to viewpoints that were different than my own and it heightened my awareness of viewpoints that exist." R9 expressed that this exposure to other viewpoints was a positive thing: "I think it's good. It's kind of pressuring me into thinking more empathetic towards people and their

problems. Yeah. It's made me more aware of things- of problems.” R8 spoke of gaining a better understanding of others and their experiences as well, saying:

“I'm not sure if I learned about myself, but it made me try to be more aware, more sensitive, not necessarily to discrimination as a whole, you know, not to tread more lightly necessarily, but to kind of understand that probably everyone out there has something like that and they would like that voice to be heard just as we did. I guess I feel a little educated. Or enlightened or something as far as gaining that kind of perspective. Being able to be- work very closely with these people who were feeling these things very passionately helped me to kind of feel that through them.”

Three participants said that as a result of their involvement in the project, they were more aware of the things they said and how they impacted others. R1 said:

“I have a lot more self-filter. I'm not a brutal person but I tend to not beat around the bush. If someone says something stupid I'm apt to say, that's ridiculous! But I think since doing the project I am more aware of my thoughts and what's coming out of my mouth and that everything I say affects someone, somewhere, something, sometime. Instead of bluntly telling someone that I disagree with them, because I can see that there are so many different responses someone could have to that, so many negative things they can feel because of me saying that I feel that I am a lot less likely to say something harsh and put it a lot more tactfully.”

R2 said:

“I am so much more attuned to what I say. I think I'm more mature now because I think about how words actually do hurt people. I've been hurt by words before. And then I'll say something and think wow, I shouldn't have said that but I already did. So now I'm kind of more cautious about what I say before I say it. I think I always thought about it, like, oh, that kind of sounded discriminatory, but now I actually think about like, oh, well, I wonder what that actually meant to that person. Like, ouch, I probably shouldn't have said that.”

R9 mentioned a specific aspect of the project that had led to this increased awareness of one's words affecting others:

“The Little Things was the biggest one I think. It kind of, I mean working on it made you have this mirror reflection of every little thing that you say

has this ripple effect. And then add all of those ripple effects up and that makes a wave and that wave takes out something. Having that instilled in my brain from working on it and then presenting it has made me really think of all the little things that I have done in my life and how that might have effected someone else.”

Five participants remarked on being more confident and well equipped in regards to speaking up when observing or experiencing the social issue addressed by the project.

R1 said:

“I feel like I've learned how to be more... whenever I hear an idea and I agree with it I feel like I have validity in saying yes, I agree. Or if they say something and I'm not sure I like the idea I feel like I'm better able to politely disagree. I didn't realize that some people will discriminate against people with anxiety disorders and nervous disorders. That to me was sickening. I'm glad that I heard that this was happening because I am able to defend that and if I hear someone saying anything about people with mood disorders or whatever I feel like I am more prepared that it is being done so I am more able to stop it. Since I am aware now I can say something about it. I'm more able to explain to them it's no fault. Everyone is susceptible to it. I guess just knowing that it's out there I am able to make a more educated response I guess in situations like that.”

Similarly, R3 said, “It's made me a lot more confident in myself. Being able to be more outspoken. Being able to stand up in front of people and say what I really feel and I'm not afraid to address the problems, the issues that really freak people out as much anymore.”

Two of these participants linked this raised confidence with an increased likelihood to speak up. R2 said, “I find myself confronting my friends about things like this. They'll make a snarky comment and I'll say something. Even if it was like, one of those, oh my gosh, look how fat that guy is, and I'll be like, wait, do you have a problem with fat people? They just kind of get all uncomfortable and then there's this awkward silence and I'm like, I'm just asking, No, it's okay. I just thought you should think about it.” In a similar vein, R6 stated:

“Lately I've been more likely to respond to discriminative comments. More than previously, so yeah. Before I would have just let probably anything go. Even if it was offensive. Even if it offended me personally. I probably would have just let it go. But now, I don't know, even if it's something smaller, or seems a lot smaller, I'm more likely to say at least like, hey, that's not cool, or hey, don't say that or that's discrimination. Just call them out on it. They don't respond poorly, like they don't get defensive or anything about it. Because I think they realize it's an issue too, but they just like, don't say anything about it and go ahead into it. So mostly- I want to say positive response. There is a difference. If I'm more comfortable with them I'm more likely to say something. Probably the ability to talk to other people about it, which we did a lot of during rehearsals.”

Part of the increased confidence in regards to speaking up when confronted by the social issue for R8 involved an affirmation in the sense that the performances were a successful act of speaking up:

“The most important thing I take away from it is to- basically to not back down. My views and perceptions have broadened a bit. Basically that- I guess I was a little bit apprehensive to deal with both the group and audience members, whomever, that's- because my approach is typically pretty direct and I guess boisterous is maybe the word, and to be kind of flamboyantly humorous about it, that that would you know, rub people the wrong way and strike some nerves. But I didn't really have that. While my perceptions and stuff like that broadened, at the same time it's kind of like a reaffirming experience to keep going down that path, to not be quiet about it or anything, to keep putting yourself out there and to keep putting issues out there, however you express it.”

### **Other Reflections**

During exit interviews participants were asked if they felt that they had learned anything through their involvement in the project or had been changed by their involvement in the project. All nine participants responded affirmatively. However, when asked to elaborate, rather than explain what specifically they had learned or how specifically they had changed, participants instead explained how positively they felt after being a part of the project. These affirmative responses fell into several categories

and included: participants felt it was a positive experience, participants enjoyed being a part of the project, they felt others should have an opportunity to be involved in a similar project, and they felt that they had participated in something that had made a difference.

Six participants stated either that being involved in the project was a positive experience or the changes that had come about as a result of their involvement in the project were positive ones. When asked about the changes experienced, R2 said, “I think they're awesome. I like them. I like them a lot. I feel like it's made me a better person and I've grown. I am totally a better person now. I think about things more. I think about the impact of things more.” Similarly, R3 said, “They're for the better. I feel really good about them. It's something that needed to happen a long time ago but I just don't think I ever found the right thing to really do it and this really pushed that forward.” Along the same lines, R6 stated, “I feel like a better person about it I guess. I think it was a positive experience.” R1 also indicated that the changes were positive and also went on to discuss one reason why the experience had been such a positive one, saying:

“They're really positive. I'm really glad my attention has been brought to it and I'm glad that some of my brutality has gone away. I feel like I'm an overall happier person. I don't know if that was just physically getting out and talking with people and being with people who shared some beliefs with me or if it was more because I did something special that only a couple people did and I feel like it really had a big impact on the people who did it.”

R5 also mentioned feeling positively about working so closely with a small group, stating that it felt good to walk away knowing that “At least there are a small group of people who understand certain things that go along with this. Who understand the same things I have understood.”

Three participants mentioned specifically that involvement had been fun or that they had enjoyed being a part of it and two participants expressed that others should be given the opportunity to participate in a project such as this one. R2 said about the project, “It was awesome. It was the most fun I've had in a long time. I feel like we all got really close really fast. It was so much fun.” R5 said, “I learned a lot. I met a lot of good people. I enjoyed it.” and R7 stated, “It was fun. I enjoyed it.” R2 also said, “I think it was awesome. I think that everyone should do a devised theater project about a social issue. Because it makes you think.” R1 expressed a similar sentiment:

“Everyone would benefit from having done this project. Ignorance is not bliss. It's ignorance. That's all it is. You have to be aware of what's happening on your campus. Sooner or later it could happen to you. Discrimination is going to affect you at some point in your life and I think the more aware of it you are the more prepared you are to handle it. I wish more people would have been involved in this because I feel like it was such a life changing experience. I almost wish that something like this would happen every year a couple of times a year. I feel like more people need to be involved in it.”

