Face to Face – Using Theatre as a Tool to Teach Conflict Resolution

By Jodi Wederath

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Approved: Deborah Martín 
Thesis Director Signature  Date: 5/30/01

Approved: Thomas Cavenagh 
Second Reader Signature  Date: 5/30/01
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Abstract

This thesis addresses the process of researching and producing the play *Face to Face* by David Williamson. The foundation for this study is the unique format of the play and its basis in a specific conflict resolution process. The section on research explains the process of community conferencing as represented in the play and highlights its real life use in the workplace and in juvenile justice and social services in Australia and New Zealand. Finally, this section reviews the process of communicating with the original cast and director from the 1999 production of *Face to Face* at the Ensemble Theatre in Sydney.

The second part of the thesis discusses the challenges in producing and directing the amateur and national debut of *Face to Face* at North Central College. Adapting the script, casting the production, training the actors, and coordinating promotion materials are issues addressed under this heading. The final section of the thesis reviews audience responses to North Central College's production and assesses the educational value of the play. The conclusion of this review and analysis is that the play is an excellent tool to educate an audience about community conferencing and conflict resolution.
Face to Face by David Williamson is an amazing play that can be produced only through the commitment of a great deal of time, research and talent. It is difficult to summarize the experience of directing such an entertaining and educational piece. It took over a year to complete the research, rehearsal and performance process. The show is based in a unique conflict resolution process called community conferencing. Community conferencing is a relatively new process that has only been widely used and recognized in Australia and New Zealand over the last decade. The show demands that the director and actors have a clear understanding of the process of community conferencing in order to accurately portray the themes and characters.

The play is experimental and challenging not only because of its basis in a unique setting and context, but also because it has no breaks or scene changes. There are ten characters that all remain on the stage for the entire ninety-minute duration of the production. There are no special effects and no elaborate setting. The show must be carried by the pure emotion of the actors. The verisimilitude of the plot is produced through story telling without the benefits of reenactment. It is a challenge to produce for even professional directors and acting teams, but it offers a great educational tool for amateur theatres and is a gift to any university interested in portraying the benefits of conflict resolution.

By the time the show was performed on February 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} of 2001, I had grown to have a much better understanding of my two major fields of study, conflict resolution and theatre. The opportunity to use theatre as a medium to teach people about a unique process to solve conflict was an incredible education experience. The best way to summarize my work is to view it in a chronological format. I will begin with an
explanation of the research process and the resources I gained through my travels to Australia and New Zealand. I will then discuss the rehearsal process and other work necessary to perform the show. Finally, I will assess the ability of the play to educate an audience about the process of community conferencing and conflict resolution in general.

I. **Researching *Face to Face* and the Process of Community Conferencing**

The conceptualization for producing this play began in January of 2000. Tom Cavenagh, director of the Dispute Resolution Center at North Central College, forwarded to me an e-mail message from Alan Tidwell, a member of the Australian Dispute Resolution Association. Cavenagh had received the message from Tidwell in May of 1999. In the message, Tidwell announced to conflict resolution professionals involved in an on-line discussion week the benefits of viewing *Face to Face* in its opening run at the Ensemble Theatre in Sydney. Through a chain of e-mails, I was able to reach the director and actors of the original production, a number of conflict resolution professionals in Australia, and David B. Moore, director of Transformative Justice Australia (TJA)\(^1\). Moore, his writings, and the research and other professional contacts he recommended became the foundation for a fruitful path to gaining all the necessary information to produce and direct *Face to Face*. This also led to research of the origins and supporting theories of the community conferencing process that the play is based on.

**Media Perceptions of *Face to Face* and Community Conferencing**

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\(^1\) Transformative Justice Australia was co-founded in 1995 by David B. Moore and John M. McDonald. TJA is a private company that provides community conferencing in the workplace setting. The company provides "anything from advice on the suitability of a case for a community conference, through training workshops for community conference facilitators, convening workplace conferences and providing broad program design and assistance with implementation" ("History of Transformative Justice Australia" 4). TJA directors were critical in the creation and development of *Face to Face* by introducing the concept and providing resources to David Williamson for his writing of the play.
Even before reaching David Moore, I was able to format a theme for my research based off of media perspectives of *Face to Face*. Through a number of newspaper articles reviewing *Face to Face*, I gained a general concept of the plot, characters, and the play's basis in a conflict resolution process. I came to understand quickly through the words of critic Bryce Hallett the importance of conflict resolution in the play:

*Face to Face* is a fascinating...90-minute documentary drama which puts store in a method of justice founded on conciliation, concern and emotional honesty...*Face to Face* enables us, like a fly on the wall, to witness 'the process' as nine participants gather in the Ensemble Theatre 'hall' to air their grievances, and in essence, spill their guts. Instead of going to the courts, community conferencing brings the perpetrator of a crime 'face to face' with his victim(s) - a forum which, depending on how well it's mediated, looks to the causes and motives triggering a violent act” (Hallett 1).

In a March 18, 1999 article in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Debra Jopson comments on the premiere of *Face to Face* in order to highlight the community conferencing process. She explains that while the play is fictional, it is “grounded in real-life experiences in community conferencing, which in 11 months in NSW (New South Wales) has seen 1,000 young offenders diverted from courts and having to face their victims” (Jopson 1). In this statement, Jopson is referring to the Youth Justice Conferencing Program in the Department of Juvenile Justice (NSW). The program was enacted nine months after the adoption of the *Young Offenders Act of 1997*.2

2. “The objects of this Act are: a) to establish a scheme that provides an alternative process to court proceeding for dealing with children who commit certain offences through the use of youth justice conferences, cautions and warnings, and...c)to establish and use youth justice conferences to deal with alleged offenders in a way that (i) enables a community based negotiated response to offences involving all the affected parties, and (ii) emphasizes restitution by the offender and the acceptance of responsibility by the offender for his or her behavior, and (iii) meets the needs of victims and offenders” (*Young Offenders Act 1997 No 54*).
Through this article and other sources, it became clear that in order to understand
the scope of conflict resolution in *Face to Face*, I needed research the origins and
applicability of community conferencing. This led to research of the people Williamson
based the play on (directors of Transformative Justice Australia), interviews with Jenny
Bargen (director of Youth Justice Conferencing Directorate NSW), and to further travel
to Wellington, New Zealand to learn about the foundation of conferencing as a form of
conflict resolution.

**Transformative Justice Australia and the Creation of *Face to Face***

The success of my research would have been stifled rapidly had it not been for the
generous services of David Moore and his extensive knowledge of the community
conferencing process. In our very first communication via e-mail, Moore provided me
with information regarding the acquisition of the script and the preface to the play that he
coch-authored with John McDonald. The preface titled “The Theatre of Everyday Conflict”
summarizes the creation process of *Face to Face* and the cooperation between TJA
directors and David Williamson. It also defines the conflict resolution process used in
the show, provides a brief history of the process, and explains how the process fits within
the plot of the play.

Moore and McDonald write in the preface that they contacted Williamson after an
article he authored reviewing key debates about emotionality in the April 1998 *Review of
Books*. They met and discussed the process of workplace conferencing, and within
months a first draft of *Face to Face* was completed. Moore and McDonald explain that
Williamson learned about the process by participating in a TJA community conference
facilitator’s workshop. Williamson also discussed with the TJA directors their case
studies of community conferencing. *Face to Face* “compresses these experiences [the case studies and role playing] into a drama remarkably close to the experience of being inside the circle [conferencing]” (Moore and McDonald 72).

In the preface, the directors of TJA define a workplace conference as “a structured conversation in a community of people affected by conflict. It is one of several processes designed to transform the negative emotions associated with conflict into the positive emotions associated with cooperation” (69). They explain that *Face to Face* portrays a fusion of community conferencing and workplace conferencing:

In the typical community conference...two polarized groups move to a deep understanding that they are all in this together, and so share a vested interest in repairing the damage and minimizing further harm. In the typical workplace conference, a community defined by economic necessity – they’re all there to earn a crust – comes to a deep understanding that they are also a social and political community. And they need to articulate and reconsider the social and political rules that govern their interactions (71).

The community conferencing in the play is based on the plot of one party clearly having done wrong by another, and the wrong-doer avoiding prosecution in a courtroom trial by participating in the conference. The workplace conferencing aspect of the production is delivered through the social and political discussions of workplace issues such as low pay and poor communication between management and employees.

