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Forever Home: A Multilevel Approach to Fostering Productive Transgression in Honors

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Abstract: Transgressive pedagogical methods such as those advanced by Freire, Giroux, hooks, Kincheloe, McClaren, and others are enlisted to train honors students to assist organizational entities in the pet adoption sector, with the eventual goal of achieving the ideal of adoption, securing a "forever home." Three self-assigned groups of honors students (six students each) were tasked with contacting pet adoption entities and—based on class readings, lectures, and discussion—offering assistance in improving contact episodes between adopters and adoptees. Students were asked to pre-analyze impending interactions with target entities according to Hymes's SPEAKING template; to engage contact; and to report to the class afterward. One group achieved linkage but had to fundraise rather than act as consultants for pet-human interaction. The other two groups failed to achieve contact, instead performing in-class

dramatizations of how their interactions went and how they should have gone had Hymes's communication episode ideals been realized. Relying on discourse analysis, class readings, discussion with students, and past experience, the instructor examined the class from the viewpoint of transgressive pedagogy, creating a five-level model to bring together various influences on the transgressive mode (the THERE model): *T*eacher as Outlaw, *H*onors Courses Fit; *E*xpand Problem Space; *R*eveal ZOPED; and *E*ngage Real World. Based on a review of instructor and student experience via the THERE model, suggestions are offered to engage honors students in transgressive learning approaches for the benefit of society and for finding in honors curricula a "forever home."

INTRODUCTION

The neo-pragmatist Richard Rorty once said, "The world is out there, but descriptions of the world are not." This tantalizing statement is a first-rate depiction of the engage-the-real-world approach of experiential teachers as well of their "woke" colleagues who have built upon knowledge in this burgeoning domain by conceptually uniting real-world experience with senses of mission, social justice, and the righting of wrongs.

No more fertile soil is available for nurturing these progressive ideals than honors colleges, where the best and brightest young students seem ready to be enlisted as fighters in redressing social injustice. For years, scholars and practitioners in honors education, knowing their students' potential, have sought and found ways to make students aware of how they can affect what, as Rorty says, is "out there." The various domains and levels embraced by transgression literature offer some of the best means to accomplish just that.

TRANSGRESSION—AN OVERVIEW

Relatively recently, serious attention has focused on transgression in teaching (Duncum, 2009; Freire**,** 2005; Giroux, 2004; hooks, 1994). Though transgression by that or another name has been a pedagogical concern throughout history (Conroy & Davis, 2002), issues of progressive social engagement and education's role in social activism have foregrounded the

potential for pedagogy to be enlisted in pursuit of social justice (Biesta, 2013; Motta, 2013).

Concepción & Eflin (2009) have provided a working definition of transgression:

> to transgress is to flout a valued norm in such a way as to threaten the viability of the norm . . . whether an experience, act, practice, institution, piece of course content, or person is transgressive is context dependent; there are many types of norms and many ways to flout them. (p. 183)

The second part of this definition informed the approach underlying the evolution and outcomes of my course Forever Home, where work involved roughly equal amounts of traditional and experiential learning. The pedagogical process in this course involved levels of entry into acts of resistance to achieve a holistic view of transgression where transgression is not a separate, individualistic, or spontaneous activity. In any curriculum, but especially honors curricula, we must approach transgression warily, mindful of its promises and perils, starting with its multi-dimensionality.

Addressing transgression-based learning in the sustainability movement, Lotz-Sisitka, Arjen, Kronlid, and McGarry (2015) provide a succinct, comprehensive view of transgressive learning processes:

> people everywhere will need to learn how to cross disciplinary boundaries, expand epistemological horizons, transgress stubborn research and education routines and hegemonic powers, and transcend mono-cultural practices in order to create new forms of human activity and new social systems that are more sustainable and socially just. (p. 74)

The transgressive approach of Forever Home adopts three ideas: (1) process over product; (2) instructor deference to students in deciding what and how to learn; and (3) experiential learning strategies transgressing traditional practices.

Transgression often appears as defiance of social convention. The *OED* ("Transgression," 2018) defines it as "the action of transgressing or passing beyond the bounds of legality or right; a violation of law, duty, or command; disobedience, trespass, sin." The word's individualistic flavor may derive from its association with religion, confirmed by several *OED* examples. As a pedagogical key, though, it is best seen as multi-levelled, situated in complex

elements of circumstantial domains where focus on only one element is ill-advised (Engeström, 1987; Vygotsky, 1978).

FOREVER HOME:
A TRANSGRESSIVE, EXPERIENTIAL HONORS COURSE

An example of exploring intersections among honors curriculum and experiential learning (Braid, 2008; Clauss, 2011) together with transgression was my course Forever Home, a one-credit honors seminar in the fall semester of 2017 at the University at Albany, which has a substantial honors college of over 400 students. The course dealt with external organizational communication, or how organizations present themselves to external stakeholders, mostly through advertising, marketing, public relations, and sales (Cheney & Christensen, 2001) and pet adoption, taking its name from the ideal result where adopters provide permanent homes for pets.

Three teams of six students each approached three organizations in the multiplex pet adoption sector, offering help as consultants to improve chances of pets finding a "forever home." Teams 1 and 2 failed to gain full contact with their target organizations, while Team 3 made contact but performed the assignment via a different service (not consultancy but fundraising). I view these results as displays of transgression, uniting them in a five-level model (the THERE model) that sharpens our conception of how transgression can invigorate a course in an established honors curriculum.