Four of the participants said that they felt that they had been a part of something that had made a difference. When mentioning being a part of something that had made a difference, R6 also spoke of realizing that addressing the social issue had been less difficult than expected: “It helped me realize that discrimination is, like, everybody realizes it's there but a lot of people are just like, afraid to address the issue or just lazy to address the issue. They don't really go out of their way. I feel like it's, like after working on this I realize that like it's not that difficult to address. It's just, it hasn't been so it seems like it is.”



For other participants, making a difference was generally centered around the impact that the performances had on audience members. R1 said:

“Even if people came and sat down and watched it once and was like oh, what was that, I don't even know what I watched. When they walked away and see it happening on campus they're going to think of it. Whether they want it to or not it's going to come to their mind. It's going to make an impact on their life. Even if they just came because they were watching it for a class or whatever. It's going to make an impact on them whether they like it or not.”

Similarly, when asked to expand on what had the greatest impact on participants, R3 said:

“I feel like the entire project did but I think the very last performance did because they were a more receptive audience. What we were doing- I could see the reactions on their faces, how they took everything in, and then talking to a lot of them about it afterward, it really like... it really made me realize what we were doing really does- people actually do finally see what we were doing and it was really interesting to hear their feedback on what we felt and what we did and their intrigue on well, how did you get to that place? I think that was my favorite part was that final result.”

R8 also mentioned the audience response, focusing on the reaction of a well-known and respected professor who had come to see the final performance:

“Rick, who is generations apart from us, Rick was tearing up and was moved by this piece. And I think for us, for me, the piece was ours, it was very personal to us and it meant something to each and every one of us. We didn't have any idea of what an outsider perspective was going to be. We didn't know what they'd take away from it or if it would mean anything to them because it's pretty much structured- and you know- and we had no idea if the chaos would become something to them. Because it's so internalized to us. And Rick mentioned that, he said that it was brave. That it took courage and openness to talk about those things like that and to be open about it and that that gave him hope. So it's kind of a jarring reaction to me to have someone who is in such a different situation from ourselves to have that kind of reaction. That our internal thoughts put into an external performance became internal to someone else.”

## Summary

Based on the findings drawn from both the entrance and exit interviews of participants, several things can be concluded:

1. Participants' definitions of discrimination and prejudice broadened.
2. Participants' knowledge of groups on campus working with the issues surrounding discrimination and prejudice did not increase.
3. Participants became more convinced that discrimination and prejudice are issues that need to be addressed on their college campus and felt both that addressing the issues was the responsibility of everyone and that it could be best achieved by raising awareness.
4. Participants became more aware of discrimination and prejudice.
5. Some participants became more likely to act when observing instances of discrimination and prejudice on campus.
6. The differences in experiencing instances of discrimination and prejudice on campus were much smaller than the differences in observing them, but one participant did become more likely to act when experiencing discrimination and prejudice.
7. Participants felt that they were much more likely to act when observing instances of discrimination or prejudice after their involvement in the project due to increased knowledge and confidence.
8. Participants became more open and sensitive to viewpoints that differed from their own.
9. Participants became more aware and careful of the things they say.
10. Participants enjoyed the experience and some felt that others should be encouraged to partake in similar projects and that they were able to make a difference through their involvement.

Participants' broadened definitions, identifying discrimination as an issue needing to be addressed, heightened awareness of discrimination, and increased sensitivity to the viewpoints of others are all connected to ideas presented in the existing literature on the

power of theater, addressed in section two of Chapter II. The literature there posits that theater is powerful in that it presents both reality and possibility, and in doing so can increase the awareness of both actors and audience. Participants in this research project gained a greater awareness of discrimination and prejudice, leading to not only broader definitions of the terms but also an increased sense of discrimination and prejudice as issues needing to be addressed on their college campus. This greater awareness stemmed from exposure to observations and experiences novel to them. This exposure also led to participants becoming more open and sensitive to viewpoints that differ from their own.

Participants' identifying discrimination as an issue needing to be addressed, increased likelihood to act when confronted with discrimination, increased sensitivity to the viewpoints of others, and heightened awareness of their own behaviors can all be linked to the literature in the third section of Chapter II, which addresses theater and emotion. The literature there focuses on the empathy evoked by theater and how it presents the experiences of others in a way that forces audiences and actors to confront the impact of those experiences on an individual. Participants remarked on how much they learned in terms of the impact discrimination can have on an individual and expressed surprise at the ways in which they learned discrimination was occurring around them. Part of participants' conviction that discrimination and prejudice needed to be addressed on campus stemmed from this increased empathy with those being discriminated against. This increased empathy also led to participants becoming more likely to speak up when observing instances of discrimination, becoming more sensitive

to viewpoints that differed from their own, and becoming more aware of the impact their words can have on others.

Participants' increased confidence and knowledge in regards to speaking up, as well as their enjoyment of and reflection on the benefits of the project tie in to the literature on theater and education discussed in section four of Chapter II. The literature there indicates that when theater is used in education it engages students and increases their confidence in their ability to convey ideas to an audience. Similarly, involvement in this project was an enjoyable and positive experience for participants. Not only did they feel as if they had made a difference by creating and performing a piece with important messages for an audience, but they also felt that their actions in the future would be shaped by the increased knowledge and confidence they had gained through their involvement in the project.

Participants' analysis of their own behaviors and increased likelihood to act, as well as the confidence and knowledge gained that contributed to that likelihood, are connected to ideas discussed in the existing literature on theater and social change, found in section six of Chapter II. This literature indicates that theater can be a catalyst for social change in that it encourages people to examine their own beliefs and behaviors as well as provides them with a rehearsal for real life, leaving them better equipped to both discuss and act when confronted with similar issues outside of the performance. Participants stated that both their beliefs and behaviors had been altered as a result of their involvement in this theater project. They became more likely to act upon observing instances of discrimination and more likely to carefully consider the impact of their

words. Their increased likelihood to act stemmed from both a heightened confidence and a ready availability of language and ideas, all of which came about because as participants created and rehearsed a performance piece, they also rehearsed for similar real life situations. Their heightened awareness of their own thought, words, and actions, came about as a result of being forced to examine their own beliefs and behaviors as they worked to explore and then share ideas about discrimination and prejudice with an audience.

All of the observed changes can be tied to the sociological framework of symbolic interactionism, and more specifically, to the ideas of role-taking and imaginatively rehearsing. The basis of the entire project was collaborative interaction with a goal of creating a performance piece. This interaction occurred in groups of various sizes, but participants spent very little time alone. The only activities that were not collaborative were the end of session reflections. The changes in both beliefs and behaviors that participants experienced were a direct result of their interactions with other participants.

It is my assumption that the changes in beliefs that participants experienced, specifically their broadening definitions of discrimination, identification of discrimination as an issue that needs to be addressed, and heightened awareness of discrimination, stemmed from their role-taking. As participants shared their own observations and experienced and worked together to synthesize them into a performance piece, they learned about experiences novel to them and gained both understanding and empathy. I believe this increased understanding and empathy spurred changes in beliefs

and would have been much less evident if participants had learned about discrimination in a way that involved less role-taking.