Since *Face to Face* is based off of the work of Transformative Justice Australia, it is appropriate that in the preface, the directors of TJA discuss their history with the process. They explain that their initial involvement began with their work in “Australia’s

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3 In the play, Glen Tregaskis, a young construction worker, “has been dismissed after assaulting a colleague [and] expresses his anger by ramming the boss’s Mercedes. The assault and the property damage are two actions that might find their way before a criminal court” (Moore and McDonald 71).
pilot program of community conferencing in juvenile justice in the early 1990's (Moore and McDonald 71). Following the pilot program, the conferencing process was adopted in other areas of Australia and became quite popular in the realm of education. Moore and McDonald state that they began TJA in order to “improve methods of learning about and teaching community conferencing...[and] to develop an application of the conferencing process for the more complex setting of the workplace” (71).

The Public Realm of Community Conferencing in Australia

While TJA is an example of the implementation of community conferencing for private businesses, the government of Australia continues to support the process as well. The clearest example of this support since the Wagga pilot program, is the adoption and implementation of conferencing legislation in New South Wales (NSW). In a personal interview with Jenny Bargen, director of the Youth Justice Conferencing Directorate NSW, on July 25th, 2000, I learned the history of the community conferencing process in the NSW juvenile justice system. As mentioned previously, conferencing was outlined in the Young Offenders Act of 1997. However, Bargen explained that the conferencing program has been operating only since April of 1998.

While based on the pilot models used in Wagga Wagga and a few other areas in Australia, Bargen stated that the model in New South Wales differs from others based on the training and background of the facilitators. According to Bargen, “In previous models, police officers were the conference facilitators, our [NSW] facilitators come from all different sorts of fields and go through a general training program.” She also

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4 In 1991, the first model of community conferencing was established in the justice system of the New South Wales' city of Wagga Wagga. Based off of the Family Group Conference process adopted in New Zealand after 1989 legislation was passed, “the Wagga model” consisted of conferences for certain cases of
explained that conference convenors are evaluated every year on their abilities, skills, and success with conference coordination and implementation.

In the interview, Bargen stated that the conferencing model was still new and experiencing growth. She explained that as the program expanded, the guidelines for conference facilitators would be further clarified. She said that the expansion of conferencing is beyond New South Wales and juvenile justice. Bargen mentioned that there are other justice programs being developed in other areas of the country that use the community conferencing model and that many schools have adopted conferencing as a policy for staff and students. Also, she stated that NSW was currently working on legislation to implement conferencing in the department of social welfare.

**Principles, Theory, and Origins of Community Conferencing**

Even before my travels to Australia, Moore provided me with other resources he had authored that led me to the origins of community conferencing and to the theories that founded and support the process. In an article titled “Community Conferencing as a Special Case of Conflict Transformation,” Moore and McDonald explain the basic principles of community conferencing. The brief explanation of the process they provide is as follows:

Both in its community and workplace variants, a conference involves most or all of the people affected by a specific case of conflict. They are brought together by a conference facilitator, whose role is to referee the ensuing conference, not to become a player in it (“Community Conferencing as a Special…” 1).

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juvenile offenders that were coordinated by a police officer at the local police station. It focused on the “harm caused by a particular offense” and was “community based” (“Shame, Forgiveness” 2-3).
In this article and others, Moore and McDonald explain how community conferencing differs from other forms of conflict resolution. The first difference is the number and type of people involved in the process. In mediation, only two opposing parties and a mediator are involved. The central concept of a conference is that it is "democratic." To ensure that the process is democratic, the facilitator must 1) encourage everyone affected by a conflict to attend, 2) make certain that everyone at the conference has the opportunity to speak and be listened to, and 3) guide the discussion in a manner that every issue has adequate consideration ("Community Conferencing as a Special..." 1). Second, as opposed to mediation, negotiation or arbitration which operate in a manner to find the facts and solutions regarding specific disputes, "conferencing is designed to deal with general conflict" ("Disputes and Conflict... 1).

Third, in other conflict resolution process, emotions can be downplayed or ignored. However, community conferences focus on the identification and transformation of emotions. In fact, Moore and McDonald would like to emphasize in the general understanding of conferencing that it is "a mechanism by which the negative emotions associated with conflict can be transformed into the positive emotions associated with cooperation" ("Community Conferencing as a Special..." 9). They explain in this same article that there are three general stages of emotionality in a conference. The first is "contempt, anger and fear directed at individuals (on the basis of their actions in the past)," the second is "disgust, distress and surprise" which is a reaction to the new information revealed during the conference, the third is interest and relief as plans for the future are developed (8).
One of the strongest theories that relates to community conferencing is John Braithwaite’s theory of reintegrative shaming. A basic explanation of this theory is that in order for true retribution and rehabilitation to occur with an offender, there must be a feeling of shame and an interest in reentering the community. Braithwaite argues that the deterring factors from offending against other people are “social disapproval” and “pangs of conscience” (Moore 3). Moore explains that “the theory of reintegrative shaming emphasizes the interdependency of individuals. It identifies shame as the emotion that regulates this interdependency” (6). A practical model developed from the reintegrative shaming theory must involve the community to which an offender belongs and focus on the process of shame rather than guilt.

According to Moore and McDonald, there are four differences between shame and guilt. First, guilt can be felt without the recognition of it by others, but shame requires an audience. Second, guilt is only felt by the transgressor; shame can be felt vicariously. Third, in guilt there is a separation between the act and the person who committed the act; shame does not have this separation. Finally, guilt protects the offender because it allows a person to distance themselves from the act he/she committed (Community Conferencing as a Special…” 3). Moore and McDonald also explain that shame is the vital psychological element and that forgiveness is the central sociological element of the conferencing process (2). Typically in a community conference, the offender or a number of participants apologize and the victim or other participants give forgiveness. These TJA directors clarify that everyone experiences a sense of shame in the conferencing process and that when this has occurred, the emotional climate changes from negative to positive (8).
While the reintegrative shaming theory relates to the community conferencing process, Moore and McDonald contest that conferencing has its own theory that they call "conflict transformation." They explain that some processes developed from the reintegrative shaming theory are forms of "conflict minimization." In minimization, conflict is minimized by removing the influence of the offender or not addressing a significant element of the conflict. Under models of conflict minimization, punishment or therapeutic treatment is imposed on an individual by the state or by a "collectivity" acting on behalf of the state (9). On the other spectrum, conflict maximization is a model that exasperates the differences between the parties in conflict. An example of a conflict maximizing environment is the adversarial setting of courtrooms.

Moore and McDonald argue that conferencing falls under its own category of conflict transformation because it neither maximizes nor minimizes conflict. They adopted the title "transformative justice" to distinguish it from the other forms of "restorative justice" mentioned above. This approach is transformative because it brings a community together to "transform" conflict into cooperation ("Community Conferencing as a Special…" 10).

Now that we have discussed the theory of community conferencing, we can look to the origins of the process. In an article titled "Shame, Forgiveness, and Juvenile Justice" which appeared in the Winter/Spring 1993 journal Criminal Justice Ethics, Moore explains that community conferencing is founded in the Family Group Conferencing (FGC) model of New Zealand. He states that one main purpose of the model is to maintain a juvenile justice system that is appropriate for the young offenders.
of the Maori and Pacific Island Polynesian cultures in New Zealand ("Shame Forgiveness" 2). He defines the basic design of the model as follows:

A young person who has committed an offense against an identifiable victim is brought face to face with that victim... Both offender(s) and victim(s) are accompanied by family members, guardians, peers, or other people with a significant relationship to the offender or the victim...[All involved in the conference] may contribute to the search for restitution and to negotiations for reparation of the damage caused by the original offense... The [FGC] is convened by an official of the justice system... a police officer, a welfare worker, a representative of the juvenile court... ("Shame, Forgiveness 2).

The New Zealand Process of Family Group Conferencing

In visiting New Zealand and speaking with leading researchers and practitioners of FGC, I learned that the model applies not only to juvenile offenders, but also to the care and protection of all children and youth through the Child, Youth and Family Services of the government. There are actually two types of conferences run by the government of New Zealand. The first is under the Care and Protection format of child and family services. On August 3rd, 2000 at 1:00 p.m., I met with Barbara Gilray at the Child, Youth and Family Services department in Wellington. She explained that she had been a Care and Protection Coordinator for 11 years and provided me with an article she authored titled "A Practitioner’s Perspective of the Care and Protection Family Group Conference Process."

The article explains the functions of FGC and the circumstances under which a care and protection conference is called. Gilray explains that some of the concerns covered by a care and protection FGC are "physical or sexual abuse, care or neglect issues, or... a child or young person behaving in a way that is detrimental of his or her
own well being” (4). Conferences are called when 1) a social worker or police officer has evidence that a child or youth needs care and protection services, 2) a Family Court refers a child or youth to conferencing, 3) when a child is placed in the care of the government or other persons for a period of more than 28 days, 4) other agencies (including schools for truancy) alert the Department of Child, Youth and Family that a child needs care and/or protection (Gilray 4).