TRANSGRESSION AND FACILITATING CHANGE:
THE THERE MODEL

To clarify transgressions in Forever Home, I propose the THERE model (Figure 1), uniting five levels that show domains of potential transgression, beginning with the instructor and moving outward to engagement by students with the sociohistorically specific "real world" or, if one prefers, the reverse. The THERE model (*T* eacher as Outlaw; *H* onors Courses Fit; *E* xpand Problem Space; *R* eveal ZOPED (zone of proximal development); *E* ngage Real World) to show transgression as "getting there" and that transgression, in pedagogy, is always the "there" there.

Figure 1 shows activity fields where transgressions manifest themselves, moving outward and inward due to level interaction. These fields represent my analysis (based on the class Forever Home and on my experience). Maps

stipulating other levels can be fashioned for this class and even more for other courses.

Movement among levels is multi-directional. In the figure, bi-directional arrows show at least two ways to realize transgression. The center circle, T1 ("T" for "transgression") is "teacher as outlaw," which addresses teachers' relationships to their identity and teaching (hooks, 1994; Palmer, 1997). But T1 is also an outcome as shown by the opposite-moving arrow, so "teacher as outlaw" could also be T5, which addresses the teacher as "teaching to transgress" (hooks, 1994), while knowing the rewards and risks of transgression. Henceforth, levels are named by both positions: "teacher as outlaw" is "T1/T5."

T2/T4 ("honors courses fit") concerns honors curricula: how classrooms suffused with transgressive potential compare to honors classes with

FIGURE 1. THERE MODEL: INTERACTIVE LEVELS OF TRANSGRESSION IN FOREVER HOME
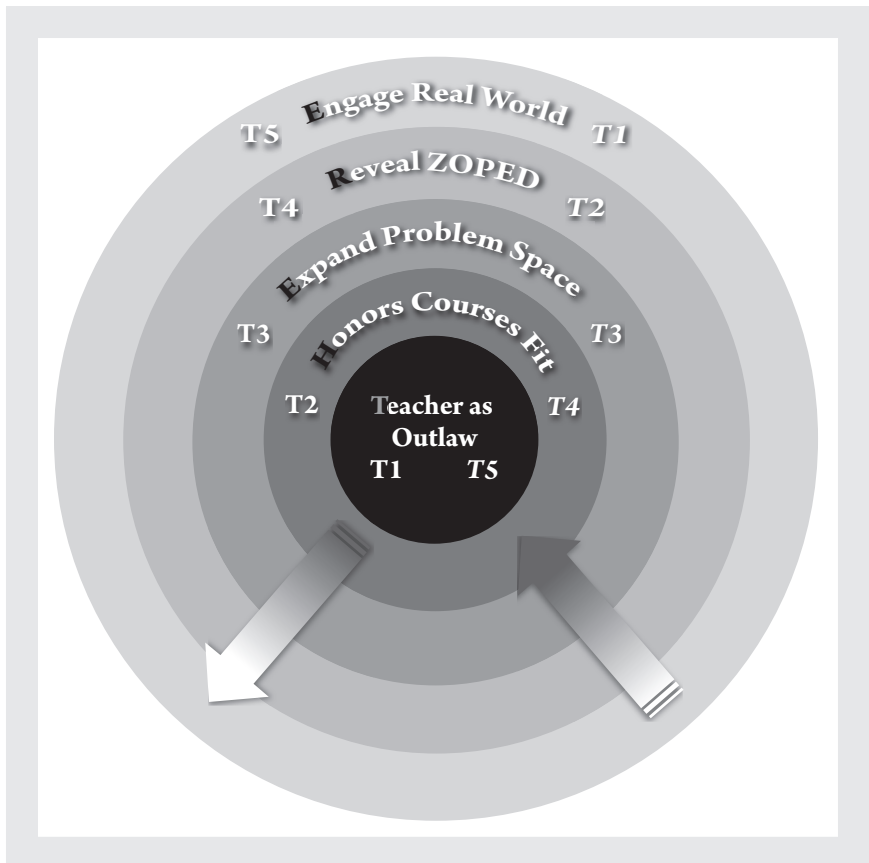
seemingly less flexible requirements (Carbonaro, 2005). T3/T3 ("expand problem space") tackles how, in transgressive classrooms, departure from convention is both permitted and rewarded. T4/T2 ("reveal ZOPED") envisions movement through sociohistorically explicit territory; minimally, this addresses instructor to student to real world as a zone of proximal development (ZOPED or ZPD), a familiar concept in transgressive and experiential learning (Chaiklin, 2003).

Last, T5/T1 ("engage real world") shows transgression encountering the messiness of the "real world," thereby distinguishing "real world" from classroom even though, obviously, everything in the model is the "real world." T4/T2 is a "no man's land" between problem space expansion and intruding "real world" issues (see, e.g., Kaufman, 2010). T4/T2's transgressions are among the tools to facilitate outward movement of classroom instruction, a domain where students, needing assistance, start their journey to meet the "real world," where they need to end up having mastered what is being taught.

The bi-directional arrows hint at how levels modify each other. For example, finding a T4/T2 ZPD in one class can increase a teacher's confidence as an empowered outlaw, possibly useful in other classes [T1/T5]; expansion of a T3/T3 problem space can improve chances of attracting honors students by casting a wider net, improving the fit between the transgression-suffused Forever Home and more "appropriate" course selections [T2/T4]; and so on.

One further conceptual system that played a decisive role in executing the THERE model (through being pressed into service to deal with anomalous events) is the template proposed by Dell Hymes (1964) for analyzing social situations involving communication, for which Hymes provided another mnemonic, SPEAKING: *S* etting/scene, *P* articipants, *E* nds, *A* cts sequence, *K* ey, *I* nstrumentalities, *N* orms, and *G* enre. These designate elements of speech events, i.e., one or more speech acts by more than one participant, illustrating Hymes's view, called "ethnography of speaking," that successful communication demands more than knowing linguistic code and entails information about context (Briggs, 1986). The elements in SPEAKING pinpoint these areas of contextual knowledge.