Similarly, it is my assumption that other changes that participants experienced, specifically their heightened attention to their own behaviors, increased sensitivity to the viewpoints of others, and their increased likelihood to act when confronted with discrimination, arose from a combination of their changes in beliefs and the fact that the process of creating a piece of theater is both imaginatively and literally rehearsing for real life. Participants were able to explore potential actions, reactions, and consequences as they created and revised their piece. They were also able to discuss and portray both reality and possibility since their medium was theater. Through their discussions and collaborative work to create a performance piece of theater about discrimination, they not only became more aware, but also more confident in their own capacity to engage with the issue. As they rehearsed for their performances, they were also rehearsing for their real lives, which is what led to the changes in behaviors indicated in their exit interviews.

CHAPTER V  
CONCLUSIONS

**Expectations**

This research project assumed that since participants, during the course of creating and performing an original piece of theater about a social issue, would not only be learning about situations and people that may be unfamiliar to them but portraying them for others as well, their beliefs and behaviors in regards to those people and situations might change as a result of their involvement in the theater production. This research project set out to explore the occurrence and extent of these changes.

I anticipated that involvement in this project could have a positive impact on the way participants think about the social issue, affect the way they interact with others around the social issue, and make them more likely to become involved in pushing for social change around the issue. This research set out to assess the extent to which this would occur over the course of the production process by assessing what changes, if any, were made to the beliefs and behaviors of participants regarding discrimination and prejudice on campus.

I also anticipated that through involvement in this project, participants would learn more about discrimination and prejudice as they shared their individual observations and experiences with one another and come to identify discrimination and prejudice in new ways as they worked to turn these observations and experiences into a piece of theater. Additionally, I expected participants would come to feel a personal connection with issues pertaining to discrimination and prejudice as they took on roles

and portrayed characters and stories connected to instances of discrimination and prejudice as well as become more engaged with the social issue as they shared it with others in the form of a performance. I hoped that in addition to changes in participants' beliefs, the project would affect their behaviors in regards to how they responded when they observed and experienced instances of discrimination and prejudice both on their campus and in general.

Based on the findings drawn from the participants' entrance and exit interviews, many of these expectations were met. Participants did indeed indicate that they learned a great deal, and for the most part, their beliefs and behaviors did change to some extent. Participation in the project led to not only learning about and a both heightened and broader awareness of discrimination and prejudice, but also increased empathy with people who are discriminated against. In addition to changes in beliefs, through involvement in the project, which served as a rehearsal for real life, participants experienced changes in behaviors as well. Participants gained awareness and began to consider their words and actions more carefully. They also became more likely to act when confronted with the social issue addressed in the performance piece. Participants became more likely to speak up when they felt that someone they knew was being discriminatory. It can be hoped that these changes in beliefs and behaviors will persist and that in some small way this research project will have helped contribute to social change by changing the way a small group of individuals believe and behave.



## **Connections to Existing Literature**

This research project reflects the existing literature in that it illustrates the power of theater to present both reality and possibility for an audience as well as to increase awareness in both actors and audiences, as evidenced by participants' portrayal of both actual and fabricated instances of discrimination and by participants' heightened awareness of discrimination and prejudice. It also illustrates how part of this power is derived from the way theater evokes empathy in both actors and audiences, as evidenced by participants' increased awareness of and receptiveness toward others' views. This project also corroborates the existing literature on theater and education in that it demonstrates the enjoyment people get out of creating theater as well as the confidence they gain by doing so, as evidenced by the positive responses of participants' regarding their involvement in the project. Finally, this research project reflects the existing literature in that it supports the claim that theater can be used as a catalyst for social change because it encourages actors to examine their own beliefs and behaviors and leaves them better equipped to both discuss and act in their lives by allowing them a chance to rehearse their potential words and actions in a risk free environment. This is evidenced by participants' changes in beliefs and behaviors, as well as by their statements regarding the causes of those changes.

This research project also informs and expands upon the existing literature, primarily in that it provides a model for how beliefs and behaviors of participants can be impacted through their involvement in a theater production. Since this research project can be deemed a success in that it led to many expected and positive outcomes, it seems

plausible that similar projects could be undertaken involving any number of social issues. I hope that this project can serve as an example for such future endeavors. No matter the issue addressed, if a group of individuals is devoted to exploring it and turning their observations and experiences of it into a performance piece for an audience, they are bound to learn, broaden their awareness, and perhaps change their beliefs. Perhaps most importantly, though, through rehearsing and performing their original piece of theater, they are also rehearsing for real life. This rehearsal leaves them equipped with language and behaviors that they can employ in their lives outside of the project when confronted by the social issue addressed. It also leaves them equipped with the confidence to do so, bolstered by an affirmative response from an audience and a positive feeling that they, as individuals, have contributed to something that matters; they have raised their own awareness as well as the awareness of others. Just as engagement with the material can lead to changes in beliefs, so too can this rehearsal for real life lead to changes in behaviors.

### **Limitations**

Further research will need to be done to verify that this devised theater production process does in fact affect the beliefs and behaviors of participants when other subject areas are the focus of the production. Further research is also called for in that people of different ages may be more or less affected by a project with such a large component of group work and cooperative creation. Perhaps college students are more susceptible to change of this nature than younger or older individuals. Furthermore, perhaps this research model is more or less effective when participants are all members of a particular

peer group who have much in common, such as college students from the same campus, than when they are drawn from a variety of groups and share fewer characteristics. Additionally, since all of the participants in this particular project had some experience with theater, further research will need to be done to determine whether or not experience with theater is necessary in order for involvement in a devised theater production to have this kind of impact on beliefs and behaviors of participants.

Perhaps one of the largest limitations of this particular research study is that it included a small and homogeneous sample. All nine participants shared some key demographic features. They were all white IUP students who grew up in small towns in Ohio, Virginia, or Pennsylvania. While this racially and geographically homogeneous sample was not desired nor sought out, it is possible that it had an impact on results. Therefore, it will be important for future research to explore more diverse samples and to endeavor to determine how much demographic information has an impact on levels and types of changes that participants experience as a result of their involvement.

An additional limitation to this research project is that it does not allow for analysis of the longevity of the impact of involvement on beliefs and behaviors of participants. Therefore, further research should be done to explore how long lasting the impacts of involvement in a devised theater production are on the beliefs and behaviors of participants. This research study involved collecting data from participants for the last time after the performance of their original piece. There is no way to determine if participants' beliefs and behaviors will regress, stay consistent, or continue to change in the time after the project is concluded. While not within the scope of this particular

project, it would be beneficial to collect data from participants about their beliefs and behaviors at some point in the future in order to better assess the duration of the impact of involvement.

Another limitation to this particular research project involves the small scope of the impact it had on the behaviors of participants. While participants became more likely to speak up when they observed instances of discrimination and/or prejudice, this action seemed to be limited to instances in which they knew and were fairly comfortable with an individual making discriminatory comments. Participants, as a result of their involvement in this project, were not more likely to engage strangers or even slight acquaintances in conversations about their discriminatory language or behaviors. Participants were also not any more likely to engage in activism on a larger scale, as supported by the fact that they did not seek out any campus organizations to become involved with. Perhaps behavioral changes of that magnitude are too much to be expected as results of this type of research project, though.

A final limitation to this research project is that the scope of the study was limited to an analysis of the changes in beliefs and behaviors over the course of the project that took into account neither what those specific beliefs and behaviors were initially nor how participants came to hold those beliefs and behaviors. I collected limited demographic data since I did not intend to explore how who the participants were before the project impacted their experience of the project. I focused instead on simply determining whether changes would occur with an additional, but lesser, focus on the types and extent of changes. Now that it is clear to me that involvement in a devised theater production does

indeed lead to changes in beliefs and behaviors of participants, I can move toward a focus on not only what specific aspects of the project cause those changes, but also how the backgrounds and identities of participants impacts those changes. During future research, demographic information and a more complete picture of the participants prior to their involvement will be vital in achieving these things.