Gilray also identifies the format of FGC. She writes that the process generally consists of three phases. Phase one is an information and advice giving time. “The family/whanau are entitled to be informed about the investigation and what was found, the referring agency’s assessment and reasons for it,… and what plans might be able to meet the needs identified in the assessment” (Gilray 5). Phase two is a private meeting time for the family. Officials and information givers leave the room so that the family can discuss the situation among themselves and negotiate options. Phase three is when the family members and officials come back together and negotiate a plan (Gilray 5). She writes that the average time for a conference is three and a half hours and that the coordinator has a key role during this time in maintaining a balance between the family’s rights and the responsibilities of the agency (Gilray 5-6). She states that it is the Coordinator’s responsibility to: 1) “consult with professionals, such as, psychologists, psychiatrists, school teachers, public health nurses, and so on, to make sure that all relevant information is made available at the conference,” 2) “obtain the views of persons

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5 Maori (indigenous) name for “family” (Gilray 10).
6 This phase while appropriate to FGC does not always function in the community and workplace conferencing setting.
excluded from, or unable to attend the family group conference.\footnote{Those entitled to attend a care and protection FGC are “1) the child or young person concerned, 2) the parents, guardians or caregivers of the child and members of their family groups, 3) the Care and Protection Co-ordinator, 4) a representative of the referring agency, 5) a Barrister or Solicitor [lawyer, social worker] representing the child or young person, 5) and other persons as specifically defined [other members of the community with involvement in the case]” (Gilray 7).} 3) “ensure that an appropriate plan is formulated that is specific and workable,” 4) “ensure the agreed plan is distributed to [conference attendees] and others entitled to a copy, and this may include the Family Court,” 5) ensure that reviews of the decisions, recommendations and plans and the progression of the plans are implemented in the FGC setting when needed, 6) refer the case back to the referring agency or to Court when an agreement at a FGC is impossible (Gilray 7-8).

Aside from providing a wealth of knowledge about the Care and Protection Family Group Conferences, Gilray also set up a meeting for me with Kerri Bradley and Allan MacRae, two Youth Justice coordinators in the Wellington district. In a meeting among Bradley, MacRae, and myself on August 3\textsuperscript{rd} 2000, we discussed the differences between the Youth Justice (YJ) conferences and the Care and Protection (C&P) conferences, the advancement of juvenile justice through family group conferencing, and the areas for future improvement.

MacRae and Bradley explained that while the format of YJ and C&P conferences are the same, the concerns addressed are different, and the types of participants in the conferences may differ as well. One of the major differences in concerns addressed in the conferences is that the youth involved is an offender\footnote{Any youth that admits to or is proven guilty of a crime is court ordered to attend a Youth Justice Family Group Conference (Bradley). This is important to recognize in order to clarify that the goal of YJ family group conferencing is not to determine the guilt of a young offender but to develop a form of restitution for the victim and reformation for the youth.} so there is a victim(s)’s needs to consider. Bradley stated, “One of the goals of youth justice conferencing is to provide...
the victim a healing process.” MacRae explained that on account of this concern, it is extremely important to prepare the participants in a YJ conference more thoroughly than may be necessary for a C&P conference.

As proof of the extensive preparation needed for a YJ conference, the Child, Youth and Family Services department has informational videos that they provide to participants in the conferences. The department also allows time in a coordinator's schedule to visit with and communicate with participants prior to a conference. In a 20-minute video titled “Putting Right the Wrong: Victims Rights in the Family Group Conference Process,” there is a scene of a coordinator explaining to a victim the benefits of FGC. The coordinator states, “The conference is a venue to meet the offender and tell him or her the effect that their action has had on your lives.” The coordinator continues to explain that not only is this a cleansing process for the victim, but that it also helps the young offender to recognize and accept the responsibility of his/her action. In a complementary video titled, “Penny’s Family: A Pakeha Youth Justice Story,” a Youth Aid Officer visits the family of a young shoplifter to explain the FGC process. She states, “The support of family will ease the load of finding a solution and will make Penny more responsible for her actions.” The officer continues to explain that since the family has input in the outcome of the conference, the youth will more likely accept and complete the reformation process.

Other than the participation and concerns of the victim in the YJ conference, the C&P conference differs from the YJ conference in that a C&P coordinator can exclude someone from attending the conference that may impede on the process. The YJ

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9 Maori name for a non-indigenous person of European descent (Gilray 10).
coordinator does not have that option. This can create very large and complex conference settings. MacRae explained that this occurs especially when there is a community offense\textsuperscript{11} committed. Under these circumstances the community is seen as the victim and it is difficult to identify members of that community to participate in the conference. Also, Bradley explained that she has experienced difficulty when there was an aggressive family member of the offender that impeded the process and hindered results. Although she knew that this would occur, she was not allowed to stop or discourage that family member from attending the conference.

Both Bradley and MacRae explained that there have been a number of benefits to the FGC process. They explained that one of the greatest benefits is that there has been a drop in crime. An article in Early Help May 2000, a newsletter from Child, Youth and Family services, mentions the statistics of this improvement. These statistics are outlined in the following chart\textsuperscript{12}.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The number of serious recidivist offenders in Wellington over four years:</th>
<th>The number of Youth Justice Family Group conferences convened in Wellington:</th>
<th>The number of charges dealt with at Wellington YJ Family Group Conferences:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999 – 2 recidivist offenders</td>
<td>1999 – 74 YJ conferences</td>
<td>1999 – 176 charges</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(“Innovation improves outcomes”\textsuperscript{10}).

The article also explains that there has been a higher recognition and understanding of contributing factors to youth related crimes and more creative approaches to seeking

\textsuperscript{10} A specially assigned police officer that deals directly with youth offenders and has an involvement in the youth communities such as schools.

\textsuperscript{11} A community offense is one in which there is no one single victim but rather an entire community affected. For example, graffiti or damage to a park would be considered a community offense.

\textsuperscript{12} Please note that the statistics in the chart reflect solely the cases in the Wellington, New Zealand district and not in the other districts of the country.
solutions. The article highlights the creative approaches of Allan MacRae in his role as a Youth Justice Coordinator. One example cited is as follows:

A programme called Tu Rangatahi which targets a group of youth appearing in court mainly because of gang associations...links young people with appropriate cultural groups, provides positive role models, develops skills for future employment, encourages peer support for individual change within the group, and helps the young people feel part of their community (“Innovation Improves outcomes 10).”

Although it is clear that there have been some great improvements to the juvenile justice program due to the work of FGC, Bradley and MacRae explained several limitations to the process and suggested some steps for future progress. While both agree that the program is founded on good legislation, they also stated that the training program is poor, that there are inconsistencies in the implementation of FGC across the country, and that further emphasis on victims’ interests is necessary. MacRae also explained that more preventative programs should be a part of the YJ conferencing program. He stated, “We need to get to the problem even before the kids need to attend a conference.” He offered an example of preventative measures that could be taken.

MacRae told the story of how he and coworkers went to a city park where youth gathered and to which the neighboring adults complained of violence and crime. MacRae and the others discovered that the teenagers were in the park because they did not have any organized space to gather and because they felt safe with the adults passing by. It was after the police disbanded the youth from their secure place every evening that crime

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13 The legislation they are referring to is the Child, Young Persons and Their Family Act (1989). “The CYP&F Act is based on an explicit family group perspective, recognizing that children and young people need a sense of continuity, identity and stability that is best met within immediate or wider family/whanau group...the Act has general principles which govern its implementation, and separate specific principles which govern the care and/or protection and the youth justice offending matters” (Gilray 3).
began in the park. To solve the problem the community built a disco for the youth, and both the teenagers and adults of the community felt safer.

**Researching the Production Process of Face to Face**

As mentioned in the introduction, *Face to Face* is a challenging play to produce not only because of the complex process of community conferencing that it is based on, but also because of the unique format of the play itself. The play has no scene breaks and all ten characters remain in the scene for the entire 90-minute duration of the show. As a second step to researching the production, I needed to discover an appropriate method for addressing these special needs. It was very fortunate that I had an opportunity to meet with the cast and director of the original, professional production. I was able to discuss with them the manners in which they dealt with the challenges of the play.