THE RELATION OF EACH LEVEL TO FOREVER HOME

T1/T5: Teacher as Outlaw. Forever Home was immediately transgressive, thrown into a mix of well-defined offerings in a major honors program. Though a teacher of thirty years' experience, the last eight as full professor, I was on sabbatical from my home university. My teaching, which emphasizes

precision recall from technical scholarly sources plus extensive experiential learning, seemed ill-suited to the honors curriculum of the University at Albany, where I was visiting. Honors students, composed of the top five percent of undergraduates, seemed most acclimated to courses that emphasized reading from disciplinary specializations, membership on "real-world" research teams, and seminar classes taught by ranking professors from their major departments.

My experience suggests that honors students tend to resist transgression, possibly because honors undergraduates have won the academic game largely by not transgressing beyond conventional instruction. According to traditional measures like examinations and writing, they have excelled. I find that, in contrast, nontraditional returning adults seem most comfortable with transgression.

However, every teacher designing a new class or adapting an extant one is already an outlaw, venturing into novel realms guided only by experience and instinct. A key to using transgression lies in accepting this outlaw status, thus actualizing a powerful pedagogical instrument. As hooks (1994) notably put it, "Teaching is a performative act . . . that offers the space for change, invention, spontaneous shifts, that can serve as a catalyst drawing out the unique elements in each classroom" (p. 11). Harris (2011) concurs: "I do not expect students to take any risks that I would not take, to share in any way that I would not share" (p. 755). Knowingly or not, teachers often don outlaw mantles.

Finally, the perhaps objectionable term "outlaw," chosen because of its transgressive focus, has been defined in more inspiring terms. Palmer (1997) poses a full range of what the "woke" teacher sees as fields for potential transgressions:

> Good teachers join self, subject, and students in the fabric of life because they teach from an integral and undivided self; they manifest in their own lives, and evoke in their students, a "capacity for connectedness." They are able to weave a complex web of connections between themselves, their subjects, and their students, so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves. (p. 3)

T2/T4: Honors Courses Fit. Honors students are known for their focus on and success at work leading to academic esteem, so they choose courses demanding greater outlay of time and energy (Lacey, 2005). One might speculate that honors students also avoid atypical courses that lie outside their customary well-defined career paths (Wintrol & Jerinic, 2013).

Forever Home lies firmly athwart this "atypical" domain: a one-hour, eight-week course with a workload nearly equal to sixteen weeks in non-honors courses and with eight readings of high difficulty; four objective exams; and a group project targeting an extant organization. As Slavin (2008) and Ford (2008) pointed out, such conditions may mean that honors students find it difficult to experiment with taking courses that lie too far outside a more or less precisely defined career path. For only one credit hour, even with its obvious social appeal, Forever Home could be a hard sell to students with very precise plans about their education.

I had taught this course three times before, for three credits over 16 weeks, at a large midwestern public university, where my students were a mix of non-tracked students, few of whom would be honors level; my home university has no honors program, *per se*. Thus, *ab initio*, I saw opportunities overflowing with transgressive potential: some specified, hence inescapable, and others unanticipated, hence abundant with transgressive options.

T3/T3: Expand Problem Space. Problem spaces provide resources to shape solutions. Expanding problem spaces means recasting problems to involve more resources or reconfiguring existing ones, especially those that are veiled at first (Dorst & Cross, 2001) or emerge as solutions develop (Engeström, 1987). In Engeström's view, problem spaces resemble object nodes in his triangle of activity: "raw material" where activity is directed, adjustable by physical or symbolic tools as internal or external mediating instruments (Wells, 2002, p. 47).

Given the frustrations encountered in contacting the target organizations, my awareness of what was available for solutions underwent several modifications as they always do, each time resulting in expansion of the problem space.

T4/T2: Reveal ZOPED. The zone of proximal development (ZOPED or ZPD) is "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86)

The ZOPED in Forever Home consisted of: (1) setting up contact between teams and target organizations, with the pre-mastery state (i.e., unfamiliarity with Hymes's SPEAKING model and reflecting little familiarity with organizational protocol) and post-mastery (i.e., familiarity with the model as an analytical tool) encompassing experiences clarifying relations between fledgling students and formal organizations; (2) honing all three

teams' ability to use Hymes's SPEAKING model to aid initial contact with target organizations and to do follow-up analysis after failing to connect with a target (Teams 1 and 2); and (3) providing, through instructor experience in business consulting as well as proficiency with activity theory and the ZOPED, guidance to lead team members from their actual developmental level to the desired level by responding to idiosyncratic experiences with targets, in other words from pre-mastery, defined as a mishmash of experiences, readings, and unfamiliar methods (SPEAKING model) to post-mastery as a unified view drafted in class. Each "move" necessitated breaching boundaries—that is, transgressing.

T5/T1: Engage Real World. As noted, the label "real world" is a bit spurious. Clearly, the "real world" is both the goal of Forever Home and the source of all one needs to attain that goal. I reserve more thorough explanation of this level for a point where we know more about the results of analyzing student performances in Forever Home.

A (SELECTIVE) SUMMARY OF TRANSGRESSION OUTCOMES BY TEAMS

Starting at T1/T5 ("teacher as outlaw"), in forming teams I transgressed my own process for constituting student groups usually at random and less commonly by tracking students according to various criteria. In Forever Home, at the request of one of my best students, I let them decide their own groups, assuming that since they were honors students, they shared a baseline GPA and might be more culturally homogeneous than teams based on other criteria.