### **Recommendations**

Were I to conduct this or a similar research study in the future, I would make several changes. First, I would take video recordings of all of the performance pieces created by participants throughout the entire process. While we did discuss every performance piece as a group, I feel that it would have benefited those performing each piece to be able to view the piece as an audience member. This unique perspective would have added to their existing one as performers and informed their opinions as to what did and did not work. Furthermore, I had hoped that more of the ideas and techniques discovered and utilized during the early sessions of the project, during the devised theater workshops, would be carried through into the final performance piece. I suspect that having recordings of these performance pieces and viewing them later on in the process, closer to the creation of the final performance piece, would have enabled this.

Participants would have been reminded of interesting and effective things they had tried and could then find ways to incorporate them into the final performance piece. An alternative to this that might achieve the same results would be to have participants keep a journal throughout the process. While I asked them to record their reflections at the conclusion of each session, I collected these reflections and the participants no longer had

access to them. If they had retained a copy of these reflections, participants could have looked back on them later in the process, which may have led to greater incorporation of early ideas into the final performance piece.

Another change I would make is to conduct more frequent interviews. While the entrance and exit interviews did indicate that changes occurred in the beliefs and behaviors of participants over the course of the project, I am unable to pinpoint when exactly those changes took place. It is unknown whether or not particular sessions had a greater impact on these changes than others. It is also unknown if the performance of the final piece and audience reaction to it had a greater impact than the sessions leading up to the performance did. I feel that if data had been collected more frequently, it would be easier to track not only when changes in beliefs and behaviors occurred, but also to determine more precisely why they occurred. This might lead to a restructuring of the entire process, depending on participant reaction to individual sessions. Rather than conduct frequent interviews, though, other methods of data collection could be explored. For example, participants might be asked to fill out questionnaires on a regular basis throughout the project. Their answers to these questions might indicate when and why changes were occurring over the course of the project.

The change I feel most strongly about involves my own simultaneous roles as both researcher/observer and director of the piece/devised theater teacher. While a director has less authority in a devised theater production than in a traditional production due to the highly collaborative nature of devised theater, it still fell upon me to lead group discussions and to synthesize group responses into the outline for our performance. I also

made suggestions, drawn from my experience in theater as a director, as to changes that could be made to enhance the audience's understanding and enjoyment of the performance. These suggestions were never questioned and always acted upon. Looking back, I realize that by conducting the devised theater workshops in the second phase of the project, I set myself up as a figure of authority. Other instances in which I assumed a role of authority included when I scheduled meeting times, assigned participants to groups, and conducted interviews.

While some of these acts were necessary, I feel that I could have easily completed all of my tasks as researcher/observer without attaining the same level of authority if someone else had taken on the role of director/teacher. I am left wondering what data would have been pulled from exit interviews of participants who were interviewed by a researcher they were less familiar with and had not grown to respect as an authority figure. It is possible that my role of director/teacher influenced the way participants responded to me as a researcher/observer. While I do not feel that this is an issue in most research, I feel that I spent an unusual amount of time not only working with my participants, but working with them in a collaborative way that may have developed unusual participant/researcher bonds. In order to eliminate all doubt that responses were colored by a desire to please or satisfy me, in the future I would choose a less directly involved role in the process by limiting myself to simply observing and interviewing.

### **Reflections**

When I set out to conduct this research project, I had high hopes that participants would walk away motivated to speak out against injustices everywhere and immediately

seek membership in activist organizations. I realize now that my hopes were unrealistic. While changes in beliefs and behaviors did indeed occur in participants, they were on an individual and interpersonal level. After only one month of involvement, though, how much more can truly be expected of individuals? Additionally, as my participants repeatedly stressed in their performance piece, the little things do indeed matter. While I didn't bring about immediate social change with my project, I did provide nine individuals with the opportunity to raise their awareness, heighten their empathy, and feel better equipped to confront discrimination in their personal lives.

Something I, perhaps naively, did not expect to stem from this research project was my own analysis of self and behaviors. While observing participants working to create their performance piece, I picked up on language use and behaviors that were discriminatory. It surprised me that these particular students, working so diligently to learn about and raise awareness of discrimination, could themselves be committing discriminatory acts without realizing it. I was forced to consider, especially in light of one of the chosen themes of the production that everyone discriminates, that I am a part of everyone and that I too discriminate, whether I am aware of it or not. Just as the audience was encouraged to analyze their own behavior after seeing the piece, I was able to better analyze my own through observing the creation of the piece. \

Similarly, my analysis of data led to self-analysis. As I read over exit interviews, searched for similarities, and lamented the small scope of change in behavior I found evidence of, I realized that I was being too harsh on my participants. I found myself frustrated that they were not any more likely to speak up when confronted with



discrimination unless the discriminator was someone they were comfortable with. I found myself doubting the reasons they provided as excuses for why they had not spoken up even though they felt that they should have. Eventually, though, I was forced to consider my own behaviors. How often have I, just as my participants, felt that I should say something but then chosen not to for any number of reasons that seem perfectly rational at the time? How often have I chosen the path of least resistance even though I tell myself I am committed to social change? Once I analyzed my own behaviors, I was better able to empathize with my participants. Speaking up is often difficult and uncomfortable, and rather than dwelling on the scope of the change, I decided to celebrate that fact that change had occurred at all.

Overall, this research project had a positive impact on both my participants and myself. All of us, this researcher included, gained awareness and empathy, analyzed our own behaviors, and walked away feeling that we had been a part of something that had made a difference. I feel that I can safely assume that this research project also had a positive impact on the audiences for the performance piece, as they too were given the opportunity to gain awareness and empathy as well as to reflect on their own behaviors. Similarly, I can hope that the friends whom participants are now more comfortable and confident speaking to about their discriminatory acts and language will benefit from this research project. Even though the changes in behaviors of participants that I observed evidence of were on a small scale, they may in fact lead to changes in the behaviors of people who were neither involved in the project nor saw the performance piece. As my participants move on with their individual lives, they will carry with them their changed

beliefs and behaviors, and through their interactions with those around them, perhaps inspire further change.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Informational Meeting Publicity Samples

Flyer to be hung on campus:

# Interested in theater?

# How about social issues?

Participants are needed for an upcoming research project where students will be working together to create and perform an original piece of theater based on their observations and experiences of discrimination and prejudice on campus.

Informational meetings will be held on:

Monday, March 28<sup>th</sup> at 5pm in McElhaney 104

&

Wednesday, March 30<sup>th</sup> at 5pm in McElhaney 101

Want more information? Check out the Facebook event:  
IUP Devised Theater Research Project: Informational Meetings

### **Email to student organizations**

I am contacting you because I believe members of your organization may be interested in the research study I am conducting for my Master's Thesis in Sociology.

The research project will involve a group of students working together to create and perform an original piece of theater about their observations and experiences of discrimination and prejudice on campus.

I will be assessing the beliefs and behaviors of participants over the course of the production process in order to assess the impact of involvement in the project on participants.

This research has exciting implications for ways to address social change in the future. Informational meetings will be held March 28<sup>th</sup> at 5pm in McElhaney 104 and March 30<sup>th</sup> at 5pm in McElhaney 101.

Please pass this information along to members of your organization.

Thank you,  
Rachel Smith  
Sociology MA Student  
nlsl@iup.edu

### **Campus wide email**

Are you interested in theater? Social change? Both?