I met the cast of the Ensemble Theatre’s *Face to Face* at a private dinner party at Geoff Cartwright’s (Jack Manning) home on the evening of July 26th, 2001. Other than Geoff, I was fortunate enough to speak with Duncan Young (Glen Tregaskis), Barry Langrishe (Greg Baldoni), Sharon Flanigan (Claire Baldoni), Ian Bolt (Richard Halligan), and Andrew Doyle (Luka Mitrovic). The camaraderie among these actors that I witnessed at this social event was a clear indication of the relationship developed through the high-level of cooperation needed to produce the show. Through general group conversation, I discovered the sincere commitment that each actor had to the play and to the process that it was based on. Geoff Cartwright and Andrew Doyle were particularly helpful in my understanding of the Ensemble Theatre’s rehearsal process for *Face to Face* and the methods used for character development.
Geoff Cartwright played the character of Jack Manning who was the facilitator of the conference. He explained that his most valued experience in character development was accompanying David Moore and John McDonald on an actual conference. In the months before the performance, Cartwright accompanied Moore and McDonald to a workplace conference in Canberra. He said that his observation of the conferencing process and the communication styles of the facilitator was crucial to producing a quality performance of someone managing a conference. At this conference, Cartwright was not only an observer but also a participant. He explained that Moore and McDonald introduced him to participants as a member of the facilitating team and that they gave him the responsibility of retrieving anyone that left the room during the conference. Cartwright stated that he developed a sense for the true value of the conferencing process by assisting Moore and McDonald at this conference.

Cartwright also explained that Moore and McDonald coached him on the behavior of a facilitator. He said that he was taught to appear interested in everything that the participants in the conference were saying but to not nod his head at anyone. He explained that the reason behind this is that a facilitator nodding his head may be misinterpreted as agreement rather than understanding. Since a facilitator must appear neutral at all times, it is critical that as an actor, Cartwright learned the neutral behavior of a facilitator. Cartwright clarified that through his coaching, he learned that his character was not an exact representation of a facilitator. Moore and McDonald explained to him that the character of Jack Manning intervened in the discussion process and commented on participant's actions more than a facilitator would. To compensate for this fact, Cartwright created a split in his character so that when Manning was
facilitating, Cartwright portrayed him as engaging and responsible, and when Manning took over the commenting role, Cartwright would demonstrate that it was a strategy or a minor break in the character's typical behavior.

Andrew Doyle (Luka Mitrovik) told me that the most important part of the rehearsal process for him was the use of improvisation\(^\text{14}\)\(^\text{14}\). He said that they used the improvisation in order to develop a common sense of events that had occurred and to develop the emotional verisimilitude of their characters. Many times during the play, characters explain the stories of events that had occurred in the past that contributed to the conflict around which the conference is based. Doyle said that the Ensemble cast acted out every one of these moments that is mentioned in the play. He elaborated by telling the story of the experience he had in acting out a scene in which his character was heckled for his nationality by his coworkers. He said that in acting out the story he honestly felt the rage and frustration that his character would have felt, and that this improvisation experience provided for him the motivation to display this frustration in retelling the story during the rehearsal and performances of the play.

Since *Face to Face* lacks scene changes and actual reenactment of the events surrounding the conflict of the piece, the play is carried by the emotion and believability of characters' story telling. To enhance the actors' ability to create believable characters, Sandra Bates, original director of *Face to Face*, challenged them to participate in extensive character development exercises. In a personal interview on July 27\(^\text{th}\) at the Ensemble Theatre, Bates discussed with me her approach to staging this production. She

\(^{14}\) Improvisation is the technique of acting in character without the use of scripted text. This technique forces the actors to create their own dialogue and actions in a given context not dictated by a script.
production. She explained that she wanted the audience to feel that they were attending a real conference and not a play.

Sandra Bates accomplished the “realism” of her production through the set up of the performances and through character development with her actors. Bates said that in order to make the audience feel like they were attending a real conference, she did not pass out playbills as the audience members entered. Instead she provided each person with a brief sheet that said “Thank you for joining us for this community conference” and listed the names of the participants (the names of the characters in the play but not the names of the actors playing the roles). She had the main actor Geoff Cartwright set the stage with chairs and refreshments just as a facilitator would for a conference. Bates also said that she had her actors enter the stage in a staggered manner, in family and friends groupings, approaching the stage as their character really would have entered the conference. She said that she even went to the extent of not allowing her actors, whose characters would not be interacting with one another before a conference, to see each other before the performances began. After the performance, she had an informal bar in the lobby where audience members had an opportunity to interact with the actors, but the actors were expected to behave mostly in character. It was only on the way out of the building, that the audience was provided with the name of the actors in an official playbill.

Bates explained that she used intensive improvisation to prepare her actors for the show. Since each actor needed to remain in the frame of mind of their character for the entire duration of the play, she challenged her actors during the rehearsal process to consistently think in the manner that their character would. One of the ways that she did
this was by actually setting up the pre-conference interviews that every participant in the conference would have gone through. Bates explained that Geoff Cartwright developed his skills in portraying the role of a conference facilitator by having one-on-one interviews with each one of the other actors in the context of their characters. The pre-conference interviews are the time when the facilitator learns of the facts surrounding the conflict and the personalities of the participants in the conference. The improvisation exercise provided Cartwright and the other actors an opportunity to learn about their character beyond the realm of the play and to develop a sense of how their character would behave and think before, during and after the conference.

Bates also explained that her actors experienced the emotions that their character would have felt during the events that they mention in the play through improvisation of the stories they retell. She shared the story of one particularly effective exercise. In the play, a young construction worker, Glen Tregaskis, has a very bad temper and has in the past frequently lashed out at his colleagues and friends. Bates explained that she held an improvisation with Duncan Young (Glen) and the other men in the cast. The coworkers were teasing Glen about his lack of a girlfriend and the actor Duncan Young portrayed the “blow-up” of Glen at his coworkers so well that he honestly frightened the other members of the cast. This helped all the actors understand the feelings that they would have had in this situation, and this governed their reaction in the conference/performance when the story was retold.

Bates said that her method was so effective that several audience members approached her and congratulated her for finding the real people from the story to attend the conference. I learned from this discussion with Bates the importance of realism in the
play. I also identified the effective methods for training actors for the play, and I developed a plan for directing North Central College’s production of *Face to Face*. 

II. The Process of Directing the Amateur and National Debut of *Face to Face*

The process of directing *Face to Face* was much more challenging and time consuming than I had ever imagined. The responsibilities for leading and coordinating the production process extended into unexpected areas. The experience can be outlined in three main areas: preparation and scheduling, actor and interpretation development, and performance coordination.

Preparation and Scheduling for Rehearsals

The first thing that I learned through my research with the Ensemble Theatre was that I really wanted my audience to be able to believe the characters, connect with the play, and understand the process that it was based on. In order to do so, I had to change the text to reflect American culture rather than Australian. It would be difficult to teach amateur actors to develop and sustain an Australian accent for the entire 90 minutes of the play, and I feared alienating or distancing the audience by making the setting of the play on the other side of the world.

For two weeks, I read the script making changes in word choice and eliminating dialect. This was a difficult task considering the extensive use in Australia of the word “mate.” Also, the written in dialect of the working class made it even more difficult to nationalize the play. An example of the unique dialect and slang that needed to be adapted is in the following statement made by Luka in the play. “For Christ’s sake, everyone takes the piss out of everyone else. That’s the only way we get through the bloody day” (Williamson 84). The process of choosing appropriate cultural word
replacement continued well into the rehearsal period when actors had developed a good sense of their character and brought to my attention words that were unnatural. In the process, I learned not only a lot about Australian dialect, but I also learned the slang language of American culture.

The second task in preparing for rehearsals was developing a plan for the casting process. Through my discussions with the original cast and director of *Face to Face*, I knew that improvisation would be an important tool in my rehearsal process. I wanted to make sure that I would have a cast that would be open to this method of training and would be creative in their approach to their roles. I also knew that one of the difficulties I would encounter is that student actors have multiple obligations and complicated schedules. I wanted to ensure that I would have a cast that would be available and committed to making the play a top priority.

To fulfill the special needs I had for my performers, in the audition process, I chose to 1) explain the time commitment in the audition form and ask for schedules\textsuperscript{15}, 2) provide character descriptions and highlight the most demanding roles\textsuperscript{16}, 3) provide cuttings from the play for cold reading in pairs, and 4) ask each person auditioning to do an improvisation exercise. I selected five cuttings for cold readings that would allow actors to display their ability to interpret characters and to interact with others using planned dialogue. Then, I used the improvisation exercise as an assessment of the actors’ ability to experiment with this technique and to determine the level of their creativity in developing a character and dialogue. By the end of the audition process, I had selected a fairly diverse cast. I had a few experienced actors and a number of inexperienced, but

\textsuperscript{15} See Appendix I to view audition form.
\textsuperscript{16} See Appendix II to view character breakdown.
open-minded and determined performers. I was fortunate to find a talented group of young actors that I could work well with.