However, the teams proved vastly different in proactive behavior (Campbell, 2000), a key area of expertise in transgressive learning. Team 1 saw the most proactive students band together while Team 3 included those who seemed the least proactive, and Team 2 was somewhere in-between. Nevertheless, in irony familiar to experiential educators, only Team 3 linked to an extant organization. Team 1, despite achieving quick contact and intake, were stood up for their interview, thus having to perform, along with the similarly frustrated Team 2, the "substitute" assignment, an in-class dramatization of the interview and a possibly better outcome based on Hymes's SPEAKING template.

Some outcomes of the teams' transgressive engagements with this assignment are shown in Table 1. Guidance on the assignment was kept deliberately

minimal, conforming to the precept that encouraging transgression means that teachers let students determine how they will solve the main problem, which was expressed in the syllabus as

> apply[ing] principles we learn to the formulation, execution and eval-
> uation of real-world projects promoting some aspect of the systems
> (like adoption agencies, shelters, activism, and so on) involved with
> companion animals. The ultimate goal is to improve the prospects of
> a pet in the target organization or group to be adopted permanently,
> to go to a "forever home."

Table 1 shows that opportunities for transgression appeared immediately and were sustained throughout the project. The more proactive Team 1 made nearly immediate contact with their target, the Seneca-Allegheny Shelter, an established provider of services to animal adopters. This team reached out quickly, with one member—the one who suggested class members choose teams themselves—excitedly emailing me about the initial interaction on the evening of the day the assignment was first described. Two team members contacted Seneca-Allegheny's Vice-President of Operations, reporting that the meeting went very well; they, like the other two teams, were asked to pre-analyze this interaction according to Hymes's SPEAKING model. For this most outreaching of the teams, the situation could hardly have looked better; the organization's CEO even offered to have personal meetings with them and two other executives.

Then Team 1 hit a brick wall. They arrived at the organization (about ten miles away), only to find that the CEO they were scheduled to meet was unavailable, with no reason offered as to why. After an uneasy interaction with a secretary, team members were handed off to the marketing and communication manager, who, also discomfited, proved unable to answer Team 1's informed questions about operations. Though this and the previous interaction were civil and professional, the team cited examples where pertinent questions could not be answered or were fobbed off with responses like "Have you checked our website?" Promised meetings with upper-level officers never materialized.

Team 2 was also stymied. They sought to alter university rules for pets in undergraduate residences, currently limited to fish in tanks of five gallons or less. Their first contact (Executive Director of a UAlbany residential complex) said that, since residential buildings are governed by university regulations, the team's aspirations were perhaps unrealistic. With admirable, if imprudent,

tenacity, Team 2 turned to other administrators, such as the Director of Residential Life, followed by the Assistant Director of University Apartments. Unsurprisingly, each time they got the same answer: with operations

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF PRINCIPAL TRANSGRESSIONS BY TEAMS— FOREVER HOME HONORS COURSE (FALL 2017)

Team	Target (Pseudonyms)	Mode Used	Domain Transgressed (Example)	Transgression (Example)	Classroom Outcomes
1	Seneca-Allegheny Shelter	PtoP Contact, SPEAKING performance [in-class]	Presumed operation of private-sector business	Acting on presumption of equality with target	• Teaching moments: pet adoption as business (*real* vs. *imagined*) • Performance, both domains (*real* vs. *ideal*)
1	Seneca-Allegheny Shelter	PtoP Contact, SPEAKING performance	Realm between *theory* and *real world*	Necessary connection between *ivory tower* and *real world*	Creative synthesis, disparate domains
2	UAlbany Housing	Contact, SPEAKING performance	Presumed operation of academic administration	Acting on presumption of ease with which decisions are made in academia	• Teaching moments: academic reality (*real* vs. *boilerplate*) • Performance, both domains (*real* vs. *ideal*)
2	UAlbany Housing	Contact, SPEAKING performance [in-class]	Realm between *theory* and *real world*	Necessary connection between *ivory tower* and *real world*	Creative synthesis, disparate domains
3	Going Home Agency	PtoP Contact, Execution, Event	Target's view of own operation	Unsolicited advice, introduction letter	
3	Going Home Agency	PtoP Contact, Execution of Event	Conventional promotion process	Creative, *off-the-wall* promo plan	

embedded in university regulations, there would likely be no change, no matter how valuable, initiated by students.

With respect to transgression, at the T1–T5 level, I knew well the tendency of academic organizations toward inertia and could have so informed the team but transgressed this common classroom practice. My "hands-off" approach created a space where students felt free to contravene assumed boundaries between administrators and undergraduates, especially since these students were mostly new freshmen or sophomores.

In conventional, less transgressive classes, results for Teams 1 and 2 might be taken as failure, with appropriate grade consequences. However, since this class was deliberately linked with transgression and mindful of hooks's (1994) observation that "the classroom with all its limitations remains a location of possibility" (p. 207), the instructor and the teams, after class discussion, leveraged the disappointing outcome into a nexus of teaching moments, generated through applying an established means to analyze interactions.

Using Hymes's SPEAKING model to analyze speech events (all teams used this model to scrutinize pending contacts with organizational connections), I asked Teams 1 and 2 to analyze their failed contacts by each presenting two dramatizations, a total of eight to twelve minutes long, first showing what happened, with commentary, followed by another dramatization, also with commentary, showing what should have happened had Hymes's elements been optimized. This transgressive "shotgun wedding" of abstract to concrete dragged ivory tower and gritty street into useful conjunction.

Transgressive paths deepened student understanding of these episodes. The assignment goal was to (1) find a suitable organization; (2) approach it, offering assistance based on students' previous knowledge and what they learned in class; and (3) offer suggestions to improve chances that interaction between their adopters and pets would lead to "forever homes." However, because communication moves through sociohistorically specific circumstances, picking up all sorts of contesting discourse (Bakhtin, 1992), the three teams, despite construing the assignment similarly, followed discernibly different paths because of what happened after the initial directions.