I am seeking participants for a research study that will involve a group of students working together to create and perform an original piece of theater based on their observations and experiences of discrimination and prejudice on campus.

If you'd like more information about this project, please attend one of the following informational sessions:

March 28<sup>th</sup> at 5pm, McElhaney 104  
March 30<sup>th</sup> at 5pm, McElhaney 101

## Appendix B: Contact Sheet

Name:

Telephone number where you can be reached:

Email address:

Are you eighteen years of age or older?

Are you a current IUP student?

How did you hear about the informational meetings for this project?

Please write out your typical weekly schedule, including all regular time commitments:

On the back of this sheet, please list any time commitments you have for the rest of the semester in addition to those that appear in your weekly schedule. Please include any days that you will be out of town.

# **How Dirty Are You?**

(a dirty drama of discrimination)

\*All names of performers have been replaced with respondent codes

## Opening

*All enter one by one during final song of pre-show music (Blur's Stereotypes) and move to opening positions*

*Once music fades out:*

R6: A mushroom walks into a bar. The bartender says, "We don't serve your kind here". The mushroom asks, "Why not? I'm a fungi!"

R1: A dissected cadaver walks into a bar. The bartender says, "We don't serve your kind here." The dissected cadaver asks why not, and the bartender says, "You don't got the guts to drink here!"

R4: A hamburger walks into a bar. The bartender says, "We don't serve food here." The hamburger says, "That's okay, I just want a beer!"

R5: A snake walks into a bar. The bartender says, "We don't serve your kind here." The snake asks why not, and the bartender says, "You can't hold your liquor!"

R2: A times new roman font walks into a bar. The bartender tells it to get out. The font asks why and the bartender says, "We just don't serve your type here."

R3: A five dollar bill walks into a bar. The bartender says, "We don't serve your kind here!" The five dollar bill asks why not and the bartender says, "This is a singles bar!"

R8: A carton of yogurt walks into a bar. The bartender says, "We don't serve your kind here." The yogurt asks, "Why not? I'm a cultured individual!"

R6: A towel head

R1: A retard

R9: A lesbian

R4: A Jew

R5: A woman

R7: A black

R2: A transvestite

R3: A gimp

R8: An Asian walks into a bar.

R6: The bartender says, "We don't serve your kind here."

*All laugh loudly.*

## **Ad: selective hearing aid**

*R4 moves to R7.*

R4: Are you sick of hearing the same old opinions that you don't agree with every day?

R7: My grandfather told me that if someone hands you a pile of crap, you don't have to take it, but that doesn't apply to your ears.

R4: You never have to hear anything you think is stupid or wrong again. All you have to do is pick up the phone and order the selective hearing aid, and you'll be able to just turn the knob down and never listen to anything you don't want to ever again.

R7: Are you tired of having to listen to your Catholic friend going on about sacraments, hail Marys, and popping out babies every nine months? Just tune them out!

R1: Sisters! Brothers! Have you read your Bible today? I really think you should! There are some truly wonderful passages that I think will truly change your life!

*R1's voice fades as R7 mimes turning a knob at his ear.*

R4: You can just turn that volume right down. And what about that Oak Grove Preacher, always saying the same thing that nobody wants to hear over and over again?

R6: You must accept the Lord Jesus Christ into your heart if you want to be accepted into the Kingdom of Heaven!

R7: Eh, I don't think so...

*R6's voice fades as R7 mimes turning a knob at his ear.*

R4: Order the selective hearing aid today and you'll get the bonus Kaleidoscope Changer for free! You'll never have to see anything you don't want to ever again.

R7: Don't like the shape or color of someone's face? So what? Use the Kaleidoscope and you'll only have to look at the things you like to. I like it so much, I bought the company!

## **Little things segment 1**

*R9 moves to R2*

R2: Hey, want to go get wings Sunday?

R9: Actually, I'll be at church.

R2: You go to church?

R9: Yeah, I do.

R2: Wow, your weekends must suck.

*R7 moves to R8*

R8: Hey, you're an athlete, right? You from Philly?

R7: No, I'm from Camden. Just cause I'm an athlete you think I'm from Philly?

*R4 moves to R6*

R6: Were you too drunk to know who you were kissing last night?

R4: No.

R6: Do you even like girls?

R4: Yes!



## Fairytale

*R5 moves to center as townspeople gather.*

R5 (narrator): Once upon a time in Fairytale Land, after everyone had had their happy ending, a town meeting was called by a bunch of very angry fairytale characters.

R6 (little boy): It's that wolf! He's eating my sheep!

R1 (grandmother): He tried to eat my granddaughter and I!

R2 (little pig): He blew our houses down!

R5: What's going on here?

R6: It's the wolf!

*Townspeople yell about the wolf and his alleged crimes.*

R5: These are some very serious accusations. Alright bailiff, go get the wolf.

*R3 (bailiff) collects R9 (wolf) as the townspeople mutter amongst themselves.*

R9: Oh, come on! Yeah, I know why you're here. All of you. You've got a problem with me, huh?

*Townspeople yell accusations at wolf.*

R9: You three. Three little pigs.

R2: You blew down my house!

R9: Yeah, that's right, because I'm capable of blowing down houses. I went to your houses to warn you about Hurricane Ann, because it was going to blow down your houses. You and your shoddy construction! You, you built your house out of straw, and you, you built your house out of sticks. Lucky for you, you have a smart sibling who built a house out of bricks, or else you would have been gone with the wind, no pun intended.

R6: Well, maybe you didn't blow their houses down, but you ate my sheep!

R9: What? I did not!

R6: Did too!

R9: Did not!

R6: Did too!

R9: Did not!

R6: Did too!

R5: Enough! I think we need a flashback.

R6: Oh, that won't be necessary...

R9: Oh, that will be necessary!

R5: I agree with the wolf. Once upon a time, there was a little boy who tended to the sheep. One day, his sheep started to go missing.

*R6 mimes eating.*

R6: Mmmmm-mmmm. I love me some lamb chop!

*R9 walks by, whistling.*

R6: Wolf! Wolf! He's eating my sheep! Someone help! He's eating my sheep!

R9: Oh, come on! I'm a vegetarian!

R1: Well, maybe you didn't eat his sheep, but you tried to eat my granddaughter!

R9: I did not!

R8 (Little Red): Did too!

R9: Did not!

R8: Did too!

R9: Did not!

R8: Did too!

R5: You know what, I think we need another flashback. Once upon a time there was a little girl named Little Red Riding Hood. She was wandering through the woods one day when she was found by the wolf.

*R9 leads R8 to the center and mimes knocking on a door, which R1 opens.*

R1: Wolf! Wolf! Red! Red! Wolf! Wolf! What were you doing with my granddaughter?

R9: Listen, I found her wandering through the woods alone, next to a cave with a sleeping bear.

R8: That's bullsh- That's a lie, grandma!

R1: She doesn't go out by herself!

R9: Oh, you think so? She does every time you take an afternoon nap! She sneaks out to go meet up with Prince Charming!

R8: That's a lie, you big eared freak!

R1: You do have awfully large ears. And what big eyes you have. And what big teeth you have! The better to eat me and my granddaughter with! Wolf! Wolf! Someone help! Wolf!

R9: Oh, come on!

R4 (little pig): Well, maybe he didn't try to eat Little Red, but he's still a wolf!

R6: Yeah, a big bad wolf!

*Townspeople yell about the big, bad wolf.*

R9: Fine, you want me to be the big, bad wolf. I'll be a big bad wolf. Looks like I'm having a pig roast tonight! Come here, you!