Scheduling the rehearsals for *Face to Face* was an incredibly difficult task. I had to take into consideration the schedules of ten different individuals and divide the play into workable units. Another challenge to scheduling the play was determining which actors needed to be available for each rehearsal. Since every character is in the entire duration of the show, it was difficult to break apart the play to rehearse in smaller groupings of the cast. I also had to consider the amount of time that I wanted to spend in improvisation and the deadlines for memorization. After much time and consideration, I was able to divide the play into scenes that would require the attendance of certain characters and format plans for what to work on during each rehearsal period. By the end of the process, I had spent nearly ten hours of rehearsal time in improvisation and nearly 60 hours total in rehearsals.

**Development of Actors and Interpretation of Themes**

Working with inexperienced actors and an experimental format of theatre can be a challenge for any director. I found the experience challenging, but also rewarding. The challenges I experienced with interpretation and actor training included 1) blocking and space issues, 2) uncharacteristic gestures, 3) overacting emotions, 4) concentration and line memorization problems, and 5) understanding of the community conferencing process.

While *Face to Face* is a great play to produce because of its universal themes and limited need for technical or space requirements, it is difficult to produce based on the struggle to keep an audience interested in the limited physical action and movement of
the characters. The basic setting of the production is a semicircle of ten chairs. The far
majority of the time all the characters remain seated and the main action of every
character is listening. The first responsibility in blocking the production is establishing
a seating arrangement for the actors. Considerations in creating this arrangement are the
relationships of the characters and the focus of audience attention. After the seating was
established, the next step was identifying the key moments in the production where
movement is necessary, such as moments of hugging or walking away in frustration. The
third and most important step in movement and gesture training of actors was working
with them to develop the manner in which their character would sit and react to the words
of others.

The problem with the space was not only making full use of the space, but also
adjusting to the limited space that was available. Since the stage area in the studio theatre
at North Central College is very small, there was very little space in front of the
semicircle of chairs and there was no space on the sides. This created a problem with
trying to create movement for the actors when their character actually did want to get
away from the situation. I also needed to be very careful in actor placement when they
were standing because they would block the audience’s view of the other actors who
were sitting.

I had a problem with a few of my actors in their use of uncharacteristic
movements. For example, the character of Barry is a very tough and macho young man,
but the actor playing him used effeminate gestures. I addressed the problem by helping
him to identify three strong poses that he adopted whenever he felt the tendency to return

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17 See Appendix III to view rehearsal schedule.
to his normal delicate form of gesturing. By latter rehearsals, there was no sign of femininity in the actor’s portrayal of the character. I also had problems in the same format of gestures uncharacteristic for the portrayal of Greg Baldoni. The main problem that I had with the actor was establishing with him the type of movement that a blue-collar worker in the latter half of his middle age would demonstrate. I eliminated repetitive and unusual gestures by reminding the actor every time that he used them. By making the actor aware of his habitual actions (such as an unnatural form of resting his arms on his chest or stomach and pinching his pants when he held his hands on the knees), it actually helped the actor to remain consistently focused on the thoughts and actions of his character.

Overacting is not an uncommon problem for beginning actors. It was even more of a danger in a production that relies heavily on characters’/actors’ story telling ability and portrayal of extreme emotions. The one actor that I had a problem with overacting was the actor portraying the character of Glen. At first, he began the role in a timid manner. The improvisation exercises really helped him to break out of this shell and truly express the emotions of his character with strength and comfort. An example of how the improvisation exercises helped all of the actors with their emotions was a particularly emotional improvisation of the incident that led directly to the conference. We role-played Glen waiting in his car to smash his bosses Mercedes. The actor playing Glen truly demonstrated the buried temper and rage of his character that he let go in this display. It truly shocked and scared all of the actors involved and helped them to react to this emotion when they performed within the context of the script. While the exercise

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18 Blocking is the process of designating movement and gestures for actors to use in the interpretation of characters.
truly helped this actor to get in tune with the emotions of the character, it also led to him expressing the same level of anger he felt in the improvisation in the performance of the play, which was inappropriate. I worked with him to bring down his outbursts a level and to display forms of quiet anger and frustration.

The most difficult aspect of producing a show in which all the actors are on stage for the entire play is keeping all actors focused in their character. This is particularly difficult for the actors that had long breaks of time in which they were not contributing to the dialogue. I overcame this problem by challenging each actor to really think and display the type of listening that his or her character would participate in. I also made use of my assistant director who paid careful attention to the actors when they were not delivering dialogue and assigned blocking.

The line load for two actors in the production made memorization an extreme challenge for both of them. In particular, the character of Jack Manning facilitates the conference and in essence guides the progress of the play. Many of his lines were repetitive and the other characters rely on him heavily to deliver the correct line of questioning so that they can provide the appropriate responses. I worked with the actor playing this character on several occasions outside of rehearsal time on memorization.

This actor also had the additional burden of truly developing an understanding of the conflict resolution process that the play is based on. While I made sure to educate all of my actors on the basics of community conferencing, the actor playing Jack spent a number of hours outside of rehearsal reading some of the community conferencing research material that I had gathered during my travels and receiving private tutoring from me on the work and behavior of a conference facilitator. Unfortunately, I could not
provide my actor with the same opportunity that Geoff Cartwright had to attend and assist with a community conference.

Instead of providing my actor with this interactive experience, I relied heavily upon a book by David Moore and John McDonald titled *Transforming Conflict*. This text is a compilation of the material used in the facilitator workshops that TJA runs. The chapter on process was vital in training my actor the basics of being a facilitator. First, it explains the process of preparing for the conference. This portion was helpful in teaching my actor how to hold the pre-conference interview improvisations. Also, through these interviews, he explained the process over and over again to each member of the cast and reinforced his own understanding of community conferencing.

The section on convening the conference lays out a script for the facilitator to follow. The outlined steps of the conference are 1) “an introduction,” 2) “a set of open questions to all participants about past and present,” 3) “an interregnum,” 4) “core questions when negotiating an agreement,” 5) “closing remarks” (*Transforming Conflict* 81). The most important part of the book for training my actor was the outlined guidelines for the facilitator on the way that he should use his face, voice, and body to guide the discussion occurring in the conference. An example of guidelines for each category of face, voice, and body is as follows:

Look down at your notes or script. This will allow you to gather your thoughts. It will encourage the speaker to look at others and not you (86)...Do not add ‘yes’, ‘I see’, ‘hmm’, ‘sure’ while people are speaking (88)...Do not lean towards people to whom you are speaking or listening (90).

I encountered a number of challenges in working with my actors on movement and interpretation, but we overcame the problems, and I grew as a director through those
experiences. It was even more rewarding to see that my actors grew in their acting talent, developed a sense of ownership of the production, and gained an understanding of the value of conflict resolution processes.

**Performance Coordination**

As a director of the national and amateur debut of *Face to Face*, I was responsible for not only staging the show and preparing my actors, but also for promoting the production and educating my audience. These tasks entailed not only creating the publicity for the show, but also deciding who I wanted to appeal to as audience members and how best to educate them through the performance.

In creating the posters for the show, I wanted to leave the impression of confrontation and communication on the public. To do so, I enlisted the help of a local artist to draw a form of the illusionary trick of the profiled faces in black with a white vase shape in between. I also chose to place the explanatory statement of “A Conflict Resolution Drama” beneath the title to attract the individuals that may have special interest in the topic. This led to my recognition that the play is an amazing educational tool for not only those interested in conflict resolution, but also for anyone interested in communications or ethical issues surrounding conflict.

To reach this specialized audience, I asked the director of an on-line dispute resolution chat week to post an announcement for the show on all related professional websites, and I sent personalized invitations to members of the Illinois Bar Association and Illinois Association of Family Mediators. Tom Cavenagh, director of North Central College’s Dispute Resolution Center, passed an email along to all faculty on campus explaining the basic elements of the plot and the educational value of the production. At
least four conflict resolution professionals from these organizations attended a performance, and many students attended performances not only because their professors promoted the show to their classes, but also because it was a supplement to their course work.