Team 3 linked with a respected agency that declined the offer to assist in strengthening adopter-pet interaction. That agency, "Going Home," has a rigorous, proven procedure for matching pets to adopters. Team 3 was finally told, though, that if they wanted to help with fund-raising, their help would be welcome. Team 3's experience thus reveals further transgressions. Although the specific assignment goal was not achieved, the main purposes—to acquaint

students with the complexities of pet organizations and provide "real world" experience in this domain—were actualized. All three teams learned the hard way about the realities of pet adoption organizations. Student responses confirmed that Team 3's outcomes, culminating in a public event bringing money to "Going Home" and kudos to the team, may have been more rewarding than had the team satisfied the original goal.

These examples show transgression in that the territory through which my instructions passed—to the class, to initial contact, to response, to follow-up, to adjustment, to plan execution or, for Teams 1 and 2, analysis and dramatization—made it impossible for anyone to predict what would happen. Bakhtin (1992) powerfully describes this quest for meaning:

> The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes one's "own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intentions, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language . . . but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions; it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own. (p. 294)

Although this process is frustrating, it is the source of some of experiential learning's greatest joys as students and teachers surmount surprising obstacles, forging meaning through effortful and novel sharing.

APPLYING THE THERE MODEL: TRANSGRESSIONS IN THREE EPISODES

Teams 1 and 2, starting at different points—Team 1 optimistic, Team 2 frustrated—were similar in not satisfying assignment requirements. Team 3 did succeed, but in unforeseen ways. If the goal is to use transgression to effect change in consciousness, as advocated by our colleagues (hooks, 1994; Escalante [& Dirmann, 1990]; Freire, 2005), then the class process that fails may present the best opportunities for teachable moments "when the student is receptive to new understandings" (Wagner & Ash, 1998, p. 278). Three examples of transgressive activity, one from each team, show how the model illuminates interaction among fields of transgressive potentiality.

Episode 1:
The Case of the Missing Contacts (Team 1)

Team 1 was stood up upon their arrival at an agreed meeting time. Not claiming prescience, I must say that, when I was first told how this "perfect" encounter was arranged, I was suspicious. In my consulting experience, I had never seen such quick rapport between students and organization administrators. I nevertheless stuck to a principle of deferring to students in deciding what and how to learn, adopting a hands-off approach and refusing to smooth the way. I viewed the early contacts more with hope than despair: we had an ideal field to learn about the reality of business decorum, not vague prescriptions about how the rules say things should go. This lesson required the team's transgressions beyond my own. In the context of the THERE model, one nexus of transgression levels stands out: T1/T5 ("teacher as outlaw") ties to T4/T2 ("reveal ZOPED") and T5/T1 ("engage real world"), focusing on Team 1's transgression (Table 1) of "Acting on presumption of equality with target."

Retracing my thoughts in uncovering the ZOPED, I feared I might have started with too great a distance between what students could initially demonstrate and what I was proposing. I thought I had transgressed by asking too much of students who not only were tracked but were mainly freshmen or sophomores (78% of the class). This course that I had designed for classes comprising a broader range of students was now focused on narrower sociocultural dimensions. As the most dramatic of several examples, an earlier course had a student in his mid-thirties, Antonio, who had groomed pets for several organizations in the United States and Canada. In terms of familiarity with the pet adoption sector, there could hardly be a greater gulf than that between Antonio and my fledgling students, a full third of whom were in their first semester in college.

To clarify linkage between T4/T2 and its connection to T5/T1, and T1/T5, I recalled an earlier personal transgression: my allowing students to choose their own groups. Team 1 brought together what seemed to be the most proactive, confident of students. Of course, teachers know that letting students choose their groups means that those who know and trust each other will coalesce, violating the principle that heterogeneous groups generally make better decisions (Birmingham & McCord, 2004, p. 75).

My agreeing to the student's suggestion was a transgression perhaps resulting from my ignorance about how to teach honors-only classes. I had perhaps wrongly focused on their grades and presumed homogeneity. But

there was a further transgression: the confidence projected by students who, ambitious and eager, presented themselves to professionals who have their own criteria for deciding who gets noticed. Among those that professionals prefer meeting, a group of undergrads doing an assignment is probably low on the list.

In examining how the THERE model sensitizes perception and trying to sort out confusing transgressive currents, we need to look for something in Team 1's output pointing to a reason for the aborted meeting. Pondering the model led me to look for answers in the teams' assignments. I focused on the initial report where, after applying the SPEAKING model, Team 1 referred to another artifact, a letter of introduction I had written to the targets explaining what the project was; why their help would be valued; and what benefits might accrue to them. Team 1 integrated the letter this way:

> One of the most important and helpful methods we used was incorporating [the instructor's] introduction letter. Being an esteemed professor at a prestigious institution [the instructor] demonstrated our group's credibility. The letter included valuable background information that helped convey our message. (Team 1, Assignment 2)

However, somewhere in the communication process something derailed the meeting, transgressing what students and the instructor thought should happen, given their confidence concerning their educational and cultural status.

This transgression underscores the gap between reality and ivory tower views of education where teachers, both in classrooms and in letters of introduction, open doors students can pass through. Though the teacher's control over process in the classroom can be strong, this control seldom transfers outside academic settings. Fortified with the letter and secure in their analytical integrity using the SPEAKING model, Team 1's being stood up threw cold water on their idealism, inspiring teaching moments that emphasized the effects of group norms on business meetings (see, e.g., Feldman, 1984).