*R9 throws R2 over his shoulder and leaves with her.*

R5: And they all lived happily ever after... I guess?

## **Little things segment 2**

*R2 and R9 move to R6*

R6: Hey, weren't you just with someone else? Wow, you get around.

*R5 walks past R7, R4, and R8*

R7: Emo freak. Nice cuts. Why don't you cut my lawn?

R4: Want some fake blood to go with those fake cuts and your fake pain?

R8: Attention whore.

*R3 moves to R1*

R1: Hey, can I buy you a drink?

R3: Sure! Hey, I really like you. We should play D&D together next weekend.

R1: D&D? Like, dungeons and dragons? I think you ought to find someone else...

**Ad: hide your gay**

*R1, R8, and R6 move to center*

R8: Meeting your lesbian girlfriend's conservative parents for the first time?

R6: Worried someone will find out you're a lesbian because of your butch haircut?

R1: Well, my friends worry no more, because Heterextensions has your back. Just pop in the hairpiece and soon your hair will be as long and straight as your false identity.

R6: Well, that's great news Janice, but what about our male homosexual friends?

R8: Yeah, what if you're going out to the game with the guys and you don't want them to find out the truth because of your lisp?

R1: No worries, boys! Sailor's Mouth has you covered. Just pop in the comfy mouthpiece, and soon you'll be yelling and swearing just like one of the guys!

### **Little things segment 3**

*R7 moves to R9*

R9: Mike Rodriguez! Dude I saw your game last night! You were amazing. You must get like, dozens of chicks. I bet you've got one in each area code.

R7: No, there's only one girl for me. I'm not like that.

*R3 walks by R2*

R2: Welcome to comic-con! Want to see my mystical staff from the third realm?

*R8 walks by R1 and R6*

R6: Hey, you see the new guy?

R1: Yeah, was he born that way or did his parents just drop him on his face?

## Gameshow

*R2 (host) moves to center*

R2: Hello, and welcome to Truth and Dirty Dare, the game show where we find out if you can hold up to what you say. Contestants?

*R5 and R7 come forward*

R2: I'll start by giving our lovely contestants a scenario. Your friend says the movie you want to see is so gay. How do you respond? Contestant number one!

R5: I say that referring to homosexuality in a derogatory way is inappropriate and hurtful. People should love whoever they want, and a sexual preference shouldn't be thoughtlessly reduced to a casual slang term.

R2: Dirty dare, come on down!

*R9 runs forward*

R9: You want to see Chronicles of Narnia? That is so gay.

R5: Ummm..... you're right. That is so gay.

R2: I'm sorry, but you didn't complete your dirty dare. Have a seat. Next contestant!

*R3 comes forward to replace R5*

R2: Contestants, your friend tells you that all Muslims are terrorists. How do you respond? Contestant number two?

R7: Islam is a religion of peace and just because a few bad apples have given it a bad name doesn't mean that it's a bad religion. A lot of good people have come out of Islam as well, like Cat Stevens.

R2: Here comes your dirty dare!

*R1 runs forward*

R1: No, I'm not sitting next to those Muslims, they'll blow me up!

R7: Uhhh... we're eating pork anyway. Good idea.

R2: I'm sorry, but you definitely did not complete your dirty dare. Next contestant!

*R6 comes forward to replace R7*

R2: Your friend says foreigners should learn to speak English. How do you respond? Contestant number three!

R3: We should be more tolerant. They're here to learn and get an education. How would we feel if we were in their country and were expected to speak their language fluently?

R2: Okay dirty dare, come on down!

*R5 runs forward*

R5: God, I can't stand those international students. I wish they'd learn to speak English.

R3: We should be more tolerant. I mean, we have to understand that-

R5: No! I want to understand what they're saying at all times.

R3: I guess you're right....

R2: That was a good try, but you didn't complete your dirty dare. Have a seat. Our final contestant!

*R4 comes forward to replace R3*

R2: This is our last scenario of the night. Your friends catcall after a woman walking by. How do you respond? Contestant number four!

R6: I tell them not to do that because there is more to women than their looks, and you shouldn't objectify them.

R2: Dirty dare, come on down!

*R7, R8, and R9 run forward and begin whistling and yelling*

R6: Guys come on, there's more to her than her looks. What about her feelings, her personality?

R7: But she's hot!

R6: Come on guys, there's so much more to women than their looks...



*R6, R8, R7, and R9 walk away, deep in conversation*

R2: Congratulations, contestant number four! Contestant number four? Contestant number five! Congratulations! You've won our consolation prize, Heterextentions and a selective hearing aid! Well, that's all we have for tonight. Tune in next time to Truth and Dirty Dare to see what dirty situations we'll come up with.

## **Little things segment 4**

*R5 moves to R4*

R4: Depression? Is that even a real illness?

*R2 walks by R1*

R2: What is that blond studying? The anatomy of bubble gum?

*R9 moves to R8*

R8: Wait, you're a Christian? You're not going to start quoting the bible and shit at me are you?

R9: Do you want me to?

R8: No!

## **Ad: dirty scents**

*R2 and R3 move to center*

R3: Do you have a problem?

R2: Something you need fixed?

R3: Are you attracting all the wrong kinds of people?

R2: Or can't find the right ones?

R3: Try our new line of dirty scents today! From our religious discrimination line, we have Money Maker. Need a little extra cash? Trying to find a heavy, latke cooking wife? Well, just spray a little Money Maker and in just a few minutes you'll have those wailing Yahweh worshipers coming your way.

R2: And from our gender discrimination line, do you see a boner coming from a mile away? Smell that bad cologne? Stop those pick-up lines right in their tracks with Horny Guy Away and keep those hump happy guys away for up to ten hours.

R3: Or try our Scent of Asia. Having problems with a math equation? Don't know how to awkwardly pretend to fit into American culture? Try a little bit of this scent from our racial discrimination line and have those slant eyes lining up at your door.

R2: From our sexual discrimination line, see that girl walking through the Oak Grove with her sassy gay best friend? Want one for yourself? Spray Sassy Gay Spray and that fashion conscious gay guy will soon be right by your side.

R3: So try our line of Dirty Scents today!

R2: Available online and at your local Walgreens.

## **Little things segment 5**

*R6 walks by R2 and R1*

R2: He's undressing me with his eyes!

R1: Eww, all guys think about is sex.

*R5 moves to R8*

R5: Hey, do you have a date for the formal?

R8: Why, you asking me to go?

R5: No, I was just wondering how much you'd pay to have your... face... next to mine.

*R4 moves to R7*

R7: Bisexual? More like try-sexual. Can't you just pick a gender and stick with it? It's people like you that spread AIDS to the rest of us.

## Documentary

*R8 (host) moves to center*

R8: Hello, and welcome to Dangerous Deeds of Discrimination. Our undercover agents daredly delve deep into the devious depths of society in order to show you the dirty truth about discrimination. This week we are joined by R1, one of our bravest reporters, who will now share with us three of her recent encounters.

*R1 observes R2, R3, and R5*

R3: Check that out.

R2: Oh my god, I mean, she could do something with her hair.

R3: I know right? I mean, seriously, are you ill?

R2: And a little bit of makeup wouldn't hurt either.

R1: Excuse me, miss, did you happen to hear the comments those other girls were making about you?

R5: Of course I did. How couldn't I?

R1: How do they make you feel?

R5: Horrible! Just because I throw my hair into a ponytail and don't wear makeup doesn't mean I'm wrong or ugly.

R1: Thank you for your time. Excuse me; I happened to overhear you insulting that woman down there. Do you have a reason for that?