While I wanted a lot of the realism that Sandra Bates had established in her direction of *Face to Face* at the Ensemble Theatre, I wanted my audience to have enough information about the process so that they could really learn from it during the performance itself. This would have been impossible had I decided to not give the audience a program as they entered the theatre. I wrote a lengthy director's note section for the program that included basic information about the history of the play and the origins of the unique conflict resolution process that it is based on. Also, I wanted the audience to have an idea of where to get resources if they were interested in learning more about the play or community conferencing after they had seen the performance. I included a list of resources on the back of the program for their future reference.²⁰

Once this paper work preparation was accomplished, I concentrated on preparing my actors for their first performance. This was not only the first performance of *Face to Face* but also for a few, their very first performance ever. In order to calm nerves and keep the play fresh for my actors, we had a brief rehearsal period before the opening performance. We also had warm-ups as a group, and I provided words of encouragement and gratitude. Every performance was a success, and actors were able to recover well from any minor errors or mishaps that occurred. Audience response during the performance varied from uproarious laughter on opening night to pensive thoughts and

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²⁰ See Appendix V to view program.
minor chuckles during the closing performance on Saturday. Through comments made to my actors and me directly after the performances, and through written comments from students within a few weeks after the show, it was clear that Face to Face both entertained and educated our audience.

III. Assessing Face to Face as an Educational Tool

I chose to direct Face to Face not only to gain experience as a director, but to also present the topic of conflict resolution in an entertaining way. One of my major considerations during all aspects of the rehearsal process was how to best present the material so that my audience would learn about the principles and benefits of conflict resolution, in particular the process of community conferencing. In review of the written feedback from students at North Central College regarding our performance of Face to Face, I discovered four areas of understanding to be reviewed. These areas are 1) insight to the nature of the conflict and communication in the plot of the play, 2) discernment of the moral issues and themes that the play addresses, 3) a basic understanding of the process of community conferencing, and 4) a development of appreciation for conflict resolution.

Recognizing Conflict and Communication in the Plot of Face to Face

In one to two-page essays as extra credit or supplementary course work, students in the winter 2001 Introduction to Ethics and Group Process classes responded to Face to Face and related it to the material they had been studying. Overall, the general understanding of the plot was high and the identification of the aspects of communication and conflict in the play show how well the play can be used as an educational tool for a number of disciplines. One female student from the ethics course said, “In Face to
Face...we saw that the men were acting out toward [one] another because they had been hurt or teased by someone else. It was like a chain reaction” (Webpost 5 Feb. 2001)²¹. While this student identified this as a nature of conflict, another student from the group process course calls this the “ripple effect” and identifies it with a theory of group communication. She states, “The ripple effect is evident because the last event could have been preventable if the issues of pay and company moral were addressed [spoken about] sooner” (Group Process 12 Feb. 2001).

Other students identified stereotypes, lack of empathy or sensitivity awareness, and failure to communicate openly as sources and complications of the conflict in Face to Face. One female student said, “Most of the group lacked the skills and the sensitivity to effectively communicate with each other” (Group Process 12 Feb. 2001). Even a student who found the plot line unbelievable said, “I did like the way the group got together to work out the problem. I think that it brought many other issues out that had been hidden within the company” (Group Process 12 Feb. 2001).

Other students from this class focused not on the quality or verisimilitude of the plot, but on the communication skills of the main character and conference facilitator, Jack Manning. One male student said, “He always spoke with a calm voice, never screamed, never yelled, and always listened to what everyone else had to say. He made sure that everyone would have a turn to talk” (Group Process 12 Feb. 2001). Another student said:

Jack Manning’s primary purpose was to break down the barriers that prevented communication between the group. He brought them together in one room (physical barriers), he urged them to try to understand each other.

²¹ In order to maintain the anonymity of student writers, their works will be cited by the source of the information or by class title.
(psychological barriers), and he rephrased what was said so everyone in the group could understand what was being said (linguistic barriers) (Group Process 12 Feb. 2001).

**Discerning Moral Issues and Themes**

It was clear that the students had an understanding of the plot and could relate it to their class work. On this level, the audience response shows that this interpretation of the play delivered the story effectively. The second issue of educating the audience was delivering the themes and moral issues of the play. Through the written work of the students, I examined how well the audience received these messages. Students identified the moral issues in the play as 1) class conflict, 2) loyalty and adultery, 3) discrimination and abuse, and 4) the delegation of responsibility.

The first conflict the majority of the students identified in their essays was the opposing sides of Glen Tregaskis, the young construction worker and his boss Greg Baldoni. The students explain that in the process of determining the reasons and background for firing Glen, many other moral issues appear. The first is conflict between social classes. One student writes, “This play is a perfect example of Moral Plurality at work. Instead of two different countries or cultures disagreeing, it is two different classes. Greg, the rich, up against Glen and the others, the not so rich” (Webpost 5 Feb. 2001). This also relates to the social pressure of appearance, prestige, and power. Students found a theme in the selfish actions of the characters. “Greg...is simply out to become rich...Rich, the foreman, only desires for more personal power...all of the employees became ethical egoists. This is the claim that everyone acts in his/her own self interest” (Webpost 5 Feb. 2001). Another student states, “In *Face to Face* everyone was hurting everyone else to feel better about themselves.” She explains that it is
immoral to abuse inequalities for your own personal advances and says that when there is a conflict people should “try to find a mutual ground between them all” (Webpost 5 Feb. 2001).

A few students address the unethical practice of Greg in cheating on his wife. “Greg comes out looking the most immoral for both his infidelities and his greediness” (Webpost 5 Feb. 2001). Another student supports this statement saying, “Greg has taken a vow to be loyal to Claire, his wife, and he has chosen to break that vow, more than once.” She continues to explain that he breaks loyalty not only to his wife, but also to his employees by using company money for ‘business trips’ (Webpost 5 Feb. 2001). Her argument and that of a few others is that Greg (and all people) should uphold their commitment to others and consider the needs of others along with their own.

The students also recognize the unethical practice of discrimination and abuse. “His coworkers joked about him eating dog meat...People are scared of what is different, and for someone to be of a different culture, in this case, only the nationality, is too much for some people” (Webpost 5 Feb. 2001). One student advocates the Principle of Fallibility which “examines moral differences between cultures and often times discovers false judgements have been made.” He explains that “Nookie and Mac ignore the fact that their culture might also have different morals from Luka’s...However, Richard apologizes to Luka during the conference, which shows his recognition of Luka as an individual” (Webpost 5 Feb. 2001). Another student addresses the unethical practices and consequences of abuse she writes, “…is it ethical to abuse children. We would say no. It turns out that Glen’s father was physically abusive to him...This is where Glen gets his short and dangerous temper” (Webpost 5 Feb. 2001).
Students were able to identify the central theme of our production, the acceptance of responsibility. One student wrote:

The play shows the human side of all involved. I don’t think that there was one person on stage that had never done anything wrong. Conflict resolution in this format gives people a chance to look at themselves before automatically pointing the finger at someone else (Web post 5 Feb. 2001).

Another student supports this statement saying, “…they are responsible for their own actions and trying to justify their behavior otherwise only creates an uncomfortable environment.” Overall the students recognized the moral issues and themes of the play and I was surprised to find a statement that summarizes all of the themes and issues into one goal. The student compares the play to the theory of utilitarianism saying, “we should make choices that would be beneficial to everyone…that’s what the conflict session was about to make everyone somewhat happy and that’s what was accomplished” (Webpost 5 Feb. 2001).

**Understanding of the Process of Community Conferencing**

As an introduction to community conferencing, I hoped *Face to Face* would teach the audience three basic things: purpose and format of a conference, facilitator’s role, and possible uses of the process. Through their essays, students demonstrated that they gained a basic understanding of each one of these things.

Through the assistance of viewing not only the performance, but also through reference to the program distributed, one student provided a great summary of the purpose and format of a community conference. He wrote:

In [the community conferencing] process, when a social problem has occurred, instead of bringing the problem to the judicial system, a social conference is held with all
parties that may have some affect on the situation. During this conference, the parties involved, along with a trained conference facilitator, discuss problems and a way to deal [with] and hopefully resolve the situation (Group Process).

Other students also mentioned the important parts of the construction of a community conference. Many mentioned the importance of the participants in the conference. “In order to solve all issues every person involved was invited to attend.” Another from the same class outlined the discussion format in the following:

At first the initial conflict was addressed by the person at fault. From that point on, with a little guidance from the facilitator, all parties began to feed off of one another... more problems and feelings beneath the surface began to transpire...Eventually the real root of the problem was discovered, all parties had addressed their grievances and a solution that met everybody’s needs to some degree was produced (Group Process).

Not only did students gain an understanding of the format of conflict resolution, but they also demonstrated comprehension of the role of the facilitator. It was previously mentioned that students recognized his good communication skills. Others went further to establish his role and purpose in the process of community conferencing.

During the whole process, the major figure for keeping the conflict resolution going was the conference facilitator, Jack. He was not the judge on this session, nor tried to be, but was the one able to control the dialogs, interrupting and encouraging them at the right time (Webpost 7 Feb. 2001).