In Table 1, one possibly transgressive behavior is expressed as "Acting on presumption of equality with target." Here is one of several examples of the team's SPEAKING-based review that might point to such brashness. Note the confident tone and (purported) grasp of real business interaction:

> While the duo [the two team members making initial contact were] representing their entire group during the meeting at the [S-AS], they were also representing the Pets Class and [UAlbany]. A sense of professionalism and respect was necessary during the speech act to

> uphold the prestige of the University and one of its classes and [the instructor]. . . . We believed that if we were able to establish a professional genre from the beginning, it would be carried throughout the research. (Team 1, Paper 1)

This passage's tone suggests that the team, and not even the whole team, feeling secure in their nascent knowledge of ethnography of speaking and their instructor's authority, may have gone into this interaction overconfident. In any such interaction, excessive self-assurance can be taken the wrong way, especially when parties widely diverge in organizational experience.

Other clues point to overconfidence. First, initial contacts were by two individuals, not the whole group, possibly making the team seem more complex and hierarchical than it was, having sent emissaries to arrange the meetings. Second, Team 1 seemed the most proactive of the teams, so the authoritative, poised, and confident tone of the description sounds not like college underclassmen but real businesspeople—this, despite the fact that they had only recently been exposed to (1) organizations in the pet adoption domain; and (2) the SPEAKING model they used to analyze them. This tone could be taken as inappropriately suggesting equality between examiners and examined, sometimes a problem resulting from honors students' perception that they are the best of the best, superior to other students (Achterberg, 2005). Third, the tone suggests that Team 1 self-identifies not simply as students doing an assignment but as responsible for the reputation of the class, the instructor, and indeed the university. Fourth, in place of upper-level executives, Team 1 finally dealt with lower-level employees who could not answer their informed questions; upper management may have decided that lower-level employees were more appropriate to the type of work the team was doing.

My conjecture about the experience of Team 1expands our capacity to look at the failed encounter in other ways. Norms were transgressed, but we cannot discount the possibility of a simple mix-up in communication. The team's self-assessment, firmly in place and shared by its members, could also be seen as presumptuous by the administrators, prompting a stern reminder of how business really works. This possibility inspired some of my concluding remarks to the team. Lesson in transgression: ***Be circumspect about your self-presentation, and approach your target carefully***.

Episode 2:
Anyone Else I Can Speak To? (Team 2)

Team 2 approached three UAlbany administrators, successively increasing in rank, who told them the same thing: undergraduate input to changing the university's thinking on pets in dormitories would be, to put it charitably, limited. As with Team 1, I declined to restrain their approach by telling them what experience had taught me about such plans. Though perhaps transgressing what others may see as my teaching duties, I felt the by-product of this approach—students confronting a field profuse with transgressive options—counterbalanced what seemed a likely disappointing result. Besides, there was always the chance they might succeed.

Applying the THERE model to detect reasons why Team 2 was thwarted, one level stands out: T3/T3 ("expand problem space"). To understand T3/T3 as a transgression frame, one should know that Team 2 approached the first official by email:

> The tone of this email interaction was . . . professional, formal, and hopeful. We adhered to typical professional business practices like addressing him formally and using clean, professional, respectful language. The outcome of this speech event was a reply from Mr. W_____ stating that he does not think this is the right endeavor to pursue because E_____ Commons is a part of the [university] campus and therefore must adhere to campus policy as stated by the university itself. This led to us reaching out to someone directly in charge of the university apartments. (Team 2, Paper 1)

While nothing is inherently wrong with an initial approach by email, the complexity of the problem space should have led to greater awareness of communication alternatives. In confronting a problem space, the more approach and development methods one knows, the better; the more channels one has, the more likely it is that some of them will succeed.

Consider the administrator who receives dozens, even hundreds, of emails each day (Zach, 2005). Like Team 1, Team 2 was probably far down on the list of priorities for university officials. Too, it is hard to imagine that this was first time someone had made this request, so the university had no doubt settled on a safe, unshakable response ("out of our hands"), one that makes sense to anyone, even an underclassman, who has experienced embedded levels of university authority. My experience in academia, which I kept

to myself, also tells me that the target would likely have subordinates handle such emails. Possibly confirming this speculation, when Team 2 approached the next two higher-level administrators, they got the same answer. The first administrator or his assistant may well have blind-copied the original request and/or response to the other two administrators or their assistants.

The utility of T3/T3 is clear. The SPEAKING model, as well as common sense, shows numerous ways to expand the problem space, so Team 2's preference for email—shared with most undergraduates (Johnson, 2007)—betrays a limited view of resources to actualize this expansion. In fact, one could have obtained that same response from any number of undergraduate students in the housing system: floor supervisors, resident assistants, housing service interns, and so on. A reality check with such students, who live and work with team members, might have hinted at the advisability of taking a more nuanced view of their task.

Even had these suggestions been followed, university administrators would have been unlikely to respond differently. However, inside information from associates might have provoked different goals (expansion of the problem space) from the frontal assault on embedded procedures to something more circumspect. One might propose workshops for administrators and students to discuss pets in housing, scholarly attention to which has lagged (see, e.g., Polking, Cornelius-White, & Stout, 2017). One might try via websites or social media to draw attention to facts about pets in rented housing, countering exaggerated fears; such issues were addressed in our class readings and in summaries such as Palluzi (2013). Few more fertile ZOPEDs (T4/T2) connect real world (T5/T1) and problem space (T3/T3) than spanning what is believed about pets and rental properties versus what is known. Lesson in transgression: ***Before you transgress, take the time to survey, and use, as much of your entire array of resources as you can.***

Episode 3:
We're Fine Here! (Team 3)

When we look for transgressive opportunities, Team 3's experiences are both instructive and delightful. The team approached their target bearing the same kind of letter as Teams 1 and 2. Volunteering assistance, they received no encouragement; in their words,

> [The director] believed that ["Going Home"] was well established enough, and that she did not need help with social media or

spreading awareness. We then proceeded to ask if we could volunteer to help out the program, but she explained to us that volunteers must host pets inside their homes as they await adoption, which would not be possible for on campus students. We persisted on helping, and discovered that [the director] only expressed interest in fundraising. (Team 3, Final Report)

Regarding the director's judgment, I disagree that they needed "no help" with media. Their website, which can tolerantly be described as unsophisticated, needs considerable work. From public presentations and the director, however, we learned that extensive effort had been put into a complex process for matching dogs (their specialty) and adopters: their procedure tackled every obstacle to pet adoption I knew of, from adopter commitment to veterinarian involvement to landlord approval to participation of every family member in the adoptee's first home visit. My fledgling team had little to offer this process, making their next moves less surprising than they might have been.