R2: Seriously? Umm, look at her!

R3: How long does it really take to make yourself look better than that?

R2: Right! I mean, look at us. I'm clearly prettier than her.

R1: So what you're saying is that you put her down in order to make yourselves feel better? Thank you for your time.

*R1 observes R6 and R7*

R6: Daddy, Tommy says that those two are lesbians and that's weird. Is that weird?

R7: Yes, son, lesbians are weird.

R6: Why?

R7: Well... it's like this... if you go to a buffet, you don't want them to serve all fish. I mean, we like Long John Silver's, but only if it's attached to a KFC, right?

R6: Right!

R7: Exactly.

R1: Excuse me, sir, but I overheard you discriminating against lesbians. Why is that?

R7: Well, it's wrong. I mean, do you ask a bird why it flies or a fish why it swims? They do it because they were born to do it.

R1: So what are you teaching your son?

R7: I'm teaching him what's right.

R1: And what about you? How do you feel about lesbians?

R6: I like KFC and Long John Silver's.

R1: Would you say that you got these ideas from your family?

R6: Of course! My parents are always right.

R1: Thank you for your time.

*R1 observes R9 walking by R4 and R5*

R4: Do you see that monstrosity? That, that mosque?

R5: I know! It spits in the face of 9/11.

R4: I can't believe it's right next to Ground Zero. That's ridiculous. It shouldn't be allowed.

R5: It's horrible! How unpatriotic.

R1: Excuse me, sir, do you have a moment? Have you heard some of the things being said about the mosque near Ground Zero?

R9: Oh yeah, of course. Every time I go in.

R1: What are your feelings about these comments?

R9: Well, I know that this is America and we're all entitled to free speech, whether or not it's right or wrong.

R1: Thank you for your time. Excuse me; I gather that you're very angry about the mosque near Ground Zero. What is behind that anger?

R5: It's unpatriotic, and to be honest, unchristian.

R4: It's a shadow of violence.

R1: Do you know any Muslims?

R4: No!

R5: Of course not!

R1: So what you're telling me is that you fear the unknown? Thank you for your time.

R8: Very disturbing and startling experiences, but these things happen every day. Well, R1, we thank you for your courage. We also thank those who were foolish enough to be interviewed with their real names and faces. We hope they all still have jobs on Monday. That's all for now. Join us next time for more Dangerous Deeds of Discrimination.

## Little things segment 6 and final segment

*R6 and R7 walk by R3*

R7: Hey buddy, check out those tits.

R3: Men are such assholes.

*R1 walks by R5 and R4*

R5: How did she get an A on the test?

R4: Who'd she have to fuck?

*R2 walks by R3 and R7*

R3: You want some pussy? She's easy.

*R8 moves to R2 and R6*

R6: Do you understand why you weren't chosen for the part?

R8: No, why wasn't I selected?

R2: Would you understand if I told you that you didn't look the part?

*R1 moves to R9*

R1: Wait, I don't really understand-

R9: Oh my god, listen! Alright- you know what; I've already tried explaining it three times. Jesus, you give us all a bad name, you dumb blonde.

*R7 moves to R2, R6, and R8*

R6: Hey, party over here!

R2: Come party with us!

R7: You guys, I can't party with you tonight.

R6: Why not?

R7: Well, I guess I don't have to worry about my grades or nothing, but there's a



game tomorrow and you know my scholarship's riding on my game. I can't.

*R4 moves to R5*

R5: Bisexual? Please, you know that doesn't last outside of college.

*R2 moves to R1*

R1: So you've been with Dan for what, a week now? You sleep with him yet?

*R5 moves to R9*

R5: I'm just-

R9: I know, so depressed. Geez, why don't you go kill yourself already? Sorry, it's just a figure of speech, I didn't mean it!

*R9 moves to R4*

R4: Are you actually listening to that crazy guy standing on a hill in a blizzard? The oak grove preacher is insane. What do you believe, anyway?

R9: I mean...

R4: Well?

R9: Yeah, he's dumb.

*R6 moves to R7*

R7: Dude, dude, check her out man, she wants you!

R6: I don't know man...

R7: Go on, give it to her!

R6: She seems like a nice girl.

R7: She's got holes, doesn't she?

*R3 moves to R8*

R8: Hey, you play D&D, right?

R3: All the time!

R8: Some of us are LARPing, want to come with? We've got an extra sword.

*All step forward*

R8: Is that all I am to them? Just an ugly face?

R1: Did your parents drop you on your face?

R5: How much would you pay to have your... face... next to mine?

R2: Would you understand if I told you that you didn't look the part?

R8: Will I ever be good enough in anyone's eyes?

R1: Am I just a dumb blond?

R2: What is she studying, the anatomy of bubble gum?

R4: Who did she have to fuck for that A?

R9: You give us all a bad name, you dumb blond!

R1: Maybe I don't even deserve to be in college...

R7: I'm more than just an athlete.

R8: You're from Philly, right?

R9: I bet you've got a chick in every area code!

R6: Dude, you're a jock, you love to party, right?

R7: Maybe I am just a jock...

R4: Do I need to choose one gender over another?

R6: Did you even know who you were kissing?

R7: Bisexual? More like try-sexual. You'll try anything!

R5: Bisexual doesn't last past college.

R4: Maybe I don't exist. Maybe I'm just confused.

R2: Just because I date doesn't mean I sleep with them and I'm a slut.

R6: Wow, you get around.

R3: She's easy.

R1: So, you sleep with him yet?

R2: You know what, fine. Everybody thinks I'm fooling around, might as well. Hey you, want to have sex?

R5: Depression is real, right? There's something really wrong with me. Right?

R7: You just cut for attention.

R4: Depression is not a real illness.

R9: Why don't you go kill yourself?

R5: Maybe I should. It's not like they're going to care anyway.

R9: Just because I love God doesn't make me a zealot.

R2: Wow, your weekends must suck.

R8: You're not going to start quoting the bible at me, are you?

R4: Are you listening to him? What do you believe?

R9: I'm agnostic.

R6: Everybody thinks that just because I'm a man, I'm another misogynist.

R2: He's undressing me with his eyes.

R3: Men are such assholes.

R7: She's got holes, doesn't she?

R6: Whatever, everybody thinks it anyway. Might as well get my dick wet. Hey you, come on over here.

R3: What kind of nerd do they think I am?

R1: D&D? Like, Dungeons and Dragons?

R2: Want to see my mystical staff from the third realm?

R8: Hey, want to come LARP with us? We've got an extra sword!

R3: I'm not that kind of nerd!

## **Ad: safety spray**

*R9 and R5 move to center*

R5: Are you tired of having to be around judgmental people?

R9: Feel like you're paying attention to the wrong sort of crowd?

R5: Do you want to only be around the right people who share all of your opinions?

R9: The people that will listen and not argue?

R5: Well, now there's a product for you.

R9: Safety Spray!

R5: All you have to do is spray one quick spritz over someone and they'll either glow with a beautiful rainbow aura if they're just like you, or they won't glow at all.

R9: They'll be left in the dark and you won't have to deal with them or talk to them ever again. You can just walk away with all of your bright and colorful friends. Buy it today!

## Closing

*All move back to opening spots*

R6: If you are a young mother, I'm going to assume that you're irresponsible and slutty.

*R6 moves to a bucket of mud and smears some on his arm*

R1: If you smoke, I'm going to assume that you are ignorant and don't care about your or other peoples' health.

*R1 smears mud on her face*

R9: I avoid the black side of my dorm because I'm afraid of getting mugged.