The same student from the last statement even recognized the importance of the facilitator’s neutrality. She wrote, “It was important for him not to take sides so he can stay impartial.” Another student found a key piece of the community conferencing theory in the behavior of the facilitator. He states, “...after listening to what the individuals said, Jack always asked, ‘So how did it make you feel.’ By doing that, Jack
was able to release the feelings that participants were trapping inside of them.” The student explains that it was the facilitator’s “listening and evoking emotions from the other characters” that led to the solutions of the conflict (Group Process).

Students discovered the facilitator’s tasks of guiding the discussion, evoking emotions, and bringing about understanding, acceptance, and compromise. Finally, a few students mentioned the application and proper setting for this type of conference. One student explained that he may be able to use the process in his group work for class. Another states, “This type of resolution process would seem to work well with someone’s job or even in an educational scenario. The student, his/her parents, teachers, counselors, and whoever else may be involved would be able to collaborate on an issue that was causing problems for the student” (Group Process). Finally, a female student actually promotes the use of the process for all groups experiencing conflict. She wrote, “Community conferencing can be added as an effective tool to aid in the success of any group” (Group Process).

Appreciation for the Concept of Conflict Resolution

Many students expressed their interest in the unique way of solving problems that they witnessed during the performance. They found it a good alternative to the courtroom and were happy with the creative solutions found for the conflict. The ability of Face to Face to establish an appreciation for the process of conflict resolution is best summarized in the following list of quotations from the student respondents to the show.

- *Face to Face* shows that confronting a conflict face to face often reveals the ‘true’ matter of the problem and [it also shows] resolving the initial issue with that in mind (GP).
- I thought that *Face to Face* was a wonderful look into the use of communicating with others and working with the groups dynamics to bring forth problem solving strategies to a group that is in despair (GP).
• I did enjoy the overall concept and idea of the play. It shined a new light on group resolution (GP).
• The play *Face to Face* presented a very effective way of solving conflicts... (Webpost 7 Feb. 2001).
• More than the play, which is a good example, the idea of conflict resolution in this format shows that through dialogue things can be accomplished (Webpost 5 Feb. 2001).
• Overall the conference seems an effective method of conflict resolution without judicial involvement (Webpost 5 Feb. 2001).
• The play *Face to Face* opened my mind to a whole new way of dealing with issues (Webpost 5 Feb. 2001).

**Conclusion**

Although community conferencing is not applicable to every conflict, community conferencing is an interesting and *successful* approach to conflict; and while *Face to Face* is not an all-encompassing training or educational program for those interested in conflict resolution, this play is an effective tool to introduce the concept of conflict resolution in an entertaining format. This thesis is not meant as a justification for changing the format of conflict resolution in all arenas, it is a mere introduction to the possibility of using a new format for not only dealing with conflict but transforming it into something positive. My hope is that this thesis and *Face to Face* will be used as a tool for individuals to find new and entertaining methods of teaching communities about the importance of conflict resolution.

This being said, it is important to recognize the limitation to the information provided in this work. First, this thesis does not provide sufficient information for individuals seeking to influence government policy regarding the implementation of community conferencing in the departments of social welfare or juvenile justice. The review of the use of community conferencing in the governments of Australia and New Zealand is meant to provide examples of the practical applications of the process and to
demonstrate that the content of the play is based in real life experiences. This is not an argument that these programs should be adopted by every government, but it does provide some basic information that introduces the concept and can be considered for future study in this area.

Second, the methods of actor training and theme interpretation of the piece that I offered are informed but not well experienced. I am still in the process of developing my skills as a director, and the choices I made in terms of blocking and actor training revolved around the purpose of educating the audience more so than entertaining them. My responsibilities were also not as expansive as a professional director who may have concerns about revenue generation and costs for producing the show. I was fortunate enough to get special permission for the rights of the show from David Williamson who did not charge me for those rights. I also had a designated performance space that I did not have to rent, the cost of the promotional material was covered by the theatre department of the college, my actors and technical support staff were volunteers, and there was no cost for set pieces or props. While there are limitations to the information I provided regarding directing a production of *Face to Face*, my ability to direct *Face to Face*, train actors, and educate and entertain an audience all while at a student status demonstrates that the play has universal themes and can be used as an educational tool for those involved in the production process.

Finally, while it was important to view some audience reaction to *Face to Face* in order to assess the education potential of the play, the pool of respondents to the play is in no way representative of the entire audience that viewed North Central College’s performances, not to mention a representation of the learning potential of all audiences.
Unfortunately, the responses I received were from students that had attended the performance with the intention of assessing its relationship to topics that they were studying. Others seeking solely entertainment may not have been able to be educated to the extent of the students that were prepared for the experience. However, what the responses do show is that in a university setting there is a potential for using *Face to Face* to relate to and enhance course material.

The process of researching community conferencing and directing *Face to Face* was an intense learning experience. My study of community conferencing enhanced my understanding of the concept and applicability of conflict resolution, and directing the play enriched my studies of theatre and literature. I also learned valuable research, leadership and communication skills. My hope is that this study encourages people skilled in theatre to consider and enhance the educational value of their performance. I also hope it encourages professionals and educators in the field of conflict resolution to use drama as a method to promote their theory and practice.
Works Cited

Bargen, Jennifer. Director for the Youth Justice Conferencing Directorate New South

Bates, Sandra. Director for the Ensemble Theatre and its 1999 Production of *Face to
Face.* **Personal Interview.** Sydney, Australia, 27 July 2000.

Bradley, Kerri. Youth Justice Conference Coordinator. **Personal Interview.** Wellington,

Cartwright, Geoff. Professional Actor who Portrayed Jack Manning in the 1999
Ensemble Theatre Production of *Face to Face.* **Personal Interview.** Sydney,
Australia, 26 July 2000.

Doyle, Andrew. Professional Actor who Portrayed Luka Mitrovik in the 1999 Ensemble
Theatre Production of *Face to Face.* **Personal Interview.** Sydney, Australia, 26
July 2000.

Gilray, Barbara. Advisory Officer for Residential and Caregiver Services/Care and
Protection Conference Coordinator. **Personal Interview.** Wellington, 3 Aug.
2000.

Gilray, Barbara. “A Practitioner’s Perspective of the Care and Protection Family Group


Hallett, Bruce. “Facing Up to a Culture of Ignorance and Fear.” *Sydney Morning


Moore, David B. and John M. McDonald. “The Theatre of Everyday Conflict.”


“Penny’s Family: A Pakeha Youth Justice Story.” *Family Group Conferences: A Series*

“Putting Right the Wrong: Victims Rights in the Family Group Conference Process.”


North Central College Course Webboards.
** FACE TO FACE**—Audition Form

Name (as you'd like it spelled in the program): __________________________

Circle Year: Fr. So. Jr. Sr. Local phone number: __________________________

Your age: _____ Your local address: ______________________________________

* * * * * * * *

Please briefly describe your acting experience:

* * * * * * * *

Please list any experience you may have with conflict resolution (ie conflict resolution course at NCC, peer mediator in high school, etc.)

** We will have a heavier rehearsal schedule than a normal studio show for Face to Face due to the demands of the show. There are 10 characters in the show and all the characters are on stage for the entire hour and half. Please note - this does not mean that every actor will be called for every rehearsal. However, there are a few roles that are very demanding and require the actor to be at nearly every evening rehearsal and also have quite a bit of time available outside of the normal evening rehearsal time. I will have a varied rehearsal schedule with some rehearsals during the day, but with the majority of the rehearsals running from 6:30pm - 9:30pm Sundays through Thursdays. I may even need to schedule some daytime rehearsals on the weekends. Rehearsal locations will vary. I will call you to tell you where we will meet or tell you at the previous rehearsal. I will create a master schedule as soon as I can collect all the scheduling information I need. Performances are February 1st, 2nd & 3rd. I need to know all conflicts (including if you are going to ACTF) and whether or not you would be willing and able to accept one of the more demanding roles.

Are you willing to take on one of the larger roles which will require a great deal of time? ______ yes ______ no

There is a substantial amount of swearing in this play.
Are you willing to be in this play knowing that there is this kind of language? ______ yes ______ no

Are you willing to perform one of the characters that uses this language? ______ yes ______ no

Please write the name of the roles you are most interested in.

Please fill out the schedule information on the back of this form!!
What re-occurring conflicts do you have (Show Choir, etc.)? Please give me as much info as you can.

What one-time conflicts do you have (6:30-9:30 p.m., Sun.-Thurs. rehearsals, any weekends you will not be available, plus performance dates)?

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<th>time</th>
<th>reason</th>
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Please mark the times when you are not available.