Taking stock of the transgressive behavior in this example, we see that, in addition to incursions shared by the other teams, Team 3 trod firmly on the toes of its target organization. Then, in a series of tweaks revealing how wrong a teacher's first take can be, Team 3, which I judged least proactive (thus least likely to succeed), resolutely stuck to its target until they could leverage their participation, just as "Going Home" was undoubtedly leveraging the team.

Of several possible ways that Team 3's transgressive realities map onto the THERE model, what happened to the team (and what they caused to happen) involves T3/T3 ("expand problem space") and T5/T1 ("engage real world"). Although their experience necessarily also spans T4/T2 ("reveal ZOPED"), that is not the focus here. Instead, attention is on the restrictive but realistic adoption environment perfected by "Going Home."

What makes the example of Team 3 especially valuable is that the team revisited expanding the problem space repeatedly after being shut out of their target's operations twice. Rejection of each request in the unruly world of T5/T1, even as it blocked the progress of one transgression, invited another. With each reformulation came an opportunity to instigate another transgression, from offering help with media (failed) to volunteering for the process of pet adoption (failed) to fundraising (succeeded). Nor did the outlaw teacher monitor and guide Team 3's progress through its three-tiered trek; rather, I wrote the assignment so the team could conceive of this outcome, among others. Although repeated frustration followed by transgression was not forecast, in this design it was an alluring possibility.

Team 3's event was creative, professional, and successful. The fundraiser was held at a local pizzeria known for supporting charitable causes. For each item sold, twenty percent was donated to "Going Home"; the amount raised was just under $170.00, exceeding the target by about fifty dollars.

In another irony, the media help at first spurned by "Going Home" proved critical in promoting the event, made more effective by Team 3's transgressive joining of it to standard promotional forms, featuring among others (1) hard-copy flyers posted in UAlbany residential locations; (2) direct Twitter messaging to students (after requesting permission, the flyer was posted to that account, then retweeted by a university organization promoting student involvement); and (3) posting the flyer to Team 3 members' stories on Snapchat as well as Snapchat stories of students in two of the university's residential complexes.

A final key to success was encouragement from the UAlbany Honors College:

> perhaps the most successful [element] was the Honors College. We were able to coordinate with [the] Dean, who agreed to making it an honors event for students to reach their requirements for Honors College housing. This greatly contributed to the fundraiser, as the majority of the funds that were raised came from Honors College students. (Team 3, Final Report)

One learns from this sequence that encouraging transgression is not only useful in encountering T5/T1's "real world," but it can, consciously or unconsciously, be an instructor's perception-shaping ace in the hole. I did not anticipate the range of the effects of encouraging transgressive behavior because no one can, yet the conduct of Team 3, together with what I learned from their classroom presentations, compelled me repeatedly to refine my view, which might not have occurred had I eschewed the transgressive mode to set a conventional goal and judge the team accordingly. Lesson in transgression: ***Repeated applications of transgressive activities (such as expansion of problem space) can refine views of process, benefiting all levels.***

THE HYMES MANEUVER:
TRANSGRESSION AND IMAGINATION

One more element in this array came to me after the failure of Teams 1 and 2 to gain access to perform the original assignment. I needed a way

to permit teams to probe more deeply into what happened while requiring an amount of work equal to that of Team 3. Most importantly, I needed to encourage them to assay future activity that could work.

Since Hymes's SPEAKING model proved useful in preparing the teams for their initial encounters, I made it the basis for asking Teams 1 and 2 to invent a classroom presentation (8–12 minutes in length) comprising three elements: (1) dramatization of the failed encounter; (2) dramatization, based on the SPEAKING model, showing another way the encounter should have gone; and (3) commentary in both dramatizations that noted what Hymes said about how such speech events do and should proceed.

The presentations by Teams 1 and 2 provided valuable additional knowledge and opportunities for enacting and talking about transgression. Two transgressions in the Hymes maneuver are relevant and situate them in the THERE model. First are the substitute assignments, which are transgressive because, absent the initial teams' failures, they would never have been needed. In normal pedagogy, course syllabi are often sacrosanct (Goodboy & Myers, 2015), making this transgression more dramatic: in the middle of class, the instructor brought in an untried assignment to answer a need to balance workload requirements. To experiential educators, this move is unremarkable, even routine, but to honors students, whom we know to profit by sticking to the rules, it can be disconcerting. On the THERE model this move could be seen as provoked by adjustments in T3/T3 ("expand problem space") and T4/T2 ("reveal ZOPED"), stimulated by T5/T1 ("engage real world"). Conjoining conventional expectations (all students do equal work) with quirks of the "real world" (flexibility in confronting the unexpected) means that multiple transgressions are practically unavoidable.