*R9 smears mud on his arm*

R4: I would never open the door of the dorms for a man at night, but I would probably open them for a woman.

*R4 smears mud on her chest*

R5: If you say something stupid or trip over your words, I'm going to assume you're stupid.

*R5 smears mud on her face*

R7: If you tell me you're in a sorority, I'm going to assume you're a slut, and then I'm going to try to fuck you, conscious or not.

*R7 smears mud on his face*

R2: If you're a non-native English speaker, I will get mad at you, because I can't understand a word you say.

*R2 smears mud on her arm*

R3: I assume that all of my friendships with Christians won't last just because I'm an atheist.

*R3 smears mud on her chest*

R8: I feel awkward and guilty around handicapped and disabled people.

*R8 smears mud on his face*

R6: I'm R6, and I discriminate.

R1: I'm R1, and sometimes I make false assumptions.

R9: I'm R9, and I will categorize you.

R4: I'm R4, and I act before I think.

R5: I'm R5, and I will judge you.

R7: I'm R7, and I'm just human.

R2: I'm R2, and I will hurt you with my words.

R3: I'm R3, and I'll admit I discriminate.

R8: I'm R8, and I'm a little dirty, too. Hell, we're all dirty.

R6: How dirty are you?

*All leave one by one as closing music (Bad Religion's A World Without Melody)  
plays*

## **Appendix D: Performance Piece Publicity Samples**

### **Email to student organizations**

I am writing you because I think members of your student organization may be interested in attending upcoming performances of *How Dirty Are You?* (a dirty drama of discrimination). This original piece of theater has been created by IUP students as part of my Sociology Master's thesis and is based on observations and experiences of discrimination on campus.

Performances will be Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup> and Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup> at 6pm in the picnic area between Eberly and Stephenson Hall (formerly Crimson Suites). In case of rain, performances will take place in the Ruddock Hall MPR (G12). There is no admittance fee.

If you think members of your student organization would be interested in these performances, please pass this information along to them. Please also feel free to contact me with any questions or for further information.

Thanks,

Rachel Smith

Sociology MA Student

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### **Email to professors**

I am writing you because I think that students in your classes may be interested in attending upcoming performances of *How Dirty Are You?* (a dirty drama of discrimination). This original piece of theater has been created by IUP students as part of my Sociology Master's thesis and is based on observations and experiences of discrimination on campus.

Performances will be Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup> and Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup> at 6pm in the picnic area between Eberly and Stephenson Hall (formerly Crimson Suites). In case of rain, performances will take place in the Ruddock Hall MPR (G12). There is no admittance fee.

If you think students in your classes would be interested in these performances, would you please announce this information in your class sessions? Please feel free to contact me with any questions or for further information.

Thanks,

Rachel Smith

Sociology MA Student

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## Appendix E: Informed Consent Form

You are invited to participate in this research study. The following information is provided in order to help you to make an informed decision whether or not to participate. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask. You are eligible to participate because you are currently a student at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP).

The purpose of this study is to assess the effects of involvement in a devised theater production on the beliefs and behaviors of participants. Participation in this study will require approximately thirty hours of your time over the course of the production of the devised theater piece. Participation in this study will involve a one on one preliminary interview, participation in devised theater workshops, participation in the creation of an original piece of devised theater, the performance of that piece for audiences, and a one on one exit interview.

Your answers during the preliminary and exit interviews will be recorded, transcribed, and analyzed in order to assess any changes that have occurred in your beliefs and behaviors since the beginning of the production process.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators or IUP. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw at any time by notifying the Principle Investigator. Upon your request to withdraw, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence and will have no bearing on your academic standing or services you receive from the University. The information obtained in the study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement below and return to the Principal Investigator. Take the extra unsigned copy with you. If you choose not to participate, return the unsigned copies to the Principal Investigator.

This study is being sponsored by the IUP Frederick Douglass Institute and the IUP Department of Theater and Dance.

### Contact Information:

Principle Investigator  
Rachel Smith  
Sociology MA Student, IUP  
Email: [nsl@iup.edu](mailto:nsl@iup.edu)  
Phone: 724-464-7143

Faculty Sponsor  
Dr. Robert Heasley  
Sociology Professor, IUP  
Email: [robert.heasley@iup.edu](mailto:robert.heasley@iup.edu)  
Phone: 724-357-3939

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724/357-7730).

**VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM:**

I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

Name (PLEASE PRINT):

Signature:

Date:

Phone number or location where you can be reached:

Best days and times to reach you:

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study, have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature.

Investigator's Signature:

Date:

## Appendix F: Entrance Interview Questions

3. How old are you?
4. How many years have you been a student at IUP? What is your major?
5. Where did you grow up?
6. Do you live on campus? If not, do you live in off campus student housing?
7. Are you involved in any groups or organizations on campus? If so, which ones?
8. Are you involved in any groups or organizations off campus? If so, which ones?
9. How would you define discrimination? Please provide examples of discrimination and explain why they are examples of discrimination.
10. How would you define prejudice? Please provide examples of prejudice and explain why they are examples of prejudice.
11. Have you ever observed discrimination and/or prejudice on campus? If so, please describe your observations, including the context, setting, and people and language that were involved. Also, if you have observed discrimination and/or prejudice on campus, how often have you observed it?
12. If you have observed discrimination and/or prejudice on campus, what did you do when you observed it? Please describe any actions you took and explain why you acted the way you did.
13. Have you ever experienced discrimination and/or prejudice on campus? If so, please describe your experiences, including the context, setting, and people and language that were involved. Also, if you have experienced discrimination and/or prejudice on campus, how often have you experienced it?
14. If you have experienced discrimination and/or prejudice on campus, what did you do when you experienced it? Please describe any actions you took and explain why you acted the way you did.
15. Do you feel that discrimination and prejudice are issues on campus? If so, do you think they need to be addressed? If so, how and by whom?
16. Do you know of any groups or organizations on campus who work with issues surrounding discrimination and prejudice on campus? If so, please tell me about them.

## Appendix G: Exit Interview Questions

1. How would you define discrimination? Please provide examples of discrimination and explain why they are examples of discrimination.
2. How would you define prejudice? Please provide examples of prejudice and explain why they are examples of prejudice.
3. In the last month have you observed discrimination and/or prejudice on campus? If so, please describe your observations, including the context, setting, and people and language that were involved. Also, if you have observed discrimination and/or prejudice on campus in the last month, how often have you observed it?
4. If you have observed discrimination and/or prejudice on campus in the last month, what did you do when you observed it? Please describe any actions you took and explain why you acted the way you did.
5. In the last month have you ever experienced discrimination and/or prejudice on campus? If so, please describe your experiences, including the context, setting, and people and language that were involved. Also, if you have experienced discrimination and/or prejudice on campus in the last month, how often have you experienced it?
6. If you have experienced discrimination and/or prejudice on campus in the last month, what did you do when you experienced it? Please describe any actions you took and explain why you acted the way you did.
7. Do you feel that discrimination and prejudice are issues on campus? If so, do you think they need to be addressed? If so, how and by whom?
8. Do you know of any groups or organizations on campus who work with issues surrounding discrimination and prejudice on campus? If so, please tell me about them.
9. Do you feel that you have learned anything from your involvement in this theater production? If so, what, and how do you feel about what you have learned?
10. Do you feel that involvement in this theater production has changed you in any way? If so, how, and how do you feel about those changes?
11. Do you feel that you would react differently now if you observed or experienced discrimination and/or prejudice on campus than you would have reacted before your involvement in this theater production? If yes, describe how you would react differently and why you think that is.