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Thanks and Best of Luck!!! ☺ Jodi
Character descriptions for *Face to Face.*

*JACK MANNING* - is the community conference convener. He is in his mid-thirties and middle-classed. He is a very approachable and trustworthy man. He has a special gift for helping people to resolve their conflicts. Please note - this is the most demanding role and will require a lot of time outside of rehearsals learning about the special conflict resolution process the show is based on.

*GLEN TREGASKIS* - is a construction worker in his 20's. He is simple witted, but he is honest, trusting and hardworking. He is taken advantage of by his coworkers and his short fuse leads him to lash out, lose his job and smash his boss’s Mercedes.

*MAUREEN TREGASKIS* - is Glen’s mother. She is in her 40’s and has had a very difficult life. She is also hardworking and very supportive of her son.

*BARRY MCLEAN* - is Glen’s closest friend and in his 20’s. He is a bit brighter than Glen but clearly is from the same neighborhood and has the same blue-collar lifestyle.

*GREG BALDONI* - is the owner and manager of Baldoni Exhibition Constructions, Glen’s former boss and victim of Glen’s car bashing. He is a social climber in his 50's and driven for success.

*CLAIRE BALDONI* - is Greg’s wife. She is caring and supportive of her husband, but also has an opinion of her own.

*RICHARD HALLIGAN* - is the foreman at Baldoni’s and in his 40’s. He is mild-mannered and tries to be just one of the guys.

*LUKA MITROVIC* - is an employee at Baldoni’s. He’s a single male in his early 30’s whose tough-man attitude provides for comic relief in the show, but he also has a great dramatic bit as well.

*JULIE ROSSITER* - is Greg’s personal assistant in her late 20’s or early 30’s. She’s a flirtatious but loveable character that reveals the sex scandal of the show.

*THERESE MARTIN* - is Greg’s accountant and very shy. She’s in her late 20’s but appears rather older because of her conservative dress and poor social skills.

* indicate the very demanding roles
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Cast</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sun. Jan. 7th</td>
<td>7-9 pm</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Heininger run show</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. Jan. 8th</td>
<td>6:30</td>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>Townhomes p. 76-80</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>Jack, Glen</td>
<td>Add Luka p. 82-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8:30-10 pm</td>
<td>Jack, Barry, Maureen, Richard, Greg</td>
<td>p. 89-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues. Jan. 9th</td>
<td>7 pm</td>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>Townhomes p. 90 - 98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:30 pm</td>
<td>Jack, Glen</td>
<td>p. 98-100 Improv</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8:00 pm</td>
<td>Jack, Barry, Luka, Glen, Therese, Julie</td>
<td>p. 84-89</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9:00 pm</td>
<td>Luka, Glen, Therese, Julie</td>
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<td>7 pm</td>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>Townhomes p. 115-117, 119-120</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Jack, Julie</td>
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<td>Jack, Barry</td>
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<td>8:30 pm</td>
<td>Jack, Glen, Barry, Luka, Therese</td>
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<td>Thurs. Jan. 11th</td>
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<td>Jack, Therese</td>
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<td>8:00 pm</td>
<td>Jack, Luka</td>
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<td>8:30 pm</td>
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<td>Sun. Jan. 14th</td>
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<td>TBA run show blocking/cleaning p.100-111</td>
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<td>Jack, Maureen</td>
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<td>7 pm</td>
<td>Jack, Claire</td>
<td>Townhomes p. 117 - end</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8:30 pm</td>
<td>Luka, Barry, Glen, Richard</td>
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<td>Thurs. Jan. 18th</td>
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<td>All</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun. Jan. 21st</td>
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<td>7 pm</td>
<td>Jack, Glen</td>
<td>Heininger p. 76-80, 82-84, 89-90</td>
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<td>8:30-10 pm</td>
<td>Jack, Glen, Barry, Maureen, Richard, Greg</td>
<td>p. 90 - 98, 98-100</td>
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<td>Tues. Jan. 22nd</td>
<td>7 pm</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Heininger p. 100 - end OFF BOOK!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed. Jan. 23rd</td>
<td>7 pm</td>
<td>Jack, Glen</td>
<td>Heininger p. 101-105</td>
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<td>7:30 pm</td>
<td>Jack, Claire, Greg, Julie, Glen, Maureen, Barry</td>
<td>p. 106 - 109</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8:00 pm</td>
<td>Add Therese and Richard</td>
<td>run p. 76 - 100 OFF BOOK!</td>
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<td>All</td>
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<td>Thurs. Jan. 24th</td>
<td>7 pm</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Heininger run show/ problem spots</td>
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<td>All</td>
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<td>7 pm</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Heininger run show</td>
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<td>Wed. Jan 31st</td>
<td>7 pm</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Heininger DRESS REHEARSAL</td>
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Thurs., Fri. & Sat Feb. 1st 2nd & 3rd | 8 pm | PERFORMANCE !!!!!!
A CONFLICT RESOLUTION DRAMA

BY: DAVID WILLIAMSON

NATIONAL & AMATEUR DEBUT
DIRECTED BY: JODI WEDERATH

FEBRUARY 1, 2, 3 2001
8 PM

HEININGER AUDITORIUM OF LARRANCE ACADEMIC CENTER
309 E. SCHOOL STREET, NAPERVILLE, IL

FREE ADMISSION WITH BUSINESS CARD OR THIS ANNOUNCEMENT

SPONSORED BY
NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE THEATRE DEPT. &
NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTER

CAUTION: CONTENT MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR CHILDREN
A Very Special Thank You to:

David Williamson for the rights to produce the show; Deborah Martin for her guidance in advising my direction and the development of the show; the North Central College Theatre Dept.; Thomas Cavenagh and the Dispute Resolution Center; Sandra Bates, Geoff Cartwright and the rest of the cast of the Ensemble Theatre production; Paul Mashl for box office assistance; the Richter Committee; Tom Sawyer, director of NCC College Scholars Program; Betsy Matheson for her amazing talents as an assistant director; and the cast of Face to Face for their hard work and incredible talent.

Please review the following sources if you are interested in learning more about community conferencing.

A copy of Face to Face is available through Currency Press
www.currency.com.au

Website for Transformative Justice Australia
www.tja.com.au

“Community Conferencing as a Special Case of Conflict Transformation” by John M. McDonald and David B. Moore in Restorative Justice and Civil Society edited J. Braithwaite & H. Strang - Cambridge University Press.

www.restorativejustice.org

Family Group Conferences: Perspectives on policy and practice

A CONFLICT RESOLUTION DRAMA

BY: DAVID WILLIAMSON

NATIONAL & AMATEUR DEBUT
DIRECTED BY: JODI WEDERATH

FEBRUARY 1, 2, 3 2001
8 PM

HEININGER AUDITORIUM
LARRANCE ACADEMIC CENTER

SPONSORED BY
NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE THEATRE DEPT.
& NCC DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTER
Message from the Director

Thank you for joining us for this special conference. What you are viewing is a unique process of conflict resolution that originated from the Maori tribe of New Zealand. It was implemented into the juvenile justice system and social welfare department in New Zealand in 1989 and since then, has traveled to Australia and is beginning to gain international recognition.

This process is called community conferencing. Its name reflects the fact that the process brings all members of a community affected by a conflict face to face. Through the guidance of a trained conference facilitator, participants work to establish an agreement on how to deal with the conflict. The private company Transformative Justice Australia (TJA) uses this process to assist businesses with workplace related issues.

In 1998, the directors of TJA wrote to Australian playwright David Williamson and explained the process of community conferencing and why it would be a great basis for a play. By May of 1999, *Face to Face* was being performed at the Ensemble Theatre in Sydney.

In January of 2000, Tom Cavenagh, director of the Dispute Resolution Center here at North Central College, forwarded me a message about the play. Through Cavenagh’s assistance and a chain of e-mails, I was able to contact a director of TJA, David Moore, and the director and original cast of *Face to Face*. Funded by a Richter Fellowship grant, I traveled to Australia and New Zealand this past July to study the play and the community conferencing process.

When I returned from my trip, I wrote Williamson and received special permission to direct the amateur and national debut of *Face to Face* here at North Central College. Through the assistance of Deborah Martin and the rest of the theatre department, I was able to obtain and work with a fabulous cast, and bring this play all the way from the other side of the world to you. My hope is that not only will *Face to Face* entertain you, but that it will also prove to you that there are other effective ways to deal with conflict outside of courtroom trials.
PICTURES FROM THE JANUARY 31\textsuperscript{ST} 2001 DRESS REHEARSAL OF NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE'S PRODUCTION OF \textit{FACE TO FACE}