A second transgression is that each of the two teams, lacking specific instructions and being told, simply, to produce "two dramatizations and commentary," took the assignment in different directions: Team 1 took it as a request for a full research paper, with detailed scripts for each dramatization, and Team 2 took it as asking for an outline along with what seemed largely improvised dramatizations. Following the first transgression, the divergent paths toward performing it are both perfectly acceptable. As before, I kept things indefinite, hoping the teams would show me some creativity, which they did. Team 1's more extensive and Team 2's leaner and cleaner approaches were transgressions built on an earlier transgression, using Hymes and dramatization, settling them squarely in the THERE model's T3/T3 level ("expand problem space").

Team 1's fully developed paper, which was scholarly and insightful, was an illustration of enacting and talking about transgression. Hymes focuses on eight interrelated components, one of which is "key" (the "K" in "SPEAK-ING"): "In . . . social interaction, participants offer each other cues as [sic] how to interpret the message content. It refers to the tone, manner, or spirit in which a particular message is conveyed" (Zand-Vakili, Kashani, & Tanban-deh, 2012, p. 30). In their analysis of "key" in encounters with lower-level employees, note the precision in Team 1's use of terms from linguistics and communication studies:

> The key of the speech event is heavily defined by [the manager's] vocalics and nonverbal language when questioned about things that she does not have a lot of information on. At the end of some of her sentences, she raises her vocal pitch—giving the impression that she is asking a question when she actually is not. She also stutters and hesitates before answering . . . [our representative's] questions. At the same time, she does not hold direct eye contact. This creates a strong sense of uncertainty from her side of the conversation. (Team 1, Exercise 3)

Of course, one need not take Team 1's analysis as "correct." But the forward movement of transgression, firmly established, opens the problem space(s) to numerous incursions and associated transgressive possibilities. The primary objective—to familiarize students with a way to analyze and improve communication—was certainly achieved, and its divergent results confirm the growth possibilities in an environment that consciously encourages transgression. Moreover, discussion of class presentations fostered numerous "teaching moments" (Nelson, 2016) when suggestions about transgression could be further examined.

CONCLUSION

Analyzing Forever Home through the THERE model moves us from seeing transgression as random and impulsive, stimulating often fruitless resistance, to situating it in an inclusive map, grounded in critical pedagogy and proposing rational, deliberate, sweeping struggles to make things better—for animals and certainly for humans. In lieu of presenting transgression as impulsive, inchoate rebellion, the THERE model unites cold-blooded reason with ardent passion, forming a veritable "refiner's fire," cleansing one's

quest of impurities, having been tested, to quote Isaiah (48:10 ESV), "in the furnace of affliction."

Using the THERE model as a conceptual mnemonic leads to the question "where can one best situate acts of transgression, and how can one use them to more fruitfully direct transgression by pinpointing particular domains of activity and their interaction?" A valuable, practical program can be based simply on the lessons derived earlier: (1) be circumspect about your self-representation; (2) survey and use as many resources as you can; and (3) refine the process by constant application and practice. These lessons can be the basis of a practical program to motivate students to confront even the most wide-ranging and complex problems crying out for intervention. Add to this the model's carefully defined levels, with the insight that there is substantial freedom of movement from linking the levels with and across each other, plus the fallback that being stymied in transgressing at one point only means you have numerous other avenues to stage a sortie, and you have an extraordinarily potent tool, not an end goal but ground zero in the battle for freedom from stale pedagogical convention.

Doubtless readers will have seen how some of the THERE model draws on roots in critical and experiential pedagogy. I have noted connections with some such sources, among the many others, in my hope of stimulating readers to further vivify the THERE model, bringing insight concerning their learning and experience to praise, vilify, verify, contradict, support, plead for, reject, and/or ignore this initial attempt at a unified field theory of pedagogical transgression.

A course such as Forever Home is appropriate for honors programs different from the one in which it was configured for this analysis. Run with virtually the same general guidelines, the course worked at both UAlbany and Northern Illinois University (NIU). UAlbany, with an undergraduate enrollment of 12,698 and an honors college of more than 400, is part of a network of more than 60 state schools. NIU had roughly the same enrollment (13,454) but no appreciable honors program, a suburban setting, and, except for state budgeting, little to no networking with other state universities.

At NIU, the first iteration of Forever Home (not then known by that name) eventuated in two teams, one of which underperformed and the other performing so spectacularly well that it inspired me to offer the course again. The second iteration at NIU had five teams, all of which were successful at contacting and providing valuable input to local organizations in the pet adoption sector.

Despite the wide variance in standards for providing fertile soil in which an honors course can thrive, we would do well to consider the insights provided by honors educators such as Achterberg (2005) and Freyman (2005), who have ventured into the complex and varied mindscapes of honors students to come up with a number of traits they deem valuable to the successful honors student, no matter where they are situated; among these are appreciation of diversity, communication ability, curiosity, patience, and purpose. The Forever Home class, both in its most recent and previous incarnations, undeniably succeeded in developing these ideal traits. We drew on both failed and successful contacts with a wide range of organizations, exposing students to environments abundant with diversity. The performances called into service a multitude of communication skills and also succeeded in developing student abilities in these areas. Moreover, students proceeded by being curious and advancing into the unknown while having to remain patient in the face of repeated setbacks and keeping their "eyes on the prize," the ultimate purpose: doing something worthwhile to alleviate the stress on adoption animals.

Finally, the elements of Forever Home, requiring no special physical resources other than the presence of organizations in the pet adoption sector, which are ubiquitous, can be instituted on any campus with little concern about administrative reluctance and indeed the likelihood of garnering a good amount of social approval for getting students involved in such a worthy enterprise.

Standing on the shoulders of champions of critical pedagogy—heroes like Freire, Giroux, hooks, and many others—we look forward to the day when transgression will no longer appear outlandish or rare but will find a resting place—though not too comfortable—in "woke" classrooms within our respected honors programs, its Forever Home.

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